

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL
HEADSHIP POSITION: THE CASE OF SELECTED SCHOOLS
IN LILONGWE DISTRICT

MASTER OF EDUCATION (SOCIOLOGY) THESIS

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UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

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MASTER OF EDUCATION (SOCIOLOGY)

A THESIS

By

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degree of Master of Education (Sociology)

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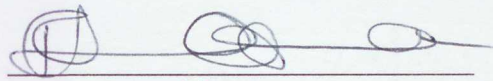


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DECLARATION

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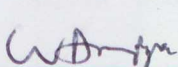
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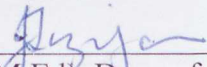

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Dedication

To my daughter Rehema, my sons Yamikani, Alinafe and Mussa. You have been wonderful to me. Special dedication goes to my mum Emma Flower Kayuza Mwansambo for inspiring me to write on this subject matter with her own experiences.

To Davie, my better half for moral support.

To my sisters, brother, nieces and nephews for your love and care.

To all women of Africa and above all to God Almighty, the Giver of life and wisdom.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated factors affecting women's participation in primary school headship position. The study's sample comprised nine female and nine male head teachers, 35 female and 33 male teachers, 48 (24 female and 24 male) Standard 8 pupils from 18 primary schools in Lilongwe District, and six key informants. The head teachers and key informants were purposively selected while the teachers and pupils were randomly sampled. A questionnaire for head teachers and teachers, a focus group discussion guide for pupils, and an interview guide for key informants were the main data collection tools used. The qualitative and quantitative data collected were analysed manually and by using SPSS, respectively.

The study established that, although they aspire for headship position and even where they outnumber male teachers as is the case in Lilongwe District, females are under-represented in that position. The results show that socialisation and the devaluation of women's work are the major explanatory factors from which stem other factors such as communities' negative attitude towards female teachers; delayed promotion of female teachers; and assignment of female teachers to junior classes. Female head teachers face several challenges including insubordination from fellow teachers and working in hostile communities that expect them to behave like men. The study concludes that if women's participation in headship position is to improve, it is necessary that the challenges facing female teachers be addressed. This should be through implementing existing policies and taking affirmative action aimed at improving the status of women in general and female teachers in particular.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACB	Anti-Corruption Bureau
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AIM	Asian Institute of Management
AU	African Union
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CI	Catholic Institute
CWED	Central West Education Division
DEM	District Education Manager
DFID	Department for International Development
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
EDM	Education Division Manager
EFA	Education For All
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FPE	Free Primary Education
FPS	Full Primary School
GAC	Gender Advisory Committee
GAP	Global Platform of Action
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HHI	Henry Henderson Institute

ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JCE	Junior Certificate of Education
LEA	Local Education Authority
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MITTEP	Malawi Integrated Teacher Training Programme
MoESC	Ministry of Education Sports and Culture
MoEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
MoGYCS	Ministry of Gender Youth and Community Services
MoWCD	Ministry of Women and Child Development
MPRSP	Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
MSCE	Malawi School Certificate of Education
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure and Framework
NED	Northern Education Division
NESP	National Education Sector Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NGP	National Gender Policy
NSO	National Statistical Office
NSTED	National Strategy for Teacher Education Development
PEA	Primary Education Advisor
PIF	Policy and Investment Framework
PTA	Parents and Teachers Association
RCC	Roman Catholic Church

SADC	Southern African Development Community
SED	Shire highlands Education Division
SEED	South East Education Division
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Scientists
SWED	South West Education Division
TDC	Teacher Development Centre
TSC	Teaching Service Commission
TTC	Teacher Training College
UMCA	Universities Mission to Central Africa
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WILSA	Women In Law in Southern Africa

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the importance of educating women, the genesis of formal education in Malawi and its links to teacher education development and the current trends in female teachers' participation in the management of primary schools. It unravels the introduction of formal education in Malawi and explains how the historical genesis of formal education has influenced the current situation in the country.

1.2 The importance of educating women

Education is the most important instrument for human resource development (Panday, 2006). It is a vehicle for promoting national consciousness and cohesion and a catalyst for economic development (Republic of Malawi, 1994). Education of females is, of paramount importance considering the role girls and women play in national development.

A higher enrolment rate of females in education has a positive impact on the economic well-being of their families and society at large. This is so because despite perceptions to the contrary, women bear the bulk of the productivity load in society. Education provides women with options to make choices for better living, productivity and involvement in national development. It is needed as a coping mechanism in times of socio-economic crisis as educated women tend to find alternatives (Chande-Binauli and Semu, 1997). Education

empowers women; it increases their status in the community and leads to greater in-put into family and community decision-making (United Nations Women Watch, 2005). More importantly, education provides women with a basic knowledge of their rights as individuals and citizens. Having knowledge and decision-making power can place women on a better footing in relation to their male counterparts. Education is a pre-requisite for women's enhanced knowledge, empowerment and political participation. Researchers have indicated that women's low education status is a major set-back to women's active participation in decision-making and attainment positions of leadership in both public and private sectors. Leach (1998) notes that education for girls and women brings benefits to other people as well. The other people include members of the women's families and communities who are beneficiaries of women's productive labour.

1.3 Brief historical overview of teacher education development in Malawi

The present formal education system in Malawi evolved from the efforts of early European missionaries, starting in 1875 when Dr Robert Laws of the Free Church of Scotland opened the country's first school at Cape Maclear. The main aim of the missionaries was to evangelise and to replace slave trade with legitimate commerce.

These missionaries trained their teachers according to the philosophies of their churches, but what was common to all was the introduction of the 3 Rs: reading, writing and arithmetic. Those trained were accepted as teachers after several years of practice teaching at mission schools (Banda, 1982). The development of teacher training was done by each Mission according to the mission's needs. As such there was no standardised curriculum. Some, for example, the Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA), the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) and the Roman Catholic Church (RC) based their teaching on catechism. Those graduating from the training schools started by helping with the evangelism and later became

teachers. Other training schools grew out of normal classes attached to primary school principal mission stations. Such was the case in Blantyre, Likuni, Livingstonia, Mitsidi Malamulo, Nkhoma and Nguludi (Banda, 1982).

Efforts to have organised teacher training started in 1894 when the Overtoun Institute was founded by the Livingstonia Mission. The Institute began training teachers in 1895 at Khondowe and trained teachers under a programme called "normal school." This was a seven-year programme. Of the 7 years, 3 years were for classroom training and 4 years of teaching practice.

In 1899 UMCA opened St Michael's Teacher Training College (TTC) at Malindi in Mangochi. Their education however emphasised the evangelisation side. In 1902, the Dutch Reformed Church opened its own TTC at Mvera. The TTC later on moved to Nkhoma where it was called William Murray's TTC. The Blantyre Mission followed suit when in 1908, it opened the Henry Henderson Institute (HHI).

