

**PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY
PARTICIPATION IN THE PROMOTION OF GIRL CHILD EDUCATION.**

MASTER OF ARTS (DEVELOPMENT STUDIES) THESIS

BY

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DECLARATION

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

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis represents the students' own work and effort and has been submitted with our approval.

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DEDICATION

To my father, late Hamid Juma, who made me the woman I am today. Your unconditional love and support has always been my pillar of strength throughout the years. You truly blessed me with love, hope and belief each day, so thank you for all the sacrifices made to educate me. I hope this far, I have made you proud.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the role of community participation in the promotion of girl child education with special focus on the work of Mother Groups, Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Youth Clubs in the communities. The main research argument is that various interventions have been undertaken and numerous others are under way to eradicate the socio economic barriers to the education of girls, however, a lot of work needs to be done in getting rid of the cultural factors which are difficult to overcome than the social economic barriers which most of the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Government have already been able to address. These barriers require the community itself to take responsibility and work towards eradicating them. The main objective of the study was to find out the role communities are playing in the promotion of girl child education in the study districts. The study explored community participation through qualitative methods using Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), In-depth Interview (IDIs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIIs) in Zomba and Machinga Districts. The main findings reveal that Mother groups, VDCs and Youth Clubs have proved to be a great resource in reinforcing the agenda of keeping girls in school and also ensuring girls return to school after either pregnancy or early marriage. They also provide sexual and reproductive health information by holding talks with the girls in school and out of school, conducting extracurricular activities to keep the girls occupied after school and on the weekends and also identifying and prioritizing needs of girls in school. However, these groups still face a lot of challenges in their work including intimidation from politicians, negative perceptions from other community members and inadequate resources to run their daily activities. Despite these

challenges, the study therefore concluded that community participation is of great importance if we are to promote girl child education and even education as a whole.

Table of contents

ABSTRACT	vi
Table of contents	vii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	1
1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT	5
1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	5
1.2.1 Broad Objective	5
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	6
1.4 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY	7
1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	7
1.6 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS	8
CHAPTER TWO	9
LITERATURE REVIEW	9
INTRODUCTION	9
2.0 GENERAL TERMS	9
2.1 EMPIRICAL LITERATURE	10
2.2 THEORETICAL LITERATURE	25
2.2.1 SOCIALIST FEMINIST THEORY	25
2.2.2 JULES PRETTY'S TYPOLOGY OF PARTICIPATION	27
CONCLUSION	31
CHAPTER THREE	32
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	32
3.0 INTRODUCTION	32
3.1 STUDY SETTING	32

3.2 STUDY POPULATION	33
3.3 STUDY DESIGN	33
3.4 SAMPLING	34
3.4.1 Purposive sampling.....	34
3.4.2 Snowball sampling	35
3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS	35
3.5.1 Semi structured in-depth interviews	36
3.5.2 Key informant interviews	36
3.5.3 Focus groups discussions interviews (FGDs).....	37
3. 6 DATA ANALYSIS	38
3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	38
CONCLUSION	39
CHAPTER FOUR.....	40
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS.....	40
4.0 INTRODUCTION.....	40
4.1 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS.....	40
4.2 LEVELS OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION.....	41
4.2.1 Perceptions on community participation	49
4.3 METHODS OF ENFORCING AND PROMOTING GIRL CHILD EDUCATION THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION.....	51
4.3.1 Mother Groups.....	51
4.3.2 Village Development Committees (VDCs).....	56
4.3.3 Youth Clubs.....	60
4.3.4 Village by-laws	62
4.4 CHALLENGES IN THE PROMOTION OF GIRL CHILD EDUCATION THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION.....	65
1) Cultural factors.....	66
2) Poverty	67
3) Lack of dedicated resources and funding constraints.....	68
4) Legitimacy. Representativeness and credibility.....	68
5) Absence of Collaboration and strategic alliances	69

6) Intimidation from politicians.....	69
7) Poor means of communication and information sharing between VDCs and ADCs	70
8) Deliberate exclusion from significant meetings at the district level.	70
4.5 EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE PROMOTION OF GIRL CHILD EDUCATION	70
CONCLUSION	71
CHAPTER FIVE	73
CONCLUSIONS.....	73
6.0 INTRODUCTION.....	73
6.1 CONCLUSIONS.....	73
REFERENCES	77
APPENDICES	83
Appendix 1: Structure of a Mother Group	83
Appendix 2: Structure of Local Government.....	84
Appendix 3: Structure of a Village Development Committee	85
Appendix 4: Structure of a youth group.....	86
Appendix 5: Focus Group Discussion guide.....	87
Appendix 6: Key Informant Interview guide	92
Appendix 7: In-depth interviews with parents/pupil guide.....	96
Appendix 8: Informed Consent.....	101

List of tables

Table 1: Pretty's typology of participation.....	28
Table 4.1.1: Total number of participants disaggregated by gender	40
Table 4.1.2: Composition of Community Groups.....	41
Table 4.2.1: Community Participation in the promotion of girl child education framework	43

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADC	Area Development Committee
CAMFED	Campaign for Girls Education
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CBSS	Community Day Secondary Schools
CRECCOM	Creative Center for Community Mobilisation
DEC	Distance Education Centres
DFID	Department for International Development
GABLE	Girls Attainment for Basic Literacy Education
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
IDI	In-Depth Interviews
MA	Master of Arts
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
NGES	National Girls' Education strategy

NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PTA	Parents and Teachers Association
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SWAP	Education Sector Wide Approach
TA	Traditional Authority
TfD	Theatre for Development
VDC	Village Development committee

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Education in third world countries has been identified as a major contributor to development (World Bank, 2010). Poorest countries of the world report lowest literacy rates, and the correlation is clear; a more educated population contributes better to the prosperity of a nation.

According to CIA's World fact book (2009), developed nations such as United States of America (USA) and United Kingdom (UK) report 99% literacy rates among the population aged 15 and above. Nations such as Sierra Leone and Malawi report 35.1% and 62.7% respectively.

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Although there are countless barriers to development at global level a huge chunk of them are gender related. These include; women's legal rights through implementation and enforcement of existing laws; women's unlocked economic potential; women's under representation in politics and decision making positions; violence against women; low labour force participation; low maternal and reproductive health; unequal education levels between women/girls and men/boys; financial and digital exclusion; time that is spent on unpaid care work and girl child vulnerability. The above mentioned high impact areas resonate with the nine targets under the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 5, which is, achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (World Bank, 2010).

Education is an important instrument for human resource development. Human resource development for the progress of country requires capacity building of both genders. Education is an important tool that can result in bringing the welfare, development and empowerment of

women. An educated and empowered woman can have much to contribute to the socio-economic development of the country. If education of girls and women remain ignored in a country, about half of the human resource would remain unprepared and unutilized. Therefore, education of girls and women holds top priority amongst various measures to improve the status of female citizens of the country, so that they can also participate and avail the benefits of development.

In Malawi, a male dominant society, the role of women is extremely important and educating women is equally important. Their roles concern ensuring the wellbeing of the family as a whole, and their education is extremely pertinent to the success of the family, the community, and ultimately the entire nation (Wilson, 2010). As the importance of girls' education is being realised, NGOs as well as government, have implemented various projects and action plans in an effort to ameliorate the dire situation. Several projects have taken a different approach, and each has had varying levels of success. Overall the situation of girls' education has improved.

Among the NGOs carrying out interventions promoting girl child education include; Campaign for Girls Education (CAMFED) with support of the Department for International Development (DFID) Malawi and the MasterCard Foundation supports vulnerable girls in Malawi. CAMFED operates in 17 Districts across the country. It started in 2009 with 2 districts in 57 schools targeting 138 students. In 2012 CAMFED expanded to 17 districts in 624 schools targeting 11,130 students. Another intervention is one by Press Trust which provides bursary to students who have performed exceptionally well at PSLCE examinations up to form 4 (UNICEF, 2015). Another one is by Creative Centre for Community Mobilisation (CRECCOM) which uses "Theatre for Development" (TfD) as a tool for gaining community support in promoting girls' education. In the long run TfD as a tool aims at changing people's attitudes towards girls'

education, as a means to promote the level of girls' primary education (Wilson, 2010). Other NGO's are [FAWEMA](#), Age Africa (ZOMBA), Save the Children Malawi (Targets children infected and affected by the HIV &AIDS pandemic), Action Aid and CARE Malawi.

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On the government side, there have been interventions such as the Education Sector Wide Approach (SWAP) which is a pool of funding aimed at construction and upgrading of school facilities, direct support to disadvantaged children, primary school improvement programme and training of primary school teachers. Another government intervention is the National Girls' Education strategy (NGES) which was launched in 2014 and outlines Government of Malawi's strategy to promote girls' education, and includes guidance to all stakeholders working in girls' education (MoEST, 2014c). NGES aims to increase girls' access to and completion of primary, secondary and tertiary education, through improving quality of education, improving attendance and pass rate, and removing barriers to education for girls (MoEST, 2014c). Malawi's Readmission Policy allows Mothers of school going age to return to school after having a child. The Readmission Policy was introduced in 1993 and was revised in 2006, however, challenges have been identified, including lack of support for the policy from some education stakeholders, and the lack of an implementation plan, and an M&E plan (McConnell & Mupuwaliywa, 2016).

Despite government and NGO's commitment over the years in providing equal educational opportunities for all, through the removal of Primary school fees, reducing distances to schools and modifying the curriculum to accommodate both girls and boys, expected increase in educational levels is not achieved. (Maluwa-Banda 2004; Moyi 2010). Even though equal number of girls and boys has been achieved in primary education but because of high dropout rates of girls in primary education there is no equal number of girls and boys starting secondary

education. The reality is that advancing girls' education is still a challenge. While significant achievements have been made in terms of access, thanks to the free primary education that started in 1994, the results are far from being satisfactory if we consider the large gaps between levels of schooling. For instance, according to the [DHS](#) (2017) 12% of women and 5% of men aged 15-49 have no education. Nearly 6 in 10 women and men have attended primary school, while 23% of women and 32% of men have attended secondary education. Only 3% of women and 5% of men have more than secondary education. About three-quarters of women and 83% of men are literate. According to the Malawi Growth Development Strategy (MGDS) III (2017) 50 percent of girls in Malawi marry before the ages of 18, making Malawi's child marriage rate the 8th highest in the world. Adolescent birth rate is around 137 births per 1,000 girls, the 3rd highest in SADC. While maternal mortality rate has dropped to 510 deaths per 100,000 live births, globally, Malawi still remains amongst the top 20 countries with the highest maternal deaths.

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Overall, various interventions have been undertaken and numerous others are under way to eradicate the socio economic barriers to the education of girls but still more a lot of work needs to be done in getting rid of the cultural factors which are difficult to overcome than the social economic barriers which most NGOs and Government have already been able to address. These barriers require the community itself to take responsibility and work towards eradicating them (Dekker, 2010). This prompted this research to find out the efforts that various communities have put in place to ensure that girls are retained in school and the factors that lead to their dropping out of school are eliminated.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Girls' education is receiving more and more attention as it is being realised as a key tool in sustainable development. There are still many barriers preventing girls from entering school, causing them to drop out early, or not to go beyond primary education. To a large extent, these are cultural barriers which are difficult to overcome than the social economic barriers which most of the NGOs and Government have already been able to address. These barriers require the community itself to take responsibility and work towards eradicating them. (Dekker, 2010).

However, it is important to understand what sort of participation is at play on the ground. This is the reason in the first place this research tries to identify the type of participation in the community. Whether it's genuine or Pseudo form of participation and reasons to either of the two and how they interact with each other or affect the other. Secondly, there are various forms of enforcing community participation such as Mother Groups, Youth Clubs and Village Development Committees but there is knowledge gap on how these groups operate, how effective they are, their specific roles, the challenges they face, and how they coordinate with other stakeholders such as NGO's and the Government as well as the religious community in the promotion of girl child education. These are the reasons why this research was set out to fill in these knowledge gaps.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.2.1 Broad Objective

To find out the role communities are playing in the promotion of girl child education in the study districts.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

- I. To find out if there has been participation from the various community members in the promotion of girl child education by comparing the levels of participation by Jules Pretty with the type of participation on the ground
- II. To explore the various methods of enforcing and promoting girl child education through community participation
- III. To find out if community participation has been effective in promoting girl child education in the study districts.
- IV. To identify the challenges in the promotion of girl child education through community participation

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- I. What are the key characteristics of community participation in the promotion of girl child education
- II. What challenges have been faced in the promotion of girl child education through community participation
- III. What have been the methods of enforcing and promoting girl child education through community participation
- IV. What roles have mother groups, VDCs and youth groups played in the promotion of girl child education

1.4 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

There is limited published literature on the role community participation in the promotion of education and of girl child education in Malawi. The studies that have been conducted have tended to follow the common trend of assessing the effectiveness community participation in various sectors and not considering the little efforts in place and how the NGOs and the government can further enlarge these efforts. Wilson (2010) states that the main constraints in tackling the issues that surround girls' education are cultural norms, expectations, as well as funding. Funding is the easier of the two to solve since cultural norms are often deeply rooted within tradition and the way of life. Social norms, such as expectations for girls' to do house hold chores, to get married, and to take care of their siblings are harder to change. When families in rural areas have financial issues they resort to keeping their daughters at home to help take care of the house and family. Measures such as the abolition of school fees and school uniforms make life a lot easier for poor families. Changing teacher's and male pupils' attitudes towards girl pupils will not happen overnight but understanding and awareness is the first step to acceptance. The movement of social mobilization has empowered communities to take grass root level steps in improving quality of education and the educational equality between girls and boys. This prompts the need to generate evidence that communities are indeed partaking in the promotion of equal education especially the girl child who is currently marginalised.

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1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This research faced a number of challenges. Below are some of them;

- Language. Chichewa language is limited therefore it brought about a lot of problems in finding appropriate words that would still mean the same thing when translated back to English but at the same time people will understand. This may have in one way affected the responses from the participants.
- Since the study was, to a larger extent, dependent on the narratives and experiences of the respondents, it may have suffered from various biases.
- The study was restricted to a few districts which limits generalizability of the results

1.6 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

The thesis has five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study, Chapter 2 reviews literature and presents the theoretical framework underpinning the study. Chapter 3 delivers the methodology, Chapter 4 presents and discusses results. Chapter 5 concludes and makes recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the empirical literature on community participation and education. It also presents the theoretical framework for analysing the findings of the study. It is divided into two subsections. The first part reviews literature whilst the second part presents a theoretical framework underpinning the study.

2.0 GENERAL TERMS

Education in its general sense is a form of learning which the knowledge, skills, values, benefits and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through storytelling, discussion, teaching, training or research. Education has been described as the most important aspect of human development, a key to a successful living, especially girl-child education (Micheal, 2011).

Osinulu (1994) and Akinpelu (2004) define education as the process of providing information to person to help the individual develop physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, politically and economically.

According to Ocho (2005), Education is the process through which individuals are made functional members of their society. Education is a process through which the young acquires knowledge and realizes his/her potentials and uses them for self-actualization. It enables her to be useful to herself and others. It is a means of preserving, transmitting and improving the

culture of the society. In every society education connotes acquisition of something good, something worthwhile.

A community is a functionally related aggregate of people who live in a particular geographic locality, at a particular time, share a common culture, are arranged in a social structure, and exhibit awareness of their uniqueness and separate identity as group. (Moltke, 1975).

Participation is generally understood as the involvement of agencies from both inside and outside a community to work together in development projects for common interest (Cornwall, 2006, 2008; Mohan & Stokke, 2000).

Community participation concerns the engagement of individuals and communities in decisions about things that affect their lives. Community participating means that communities are playing an active part and have a significant degree of power and influence. (Burns .et.al, 2004).

Girl-child education is a catch-all term for a complexity of issues and debates surrounding education (primary education, secondary education, tertiary education and health education for females (Okernmor, Nditi and Filshak, 2012). Girl-child education also includes areas of gender equality, access to education and its connection to the alleviation of poverty good governance which are major ingredients in alleviating crime against women.

2.1 EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

Norad (2013) makes use of the Jules Pretty typology of participation to analyse participation in relation to its significance to ownership, aid programme and service delivery effectiveness. The study emerges from concerns about whether the approach to the concept of “ownership” (by aid-receiving governments) which is generally considered in discourse around aid effectiveness. The

main objective of the study was therefore to create an understanding of the conditions under which local participation and local ownership may further develop and assist the design of specific interventions.

Using Pretty's hierarchy of participation, the study derived a framework of its own that can be used by aid donors, governments, and by NGOs in the design and evaluation of programmes or projects that seek to encourage community participation, either as a means to improve programme effectiveness, or as part of a wider strategy of community empowerment. The framework was pilot tested in Malawi's Health sector with the aim of developing an understanding of the main features of participation and accountability relations in the health sector in rural areas, comparing areas mainly served by government health facilities with those served by facilities managed by faith-based organisations. The other providers of health services in Malawi.

After the pilot study it was concluded that the framework developed may also be as part of a broader process of understanding participation in relation to a sector or a particular type of service. This form of analysis may focus on the constraints to effective participation for different groups, and may help identify biases in the form of participation (for instance biases related to gender, levels of education, or against those suffering particular forms of social, political or economic exclusion). The framework may also help to provide evidence on the consequences of participation, or of constraints on it. The study concluded that understanding the effects of, or potential for, community participation requires a more systematic analysis of who participates, in what way, and for what reason, than appears generally to have been the case in international experience. This study will also use Pretty's typology of participation to come up with a

framework that identifies the specific forms of participation, who participates in each form (and whether they do so individually or collectively), the participants' motives, what factors determine the effectiveness of the participation, and the results of the participation but focusing on girl child education.

Ndiaye (2015) also conducted a study titled *ways in which community involvement may influence girls' education in Senegal*. The study examines through the lens of social feminist theory the ways in which community involvement may influence girls' education in Senegal. It highlights the extent to which networking, advocacy, and meaningful interactions between community and school may contribute to improving access, learning conditions, and academic achievements for girls. Ndiaye (2015) also provides an analysis of the adverse effects of community involvement on girls' education in Senegal. It underscores the extent to which patriarchy and class interfere to shape community involvement and undermine girls' education, in terms of both access and quality. The paper further sketches a combination of Freire's dialogical approach and Nussbaum's capabilities approach as a possible direction to take in order to better address Senegalese girls' education.

The study showed that, in the Senegalese context, community involvement does have a potential to advance girls education; but it faces serious challenges that may impede the process. Advocating and building supportive networks within and outside the community may play a critical role in promoting girls' access to education by fostering more receptivity and managing to minimize the families' expenses associated with schooling their children. Other forms of involvement in which meaningful interactions between families and the school are maintained may also contribute to facilitating girls' learning.

The study underscores, however, the extent to which community involvement may be shaped by the pervasive patriarchal culture and poverty. These adverse forces stand as powerful barriers to girls' education. Given that they inform the dynamics within community involvement, the latter turns out to compromise girls' education. In such a context, although all the situation of all girls deserves attention, that of girls living in rural areas needs a special attention. This study will also use the social feminist theoretical standpoint from the study by Ndiaye (2015) because it better analyses male domination and socioeconomic oppression and exploitation as inter-related institutions and cultures that hinder the education of girls.

In 2016 the education commission for Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) conducted a qualitative study to examine the ways in which families/communities in three countries namely Kenya, Malawi and Zambia mobilise local communities to support girls' education. The study redresses barriers that hinder girls education such as school based violence, parental concern for girls safety on route to and from school, cost of education, cultural attitudes towards girls education, domestic and care work, female genital cutting, child and adolescent marriage, unintended teenage pregnancies, armed conflict and child labour among others.

The findings of the study show that communities are playing a participatory role in girls' education by helping to rescue girls at risk of female genital cutting (FGC), and child marriage, educating girls on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) issues and encouraging girls that have dropped out of school as a result of early marriages and/or adolescent pregnancy to re-enrol and complete their studies. Based on the findings of the study, FAWE proposed a number of policy recommendations that governments in sub-Saharan Africa could adopt in order to enhance girls' educational opportunities. The suggested policies included: pass laws that protect

girls from harmful traditional practices such as FGC, child marriage and others that violate the rights of girls; significantly increasing spending on education so that poor families do not have to carry the burden of educating their children; and utilize the untapped reservoir of skills within the community that can help support girls' education. For example, local women, youth, and opinion leaders (e.g. Chiefs and the clergy) can be important agents of change where girls' education is concerned among others. This study will also look at the policies that the government of Malawi has in place concerning girl child education and how they are being implemented. It will also look at how the hindrances that were redressed by FAWE are being tackled through community participation.

Loeurt To in 2016 also conducted a study which was aimed at investigating the nature of community participation in education in a remote district in Cambodia. A case study approach was used to explore the issue and employed mixed research methods for data collection. Epstein's participation and Bray's degree of community participation were used as analytical frameworks. The study focussed on the forms and processes of participation by parents, community members and education stakeholders in primary schools in remote areas. The study discovered a range of social practices in community participation in education. The degrees of participation varied depending on the types of participation and the participants. Parents had direct participation in their children's learning at home, and indirect participation through resource contribution for school development. In addition, the community participated in education through their main representatives, the School Support Committees (SSCs). SSCs were found to possess power in the decision-making processes in school and education development.

The most common type of participation was collaborative resource contribution for school development. This practice reflected the traditional culture of participation of Cambodian society but there was also a sign of behavioural change to focus more on children's learning. Teachers and School Support Committees were the drivers in bringing community and parents to participate in education. They were the facilitators, communicators, network connectors and mobilizers for school and education development. This case study suggests that a shift in focus (on the part of the government, nongovernmental organizations and education stakeholders) to support parental involvement in children's learning, rather than the traditional resource mobilisation, may better promote children's learning. This study will to a large extent replicate what was conducted by To (2016) of course there might be some differences in study setting because this study takes place in Malawi as well as the fact that this study only focuses on one gender. This study, for example looks at the motives that shape community participation in the study areas.

Westberg (2010) also conducted a study aimed at identifying factors affecting children's schooling, with special focus on child's gender, parents' role and preferences and how the school participation outcome may be resource constrained. The study hypothesized that parents' education levels are positively related with children's schooling, but that special treatment is given to children of same gender as themselves. It employed three school outcome measures in order to capture the multiple entry points of influence: the probability of annual school participation, likelihood of delayed school progression and probability of dropping out of primary school. It also found in general supporting evidence on behalf of mothers' positive effect, although evidence of gender-based preferential treatment in terms of girls' school

progression. Regarding fathers' influence the results were mixed, showing a positive relationship in terms of girls' school attendance and boys' school progression, the latter indicating preferential bias to boys; whereas girls' primary school continuation or completion was negatively affected. It also hypothesized that children's schooling would be positively affected by residing in a female headed household, given women's stronger bargaining position; but also that the ability to follow up on these preferences may be resource constrained. Using the three outcome measures it found some support for the latter hypothesis, and for girls especially, although the evidence is empirically weak.

The study further hypothesized that poverty and labour constraints, the latter also encompassing gender-based labour constraints, deter children's schooling. Using two Logit models, controlling for random and fixed-effects at household and individual level, it investigated the ability to follow up on preferences for sending children to school. And it found supporting evidence for presence of poverty constraints when controlling for random effects, although weak evidence for girls. In terms of labour constraints, the evidence was mixed, in part suggesting a rejection of the previously stated hypotheses.

The study also established that dominant inheritance system and residential location may affect internal bargaining power. In order to investigate this, it hypothesized that a child's school progression would be negatively affected when both the residential location and the predominant inheritance system in the area had an opposite gender focus rather than the sex of the child. Using Logit models, it was found that boys' school progression was likely to be negatively affected by residing matrilocally within a matrilineal society as opposed to patrilocal residence in a patrilineal society; whereas girls' school progression was positively affected by residing

patrilocally within a matrilineal society as opposed to in a patrilineal society. Whether the results are a question of regional bias or different perceived investment returns to children's schooling is uncertain. This study will replicate the research on the effects of inheritance systems on bargaining power of children's education since the study was conducted in districts that practice matrilineal system of marriage.

Wilson (2010) conducted a study which took an in depth look at the factors that make girls' education so critical to development and how the various approaches taken have or have not been effective. In order to determine the most effective means of improving the situation of girls' primary education the study analysed different projects' approaches. Analysis included any change in enrolment rate, continued or lack of continued success in terms of sustainability and feedback from either teachers or project directors as well as a general breakdown of how the project targeted girls' education and whether any significant contributions were made.

The study analysed the DFID (Department for International Development) Research Project, this was an initiative funded by the British DFID in conjunction with UNICEF targeting gender based violence in schools. As gender based violence in schools is one major hindrance that prevents girls from having equal access to education.

The study also analysed the GABLE (Girls Attainment for Basic Literacy Education) Project. The Girls' Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education project, also known as GABLE, was project implemented from 1991 to 1998 aimed at increasing girls' performance in terms of access, persistence and completion. The purpose of the project was to alter people's attitudes towards girls' primary education and to take action in improving girls' attendance and completion

of primary school. Two main tools used to do this were by bringing about the implementation of the policy to remove the requirement for pupils to wear a school uniform at school and in conjunction with this, primary education was made free. Removing the financial constraint on education, girls had a much higher access rate. This is due to the fact that many families living in rural areas cannot afford school fees or to pay for uniforms, so when there is no need to pay for either of these, it is much easier for them to send all their children to school.

CRECCOM SMC-EQ Project (Creative Center for Community Mobilization for Social Mobilization Campaign for Educational Quality) which was developed after GABLE was another project that the study analysed. CRECCOM SMC-EQ used community mobilisation through Theatre for Development as a key tool for gaining the support of the community in promoting girls' education. As a tool it proposed, in the long run, to change people's attitudes towards girls' education, as a means to promote the level of girls' primary education. The exercises involved interaction between the community and the facilitators to foster dialogue in the community and between the community and field staff regarding girls' education and the issues that they face, such as school related gender based violence. After a dialogue had been established, proposed solutions were presented through acting.

The study concluded that the main constraints on tackling the issues that surround girls' education are cultural norms and expectations as well as funding. Funding is the easier of the two to solve since cultural norms are often deeply rooted within tradition and the way of life. And so far most of the analysed projects addressed the funding barrier and left the cultural hindrance not tackled although CRECCOM SMC-EQ project was taking steps towards that direction but there is a lot to be done. This study addresses this gap as it focuses much on the community

interventions towards cultural barriers rather than the funding barriers that government and NGOs emphasize on.