The colonial government responded rather slowly in undertaking teacher education. It established the Jeanes Training Centre at Domasi in Zomba in 1929, after observing that the mission TTCs were not offering a standardised curriculum. In addition, as the colonial government introduced secondary education, there was need for the pupils to be taught using the same curriculum for ease of selection into secondary schools. By 1937 the Centre had produced 75 trained teacher supervisors drawn from various missions, who became advisors for teachers and initiated a number of improvements. Jeanes Training Centre also trained 60 teachers' wives in order to extend the influence of schools into homes. As Banda (1982) observes, the wives of teachers received such training as would enable them to assist their

husbands in exemplary home life and teaching of homecraft to their neighbours in matters such as baking, sewing and general cleanliness of the house and childcare. In addition, the Centre trained native authorities or chiefs to assist in promoting rural development. By the end of 1937, the Centre recorded 75 trained supervisory teachers, and 60 wives and 19 trained chiefs. With these efforts, teacher training was now firmly established in Malawi.

1.4 Missionaries' attitudes towards female education

Literature concerning education in Malawi shows that the purpose of education before the end of the Second World War was to prepare the natives to take up positions in the outer places of mission stations. The missionaries thought of education in terms of training teacher evangelists to propagate their missions' philosophies. It is notable that all teacher evangelists at that time were men. Brown (1975) explicitly says that "the aim was still the production of teacher evangelists, rather than teachers in the accepted sense." Women were neither regarded as teachers nor evangelists. Dzama (1998) observes that the reluctance of the main churches to elevate women to positions of religious leadership meant that only boys were to be educated. This obviously would have an impact on the development of women's education in Malawi. Since evangelists and catechists were supposed to be male, it was no wonder that the missionaries saw no reasons for educating girls. In a memorandum written to International Missionary Council at Edinburgh, London and the British colonial government in 1927, Broomfield argues:

It will be a disaster of the first magnitude if the education of African women made them unable to settle down contentedly as wives and mothers among their people. The danger is great, and it can only be avoided by the most careful exclusion of anything likely to have such a result (Cannon Broomfield quoted in Whitehead, 1984:27).

This statement seems to be an accurate reflection of the views held by most missionaries towards the subject of women education. According to Broomfield, educating the girl-child

would disrupt the intactness of the African society because the role of women in African society was taking care of their homes. Thus the missionaries failed to see any role for women outside the domestic environment (Lamba, 1982).

Missionaries' attitude towards girls' education was based on the ideas of the great philosopher Aristotle who, in *The Politics*, states that "the male is more fitted to rule than the female" (Aristotle translated by Sinclair, revised and represented by Saunder, 1981). Drawing from Aristotle's observations several other writers have made their own conclusions about women's capacity to be taught and to learn. For example, Malebranche, a priest and philosopher, stressed that women were intellectually inferior to men because female "cerebral fibre" is soft and delicate, lacking the hardness, solidity, strength and consistency of male "cerebral fibre" (Malebranche cited in Easlea, 1980:140). Sir David Brewster, the physicist, has also made similar observations (Easlea, 1986 quoted by Dzama, 1998). The picture drawn from this is that a woman was thought of having very low reasoning capacity, as a result having difficulties to understand anything when taught in class. Above all, the Bible's own teaching on gender roles and the leading role of the patriarchs in it must have informed the missionaries' own views of girls' education.

However, with time, the attitude towards girls' and women's education gradually changed. In Malawi the setting up of the Phelps-Stokes Commission of Inquiry on Education in 1924 helped lift the barriers on the girl-child's education. This Commission of Inquiry made some recommendations on the education of the girl child which helped to influence missionaries to change their attitudes towards the education of the girl-child. The Phelps-Stokes Commission Report on Education noted that "education to the limit of expanding capacity is an inalienable right of the African woman as much of the African man" (Jones, 1924). Lamba (1982) cites

the proposal by Lacey the then Director of education to Advisory committee on Native Education. He advocated that greater attention be given to the education of women and girls.

1.5 The Concept of gender and its origins

The actual movements of women concerned with gender issues started in the 19th century. The first to use the “concept of gender” were the Utopian socialists in France whose aim was to set up a conducive environment for women to participate in formal employment, voting and education. Those who advocated for employment, the right to vote, access to education and for a variety of legal and political rights, were labeled feminists by subsequent generations (Biklen and Pollard, 1993). Some observers have tried contextualising the emergence of women’s liberation with university students’ unrest in the 1960s. Girls who entered the university became frustrated by the lack of career opportunities to match their educational success. Using Marxist tools¹ of analysis, socialist feminists saw the struggle for women’s liberation as being an integral part of the struggle against capitalism.

The concept of gender has been used with diverse meanings but most with reference to a person’s sex, women’s rights and also the concept of feminism. Gender refers to “socially constructed roles and socially learned behaviours and expectations associated with females and males (World Bank 2001:3).” Robbins and Barnwell (2002:62) define gender as “a broad concept that refers to the various actions and roles of men and women in terms of social conditions, family roles, and community expectations and the thought processes and orientations that can arise from these.” Schaefer (2002:259) agrees with Robbins and Barnwell when he defines gender roles as “expectations regarding the proper behaviour, attitudes and activities of males and females.”

¹In Marx’s analysis society was fundamentally divided between classes that clash in pursuit of their own class interests. Contemporary feminists view women’s subordination as inherent in capitalist societies.

Section 1.12 has defined how the concept of gender should be understood in this study. The operational definition used in this study is in line with the definitions by the World Bank (2001), Robbins and Barnwell (2002) and Schaefer (2002).

The definitions above suggest that it is not the individual's consciousness which directs his/her behaviour but the routine of everyday activities that are typically taken for granted and only noted when someone deviates from the conventional behaviour and expectations. For example, in Malawi when a man carries a baby at his back and his wife carries nothing but a newspaper people usually notice this, because to them, this is unusual. Under normal circumstances, the woman would be expected to carry the baby. From such incidents conclusions are made that the woman could be ill or that the man is caring or even that he is "under petticoat government".

Many societies have established social distinctions between females and males that do not inevitably result from biological difference between women and men in the responsibilities assigned to them. Access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities (United Nations, 2002:4) are some of the distinctions which societies have created between men and women. Access to and control over resources and decision-making opportunities have been given to men while household caring has been assigned to women.

Women and men are different biologically, but all cultures interpret and elaborate these biological differences into a set of social expectations about what behaviours and activities are appropriate for each sex and what rights, resources and power they possess. While these expectations vary considerably among different societies, they also share some striking

similarities. For example, nearly all societies give the primary responsibilities for the care of infants and young children to women and girls while men are given the responsibility of providing finances for the family. Paradoxically, in some families it is women who finance the home because either the woman is a single parent, or the man is unemployed or spends money elsewhere (World Bank, 2001).

Traditionally, gender roles are evident not only in people's work and behaviour but also in how they react to others as well. People constantly do gender identification without realising it. For example, in a typical Malawi setting, if a father takes a child to a hospital, on the one hand, the majority of people would conclude that he is not a man or that he has been given a love potion by his wife. On the other hand, some people would admire him and say that he is a loving and caring man. Some women may even comment that they wished their husbands were like him. Sometimes people take things for granted, and without realising it they either change or confirm the society's expectations on gender roles. It must be emphasized that the gender roles and expectations are learned and can be changed overtime.