Dekker, (2010) conducted a study using Program theory to establish the Malawian view on Community Participation in School Development by conducting a qualitative program evaluation of the Basic Education Support Program (BESP) in the south of Malawi. The accent of the BESP lies on increasing community participation in creating learner friendly schools. Since the community and its members are the 'instrument' and starting point in the BESP to create learner friendly schools, their attitudes towards the project were evaluated. The research was conducted in five communities in the south of Malawi that joined the BESP. All of these communities consist of five groups, knowing the chiefs, the School Management Committee together with the Parent Teacher Association, the teachers, the parents, and the pupils. With each group of each community, a focus group was held where discussions about multiple subjects took place. The discussions yielded information on what Malawians understand by the term community participation, which elements in the program the community itself experiences as important for community participation in school improvement, and on challenges that were faced when invoking community participation in school improvement.

Overall the study answered the main research question which is 'what is the Malawian perspective on the use of community participation in the establishment of learner friendly schools?' The participants in the research almost all agreed on community participation being a good, if not the only, way to develop the school, the community and some argue even the county. The schools of the participants have improved in numerous ways, from working with adequate learning materials to the disappearance of teacher-pupil relationships. As good as community

participation is a basis for creating learner friendly schools, the program can use some adjustments. However, Dekker (2010) failed to recommend some of the adjustments to the BESP program that would further make the program a big push towards community participation efforts in school development. This study will work filling this gap.

Tizifa (2009) conducted a qualitative study in the South Eastern Education Division by applying Arnstein's Ladder of Participation. The study was aimed at assessing community participation in the provision of secondary education in Malawi by investigating the extent of community involvement in the establishment and management of Distance Education Centres (DECs); their Transition to Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs); and in their management as CDSSs. Tizifa (2009) study participants included men and women who were members of the communities around the schools under study, village heads and/or chiefs, pupils in the schools, and district managers or their representatives. These participants are also used in this study because the main focus area of research is the same, community participation in education however, this study is focused on gender and primary school's education.

The major findings of this study were that the concept of CDSS was fully understood by officials from the Ministry of Education Headquarters but at lower levels of the education hierarchy the meaning of the concept varied considerably from position to position. The conceptual understanding became even more diluted among the community groups.

It was established that DECs were established through community initiatives and communities were involved in infrastructure development and their running through school committees. However, the way the DECs were run varied from centre to centre as there seemed to be no

supervision from education authorities after their establishment. The conversion of DECs to CDSSs brought major changes in community participation in the activities of CDSSs. The major areas in which the communities participated were taken over by the government as entry to CDSS was by government selection and all the fee paid by pupils went to the government, depriving school committees of funds to carry out development projects.

The study concluded that community participation had played a major role in the provision of secondary education in Malawi. However, the participation ranged from between non-participation to a token participation. In the absence of a deliberate effort by government to empower communities towards genuine participation, i.e. so that communities would become partners of the government in decision making, and missing an opportunity to engage the communities in a consultative process during the change from DECs to CDSSs created major challenges for community participation in the functioning of the new CDSS structures. This study also sets out to establish the type of participation that is present in the communities that ensures the retention of girls in school. And this study will borrow some of the research participants of Tizifa (2009) such as the men and women who were members of the communities around the school's understudy, village heads and/or chiefs, pupils in the schools, and district managers or their representatives.

Andrew and Etumabo (2016) examines the implications of Girl-child to nation building in the 21st century in Nigeria. The paper began by pointing out the wrong notions that many Nigerians have particularly the rural dwellers about women being considered as properties for man and objects for their pleasure and how this notion restrains them from training their girl-children in schools. The paper further examined the concept of girl-child education to be all inclusive, some

hindrances to effective girl-child education such as economic factors, sexual violence and abuse, political factors, the school environmental factors and socio-cultural and religious factors were highlighted. Included in the paper also was the implications that effective girl-child education would have on nation building such as poverty-reducing effects, improves health and nutrition, reduces inequality, reduces women's fertility rates, lowers infant and mortality rates and increases women's labour force participation rates and earnings.

Northern Nigeria's high gender inequity in education places the majority of young girls at a severe disadvantage. This cross-sectional study examined enrolment, dropout, and primary school completion rates in three communities in Kaduna State. Less than half of young people (6 – 25 years) living in northern Nigeria are currently enrolled in school and the majority of students are males (60%). This study's findings indicate there are nearly twice as many boys graduating from primary school as compared to girls, and the dropout rate for boys is close to half (3%) of the dropout rate for girls (5.4%). Sustained inputs are needed to boost female enrolment in junior secondary schools, create girl-friendly school environments, and to better enable communities to understand the value of girls' education. This study will borrow the research question of the effects of girl child education in nation building to find out as part of its study if the communities find girl child education important.

Komora (2013) conducted a study to investigate the challenges of girl child education in Tana River County using Modernization theory. The specific objectives thereof were: to establish the social and cultural factors affecting the enrolment of girls in primary schools; to establish the factors which cause school drop-out among girls; to establish whether the school environment is

friendly to girls and supports their education; and to examine the role of socio-economic factors affecting girls' education.

The findings indicated that early marriages, sexual harassment, inadequate teachers and learning materials are among the factors that affect girl child education. Others include childhood pregnancies, child labour, and retrogressive cultural practices. It was also understood that awareness on the importance of education through mentoring, provision of adequate learning materials and facilities, and school feeding programs would greatly improve on the retention of the girl child in school.

In order to counter the above, it was recommended that among others, practices that encourage early pregnancies be condemned while the economic factors which bring about poverty be addressed through economic empowerment of the community. Other measures include the elimination of cultural practices which are retrogressive and the communal addressing of the issues of early pregnancies, school dropout and the resultant poor performance in school. Further research should be conducted to establish a working framework of all stakeholders to address girls' school dropout and poor performance as well as on how to eliminate retrogressive cultures that affect girls' education countrywide.

While a substantial body of work on girls' education in sub-Saharan Africa has focused on exploring the problems that keep girls from accessing education, there has been very little attention in the literature on the ways that families and /or communities support girls' education. However, the few studies that have focused on this issue seem to indicate that communities can play a critical role in girls' schooling. As the above study by Komora (2013) recommends that

it's important to address cultural barriers but fails to explain how that can be achieved. That is why in this study we are motivated to try and close the knowledge gap by researching into how the communities are dealing with issues relating to culture in the effort to retain girls in school.

Another study by Kobani (2014) which investigated the impact of Girl-Child Education on Community Development with focus on Ika Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. It found out among other things that Girl-Child Education helps in Community Development and the factors militating against girl-child education were culture and poverty level of the people. And based on the findings, the following recommendations were made; the society should stop the discrimination of the girl-child in the provision of education, also that government should make policy statements that will make the education of the girl child legal and compulsory.

The specific objectives of the study were to identify the role of Girl-Child Education in Community Development, to determine the factors impeding against girl-child education in the aforementioned area and to examine how social, economic and political development affects Girl-Child Education in Ika Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The total population for the study was 39,500 and the sample size of three hundred and ninety-five (395) persons from the selected communities i.e. Ikot Inyang Udo, Ikot Akata, Urwa Inyang, Ikot Oyo and Ikot Okon were drawn. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and data was analysed using the chi-square (X^2) statistic at 0.05 level of significance. This study will also try to establish whether Malawian communities feel girl child education has any impact on community level development as was the case in this study by Kobani (2014) in Nigeria.

2.2 THEORETICAL LITERATURE

2.2.1 SOCIALIST FEMINIST THEORY

This research has used the social feminist theory lens to understand the role community participation is playing in the promotion of girl child education. The term, socialist feminism, most often represents theories and practices initiated in the mid-1970s, which work to analyse male domination and socioeconomic oppression and exploitation as inter-related institutions and cultures. This analysis counters prior arguments, including Marxist perspectives, suggesting that once class (or racial or global economic) disparities could be levelled, sex-based discrimination would end. Simultaneously, a socialist critique of women's marginalization in capitalist economic structures into liberal feminist arguments suggesting that changing laws and attitudes, but not necessarily economic structures, would create equality for women. For socialist feminists, analysis that confronts only male domination or economic and material injustice is insufficient in explaining or altering women's marginalized status.

Socialist feminists argue that liberation can only be achieved by working to end both the economic and cultural sources of women's oppression. Socialist feminism is a two-pronged theory that broadens Marxist feminism's argument for the role of capitalism in the oppression of women and radical feminism's theory of the role of gender and the patriarchy. Socialist feminists reject radical feminism's main claim that patriarchy is the only or primary source of oppression of women. Rather, socialist feminists assert that women are unable to be free due to their financial dependence on males. Women are subjects to the male rulers in capitalism due to an uneven balance in wealth. They see economic dependence as the driving force of women's subjugation to men. Further, socialist feminists see women's liberation as a necessary part of

larger quest for social, economic and political justice. Socialist feminists attempted to integrate the fight for women's liberation with the struggle against other oppressive systems based on race, class or economic status (Ramazanoglu, 2002: Hewitt, 2010: Better, 2006).

Tong (2009) mentions: "The Marxist feminists who decided that women's sex class as well as economic class plays a role in women's oppression began to refer to themselves as socialist feminists" (p.111). In fact, these socialist feminists hold the belief that to have a more comprehensive understanding of women's oppression, both patriarchy and capitalism need to be equally considered. On that ground, socialist feminists find it vital to confront at the same time both the capitalist mode of production and men's sexism. They believe that neither of these analytic categories taken alone can aptly liberate women. Consequently, socialist feminist thought incorporates the patriarchal system and capitalism in its analysis; that is, the analytic categories of radical feminists and Marxist feminists. Tong (2009) argues, however, that this does not mean there is a unitary theory among socialist feminists. Indeed, while some scholars like Mitchell focus on the extent to which women are oppressed by two systems (capitalism and patriarchy) taken separately, other scholars such as Hartmann (1979) insist on the extent to which these two systems, although different, reinforce each other as she notes: that with respect to capitalism and patriarchy, the adaptation, or mutual accommodation, took the form of the development of the family wage in the early twentieth century which cemented the partnership between patriarchy and capital. It is the cornerstone of the present sexual division of labour- in which women are primarily responsible for housework and men primarily for wage, the family, supported by the family wage, allows the control of women's labour by men both within and outside the home. The sexual division of labour reappears in the labour market, where women

work at women's jobs, often the very jobs they used to do only at home food preparation and service, cleaning of all kind, caring for people, and so on. As these jobs are low-status and low-paying patriarchal relations remain intact, though their material base shifts somewhat from the family to the wage differential. (pp. 18-19).

In the light of these thoughts, it seems to me that these two standpoints in socialist feminist theory have provided valuable insights into the ways women's oppression is maintained by patriarchal and capitalist practices. In contrast to liberal, radical, and Marxist feminist thoughts; the two perspectives of socialist feminist thought have the advantage of providing a more comprehensive picture of reality by incorporating both patriarchal ideology and class even though some people may argue that sometimes reality might be more complex than that. I think, however, that using these two perspectives of socialist feminist thought in my study allowed me to better understand the ways in which girls' education, in the Malawian context, may be improved or adversely affected by community involvement. On one hand, it allowed me to focus on the extent to which patriarchy but also class affect girls' education. On the other hand, the fact of keeping in mind that these analytical categories are mutually reinforcing helped me gain a deeper understanding about how the participation of girls in education may be influenced.

2.2.2 JULES PRETTY'S TYPOLOGY OF PARTICIPATION

This study made use of Jules Pretty's (1995) typology of participation which speaks more to the user of participatory approaches in comparison to Arnstein's ladder of participation which looks at participation from the perspective of those on the receiving end. Pretty's typology assisted me to figure out the various forms of participation that are at play in the communities and which

ones are really contributing to the promotion of girl child education. Most importantly reasons why community members chose particular forms of participation.

Table 1: Pretty's typology of participation

<u>Type</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>
Manipulative participation	Participation is simply a pretence, with 'people's' representatives on official boards, but who are un-elected and have no power.
Passive participation	People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. It involves unilateral announcements by an administration or project management without any listening to people's responses. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals.
Participation by consultation	People participate by being consulted or by answering questions. External agents define problems and information-gathering processes, and so control analysis. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision-making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.
Participation for material incentives	People participate by contributing resources, for example, labour, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. Farmers may provide the fields and labour, but are involved in neither experimentation nor the process of learning. It is very common to see this 'called' participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging technologies or practices when the incentives end.

Functional participation

Participation seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project. Such involvement may be interactive and involve shared decision-making, but tends to arise only after major decisions have already been made by external agents. At worst, local people may still only be co-opted to serve external goals.

Interactive participation

People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local institutions. Participation is seen as a right, not just the means to achieve project goals. The process involves interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systemic and structured learning processes. As groups take control over local decisions and determine how available resources are used, so they have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.

Self-Mobilisation

People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Self-mobilization can spread if government and NGOs provide an enabling framework of support. Such self-initiated mobilization may or may not challenge existing distributions of wealth and power.

Adapted from Jules Pretty (1995).

Jules Pretty's (1995) typology of participation speaks more to the user of participatory approaches. His typology is equally normative: going from 'bad' forms of participation – the inclusion of token representatives with no real power, which he characterizes as manipulative participation, and passive participation subsequent to decisions that have already been taken – to 'better' forms, such as participation by consultation and for material incentives. 'Functional participation' captures the form of participation that is most often associated with efficiency arguments: people participate to meet project objectives more effectively and to reduce costs, after the main decisions have been made by external agents. This is perhaps the most frequently found type of participation in development (Rudqvist and Woodford-Berger, 1996). Pretty's last two categories evoke some of the professed goals of those who promote and use participatory approaches in community development. 'Interactive participation' is described as a 'learning process' through which local groups take control over decisions, thereby gaining a stake in maintaining structures and resources. The last category is of 'self-mobilisation', where people take the initiative independently of external organizations, developing contacts for resources and technical assistance, but retaining control over these resources. Self-mobilization is a spectrum defined by a shift from control by authorities to control by the people or citizens. Self-initiated mobilisation may or may not challenge existing distributions of wealth and power'. Indeed, local self-mobilization may be actively promoted by the state and international agencies as part of efficiency goals that are entirely consistent with a neoliberal approach to development. Pretty's typology makes it clear that the motivations of those who adopt and practise participatory approaches is an important factor in shaping interventions.

CONCLUSION

The review of literature has shown that it is important to establish and continuously attempt to develop partnerships between schools, parents, and communities. And other studies even further to recommend policies by government that work on fulfilling the same. But not much research has been done to establish the role these communities (individuals or/and collective) are already doing in aiding the education of girls. Given the above background, this study uses the Social feminist theory and Jules Pretty's typology of participation to establish the various roles that the communities are playing in promoting education of the girl child. The social feminist theory will help in better understanding the hindrances that girls face in their communities that require community interventions. On the framework derived from Pretty's hierarchy of participation will be theory-neutral in that it is not based on a normative judgement about participation, or on any particular assumed causal relationship. Instead, it provides a convenient summary and checklist for representing a very wide range of forms of participation, and their drivers as well as effects.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research design, research setting, the sampling procedure, the instruments used for data collection, how the data collected was analyzed, and the ethical considerations.

3.1 STUDY SETTING

The study was conducted from 1st to 15th November 2019. It mainly focused on two villages; one in Zomba district under Traditional Authority Chikowi. This area was chosen because it has close to zero number of girls out of school so it made a perfect study area to find out the reasons that have contributed to the statistics.

The second village was under T/A Ngokwe in Machinga where there are high girl dropout rates despite having partners such as Campaign for Female Education (Camfed) in the district that is

promoting girl's education through provision of bursaries and other educational entitlements to girls from poor households (Chisiano,2018).

3.2 STUDY POPULATION

The study comprised of men and women who have girl children, girls themselves (in school or drop-outs), mother groups, and village development committees (VDCs). These groups of people were drawn out because the study was interested in the holistic understanding of their perceptions, reasons and experiences towards girl child education.

3.3 STUDY DESIGN

A qualitative research design was adopted for this study because it provided primary evidence as portrayed in the literature reviewed which enabled the researcher to clearly understand the situation on the ground in regards to the perceptions, challenges, and levels of participation of various duty bearers in the communities as well as the education sector as a whole.

Secondly, the study was concerned about finding a variety of answers which made quantitative methods unsuitable because they focus more on uniformity. Qualitative research is concerned with aspects of reality that cannot be quantified, focusing on the understanding and explanation of the dynamics of social relations. Maxwell (2013) advocates that qualitative research works with the universe of meanings, motives, aspirations, beliefs, values and attitudes, which corresponds to a deeper space of relationships, processes and phenomena that cannot be reduced to the operationalization of variables. Lastly, the main question to this research is "how" community participation has promoted girl child education and this could only be answered with qualitative data not with numbers from quantitative research.

3.4 SAMPLING

The goal of sampling in this qualitative study was not to construct a sample that mirrors major demographic features of the target population, but rather to identify key informants with unique experiences and personal knowledge of the phenomenon in question who provide useful descriptions, insights and explanations of events relevant to the research questions.

The study used purposive sampling to identify the key informants and the participants needed in the semi-structured interviews. Lastly, Snowball sampling was used to identify the participants of the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).

3.4.1 Purposive sampling

This was used to identify the key informants of the study. From the very beginning the study already had pre-determined key participants from other studies reviewed. The key informants of the study included chiefs, head teachers, PEA and representative of an NGO. When interviewers reached a community they first approached the chief and conducted an interview and then he/she would direct the interviewer to the Headmaster of the school in the community where further interview was conducted. The interviews with PEA and representative of an NGO were conducted after booking appointment.

Purposive sampling was also used to identify the participants of semi-structured interviews. Interviewers purposely visited households with girls below the age of 18 years and conducted interviews with the parent present using the semi-structured interview guide for the parents and also conducted an interview with the girl child when present using the guide for pupils. Not all the households in a particular village were interviewed at some points, some were skipped to

ensure coverage and at times interviewers were referred to specific households which had a special case. For instance, in T/A Chikowi interviewers were referred to a household where a girl got pregnant and after child birth she was re-enrolled back in school.

3.4.2 Snowball sampling

This was used to identify the participants of FGDs as it's a chain referral so once one member was identified they led to the rest. In the community the chief gave names of one member of the Village Development Committee (VDC) and Youth Group and through the members given the rest of the members were identified and scheduled FGDs. The same happened to primary school through the headmaster a member of the Mother group was identified at the school and with that member further identified the rest of the members of the Mother group and scheduled an FGD with them.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Three methods of data collection were utilised, namely;

Semi structured in-depth interviews, 40 respondents; 20 per district (parents, pupils,)

Key informant interviews, 10 respondents, 5 per district (DEM, Head teachers, chiefs)

Focus group discussions thus triangulation, 6 FGDs; with 8-10 participants, 3 FGDs per district (Mother groups, Youth Groups and Village Development Committees (VDCs))

Triangulation is crucial to enable the researcher to validate data collected. All the interviews were conducted in Chichewa. A voice recorder supplemented by a writing pad to take notes on were used to collect the data.

3.5.1 Semi structured in-depth interviews

Semi structured interviews were conducted with the parents and students themselves of girls who are in school to find out how they are contributing/participating in ensuring that their girls remain in school and for those that dropped-out the reasons why this was so. When we got to a household we explained our reasons for visiting and then if they accepted we conducted the interviews using the guide. If the household had a girl child present we sort permission from her guardian as well to interview the child and if permission was granted, we conducted interviews with the child using the guide meant for the pupils. If during the interview another household was brought into the picture, we made that household our next stop. This method was preferred to allow respondents to answer adequately in all the details to produce a variety of answers. Secondly, a semi structured interview created an informal atmosphere which encouraged the respondents to be open and honest. A total of 40 semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 men, 24 women and 20 girls.

3.5.2 Key informant interviews

This method was found appropriate because it provided an opportunity to collect information from wide range of people who had first-hand knowledge about community participation and the promotion of girl child education. This data collection method was conducted with the PEA, Head teachers, NGO representative and Chiefs. Key informant interview guides were used to collect data from the participants. When we got to a particular community we first visited the chief to whom we explained the aim of our visit and sought permission to conduct the study in his community and also to have an interview with him/her at that time or he would sometimes give us another date and time. In the case of the Headmaster's, when we got to a school we

spoke to the headmaster about our research and he had accepted to partake in the study, we also asked permission to interview at least two teachers from the school. The headmaster would assign us teachers to interview. And the primary school Headmaster provided contact information of the PEA, whom we contacted to have an interview at their school. Lastly, the NGO representative interviewed were representatives of CRECCOM and CAMFED because they were the ones we were most knowledgeable of in terms of their works in Zomba and Machinga districts in relation to girl child education. At CRECCOM we were able to interview the communications manager at their office in Zomba whilst at CAMFED an interview guide was sent through email.

3.5.3 Focus groups discussions interviews (FGDs)

The third method of data collection of focus group discussion was used with youth groups, Mother Groups, and Village Development Committees (VDCs). These are groups of people in the communities who voluntarily work on various developmental issues and part of it being education. FGDs with Mother Groups were held at primary schools on the days they had their weekly meetings which in most cases was on Saturday except for one school where they had their meetings on Wednesday. The mother groups solely work towards ensuring that girls are retained in school that is why they were a vital group of people to participate in this research. Focus Group Discussions with VDCs and Youth Groups were conducted at the village square and they were arranged by the Chiefs and sometimes the members of the groups themselves. Overall, the FGDs provided an opportunity to explore the depth and nuances of opinions and understandings related to participation as well as the activities and procedures the groups had in place to promote girl child education. In total, 2 FGDs were conducted with each one of the

above mentioned groups and were conducted with 8-10 people in each community. The FDGs focused on the works of the various groups in relation to education. The researcher asked participants questions using the FDG guide and took notes and audio recordings.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Data was analyzed manually according to emerging themes also known as thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as; “a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within data.” This was done by taking each category of participants and examining each response to each question. All the responses that expressed the same ideas were put together and themes were derived from these responses. The themes from the various categories were then compared with those from other categories to determine similarities and differences. This was possible because some questions, though expressed differently to suit the categories, sought the same information.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Before the field work commenced, permission was sought from the Traditional Authority (T/A) and village headman of every community. At the schools, the headmaster was approached first in order to make arrangements for the interviews with Teachers and Focus Group Discussions with mother groups. To ensure anonymity the names were not included in this report. Objectives of the study were made clear to all participants. Participants were informed that participation was completely voluntary and that failure to participate would not lead to any consequences. Consent was sought from the focus group participants on the use of a recording device they were made aware that the recordings will strictly be used for the purposes of this study.

CONCLUSION

This qualitative study was conducted in Machinga and Zomba districts. The participants were identified using purposive and snowball sampling methods. Focus Group Discussions were used to collect data from Mother Groups, Village Development Committees and Youth Groups. Key Informant Interviews were used to collect data from Chiefs, Headmasters, PEAs and representative of an NGO. Whilst Semi-Structured interviews were used to collect data from Men, Women and Girls in the communities. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected. In terms of ethical considerations, everyone who took part in this study had given consent and for all the girls below the age of 18 permission was sought from their parents to participate in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents research findings and discussion of the findings. The chapter is divided into six sections namely: Demographic information, Levels of community participation, Methods of enforcing and promoting girl child education through community participation, Challenges of promoting girl child education through community participation and Effectiveness of community participation in the promotion of girl child education.

4.1 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

The study had 71 participants (24 men and 47 women) from the two districts of Zomba and Machinga. Table 1 provides summary of the information of the total number of participants by method of data collection disaggregated by Gender.

Table 4.1.1: Total number of participants disaggregated by gender

Gender	IDIs with parents	IDIs with girls in school	Key Informant Interviews	Focus Group Discussions	Total
Female	10	8	2	27	47
Male	2		4	18	24
Total	12	8	6	45	71

Table 4.1.2: Composition of Community Groups

TA	Mother Groups	Youth Clubs	VDCs	
Chikowi	8	8	7	
Ngokwe	8	6	8	Total
Female	16	6	7	29
Male	0	8	8	16

4.2 LEVELS OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The first objective was to find out if there has been participation from the various community members in the promotion of girl child education. This was done by comparing the levels of participation by Jules Pretty with the type of participation on the ground. From the analysis the sort of community participation that was predominant was both individual and/or collective. Using pretty's typology of participation, the study devised the table below as the framework to identify firstly who participates in the promotion of girl child education. This helped to identify, for instance, the extent to which gender, age, economic or social factors influenced the profile of participation (whether this is individual or collective).

Individuals who are able to read and write or those with connections to local elites (e.g. relatives of chiefs, Members of Parliament (MPs), etc.) were more likely to participate in programmes. On who participates also depended on the category of participation or the forms it take. Men were more present in formal local structures and committees and women were involved in volunteering and providing support. Furthermore, the better off participated in the formalised

local structures but did not participate in collective community action (such as the moulding of bricks) which seemed to be the prerogative of the poorer members.

Secondly, the framework looks at the motives for participation. This included the expectations of direct or indirect benefits, or motives that are more altruistic, or are based on commitment to particular values or ideals. Other participants were driven by material benefits (e.g. authority, training, allowances, etc.) or the prospect of future jobs. But they also engaged out of goodwill, religious conviction or moral belief. Whilst others participated out of obligation towards, and expectation of, the community and its local leaders.

The framework also looked at the extent to which the preconditions for each form of participation to be effective in exerting influence or changing outcomes were in place. This included the availability of accurate information, and a decision-making process that is not dominated by other interests to such an extent that local participation cannot exert any influence. The preconditions for effective participation varied across categories and forms of participation. Participation was effective and meaningful when adequate information and sufficient resources were available.