1.6 National and international legal and policy contexts of Education in Malawi

1.6.1 National legal provisions

The Republic of Malawi regained its multiparty democracy from a one party system of government in 1994. Following this change the country produced a new rights-based Republic Constitution which enshrines a bill of rights. This bill of rights provides a legal framework for the rights for women. According to Section 13(a) of the Constitution, one of the principles of national policy is that the state aims to achieve gender equality through progressively adopting and implementing policies and legislation is:

“To obtain equality for women with men through:

- (i) full participation of women in all spheres of Malawian society on the basis of equality with men;
- (ii) the implementation of principles on non-discrimination and such other measures as may be required; and (The Constitution of Malawi, 1995).

Section 20 (1) of the Constitution also states that:

Discrimination of persons in any form is prohibited and all persons are, under any law, guaranteed equal and effective protection against discrimination on grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, ethnic or social origin, disability, property, birth or other status.

Section 24 (1) of the Constitution specifically provides for women's rights. These include the right not to be discriminated against on the basis of their gender or marital status, the right to be accorded the same rights as men while Section 24 (2) specifically prohibits "discrimination in work, business and public affairs."

Section 30 (1) of the Constitution further states that "all persons and people have a right to development and, therefore, to the enjoyment of economic, social, cultural and political development and women; children and the disabled in particular shall be given special consideration in the application of this right." Section 31 stipulates that "every person shall have the right to fair and safe labour practices and to fair remuneration. It further says that "every person shall be entitled to fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction or discrimination of any kind, in particular on the basis of gender."

Although these legal provisions are on the statute books, the reality on the ground is that they are not always respected. Institutions and individuals can and do ignore these provisions when dealing with men and women in various sectors including the education sector.

1.6.2 International legal provisions

Malawi is also a signatory to various international instruments relating to the promotion of women's rights. These include the following:

- The Universal Declaration on Human Rights, 1948.
- The Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW 1979).
- The Human Rights Conference in Vienna (1993).
- The International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, (1994).

- The World Summit for Social Development Conference on Women, Beijing (1995).
- The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1980).
- The Conference on Population and Development, Cairo (1994), Copenhagen (1995).
- The Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing (1995).
- The Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (2005).
- SADC Gender Protocol.

The international legal provisions include obligations for individual countries to implement them at domestic or national level. However, in most cases there are problems with implementation at the domestic level. Guidelines that are put in place in the international instruments for government to act on in many instances it would appear do not have government support.

1.6.3 Other policies on gender and poverty

1.6.3.1 Malawi poverty reduction strategy paper

In line with the approval of Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, Malawi launched a Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (MPRSP) in 2002. The main goal of the PRSP is to achieve sustainable poverty reduction through political and socio-economic empowerment of the poor. The target was to reduce the country's poverty level from 65.3% to 59.3% by the year 2005 (WILSA, 2005). In Malawi, poverty levels are higher among women than among men. The National Statistical Office (NSO) found that 59% of the people in female-headed households are poor compared to 51% of people in male-headed households (NSO, 2005:150).

An analysis of government expenditure shows that women do not get what they need for them to perform their gender roles and cater for their specific disadvantaged positions. This means that government budget is not gender mainstreamed. Of the little funds for mainstreaming programmes and activities, women access a small fraction. The largest proportion is consumed by the civil service where in all sectors except the education sector, men are the majority (WILSA, 2005).

This is not a new phenomenon in Malawi as Semu and Chande-Binauli (1997:86) point out that in the 1990s, of the total income that was earned in Malawi only 33% went to females. Although they are the majority in the education sector, women in this sector may not necessarily be getting what they need to advance in their professions.

The MPRSP has a gender empowerment strategy which is co-ordinated by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. It aimed at creating a national response to gender inequalities so that poverty reduction is achieved.

1.6.3.2 The millennium development goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) present a global partnership that has grown from the commitments and targets established at the world summits of the 1990s. Responding to the world's main development challenges and to the calls of society, the MDGs seek to promote poverty reduction, education, maternal health, gender equality, and aim at combating child mortality, AIDS, and other diseases. Of particular relevance to this study is MDG 3 which is about the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. The world summit noted that women have an enormous impact on the well-being of their families and

societies but their potential is not realized because of discriminatory social norms, incentives and legal institutions.

1.6.4 National policy provisions in education

1.6.4.1 The national gender policy

Human development is essentially a process of enlarging people's choices and opportunities to realise their full potential (United Nations 2002). As such, care must be taken to ensure that all sections of society benefit from the process. The Malawi National Gender Policy (NGP) was developed with the overall goal of mainstreaming gender into the national development process to enhance participation of men and women, boys and girls for sustainable and equitable development and for poverty eradication (NGP, 2000). The NGP was set to guide and direct the planning and implementation of development programmes at all levels. It was developed as an integral part of the national development objectives which specifically seeks to prioritise gender issues. These must be mainstreamed in development policies and programmes. One of the policy's objectives is:

To provide all key actors in national development such as policy makers, the private sector, non-governmental organizations with adequate information related to gender issues (Gender Policy, 1995: 6).

In addition, the government established some institutions at district, area and village levels which provide information in relation to gender issues. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the Civil Service, and the private sectors help in networking and implementing some of the objectives of the NGP.

To show its commitment to the objectives of the NGP the government of Malawi through the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Community Services (MOGYCS)² established the following structures:

- The Gender Advisory Committee (GAC) comprising Principal Secretaries.

GAC's duty is to advise the cabinet on gender issues and ensure implementation of the NGP and provide advisory service to the National machinery which is the (MOGYCS);

- Parliamentary Women's Caucus; and
- Parliamentary Committee on Women and Children Affairs.

The two parliamentary committees' major role is to lobby and advocate for gender issues in Parliament.

1.6.5 Education policies

The Constitution of Malawi enshrines education as a basic human right. That education is a basic human right is also well elaborated in the Global Platform of Action and the Beijing Declaration amongst the international instruments. In the latter document it is stated that:

Education is a human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace. Non-discriminatory education benefits both girls and boys and this ultimately contributes to a more equal relationship between women and men. Equality of access to and attainment of educational qualifications is necessary if more women are to become agents of change (Gender Policy, 1995: 6).

The Ministry of Education Science and Technology developed a ten-year education plan called Policy and Investment Framework (PIF). This was done through consultations with donors, NGOs, the private sector and specialised task forces drawn from other ministries and parastatals, and the education sector in general.

² The Ministry of Gender Youth and Community Services is now called the Ministry of Women and Child development.

PIF spelled out government policy and programmes for the period 1995-2005. Two of the PIF's objectives were to:

- (i) increase access to education opportunities for all Malawians at all levels of the system.
- (ii) improve the participation of girls and women, children with special needs and other disadvantaged youths.

The PIF further says that the intention is to increase female participation to at least 50%³ of the total enrolment at all levels of the education system. It looks at the development of primary teacher education in detail. In addition, as part of Government policy on education the mission statement for primary teacher education is:

Primary teachers play critical roles in the development of primary age children and also in development of the wider community. The overarching aim of the primary teacher development programme in Malawi is to train and continually develop teachers so that they are able to function effectively in the delivery of quality education to all pupils (PIF, 2005:10).

Under the primary teacher education and development policies were formulated. Equity is one of the policy values stated in the PIF. On "equity," the PIF stipulates that:

The MoES shall put in place appropriate measures aimed at addressing the gender imbalances in teacher supply, provision and deployment (PIF, 2005:25).