Table 4.2.1: Community Participation in the promotion of girl child education framework

PRECONDITION	RESULT
Resources from NGOs	<p>Handouts from NGOs and Government</p> <p>Some allocation of resources to children who are in need</p>

RESULTS	FORM OF PARTICIPATION	PARTICIPANTS	MOTIVES
Achievement of project goals.	Manipulative participation	Women	Most in their responses claimed to be members of various developmental groups in their communities such as Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Village Development Committees (VDCs) but in essence they were placed there just for the realisation of the gender equality requirement. This was seen in their ignorance of the roles these groups play, and most importantly the positions the women held in them; most women were either secretaries or just a member with all the other significant positions being held by men.
	passive participation	Men Women	From the analysis of the data collected this form of participation was a common trait in most of the communities where the People were told what has been decided or has already happened. It involved unilateral announcements by an NGO/Government through the village chief without any listening to People's responses. For instance in Mulosowa village it was announced that families with orphans should submit the child's name to the chief because a certain NGO requires them. And most of the community members did not take it seriously until the few that submitted started receiving handouts in form of school fees and upkeep allowances. The respondent further explained that there is a lot of secrecy when there is a program which people will at the end get some sort of benefits, there is no to little disclosure of details. But when there is need for the people to help in some form they easily say so, this usually has to do with the community providing labour services.
	Eradication of various cultural beliefs and practices and as well as behavioural practices that impede education especially girl child education.		
	Participation for material incentives	Men Women	Most of the respondents in the communities disclosed that they mostly partake in various interventions because they usually get some rewards afterwards. One woman said they willingly go and cook porridge at the primary school because they take some of the Likuni flour to prepare at their homes. One man said he is a member of the VDC because they usually get k1000 or k2000 lunch allowances whenever they have meetings with various NGOs who come to their communities not necessarily because he understands the job description of the VDC.

FORM OF PARTICIPATION	PARTICIPANT	MOTIVES	PRECONDITIONS
Functional Participation	Men Women	This is also came out as a common form of participation were community groups helped NGOs or the government in executing their predetermined goals or as a way of reducing costs. This is what most of the Mother groups and Village Development committees are for. They receive directives on what to do and they do as they are told. For instance Mother group was told to identify girls that have dropped out of school and find out the reasons why for a particular NGO and help re-enrol them back to school. This was a predetermined objective for the NGO and very cost effective as well. The VDC in Mulosowa village were asked to help with bricks and sand as well as water for a school block by a certain NGO.	Resources by NGOs and government
Self-mobilisation	Men Women	Most of the villages we have been to have devised various means of self-help to develop their communities. A good example of this sort of participation are the village by-laws. This is where communities develop their own rules and regulations to help address various community problems. These are usually set up by the local authorities and the law breakers are also punished by the same. Examples of village by-laws include parents are not allowed to marry off their female children before the age of 18 years. All girls who get pregnant before the age of 18 should be sent back to school after they give birth.	Presence of local authorities and groupings.

Generally, community members that participated in manipulative Participation were mostly women who had little education background and their ages were around 30-50 years. In terms of economic status most of them were housewives and a few doing small businesses like one was

selling tomatoes by the road side close to their home. Most of these women are just placed in the hierarchy of committees such as the VDCs as committee members to ensure Gender equality. But they don't really participate in the decision-making processes of these groups.

"I am a member of the CBO in our village but I just attend the meetings and get the allowances an NGO comes and requests for our presence but I don't really know much about their roles and maneuvers in this village neither do I speak during the meetings". (Woman aged 32, IDIs, Zomba.)

The same sentiments were also presented by another woman aged 40 who said:

"I am a member of the Village Development committee but I am not allowed to give my views towards topics under discussion whilst some men who are well known in the community are asked specifically to give their opinions regarding some issues. This makes me feel like I'm just a stogie in the group, like I am there for beautification or something."

In terms of passive participation there is no particular age, education or economic status that the participants of it can be labeled by because their participation is usually in form of directive from a local authority or a government official who are sometimes in collaboration with an NGO. In most cases it has to do with the communities being told to contribute labour whilst the NGO or government will provide the other resources for the project. Most of the teachers also asserted that the community contributes to the development activities at the schools. The community moulded bricks, provided sand and water for construction, and provided labour in the actual construction of school blocks. Students also agreed that their parents contributed to the school

activities by doing what the PTAs (Parents and Teachers Associations) and the school committees asked them to do for the school. For instance, one student in TA Ngokwe proudly said;

“My parents are part of this school because they helped to build that school block by bringing in sand and water. They also tell me to take care of this building because they suffered when erecting it”.

Another participant stated that her parents agreed with other parents and teachers during VDC meetings to build toilets for the school and she had seen them many times going to school to work on that project.

In functional participation most of the participants knew how to read and write and in most cases these were people who had some sort of business in the community or were working either as teachers or in the estates. This is because these were mostly already members of community groups in the community and in their functional participation they were working together with NGOs or government officials to fulfill a certain objective of theirs.

“We have worked with various NGOs in identifying girls in our community who are orphans or come from very poor backgrounds and are in desperate need of financial assistance. On many occasions we have also worked with the Chief to identify households that are in need of social cash transfers and in these cases we also focus on the poorer families.” (FGDs with VDC, Mwawa GVH, Machinga).

Participation for material incentives was a common form of participation in the communities. When most of the participants were asked their reasons for their participation in various activities

in their communities they indicated the material benefits they got as a result of the services they rendered. This is prevalent from the responses below from various IDIs:

“I am in the school committee that cooks Likuni Phala for the children in the school. I partake in it because we get to have the left over porridge for our families. Life is hard here; we can’t afford to eat three times a day not to talk of breakfast so that is an opportunity for me.”

“I am a member of our village’s CBO but I’m really there for the allowances from the seminars we have with NGOs otherwise I don’t really understand our role in this village.”

“I and my husband are part of the group of people that sweep and remove garbage from the market place every Saturday morning. Because we get paid k2000each every two weeks and that’s a lot for us it helps us run our household.”

Self-Mobilization was common in most of the communities we have been to. Most of the communities’ feel the government does not do much in addressing their developmental issues either to do with health, education or transportation so they resorted to finding their own means of addressing their issues. For instance in TA Chikowi they have a committee that collects contributions of k100 from people getting water from boreholes per month so that when there is a problem they will be able to pay for repairs on their own. Parents and Teachers Association in primary schools collect contributions from parents who have children in the schools when there are issues that they can be able to address. For instance the PTA at Chalomwe Primary school has before collected contributions of K50 from each student’s parents to repair a borehole at the

school after they had made reports to relevant authorities and there was no action taking place in response to the problem. They had also made contributions towards building a girl's toilet, since there was one toilet at the school after the other one had fallen down due to heavy rains. The Mother Group at the school had received complaints from parents that girls were being absent from school because they were feeling uncomfortable with the suggestion of going to the same toilet with the boys at the school.

The communities also self-mobilize to provide security in their areas especially during growing seasons when there is a lot of bushes and maize (Ngolowela) and girls are afraid of going to school on their own early in the morning and knocking off in the afternoon. According to one of the teachers the parents clear the footpaths that lead to the schools and the houses that are along the way are asked to be more alert. In addition, the teacher indicated that if people saw strangers around the school, they reported either to the headmaster or the village headman. In so doing, they acted as security people to protect the school property as well.

4.2.1 Perceptions on community participation.

I. How the community understands “community participation”

All the groups were asked several questions on what community participation means to them and how they see their own participation. This section shows returning elements in the discussions on what community participation means to the participants. Often, community participation is literally called the key to development by the participants. To them it means activities on community level, but also taking part in the decision making process. To the participants it also means showing interest in the development of the community.

“kutengapo mbali pazochitika zammudzi”

“kutengapo gawo kwa anthu pa chitukuko cha m’mudzi ”

“Kutengapo gawo kwa anthu ammudzi popanga chiganizo”

II. On the question what would community participation in the promotion of girl child entail? There were various responses:

a. Involvement through the mere use of a service (such as enrolling a girl child in school)

“Ndikuona ngati makolo pongomuyambisa mwana wamkazi sukulu amakhala agwira ntchito yaikulu yolimbikisa maphunziro aatsikana”. (FGDs with mother groups in T/A Chikowi, Zomba).

b. Involvement through contribution (or extraction) of money, materials and labours

“Chaka chatha makolo tinapemphedwa kuumba njerwa (azibambo), kutunga madzi (azimayi) komanso kututa mchenga zomwe zinagwilisidwa ntchito pomangira ma zimbuza za atsikana chifukwa panali madandaulo oti atsikana akujomba kusukulu chifukwa chopanda zimbuza zabwino.” (Man aged 32, IDIs, Mlosowa Village, T/A Mwambo, Zomba.)

“Azimayi tinapephedwa kupeleka mapoto ndi mithiko komanso kumazipeleka pomazaphikila ana phala ku sukulu”. (41yr old woman, IDIs, T/A Machinga).

c. Involvement through ‘attendance’ (e. g. At parent meeting at schools), implying passive acceptance of decisions made by others

“Ndimategapo gawo pamaphunziro amwana wanga popita tikaitanidwa ku mtsokhano wamakolo ku sukulu” (Man aged 43, IDIs, T/A Machinga)

“Amuna anga alimu PTA yaku sukulu yamudzi muno ndiye amathandiza muzochitika zosiyani siyana kumeneko” (woman aged 27, IDIs, T/A Chikowi)

d. Participation in the delivery of a service, often as a partner with other actors

“ine ndimembala wa VDC mudzi muno ndiye timagwila ntchito ndimabungwe osiyasiyana monga CADECOM pothandiza atsikana osowa ndizithu monga makope, nsapato, zikwama, uniform ndi zina kuti apitilize sukulu yawo” (Man aged 30, IDIs T/A Chikowi)

e. Participation as implementers of delegated powers

“The community members in some areas felt they are partly owners of the schools in their communities and because of decentralisation they felt that they have the power to resolve problems within their reach that may arise at the schools in their areas. For instance parents built two toilets on their own at Chikala Primary School after the Mother Group at the school identified the problem as one of the reasons why most girls are being absent from school.” (Chairman of Khungwa VDC, Machinga)

Many of the interviewees said that the community's contribution to the promotion of girl child education was never in cash because most of the people in the rural area were poor.

4.3 METHODS OF ENFORCING AND PROMOTING GIRL CHILD EDUCATION THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION.

4.3.1 Mother Groups

Mother Groups are based at some primary schools. Out of the six primary schools visited four had mother groups and most of them had previously been established by an NGO and were

continuing even though the various projects they were set for ended because according to them they had experienced the benefits of the mother groups. One of the Mother Groups established by a Parents Teachers Association with the aim of resolving challenges that girls were facing at the school such as lack of sanitary products. According to the PTA the girls would be open to women on the issues they have other than to a group of men and women.

Roles of Mother Groups

1. Their main aim is to ensure girls remain in school and complete their education. This is done though:
2. They also encourage girls that have dropped out of school due to early marriages or pregnancy return to school.

In one of the FGDs with parents in Zomba, Mulosowa Village, we had the privilege of being narrated to the case of Falesi Gonyole who was a very intelligent girl but got pregnant in standard 8 by a man who was at Domasi Teachers College. After she got pregnant the parents took her and left her at the house of the man that got her pregnant. After the mother group of the school Falesi was attending got hold of the news and teachers had approached them on the same because she was a bright student the mother group went and spoke with the in-laws of Falesi. After she had given birth, the Mother Group was able to convince the parent's in-law to send her back to school. And at the time of this interview we could not speak to Falesi because she was at a secondary boarding school but we were able see her baby girl who is now 3 years old whom Falesi's mother in-law is taking care of.

3. Community awareness campaigns on the importance of education with the aim of challenging negative attitudes and perceptions, especially those towards the education of girls.

Maria, secretary of Khungwe Mother Group, explained that whenever there is a village meeting at the village square or any other gatherings where the whole community is in attendance they take advantage of the scenarios to advocate to the community members of the importance of educating their girl children.

“We also enhance girls’ emotional readiness to engage in learning by creating conditions for them to be in contact with academically successful female role models. We believe it is important to increase the visibility of female figures so that our girls have role models. So at the end of each school year we invite career women as guest speakers. And sometimes even when NGOs are conducting seminars we encourage them to bring female experts to come and address or educate on various issues such as a lawyer talking about human rights, a medical doctor discussing health issues, etc.

4. Income-generating activities, such as maintaining school gardens and selling produce, in order to provide financial support to vulnerable girls to cover the costs of uniform, learning materials and items to meet basic needs such as food and soap.

We learned from Mwawa Mother Group in Machinga that at times Mother Groups have income generating activities so that they are able to help some of children who are really poorer with some basic needs. In this mother group for instance they have a vegetable garden which they founded after the mother group members made contributions and they asked for a piece of land

on the school premises. Thought their sells of vegetables such as Chinese, Rape, Mustardi and Tomatoes they are able to buy soap, exercise books and at two occasions they bought school uniforms for children who cannot afford and they further explained that most of these children are orphans who live with their grandparents and in other cases it's just children looking after each other.

5. In meetings Mother Groups explore factors which deter girls and boys from school and devise possible strategies to overcome them.
6. In school, Mother Groups meet with pupils to discuss the importance of education and offer guidance and counselling on various aspects, such as expected behaviour, appropriate dressing, hygiene and sanitation, HIV/AIDS and child rights.

"In February, 2019, a certain NGO came and conducted a seminar with us and the girls on issues of reproductive Health and at the end of the seminar they gave the girls reusable sanitary pads which are made out of ordinary cotton cloth. And they also left us with some which we give to girls who start their menstruation whilst in school. We felt that this was a great effort because some girls fail to attend school because they cannot afford sanitary pads or cotton." (FGDs, Khungwa village, Machinga).

"We also refer girls to community based distribution agents in an event the girl wants family planning services; we don't disclose it to their parents because this is the choice the girl has made." (FGDs, TA Chikowi, Zomba).

7. In the community, Mother Groups identify girls and boys who have dropped out of school and work with them and their families to encourage them to return to education. They also encourage parents to become more involved in their child's schooling by looking through exercise books and asking about school activities each day.

In one of the Focus Group Discussions we had with Chalomwe Mother Group, the Chairlady explained to us how they saved a young girl called Theresa from an early marriage.

Theresa is a girl aged 16 years to return to school who was at that time in standard six. We had visited her home and talked with her parents on the porch outside her family home in a small village near Chalomwe Primary School. It's further off road, accessible by foot or bicycle. Last year, Theresa was caught by her father having sex with her boyfriend. He was very angry and decided that she should leave school and get married. Theresa's boyfriend's parents disagreed and brought the case to the Mother Group. After consulting with the headmaster and the chief, The Chairlady went to see Theresa's parents and persuaded them to send her back to school.

"I talked to them nicely and asked them to look at other families in the village whose children had finished school," the Chairlady explained. "I said you should have aspirations for your child. I told them about role models who have gone to University and become teachers or nurses. The village headman also talked to Theresa's father man to man."

As well as talking to the parents, The Chairlady also spoke to Theresa on her own.

“I made sure she wasn’t pregnant and counselled her on the dangers of child marriage. I promised her a new school uniform and free school meals. And I told her the headmaster was open to receive her back at school. I am very proud of this case that it worked out so well.”

Theresa is shy at home in front of her mother, but opens up once she is back at school. “I would have been very sad to have dropped out just because of that boy,” she said. “My favourite subject is Social Studies. I would like to be a Teacher. I like school because it opens up your mind. We learn about other countries that I could never visit myself.”

4.3.2 Village Development Committees (VDCs)

Village Development Committees are formed from various members of the village groups such as Youth Groups, Village Committees, Mother groups, Child protection committees just to mention few. This is because a Village Development Committee is not formed out of one village rather it comes out of a number of villages usually it’s under a Group Village Headman as it is portrayed in the diagram below.

The elected representatives from a group of villages further elect themselves to form the hierarchy of the VDCs and most VDCs are presided over by GHWs. The composition of a VDC is as follows:

- one elected member from each village covered by the VDC;
- the councillor of the ward in which the VDC is located;

- four women representatives nominated by people within the VDC;
- an extension worker, nominated by the AEC and
- GVH as advisor (not chairperson)

Members of the VDC elect a chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, and treasurer. If a man is elected chairperson of the committee, the vice-chairperson is elected from among the women members. The GVH and the extension worker cannot be elected chairperson of the VDC. The GVH should advise the VDC and other committees within their area.

The Village Development Committee (VDC) being a village-level institution is responsible for ensuring that the community actively participates in the development process in order to promote grassroots development. From the IDI we had with a representative from CRECCOM he explained how he feels that VDCs were established to offer a forum for community engagement in the processes that concern their development with a view to promote a sense of responsibility, commitment and ownership by the community.

Roles of Village Development Committees

Overall the Village Development Committees (VDCs) are responsible for facilitating planning and development. This is attained through:

1. Identifying and prioritising community needs as well as preparing project proposals and submitting these to ADCs
2. Communicating on community-based issues with the ADC and DEC
3. Supervising, monitoring and evaluating implementation of development activities in the villages

“We look after project resources especially the government funded projects because mostly the workers end up selling materials hence they end coming up with less quality products. This applies to both building projects and the distribution of items; they tend to give us few things and their papers have other quantities”

(FGDs with Chikowi VDC)

4. Initiating community self-help activities

“We for instance organise patrols for security purposes in the village. We also work on damaged roads leading to our community because we know that easy transportation is key to development of our community. Just last week we built a grass thatched toilet for girls our primary school together with other community members.”(FGDs with Chibwana VDC).

5. Encouraging and bringing together community resources for people’s participation in self-help activities

“We made arrangements for community members to bring together resources to construct girls’ bathroom at our primary school. People in this village require pushing otherwise a lot of things will remain undone. Though we are poor but we need to make use of the little resources we have to ensure the wellbeing of our children.”(FGDs with Chikowi VDC in Zomba)

6. Reporting to the relevant Group Village Headmen (GVH) on the discussions and activities of the committee

In an interview, Chikowi umbrella VDC chairperson, Mr Mukaya said times had changed drastically and the VDC old structures, where mostly the elderly people were in charge were no more and the young people find themselves at the helm of this respectable committee. Mr Mukaya said over the years, since the introduction of Decentralization, VDC have been at the centre of village development and have played a critical role in each village in the country. He said roles and objectives of the committee in every ward could not be ignored, hence the need for its members to be recognised, adding that committees acted as the eye and ears of government and voiced out the needs of people together with the community social welfare.

Mr Mukaya emphasised the importance of working together to bring change to the communities they represented. "However difficult the journey to lead people can be, we are determined to do our best to carry out our duties and bring change so that we leave a legacy for the coming generations," he said. He said VDC was the entry point for official meetings as they were expected to give a report of what was happening in their communities, their achievements and the needs that must be attended to. Mr Mukaya further said they intended to work with other committees from other GVHs in the future so that they could all pull together and speak in one voice to bring developments to the district.

Nevertheless, he said they were faced with challenges, among them, the workload that increases simultaneously with the number of projects running in the communities. He further said had seen the influx of the youth, surpassing elders

whom the programme was initially meant for, hence the wish that their numbers be reduced because they had programmes tailor-made for the youth. He said another challenge was that some politicians felt threatened by VDC, especially when there were differences of ideas and opinions leading to conflicts between them. He added that their development ideas are usually crushed at meetings on district level and replaced with ideas of politicians. Further, he appealed to government to consider a living wage for committee members because they had a lot of work, especially because the committee had no other sources of income. Mr Mukaya also suggested that the umbrella VDC be provided with transport to carry out their duties as well as a public address system to help announce meetings.

4.3.3 Youth Clubs

In our study we came across two youth Groups, and these were in the communities that had a kind of trading center close to them. In most of the villages that were very remote they had no youth Clubs and had no idea what they were. Of the two Youth clubs came across we noticed that they had two chairpersons, one female and the other male. Apparently that's because they feel the issues to do with girls would be better handled by a fellow girl and vice versa.

The youth clubs main aim is to provide extracurricular activities to girls and boys in school and these were mostly those who were in secondary schools. So they have activities such as netball and football teams, chess, and draft and also have parties during the end of the year. Aside from the daily activities they also plan trips to visit other Youth Clubs and interact with them and also to sightseeing. They also have Wednesday sessions where they have spiritual talks from any

willing religion leader who comes and gives them spiritual guidance. They also have talks on HIV & AIDS, Family Planning, Human Rights, Food Groups and other relevant topics.

“We started having talks on health issues and food groups after we got a visit from a certain NGO which said they were working on a project called Moyo ndi Mpamba and they taught us a lot on family planning, sexual health, Nutrition and the importance of getting tested for HIV”. (FGDs with Ngokwe Youth club)

“We decided that we have two chairpersons because there are sometimes issues that a male chairperson can have problems addressing or making decisions on. For instance, we girls have our own talk on sanitation especially during menstruation and how that's important. We also have talks with other girls who have just started their periods, so that they know what that means and how they have to refrain from sexual interactions.”

(FDGs with Jenala Youth Club)

“After I started my periods, I stopped going to school because the sanitary materials my mother gave me required frequent changing, but after a friend of mine explained to me how she got reusable sanitary pads from a youth club and I decided to join and now I freely go to school.”

(FGDs with Nkapalira Youth Club)

“At first I thought the youth club is for wayward boy and girls but after my friend joined I learned from her that its n exciting place to be because they encourage each other on various issues both spiritual and educational wise.”

(FGDs with Nkapalira Youth Club)

“My daughter was just laying around after school and on the weekends and I started to notice that she was getting involved with boys who were not her age, I asked her to join the youth club after my friend told me about it because her daughter had also joined. Ever since then my daughter was pre-occupied and she is more focused on her education. She will be sitting for her MSCE exams next year.”

(IDIs, woman aged 46, TA Chikowi.)

“Youth clubs are important because they give students what to do after school hours. When one has nothing to do they end up getting involved in things that are not really beneficial and for young people in most cases it's having sexual interactions. And they also help each other with school work and have interactions with role models and other students from other schools.” (IDIs, patron for Jenala

Youth Club, TA Chikowi)

4.3.4 Village by-laws

The barriers to girl child education most especially child marriages has led to the formulation of village bylaws by traditional authorities to encourage girl education. Village bylaws are subsidiary laws that are enacted at local level by elected or executive bodies. In the villages of TA Chikowi we learned of various village By-laws that have been in place by the TA and VDCs

and are being enforced by the community itself. The village by-laws work by community members reporting the Chief of other community members going against the by-laws and the perpetrator is summoned by the Chief and a punishment is given to the said person and some cases the police are also involved. These are some of the by-laws we came across:

- A. No children below the age of 18 years should be found in the market selling things during school days.

"I didn't know that children in our village are not allowed to go and sell food stuffs during the week. I had sent my daughter to sell vegetables on a Wednesday at Jenala market, the next thing I know I was summoned by the Chief and I was told I have no right to stop my child from going to school and sell vegetables and I was told to bring two chickens and never repeat that again." IDIs in T/A Chikowi Zomba.

- B. Parents are not allowed to marry off their female children before the age of 18 years.
- C. All girls who get pregnant before the age of 18 should be sent back to school after they give birth

In our interview with a deputy school head at Chalomwe primary school she explained that;

"Some of the bylaws in the communities help because they are consistent with the policies in our ministry. And most the parents and community members do not know these policies but the bylaws help implement them. Currently, Malawi has a readmission policy that allows girls who become pregnant while in school to return after giving birth, but it requires the pregnant girl to withdraw from school for one academic year before applying for readmission. But we don't allow pregnant girls to continue with school. We ask her to go home and return after the baby is born. If

she attends pregnant, she can be ridiculed by other students and be a bad example.”

D. All men above the age of 18 who marry, have relationships with and engage in sexual activities with girls below the age of 18 should be reported to the police.

In our interview with a representative of Chief Chikowi, he explained how sometimes even the bylaws are not enough to convince parents to send their children back to school and they end up involving the police.

“Sometimes we come across parents who feel that we don’t have enough authority to tell them what to do with their own children. For instance, there was this man in one of the villages who got his 16year old daughter married off as a second wife because the girl apparently had a boyfriend and the father thought the boyfriend was a useless boy who cannot not even provide for his daughter so he thought that its better he got her married before she gets impregnated by the useless boy but to a man who was well to do and will also be able to help their family with financial problems. After he got the daughter married we heard of the situation and we asked the man to come and we had a talk with him, of how he was breaking the law and marrying off a girl who was under aged but instead he just paid the punishment but he never took back his daughter from the forced marriage. So we decided to report the matter to the police station. Later, after the intervention of the police the girl was taken back home and reenrolled in school. “

After discovering that sometimes the police are involved when people fail to adhere to bylaws in their communities we decided to have an IDI with the police officer in charge of child protection who has helped to rescue girls from child marriage and he had this to say:

"We have able parents who refuse to educate their children. Sometimes they say they don't have money to take the girl to school after she gets pregnant and that she should be married. But when we intervene and inform them that they are breaking the law by forcing her to marry, they send the girl to school. The law says that children should be protected from abuse. But when we intervene in cases of marriage and the parent refuses to allow the girl to go to school, there is no law to compel her because compulsory education is not in our laws. So the girl stays at home doing nothing and eventually gets married. In most cases because community members do not know the laws much they don't give as of problems when we intervene in cases of child marriages they easily end the arrangements and send the children back to school because they are afraid of going to jail. So far I haven't witnessed a case where a parent was reluctant to send their girl child back to school in this area but in the district where I was working before we had such cases. "

4.4 CHALLENGES IN THE PROMOTION OF GIRL CHILD EDUCATION THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Although the community as a whole are being involved in various ways to improve girls' education, the reality compelled us to acknowledge the numerous potential challenges that community participation is facing, the patriarchal culture of most communities, and the

socioeconomic situation of parents being the major impediments against the interests of girls. There are also problems such as lack of dedicated resources and funding constraints; Legitimacy, representativeness and credibility; Collaboration and strategic alliances on the part of the community Groups/organizations and intimidation from politicians.

1) Cultural factors

➤ Patriarchy: by its very nature, a patriarchal culture legitimates men's power over women and the unequal gender relations is maintained by the way society itself functions as presented by Westberg, (2010). On this regard, there are grounds to fear that community involvement might, in some ways, reinforce the prevailing gender inequalities.

In most of the households we have been to, it turned out that the male children of the household are educated at least to the level of an MSCE whilst the female children haven't even finished their primary school.

“banja lathu silopeza bwino kwenikweni ndiye tinaona zoti bola mwana
wamwamuna yekhayi aphinzire chifukwa akapeza ntvchito azizatithandiza pomwe
wa mkaziyu azizathandizana ndi amunake” *IDIs with parents in Machinga*

As one of the girls explained in an interview:

*“the boys are better off because they do piecework maganyu and get money to buy
clothes and soap whilst us girls are forced to stay back at home to help with
household chores.”*

And there were also cases where a family had children from previous marriages (in cases of the women) or before they got married and in these cases the men refused to take responsibility for the education of the children they said feeding them was a good enough gesture.