To fulfill this, the Ministry has put in place some strategies to be followed. For example, it stipulates that it will introduce relevant incentives to ensure that more women are recruited as primary school teachers.

³ This PIF's recommendation concurs with the recent SADC Protocol which requires female representation in decision-making positions to reach 50%. This is in draft form but is to be signed before the end of 2008 (Document provided by Ministry of Women and Child Development).

On primary teacher development, the PIF indicates that the MoEST⁴ shall continue with the training of teachers using both distance and face to face approaches. In this case, more TTCs shall be established. This was to be strategised by the government through the establishment of at least one primary teacher training college in each educational division by 2002.

Despite all these commendable efforts by government, the status of women in the country has not improved much and is still low as compared to the status of men. Women are still under-represented in politics and public life yet women account for 52% of the population of Malawi which was estimated at 11.9 million in 2002 (UNDP, 2004) and 13.1⁵ in 2008 housing and population census where women are pegging at 51%. There cannot be sustainable development unless women who are the majority of the Malawian population are empowered and they participate in decision-making positions like their male counterparts. Otherwise it would be difficult to achieve any sustainable development.

1.6.6 National education sector plan (NESP)

The National Education Sector Plan (NESP) – is a Statement which sets out the Government of Malawi's view on education. It stipulates the education goals, objectives and proposals on how such goals and objectives will be realized over the coming decade, 2008 – 2019 (NESP 2008).

There are three key factors for making a positive difference in education for the citizens of Malawi. These three factors are equitable access to education, improved quality and relevant

⁴ The name of Ministry of Education Science and Technology was changed in 2006 to Ministry of Education and Vocational Training.

⁵ Unofficial information presented by the Commissioner of Statistics to Malawi Nation on 6th November, 2008.

education and improved governance and management of education. According to NESP (2008), the mission of education is to provide quality and relevant education to the Malawi nation, which enables people to acquire relevant knowledge, skills, expertise and competencies to perform effectively. NESP stipulates that Malawi has gone through three phases of education plan since it got independence in 1964. These plans were responding to development policies.

The first phase was from 1973 to 1980. The plan was intended to provide guidelines for education development on primary, secondary and teacher education. The second education sector development plan was from 1985 to 1995. This incorporated all levels of formal education. Finally from 1995 to 2005, the Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) with Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) has guided the education sector to develop to a certain extent.

NESP further reflects the government of Malawi's commitment to both regional (Southern African Development Community (SADC) and African Union (AU) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) recommendations. It targets, priorities and incorporates the ideals of Education for All (EFA) strategies. The Operation of NESP is based on MGDs which recognizes that socio-economic development and industrial growth are instruments for empowering the poor, the weak and the voiceless to attain good education. The priorities as already indicated are governance and management, quality and relevance, access and equity. The NESP has defined how the challenges for each subsection will be tackled using different strategies. Priorities for all the five sub-sectors are similar in the sense that the main themes are the same.

For this study, sub-section 4.3 is the most important. This concerns Teacher Education (Primary and Secondary). Some of the major challenges for teacher education stipulated in sub-section 4.3 of NESP are as follows:

1. Lack of coherent policies and clear strategies to address overwhelming demand which in turn has put a strain on and/or compromised both the quantity and quality of primary and secondary school education. Incoherent policies have led to teachers being reluctant to work in areas of greatest need (especially remote schools). It is estimated that there is 6 percent attrition of primary school teachers (NESP 2008).
2. Infrastructure and other facilities have not been maintained and procurement of what can facilitate affective and efficient training for teachers has not been done. The poor learning environment in colleges impacts negatively on preparation of teachers and discourages potential teacher learners from enrolling.
3. Qualified teachers rarely attend professional development courses (Continuous Professional Development – CPD). This is because the Ministry of Education Science and Technology does not organize such trainings.
4. Lack of teacher education coordinating bodies mandated to link the Ministry of Education Science and Technology, Universities and Colleges in order to produce a qualified dedicated and flexible teaching force.

Recruitment and deployment of teachers is inefficient and not deliberately targeted for female teacher trainee. Inefficient deployment results in lower pupil-teacher ratio in urban areas at the expense of rural areas. The lack of female teachers has detrimental impact on female

students because most studies have indicated that female teachers are role models for female students.

NESP is comprehensive in scope as it does cover all levels of education and sub-sectors in a ten year period (2008-2017). It provides opportunities for facilitating life – long learning and provides holistic coverage on dimensions and implementations of international covenants agreements and protocols on education, which the Republic of Malawi has adopted through ratification. However, NESP does not discuss anything on leadership and gender. It remains silent on how teachers are to be promoted into the leadership positions and on how women leadership is going to be embraced in the education sector in Malawi.

1.6.7 Promotion policy

The promotion Policy in Malawi states that teachers shall be promoted through:

- (1) Interviews when posts are advertised.
- (2) “Personal to holder” where a teacher must display high standards of performance. This is also called administrative arrangement or administrative convenience.

(T2 teachers are those teachers with MSCE, to be promoted after working for 4 years to the next grade and T3 teachers are those teachers with JCE, to be promoted after working for 6 years to the next grade).⁶

1.7 Statement of the Problem

The education system in Malawi has expanded tremendously since 1994 with the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) programme. Following the introduction of FPE the problem

⁶ This is not followed because some teachers are promoted after working for a long time.

of shortage of teachers arose, to which the Ministry of Education responded by recruiting a large number of teachers: these included about 17,000 untrained women and men to fill these teaching gaps (Croft, 2000). As a result, the number of primary teachers rose from 38,000 in 1993 to 49,000 in 1994. This increase in the number of primary school teachers was a welcome development particularly because many women (6,460) then were recruited (Ministry of Education statistics).

Despite many women teachers having been recruited, there appears no commensurate representation of women in positions of headship. Out of 5,074 headteachers in Malawi in (2007), 4,545 were males and 429 were females representing 9% while males were at 91%. The low ratio of female headteachers to male headteachers demonstrates that there is an apparent paradox bearing in mind the fact that 38% of teachers in primary schools are women. This shows that females are by far better represented among teachers (38%) than among headteachers (9%). Thus while over the years the number of female teachers has risen significantly, there has not been any significant commensurate rise in their numbers in the managerial positions, that is, headship position. This study therefore sought to provide answers to this paradox. In addition, it also sought to fill the lacuna in the literature on women participation in primary school management.

1.8 The Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate factors affecting women's participation in primary school management.

1.8.1 Specific objectives

In order to achieve the aim of the study, the following specific objectives were pursued:

- a) To determine gender representation in management positions at primary school level.
- b) To establish the attitudes of female teachers towards management positions.
- c) To identify challenges female headteachers encounter in assuming management positions.
- d) To establish the attitude of male and female teachers, District Education Managers (DEMs), Primary Education Advisors (PEAs), the Teaching Service Commission and pupils, towards women in primary school headship position.

1.8.2 Research questions

The study was guided by the following two research questions:

- a) Are there differences in the participation of women and men in headship position?
- b) What factors affect women in taking up headship position?