2) Poverty

The introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 1994 greatly reduced the cost of attending primary school. However, school fees still exist for secondary school and there are also some costs for both primary and secondary, such as the cost of transportation, uniforms and school supplies. Because of this, families may not enrol their children in school, enrol them late, or withdraw them prematurely from school. This was common in the majority of the parents' responses from the FDGs and even IDIs. They gave poverty as the main reason why girls drop out of school. The parents in most cases cannot afford school fees especially for those in secondary school and sometimes even school uniform. This was usually the case in female headed households who explained that they barely managed to feed themselves so education was just an extra mile they can't reach. From the interviews we had with pupils who dropped out or were absent from school they explained that they did so because of lack of clothes, food and soap. In the villages we noticed that a number of children especially the girls were embarrassed to go to school with torn clothes hence they opted to stay back at home.

Halima aged 17, said she dropped out of school when she was 14 and in standard eight. I had too much work to do at home. My mother always made me to miss school so that I can go to the farm and cook for my four siblings. We did not have money or food. I got a boyfriend who started taking care of me but then I became pregnant and left school. Halima married a few months after stopping school, but left the marriage after one and a half years as her husband was physically and emotionally abusing her.

In our interviews with the teachers there were also inconsistencies in school attendance due to poverty crisis in the homes. The teachers explained how some children looked tired and hungry therefore lacked concentration in class. These appalling conditions contributed to the lack of interest in children.

3) Lack of dedicated resources and funding constraints

The Village Development Committee's and Mothers Groups complained of lack of funding and resources to properly fulfill their intended tasks. Most of them explained that they sometimes get resources and funding from NGOs that come into their communities' and require their help for various development interventions they partake on. And they stressed that they never get any funding from the government they never get any funding at all. When its work to do with the government they are expected to have their own contributions.

"We came up with strategy that if an NGO wants to interact with us or need our help in their projects they should first of all meet our demands for something. For instance, Plan built us that room that we use and bought all the necessary furniture in it. Another NGO which I have forgotten its name gave us money to start up a business and we bought goats which we occasionally sell to help children in need or something that needs urgent attention t this school." (FGDs with Ngokwe Mother Group)

4) Legitimacy. Representativeness and credibility

Lack of legitimacy, representativeness and Credibility was identified as a challenge and was mostly raised by the Chiefs pertaining to the issue of village bylaws, where in some cases the

community members felt they were not legible to be telling them how to live their lives most importantly whether to marry off their daughters or not.

VDCs also expressed their concern on how they feel unrepresented in the meetings at the district level and their ideas are not given priority rather the government officials go on and implement projects they already had in mind instead of addressing projects that resolve their problems and needs.

5) Absence of Collaboration and strategic alliances

The VDCs also expressed concern over the lack of collaboration and strategic alliances. They said if there was collaboration among the VDCs and they presented a coordinated proposal to the ADCs they would have higher chances of getting heard. But they presented different things all of them focusing on their own communities rather than the larger good. That's why those in authority take advantage implement unnecessary projects they want.

“If we coordinate with the other VDCs from Mwawa and Dindi we would perhaps

*have a higher chances of getting our ideas across to the District Council to
implement our projects, but everyone is focused on their own problems instead of
working towards the greater good of our communities.” (FGDs with Chibwana*

VDC)

6) Intimidation from politicians

The political environment during meetings with political leaders and government officials tends to stimulate against effective performance of the committees as it is characterised by un-functional relationship between Councillors, MP, and Members of the DEC and also resistance

to decentralisation by central government bureaucracy. And this sometimes includes threats from politicians according to a member of Chibwana VDC.

7) Poor means of communication and information sharing between VDCs and ADCs

“Messages from the ADCs to us takes a while, mostly for us to get feedback on problems and other issues we present to them. I don’t know whether that is deliberate or not. But we have problems with our communication system.” (FGDs with Chikowi VDC).

8) Deliberate exclusion from significant meetings at the district level.

“Most times we are left out of important meetings where the actual decision making process of the projects to be implemented ate place, even those where they plan how to use the money from the government (budgeting)”. (FGDs with Chibwana VDC)

4.5 EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE PROMOTION OF GIRL CHILD EDUCATION

Another objective of the study was to find out if community participation has been effective in promoting girl child education in the study districts. Largely, community participation has been effective both at individual level and collectively despite the huddles mentioned previously.

- I. Community participation has been able to safeguard girls from early marriages through village bylaws.
- II. Village bylaws have also ensured that girls are not absent from school to help in selling their parents businesses, look after the sick or help with household chores.

- III. Issues that affect girls in school are being addressed through the existence of mother groups.
- IV. Girls who got pregnant are being re-enrolled back into school after child birth with the help of Mother Groups.
- V. Girls have a place to discuss issues that affect them personally and their education and find solutions pertaining them through Youth Clubs.
- VI. VDCs are able to organize self-help activities towards addressing the needs of girls in such as building toilets.
- VII. The results of the various forms of participation was a vital part of the framework. This looked at possibilities of empowerment, increased coverage of services delivered, better alignment with local needs and priorities, improvements in the quality and accountability for service provision, and broader ability to address complex challenges.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the study has fulfilled all the study objectives it set out to address. Firstly, the analysis has established the forms of participation prevalent in the communities when it comes to promotion of girl child education. These forms of participation include manipulative participation, passive participation, participation for material incentives and self-mobilization. Secondly, the study identified the methods of enforcing and promoting girl child education through community participation. These are Mother Groups, VDCs, and Youth Clubs as well as Village By-laws. The study then recognises the challenges in the promotion of girl child education through community participation such as lack of dedicated resources and funding constraints, intimidation from politicians, Poverty, and the absence of Collaboration and strategic alliances.

Lastly, the study established that Community participation has been able to safeguard girls from early marriages through village bylaws. Village bylaws have also ensured that girls are not absent from school to help in selling their parents businesses, look after the sick or help with household chores. Issues that affect girls in school are being addressed through the existence of mother groups. Girls who got pregnant are being re-enrolled back into school after child birth with the help of Mother Groups. Girls have a place to discuss issues that affect them personally and their education and find solutions pertaining them through Youth Clubs. VDCs are able to organize self-help activities towards addressing the needs of girls such as building toilets. Therefore, with these results the studies establish that community participation plays a huge role in promoting girl child education although for its impact to reach even greater heights it requires financial support.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

6.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides conclusions and makes suggestions towards improvement of community participation efforts towards promotion of girl child education. It also recommends further research in the field.

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

This case study set out to find out the role communities are playing in the promotion of girl child education in Machinga and Zomba districts using Jules Pretty's typology of participation and the Social feminist theory. Accompanying objectives included; to find out if community participation has been effective in promoting girl child education in the study districts; to identify the challenges in the promotion of girl child education through community participation; to explore the various methods of enforcing and promoting girl child education through community participation

A qualitative methodology was thought to be the best after reviewing other studies. Focus Group Discussions with Mother groups, Youth Clubs and Village Development Committees; In-depth interviews with parents and pupils; as well as key informant interviews with Chiefs, Teachers and representative of NGOs were used as data collection methods. The data collected was then analysed using thematic analysis, where the responses that expressed the same ideas were put together and themes were derived from these responses. The themes from the various categories were then compared with those from other categories to determine similarities and differences.

The analysis of the findings determined that there are various forms of participation in the communities such as manipulative participation, functional participation, passive participation, participation for material incentives and self-mobilization. But looking at reoccurrence of the forms of participation the study established that passive, self-mobilization as well as participation for material incentives were the most common form of participation. These forms of Community participation are enforced through various methods such as Mother Groups, Village Development Committees, Youth Clubs and Village by-laws.

The study established that all these methods of enforcing community participation have a lot of potential in promoting girl's education, however, they face several challenges that sometimes impede their interventions. For instance, Mother groups have proved to be a great resource in reinforcing the agenda of keeping girls in school and also ensuring girls return to school after either pregnancy or marriage. They also provide sexual and reproductive health information by holding talks with the girls at the school. Most importantly they are able to run small businesses and are able to support poorer children with basic needs and also give to girls re-usable sanitary pads. But they lack constant funding to be able to implement their interventions on a larger scale.

On the other hand, VDCs do not effectively serve their intended purpose because government as the main financer of national development projects including community projects makes the final decisions on development matters which more often than not disregard development projects that have been identified by VDCs. It should be noted that development projects that have been identified by VDCs do in fact reflect the felt needs of the villagers and when the central government disregards such projects, it directly excludes the people from decision-making. This is largely because of the existing power relations that place communities, especially minorities,

in an inferior position relative to the central government. Despite these challenges, the VDCs are contributing to girl child education by initiating self-help activities that aim at addressing various community problems including construction of girl's toilets, maintenance of boreholes just to mention a few. VDCs together with Village heads are also safeguarding girls through the implementation of village by-laws that help ensure that girls below the age of 18 are not married off against their will. Youth Clubs are also playing a role in keeping girls occupied after school hours and provide them with a platform to discuss issues that affect them and find solutions thereby enabling them to continue with their education. Lack of dedicated funding towards these community interventions was identified as the main problem dragging the efforts of these groups.

The study noted that in Machinga people had no idea of what Village bylaws were and what they are used for. Simply put they have never heard of them. The study concluded that the absence of village bylaws in TA Ngokwe might be the reason why Chisiano (2018) reported that there were high girl dropout rates despite having partners such as Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) in the district that is promoting girl's education through provision of bursaries and other educational entitlements to girls from poor households. The presence of village by-laws in TA Chikowi made the area to have close to zero cases of girls who dropped out of school (PLAN, 2018).

This study has contributed to the literature on the role community participation is playing in the promotion of girl child education through Village by-laws, Mother Groups, Youth Clubs and VDCs. It has also shed light on the direction funding from NGOs and government should take in its efforts of promoting girl child education. A similar study should be conducted covering all the

three regions of the Country to get a national picture of the role the community is playing towards the promotion of girl child education. Further studies can also be conducted to establish the role the government and NGO can play in aiding community participation through Mother Groups, VDCs and Youth Clubs.

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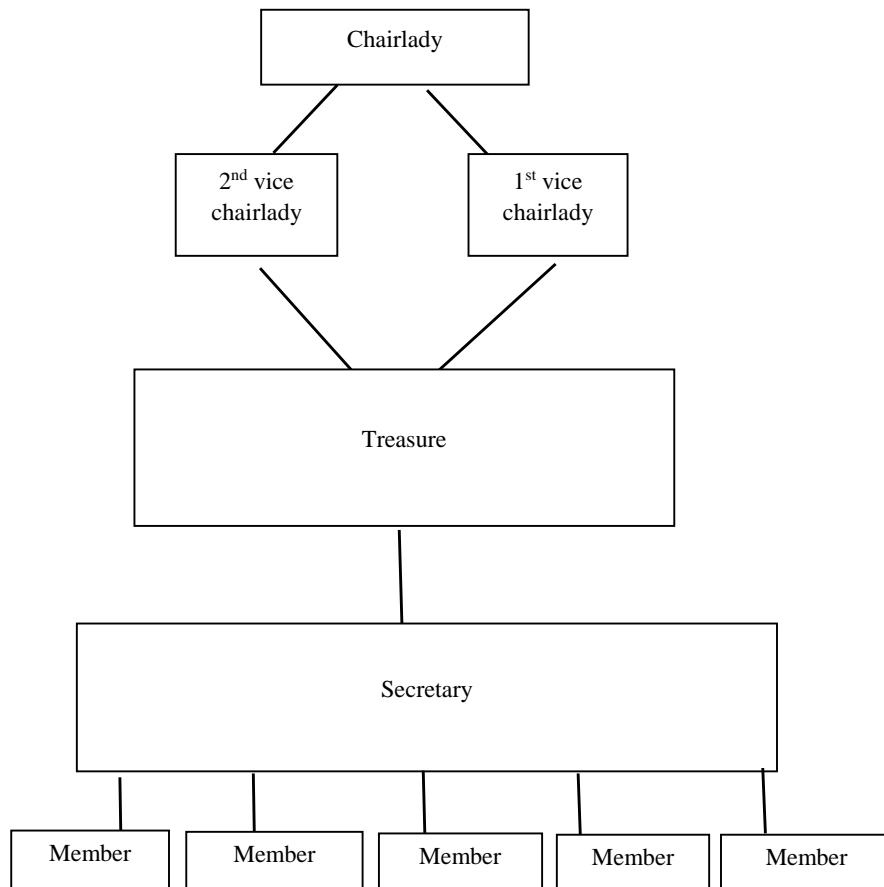
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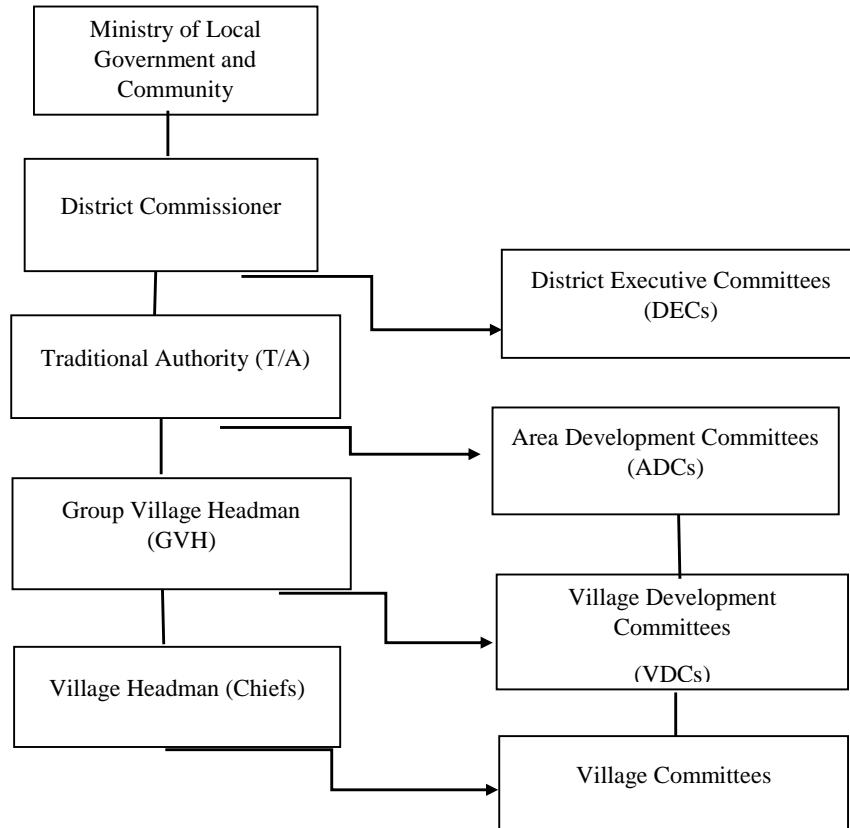
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APPENDICES