1.9 Significance of the study

This study is significant in several ways. Firstly, although there have been many research studies on women in headship positions conducted in Europe and America, there is a limited research literature on women's headship positions in Malawi and virtually no research on female headteachers in primary schools and on the challenges they face in Malawian workforce. Most of the research on women in the education system has concentrated on such

issues as girls' attainment in education, gender streaming, gender and primary schooling in Malawi. Women's participation in management position at primary school level has not generated as much interest as have such topics as gender and primary schooling in Malawi, girls attainment in education, and gender streaming and sex differences in exam performance (see Kadzamira and Chibwana, 2000; Kazima, 2001; Hyde, 1994 and Kadzamira, 1987). However, not much has been done in the area of women's participation in primary education management. It is hoped that the study will add to the bank of knowledge that already exists.

Secondly, the study will shed light on factors affecting women's participation in primary school management. The findings of the study will be useful for planners and policy makers in their efforts to formulate education management policies that enable both sexes to acquire high positions in primary school management. The findings will enable planners and implementing agencies to enhance the capacity on women's participation in educational management at primary school level in line with the government's goal of reducing the gender gap, and encouraging women's participation to meet SADC's quota of women in decision-making positions.

Thirdly and finally, this study may stimulate future research since it raises issues and questions which it cannot answer due to its scope and sample size but could be answered through further research.

1.10 Theoretical framework: feminist theory

Feminists have long regarded education both as a mechanism for reproducing gender inequalities and as a possible institutional site for challenging and redressing them. This has meant arguing for a better place for women within the education system and using the system

itself to foster change. Quite how the argument has been pursued has changed over time, as each has the particular target for reform. In the closing years of the 19th century women fought to gain access to education at par with male students. This included access to the same kind of educational institutions; the same curricular content; and to educational futures which were not simply tied to the domestic roles of wife, servant or mother (Attar, 1990; Miller, 1996). Yet despite some early gains, institutionalised inequalities have continued to resonate through successive phases of educational reform in many countries including Malawi. One of these areas is the participation of women in decision-making positions in the teaching profession.

In order to account for why women are under-represented in headship positions at the primary school, this study explored a number of feminist theories. According to McKay and Allais (1994) feminism is an ideology that advocates and promotes the rights and interests of women. It interrogates the place of women in societies under-going far reaching economic transformation. Maguire (1984) points out that feminists advocate that all men and women need to be equal politically, economically and socially. Feminists try to answer questions why women are globally disadvantaged. Four brands of feminism are particularly relevant, to this study, namely, liberal feminism, radical feminism, socialist feminism and black feminism. These will be briefly discussed below.

1.10.1 Liberal feminism

Liberal feminism began in the 18th and 19th Centuries and has continued through to the present day. Throughout its history the liberal feminist movement has been and continues to be focused on eliminating female subordination. According to liberal feminists, the women oppression started with industrial capitalism which began to draw labour out of the private

homes into public work place. Before the Industrial Revolution, factory owners employed young and married women while men were working in the plantations and their farms. After the industrial revolution, the factory owners employed men to replace women and these women were pushed back into their homes. Those women who maintained their job in the factory had a double day. After working in the factory women were supposed to work in their various homes as well. The men who were working in the factory stopped helping their wives with household chores. This, according to the liberal feminists was the beginning of oppression of women.

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1799) represents the beginning of liberal feminist movement. Her study **A Vindication of the Rights of Women**, justifies the importance of educating a woman.⁷

Contemporary liberal feminists argue that although women are sometimes divided, they do agree that the single most important goal of women's liberation is sexual equality, or, as sometimes termed, gender justice (Tong, 1970). What liberal feminists wish to do is to free women from oppressive gender roles, that is, from those roles that have been used as excuses or justification for giving women a lesser place, or no place at all, in the academy, the forum, and the marketplace. Liberal feminists argue that patriarchal society thinks women are ideally suited only for certain occupations, such as teaching, preaching, and investing (Maguire, 1984). Whereas male-centred society deems appropriate for women those jobs that require traits associated with the feminine personality, for example ego-effacement and other directedness, and deems appropriate for men those jobs that require traits associated with the masculine personality such as self-confidence and self-aggrandizement (Tong, 1970). Liberal

⁷ See Tong (1970), Maguire (1984) and Haralambos and Haralambos (1990)

feminists claim that this gender stereotyping is terribly unequal and needs to be stopped to achieve the goal of liberation for both men and women.

1.10.2 Radical feminism

Radical feminism is a school of thought which claims that women's oppression is the most fundamental form of oppression. Radical feminists claim that historically, women were the first oppressed group and that women's oppression is the most widespread, existing in virtually every known society. This women's oppression is the deepest in that it is the hardest form of oppression to eradicate and cannot be removed by other social changes, for example, the abolition of class society. Women's oppression causes the most suffering to its victims, qualitatively as well as quantitatively, although the suffering may often go unrecognized because of the sexist prejudices of both the oppressors and the victims (Tong, 1970). The radical feminist explain that men, rather than "society" or "conditions" have forced women into oppressive gender roles and sexual behaviour.

Radical feminists as stated by Romm and Sarakinsky (1994) focus on the issue of patriarchy. Patriarchy is a set of social relations which enables men to dominate and control women. Mitchel (1973) describes patriarchy as a form of violence that is practiced over women by men and male-dominated organisations. Radical feminists see systematic power relationships as lying at the root of women's oppression. They further see patriarchal relationships as the central line upon which all forms of oppression in society are based.

According to Millett (1970) patriarchal ideology, exaggerates biological differences between men and women, making certain that men always have the dominant or "masculine," roles and that women always have subordinate, or "feminine" ones. This ideology is particularly

powerful because through conditioning, men securing the apparent consent of the very women they oppress (Tong, 1989). The oppressors do this through institutions such as the school, the church, and the family, each of which justifies and reinforces women's subordination to men with the result that most women internalize a sense of inferiority to men. When women do not comply or refuse to accept patriarchal ideology men use coercion to accomplish what conditioning has failed to achieve. In patriarchal society there is a lot of intimidation to the oppressed by the oppressor.

To do away with patriarchal order in societies, one group of radical feminists, called radical-libertarian feminists' aim for an androgynous society which combines both masculine and feminine for the individual as well as for the society. While another group called the radical-cultural feminists, reject masculinity as a desirable quality and encourage women to embrace femaleness only. According to radical cultural feminists, women should emphasise traits culturally associated with women and the de-emphasise traits culturally associated with men. Therefore, they advocate for women centredness as a means of combating male-domination in society (Lown, 1969:7 cited in Biklen and Pollard, 1993). To be women-centred or women-identified requires putting women's lives and realities at the centre of women's lives in terms of social-economic, culture, political and all spheres of life.

1.10.3 Socialist Feminism

Socialist feminism arose out of dissatisfaction of the gender-blind Marxist thinking which included the thought that women's oppression was far less important than worker's oppression. What the women suffer at the hands of men is slight compared to what the proletariat suffers at the hands of bourgeois. Marxist feminists believe that class ultimately better accounts for women's status and functions. Socialist feminists on the other hand, argue

that with any class, women are less advantaged than men in their access to goods, power status and in their efforts toward self-actualisation (Lovell: 2003). Socialist Feminism further believe the struggle by women to achieve equality is secondary to the struggle by the working class to change society and have argued that class and gender inequalities reinforce each other and create groups that are doubly oppressed (Maguire, 1984). As a result women will be oppressed first as workers and secondly they will be oppressed by virtue of their gender. They further believe that under bourgeois society or class society, bourgeois women do not experience the same kind of oppression as the proletarian women. But the socialist feminists believe that gender and class play an approximately equal role in any explanation of women's oppression. As a result socialist feminists have developed two different approaches; the dual-systems theory and unified-system theory. These approaches both aim to provide a complete explanation of women's oppression. Dual-systems theorists maintain that patriarchy and capitalism are distinct sets of interests, which when they intersect, oppress women in particularly egregious ways. Dual-systems theorists describe capitalism as material structure or historically rooted mode of production, and patriarchy is described as a non-material structure that is, a largely ideological and psychoanalytic structure that transcends the contingencies of space in time. In contrast to dual-systems theorists, unified-system theorist attempt to analyse capitalism and patriarchy together through the use of one concept. According to the unified-system feminists, capitalism is not more separate from patriarchy than the mind from the body.

1.10.4 Black feminism

Black feminism highlights the triple burden of racism, poverty and sexism for black women. Black feminists criticise the other feminist theories as racist and ethnocentric. They argue that other brands of feminist theories are western and do not take into consideration the

experiences of the black woman. Eboh (1992) explains that black womanists, unlike white feminists, eschew bitterness in their confrontation and relationship with men. The black feminists do not negate men rather they accommodate them. Men are central to their lives not merely as husbands but also as sons and brothers, and their continuous presence is assured. They emphasise the triple oppression of black woman in terms of race, class and gender.

1.11 How the feminist theories will be integrated

It has already been stated that this study will be informed by feminist theories. Although their approaches are different, the feminist theories presented above have similar commitments and objectives. The feminists' concern is the girl/woman whom they feel is deprived of opportunities for attaining good education and good positions in various occupations which could put them in decision-making positions. The four theories are useful in discussing the participation of women in primary school headship position in Malawi because Malawi is a patriarchal society where, generally, men make the most important decisions including those affecting women's lives most.

In order to fully appreciate the factors influencing women's participation in primary school management in Malawi, this study draws from the four feminist theories presented above. The theories will be drawn upon when discussing the findings of the study. This eclecticism is justified because no single theory can explain the complexity of the problem under investigation.

1.12 Definition of Operational Terms

In this study the following terms are understood as follows:

- Cultural lag:** A situation where there are different rates of change among different parts of a society.
- Gender:** The socially constructed and described characteristics that are ascribed to people because of their sex. People's perceptions of how others should behave or the characteristics people believe others have are based upon the people's cultural expectations of what is male and what is female.
- Gender equality:** Implies that women and men are free to choose different (or similar) roles and different (or similar) outcomes in accordance with their preferences and goals
- Management:** Categories of persons responsible for making policy decisions at the organisational level, both public and private and those who are responsible for seeing that such policy decisions are carried out. In this study, this term is sometimes used to refer to headship position at primary school level. It is used to mean the process of making policy decisions and ensuring that the decisions are carried out.
- Participation:** The occupation of a position, the execution of responsibilities attached to that position, the exercise of the power and authority vested in that position, and the enjoyment of all the rewards that go with the position.
- Sex:** A biological description that divides most human beings into either females or males.

1.13 An Outline of the thesis

Chapter one has provided the background to the study, the national and international legal provisions of policy context of education in Malawi, statement of the problem, the aim of the study, specific objectives, significance of the study, the theoretical framework, among other things.

Chapter two reviews the extant literature related to the study. It examines the concept of feminism and the related concept of gender, women's participation in policy and decision-making positions, challenges and obstacles women face at workplace in attaining decision-making positions, experiences and reflections of women on gender related barriers, and women's participation in the education sector in Malawi.

Chapter three discusses the methodology of the study. Discussion centres on the research design, area of study, study population, sampling methods, instruments, data analysis, and ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality of the participants and the study's limitations.

Chapter four presents and discusses the results. Focus is on characteristics of schools in Lilongwe District, distribution of primary schools in Lilongwe Education Division, characteristics of the sampled schools, female representation in headship position, factors influencing females' under-representation and challenges faced by female headteachers.

Chapter five draws the conclusions based on the findings of the study. It also discusses the implications of the findings and makes some recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews available literature on women's participation in management, leadership and decision-making. It focuses on feminism, the concept of gender and proceeds to discuss women in management in general and women in education management in particular. The chapter also discusses the obstacles and challenges women face in the workplace in attaining management positions.

The literature on feminism is extensive and rich. Much of it has been shaped by the culture from which the brand of feminism has emerged. The feminist perspective and agenda have changed over time and the brief overview that follows covers the period from the 1960s to the present. In a number of western countries, women's movements lobbied governments for the introduction of legislation of women's rights. Relevant laws to entrench women's rights were enacted. In addition, equal opportunities agencies were established in government.

2.1 Feminism and gender representation in Malawi

The feminist discourse in the 1960s considered the ways in which women were similar to men and those in which they were dissimilar. It was observed that women faced many obstacles in their career development. For example, women working in the public sector in some countries were required to resign on marriage, presuming that they would have children

and would, therefore, need to stay at home to care for the family (Evans, 1995). The feminist movement was a force for equity between men and women. The objectives of feminism included not only equity but also liberation of women and men from systems of injustice. The goal was not to improve women's status relative to men but to empower women through more equitable distribution of power. Feminism advocates liberation through the elimination of all forms of oppression against women.

In recent years, greater attention has been devoted to gender at both national and international levels, and considerable efforts have been made to improve women's position in society in general and in the legal system in particular. Gender specific legal provisions have been adopted at the international level not only through human rights treaties such as CEDAW but also through other instruments such as the ones relating to the environment and to sustainable development (as reported by United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2003).

Although this is the legal position, there is an uneven gender distribution of the labour force in the formal and informal employment sector. Research done in 1985 worldwide showed that women constituted 16% of the formal wage employment. The situation has not changed much over the years (NGP, 2000). The implication has been low representation of women in decision-making positions. For example, in September 2007, the National Assembly had a total of 432 workers, of whom 54 (12.5%) were females. The Local Government had a total of 32 employees in decision-making positions, and only 2 (6%) of them were females.⁸ In the

⁸ This includes District Commissioners and Chief Executives for city assemblies.

Public Service,⁹ those in decision-making positions made a total of 689 of which 132 (19.2%) were females (Ministry of Women and Child Development Report, 2007-8).¹⁰

The gender gap as highlighted above, limits women's participation in decision-making positions. Previous studies (see for example, Kadzamira and Chibwana, 1999; Semu, 1992) indicate that some women, more especially female primary school teachers, are role models to girls. Obstacles for female teachers to become headteachers in primary schools, limit the number of role models for girls. This is because the girls think women have little chance of becoming leaders; as a result they do not put much effort in their studies to become great achievers in future (Semu, 1992). Women's participation in decision-making positions is one of the very important areas requiring gender equality and one that the Ministry of Education has to address.

Female participation in the teaching force in Malawi is low. As Table 1 indicates, between 1995 and 2007, the total number of primary school teachers ranged from 42,330 in 2007 to 53,444 in 2001. The percentage of female teachers remained at about 38% throughout the 1995-2007 period despite government's and other stakeholders' efforts to increase women's participation in the primary school teaching profession. This can be attributed to higher death rates, particularly due to the HIV and AIDS pandemic, among females than among males.