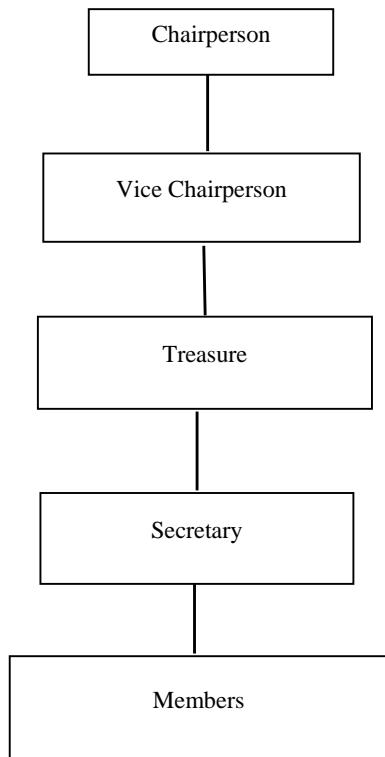
Appendix 1: Structure of a Mother Group



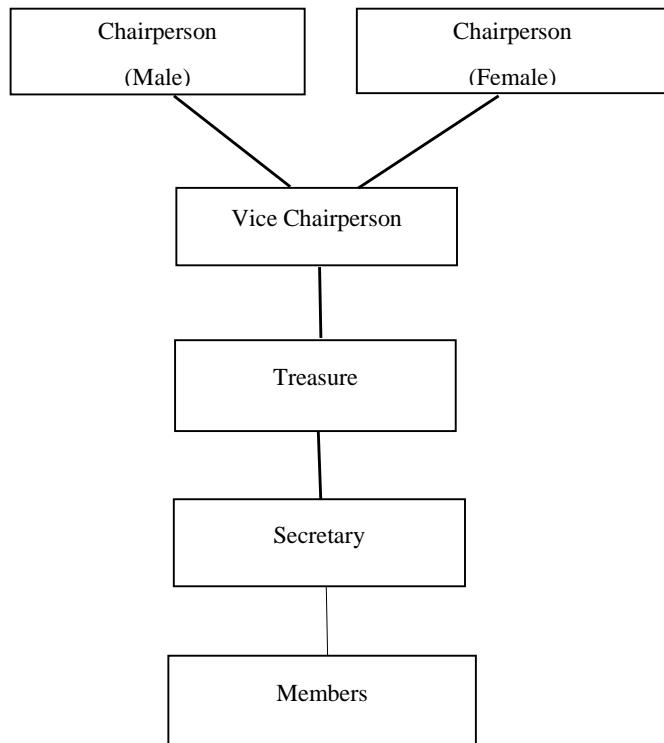
Appendix 2: Structure of Local Government



Appendix 3: Structure of a Village Development Committee



Appendix 4: Structure of a youth group



Appendix 5: Focus Group Discussion guide

STUDY AREA INFORMATION AND IDENTIFICATION

District name:
School Zone name:
Village name:
Interviewer's Name:
Questionnaire Number:
Respondent (Attach List of Participants):

SECTION A: DETAILS OF THE RESPONDENT

Information about the respondent

NAME	GENDER	AGE	MARITAL STATUS	OCCUPATION	EDUCATION

SECTION B: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

- 1. What do you understand by the term community participation?**

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- 2. Based on your understanding of community participation, what would community participation in girl child education entail?**

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- 3. In your opinion, do you think your community is participating in promoting girl child education?**

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- 4. (If yes to question 3) How is your community participating in promoting girl child education?**

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- 5. In your opinion, what are the benefits of community participation in promoting girl child education in Malawi?**

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- 6. Do you think promoting community participation in girl child education has any effects on the boys' education?**

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- 7. Can you mention some common cultural practices and beliefs common in your area?**

8. Of what influence are these cultural practices on girl child education? (Negative or positive).

SECTION C: COLLABORATION & COORDINATION

1. In your opinion, who are the key players in promoting girl child education in your area? (Probe on CBOs, CPCs, PTAs, mother groups and youth groups)

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2. Between a man and a woman/mother or father, who do you think carries more responsibility of educating the children?

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3. Between educating a girl child and boy child, who do prioritize? In what considerations? And why?

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4. What consequences does the above mentioned considerations have on the child of the opposite gender?

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5. What do you think is the role of chiefs and head teachers in promoting girl child education in your area?

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6. In your opinion what do you think is the role of the government and NGO's in promoting girl child education in your area?

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7. How is your community working with the government, NGO's and churches in promoting girls education in the area?

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8. Do you think the government, church and NGO's efforts are complimentary or frictional to each other?

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SECTION D: CHALLENGES

1. What do you think are the challenges forcing girls to drop out of school in your area?

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2. In your opinion, what do you think are the main challenges hindering your community to fully participate in promoting girl child education?

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3. In your opinion, what do you think are the challenges being faced by your community in working with the government and NGO's in promoting girl child education in your area?

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4. As parents are you sometimes faced with an imaginable situation to choose between educating a girl child or boy child? If yes how does this happen and what would you choose? How does your communities deal with such situations?

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SECTION E: COMMUNITY HAS ANSWERS/DESIRED CHANGE

- 1. What do you think are the reasons why most girls drop out of school in your area?**

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- 2. Are there any by-laws in the community in promoting girl child education?**

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- 3. If yes, how effective are these by-laws? (Case stories).**

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- 4. Given an opportunity to change three things in relation to community participation in promoting girl child education in your community what would these be?**

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- 5. What is your vision on community participation in promoting girl child education in Malawi?**

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- 6. Do you think there is a link between the promotion of education and development in Malawi?**

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Thank you for your participation.

Appendix 6: Key Informant Interview guide

STUDY AREA INFORMATION AND IDENTIFICATION

District name:
School Zone name:
Village name:
Interviewer's Name:
Questionnaire Number:
Respondent (DEM, Head Teacher, PEA, Chief, MoE, NGOs):

SECTION B: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

9. What do you understand by the term community participation?

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10. Based on your understanding on community participation, what would community participation in girl child education entail?

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11. In your opinion, do you think your community (School/district) is participating in promoting girl child education?

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12. In your opinion, what are the benefits of community participation in promoting girl child education in Malawi?

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13. Do you think promoting community participation in girl child education can lead to a high dropout rate in boys?

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14. What processes have you put in place to ensure community participation in promoting girl child education?

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15. What has been the enrollment percentage and dropout percentage for the past two years (2018-2019) in terms of gender at your school/zone? (Head Teacher/PEA).

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16. Can you mention some common cultural practices and beliefs common in your area?

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17. Of what influence are these cultural practices on girl child education? (Negative or positive).

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SECTION C: COLLABORATION & CORDINATION

9. In your opinion, who are the key players in promoting girl child education in your area/district? (Probe on CBOs, CPCs, PTAs ,mother groups and youth groups)

10. What do you think is the role of chiefs and head teachers in promoting girl child education in your area?

11. In your opinion (professional opinion for DEM & Head teacher) what do you think is the role of the government and NGO's in promoting girl child education in your area?

12. In your opinion, how is your community/school/district/zone working with the government and NGO's in promoting girls education in the area?

13. Do you think the church and religious leaders have any role in promoting girl child education in your area? If yes explain.

SECTION D: CHALLENGES

5. What do you think are the challenges forcing girls to drop out of school in your area/school/district/zone?

6. In your opinion, what do you think are the main challenges hindering your community/zone/district to fully participate in promoting girl child education?

7. In your opinion (professional opinion for DEM/PEA/Head Teacher), what do you think are the challenges being faced by your community in working with the government and NGO's in promoting girl child education in your area?

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SECTION E: COMMUNITY HAS ANSWERS/DESIRED CHANGE

7. What do you think are the reasons why most girls drop out of school in your area/school/district/zone?

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8. Are there any by-laws in the district/zone/community in promoting girl education?

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9. If yes, how effective are these by-laws? (Case stories).

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10. Given an opportunity to change three things in relation to community participation in promoting girl child education in your community/school/zone/district what would these be?

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11. What is your vision on community participation in promoting girl child education in Malawi?

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Thank you for your participation

Appendix 7: In-depth interviews with parents/pupil guide

STUDY AREA INFORMATION AND IDENTIFICATION

District name:
School Zone name:
Village name:
Interviewer's Name:
Questionnaire Number:
Type of Respondent (Parent or Pupil):

SECTION A: DETAILS OF THE RESPONDENT

Information about the respondent

Respondent name:	
Gender (1=female 2=male)	
Age	
Marital status (Parent) (1=single 2=married 3=separated 4=divorced 5=deceased)	
Highest level of formal education (1=none, 2=Some primary school, 3=finished primary school, 4=junior	

secondary school, 5=senior secondary school, 6=adult literacy, 99= other, specify)	
Main occupation of the Participant (1=farming 2=employed 3=self-employed)	
Number children in school? (Parent)	
Number of Children out of school?	

SECTION B: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

18. What do you understand by the term community participation?

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19. Based on your understanding on community participation, what would community participation in girl child education entail?

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20. In your opinion, do you think your community is participating in promoting girl child education?

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21. In your opinion, what are the benefits of community participation in promoting girl child education in Malawi?

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22. Do you think promoting community participation in girl child education can lead to a high dropout rate among boys?

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23. Can you mention some common cultural practices and beliefs common in your area?

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24. Of what influence are these cultural practices on girl child education? (Negative or positive).

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SECTION C: COLLABORATION & COORDINATION

**14. In your opinion, who are the key players in promoting girl child education in your area?
(Probe on CBOs, CPCs, PTAs ,mother groups and youth groups)**

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15. What do you think is the role of chiefs and head teachers in promoting girl child education in your area?

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16. In your opinion what do you think is the role of the government and NGO's in promoting girl child education in your area?

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17. In your opinion, how is your community working with the government and NGO's in promoting girls education in the area?

18. Do you think the church and religious leaders have any role in promoting girl child education in your area? If yes explain.

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SECTION D: CHALLENGES

8. What do you think are the challenges forcing girls to drop out of school in your area?

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9. In your opinion, what do you think are the main challenges hindering your community to fully participate in promoting girl child education in your area?

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10. In your opinion, what do you think are the challenges being faced by your community in working with the government and NGO's in promoting girl child education in your area?

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11. As a parent have you ever been faced with an imaginable situation to choose between educating a girl child or boy child? If yes how does this happen and what would you choose? How does your communities deal with such situations?

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SECTION E: COMMUNITY HAS ANSWERS/DESIRED CHANGE

12. What do you think are the reasons why most girls drop out of school in your area?

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13. Are there any by-laws in your community in promoting girl child education?

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14. If yes, how effective are these by-laws? (Case stories).

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15. Given an opportunity to change three things in relation to community participation in promoting girl child education in your community what would these be?

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16. What is your vision on community participation in promoting girl child education in Malawi?

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17. Do you think there is any correlation between development of Malawi as a country and educating the girl Child?

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Appendix 8: Informed Consent

INTRODUCTION

My Name is Marriam Juma. I am a post-graduate student studying Master of Arts in Development Studies at Chancellor College. As part of my degree, I am expected to take on, conduct and complete a research project hence my coming here. My research intends to establish the role of community participation in the promotion of Girl child education this area.

CONSENT

You have been selected to participate in this study and I would like to know if you are willing to do so. The information you provide herein will be used for the sole purpose of informing study results. Please note that participation in the study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time without any explanation whatsoever. Your views will be treated with the strictest of confidence and it is not possible for any person to identify you based on your responses in this study. You are free to ask me any questions about this study.

Do you agree to participate in this study?

Yes (tick)	No (tick)