⁹ This includes, Chief Secretary to the President, Principal Secretaries, Head of Departments and Directors for different sections.

¹⁰ By September, 2008 the Ministry of Women and Child Development had not compiled the latest information, for 2008/2009.

**Table 1: Number and percentage of male and female primary school teachers,
1995-2007**

YEAR	MALE TEACHERS		FEMALE TEACHERS		TOTAL TEACHERS
	Number	%	Number	%	Number
1995	28,489	62	17,286	38	45,775
1997	28,660	61	18,710	39	47,370
1999	27,486	60	18,326	40	45,812
2000	29,687	62	18,153	38	47,840
2001	33,286	62	20,158	38	53,444
2002	28,563	62	17,468	38	46,031
2003	27,906	62	17,194	38	45,100
2004	27,102	62	16,850	38	43,952
2005	28,272	63	16,803	37	45,075
2006	26,893	62	16,304	38	43,197
2007	26,341	62	15,989	38	42,330

Source: Ministry of Education statistics (2007- 2008).

2.2 Gender representation in decision-making positions

Greater participation of women in decision and policy- making is essential at every level, if women are to contribute fully in all development sectors including education. Education and participation in decision-making are closely linked. The greater the access the women have to education, the greater their ability to participate in policy-making bodies (United Nations 2000). As UNICEF (1992:22) states, “education increases women’s status in the community

and leads to greater input into family and community decision-making.” Education is but one factor responsible for increasing women’s participation in decision-making and policy-making bodies. Education alone does not guarantee women’s access to positions of power in society.

Research by ILO (2001) has shown that women have demonstrated considerable leadership in community and informal organisations as well as in public office. However, socialisation and negative perceptions of women and men including stereotyping through the media reinforce the tendency for decision-making positions to remain the domain of men. Likewise, the under-representation of women in decision-making positions in the area of the arts, culture, sports, the media, education, religion and law have prevented women from having a significant impact on many key institutions (UNICEF, 1992). In all countries, women are under-represented at every level in government, especially in ministerial and other executive and legislative bodies. Szanton and Eleanor (1997) report that world-wide women held only 10 percent of parliamentary seats and 6 percent of ministerial level positions in 1994 and most of those women in ministerial positions were responsible for health, social welfare, education and culture or women’s affairs. These are areas that are traditionally considered to be women’s concerns. Traditionally, ministerial positions in the fields of the economy, politics, and agriculture or technical issues are almost exclusively a male preserve (UNDP 1999). It is further reported by UNDP (1999) that in the United Nations system, women held only 28.2 percent of all positions.

In Malawi, as of September, 2007, out of 29 cabinet ministers, only 6 (21%) were female and out of 15 deputy cabinet ministers 1 (0.07) was a woman. As of the middle of October, 2008, the percentage had declined to 7 (17.5%) of the 41 cabinet ministers and deputy ministers.

Similar to the situation described above, 2 of the female full ministers were in the ministries of women and child development and tourism, while the 2 female deputies were in education and health ministries. Only 2 female full ministers were in the areas of international relations and information and civic education. There was none in the ministries of finance and labour. Hill and King (1995) points out that, "geographically, culturally and historically, the marginalisation of women in society continues to be distressingly universal." In every country, women experience tensions that distract them from their full participation in the social, economical and political life of their community.

Studies carried out in the United States of America by Synda (1994) and Rensefield (1994), for instance, revealed that until recently women were expected to choose homemaking careers, that is the careers which aimed at making them good housewives, for example, sewing, cooking and knitting (Malambo and Ntalasha, 1995). This is reflected in recent years as only a few women are seen in jobs which could make them become policy-makers. Regardless of regional peculiarities or scale of responsibilities, the inequalities between men and women are greater, the closer they get to the top of the hierarchy (United Nations, 2005). However, it has also been observed by the World Bank (1995) that the inequalities have begun to lessen in recent years.

Women have recently made some in-roads into occupations once defined as "men's preserve." By the 1990s, for example, in the United States of America and Britain, women constituted the majority of workers in previously male-dominated professions such as accounting, journalism, psychology, and public administration (ILO, 1993). This indicates that many societies have realised that gender roles are socially constructed and not biological. Recently, it has also been observed that men have been going into female-dominated jobs,

such as nursing and secretarial work. This development affirms that indeed most of the gender roles are socially constructed and not biological, and can be changed. However, some societies are still lagging behind; for example, in many African countries because of tradition and culture. Men still dominate decision-making positions at every level and in almost every institution. The problem is compounded by the fact that issues of gender in African society are viewed as externally generated from the western countries.

The view that the gender discourse in African society is externally driven and that it receives its rationalisation from the western countries may explain why the concept of gender is not fully accepted in many African countries including Malawi. Although it is championed by activists, politicians and others, the critical mass seems not believe in gender equality. That is why issues of equality between men and women are usually frowned upon by many people. Some cite the Bible and the Koran as the ultimate sources for justifying the inequality that exists between men and women. This attitude shows how deeply ingrained differentiation of gender roles is in human psyche.

2.3 Women's leadership and public life

Leadership is intricately connected with the ability to use power to influence action for change. The nature of leadership is an influencing relationship occurring among mutually dependent members. People need opportunities to exercise their leadership. The "women's leadership" refers to both "women" who take leadership and to particular political and philosophical perspectives that women bring to leadership. It has been observed that even though women could bring certain skills to the workplace, the community and the home, they are rarely given opportunities to exercise their leadership skills. Recognising women's leadership potential goes hand in hand with accepting that there are many types, styles and

areas of leadership. Some of the disparities between men and women in public life and leadership have narrowed but wide gaps remain (Anand, 1993) as women still play a very minor role in high-level political and economic decision-making in most countries. According to reports by the United Nations (1995), women were also poorly represented in the top echelons of government. It was indicated that, overall, women are the least represented in ministerial portfolios dealing with executive, economic, political and legal affairs of many countries. Men maintain a stronghold on such key areas as defence, economic policy and political affairs in all regions.

Boutros Boutros Ghali, the former Secretary General of the United Nations, pointed out that women have always been better represented at entry-level positions than at higher levels (United Nations 1995). He further noted that, although the 1980s saw more women in entry and mid-level positions, women were still well below 20% representation at senior level.

2.4 Challenges and Obstacles Women Face at the Workplace in Attaining Decision-Making Positions

2.4.1 Management positions

Women face diverse challenges when they want to become managers. Ducci (1993) categorises the challenges into two: structural and situational obstacles. According to him, educational level, occupational experience and income level are regarded as structural obstacles while family responsibilities and dependence on the opposite sex by females as situational obstacles.

Semu (1992) explains that there are societal structures and expectations for women which are regarded as situational obstacles that hinder women from participating in decision-making positions. The gender division of labour as well as the unequal allocation of resources at all

levels from the household to national and global society; explain how these contribute to the state in which women find themselves.

Carell (2000) calls obstacles that prevent qualified females to attain higher positions in their work place as "glass ceiling." Glass ceiling is a term coined in the 1970s in the United States of America to describe the invisible barriers, created by attitudinal and organisational prejudices, which block women from senior executive positions. That this glass ceiling occurs in the workplace or in politics is essentially a reflection of social and economic gender inequality (Wirth, 2001).

Despite efforts by women groups and United Nations Organisations to break these barriers that prevent women from participating in decision-making positions, the world's biggest companies still exclude women from top executive jobs as evidenced by the fact that women only hold 1 to 3 percent of these top executive positions (Danish Publications, 2005). The International Labour Organisation (ILO) observes that the higher one goes, the larger the gender gap (ILO Report 2005). It indicates that discrimination becomes greater where most power is exercised.

Tizifa (2000) concurs with ILO when she argues that it is the patriarchal order which reinforces women's subordination within all classes and ethnic groups though with different dynamics in each case. She further explains that a woman is defined in terms of the family set up. This entails taking care of the children and the house management. To some extent, these family commitments conflict with women's professional work. It is hard at the same time to accommodate both the family and job responsibilities as some of the institutional arrangements are not tolerant of both.

Chafetz (1988), quoted in Semu (1992:11) explains that “institutional discrimination is when women are seen as anomalies that do not fit properly with the male-defined social order.” Schaefer (2000:266) defines institutional discrimination as a denial of opportunities and equal rights to individuals and groups that result from the normal operations of a society. Those discriminated against may be members of minority group, ethnic, religious, or racial groups etcetera. In patriarchal society, this kind of discrimination affects females more than males since the latter are in positions of power authority. In the education system, studies that examine the barriers that keep women from becoming school managers document a number of reasons some of which are lack of a support system, stereotyping, lack of self-confidence and devaluation of women.

2.4.2 Lack of support system

Ouston (1993) says that in most cases women lack support from both males and females to prepare them for interviews to secure a job or go into higher offices. Women are much less likely than men to have formal or informal networks that let them know about jobs and help them get short-listed for interviews. It is believed that, world-wide, many families depend on women for child-caring responsibilities (United Nations 2005 and Seguret 1993).

In many cases during interviews, questions about the number of children, dependants and ages of the children are asked, because some of those who hire women believe that child-caring responsibilities make women undesirable candidates for managerial positions (Coleman, 2002). However, none of the studies carried out in Malawi and those that have been reviewed in this study have reported that women experience such questions. This could be explained by the fact that hitherto what happens in interviews has not been a subject of

research. Nevertheless, Coleman's argument needs to be considered because the mentality of looking down on women as a result of the gender roles assigned to them by the society, which are not biological, may negatively affect many qualified women. As a result they may not get hired or promoted.

However, in relation to education in Malawi, Kadzamira and Chibwana (2000) established, on the one hand, that the majority of female pupils preferred to be taught by women because they felt it was easy for them to relate to the women. It was also reported by the female pupils that they were sometimes sexually harassed by some male teachers. On the other hand, the same study established that there were some negative comments from boys and girls about female teachers' ability to teach in the upper classes. Croft (2000) notes that to break through gender-stereotyping in pupils' perceptions, female teachers need support in developing additional classroom management strategies that break down existing prejudices about their teaching ability. Kadzamira and Chibwana's observations are pertinent to the understanding of the dynamics of teacher-pupil relationships. Some of the challenges that these relationships pose may be overcome by implementing Croft's proposal. The point here is that, for female teachers to get promoted to the position of headteacher, they need to get hired first then promoted later.

2.4.3 Stereotyping

Feldman (1987) defines stereotype as a kind of schema in which beliefs and expectations about members of a group are held simply on the basis of their membership in that group. Robbins (2003) agrees with Feldman by looking at stereotyping as judging somebody on the basis of one's perception of the group to which that person belongs. Schaefer (2002) goes further to explain that stereotypes are unreliable generalisations about all members of a group

that do not recognise individual differences within the group. Thus a dominant group has the power not only to define itself legally but to define a society's values.

Through stereotyping, societies have traditional expectations regarding appropriate behaviours for both male and females. Feldman (1987) cites competitiveness and ambition as characteristics attached to men and if a woman is aggressive it is said that she behaves like a man, while women are expected to be passive, to have nurturing characteristics and to be meek. Because of their nurturing behaviour, female primary school teachers are requested to teach in infant classes, while men are given headship positions (Croft, 2000). The reason for putting men in headship positions could be because it is believed that men have the aggressive characteristics which go very well with disciplining of pupils and teachers.

Women are viewed as lacking the capacity to be leaders and that they are unwilling to be away from home due to family commitments (Torrington, 1997). This is a generalisation that cannot be applied to all women. Women who seek professional equality discover that the yard-stick for their performance is compared to male patterns of commitment. Gender stereotyping, unfortunately which is upheld by various cultures, does not consider women's potential because conclusions are made before an individual's performance. This stereotyping has a negative impact on women's advancement. It is also generally believed that psychologically women are very emotional and that it would be difficult for them to handle tough discipline cases when given leadership positions.

In a study by Spencer and Podmere in 1992 in the United Kingdom, it was established that some factors which contribute to the professional marginalisation of women were stereotypes that women are unstable, emotional, and not decisive enough (quoted by Ouston, 1994). They

further said women have fear of competition; as a result they reduce the prestige of their profession. In fact Cassel and Walsh (1998) stress the psychological barriers associated with taking on more powerful roles by women and outline some of the difficulties women face at the work place. However, the authors argue that there is need to analyse the extent to which male-oriented perspectives underlie the practice and values of institutions. Women encounter various negative stereotypes in their everyday life. Society puts the women on a scale and weighs them to see if they behave according to the stereotypes. Women will continue to be negatively affected by the stereotypes unless the women themselves challenge these stereotypes. They can do that by, for example, getting into leadership positions on merit and displaying high standards of performance in such positions. This will show that, while they are different from men, they are equal to them.

2.4.4 Male prejudice

For many centuries, men have acted as “gatekeepers” in setting standards, producing the social knowledge and decreeing what is significant, relevant and important in light of their own experience. Pigford and Tonnsen (1993) point out that to control, who gets in, and who gets promoted; organisations devise their own formal and informal screening systems. Healey and Kraithman (1996) comment that at school level, governing bodies and Local Education Authority (LEA) decides who to promote. Women face unequal struggle in reaching for senior positions in schools because in most cases the governing bodies and LEA are male dominated. Men are the gatekeepers who often prefer promoting a young man to a young woman with the assumption that at one point a young woman will need a break to give birth which will affect the school management.

In a study done in Indonesia by Asian Institute of Management (AIM, 1987 cited in Soekarsono, 1994) the ex-President Director of a leading private Bank in Jakarta, who was one of the key informants in the study, declared in an interview that:

... If I have to choose between two applicants for a job, a man and a woman with the same capabilities, I will choose a man. A man has an edge, because he is rational. The leaders in this world are mostly men, right? In women, emotional feelings will always be there, where as in our jobs we need to make decisions based on rational thinking, not on mere feelings (Soekarsono, 1994:18).

Male prejudices are one of the challenges which women face to get into the management positions. Carell (2000) defines prejudice as a process where stereotypes strengthen one's sense of superiority to the members of the stereotyped group. This is a negative attitude toward an entire category of people, often of a different sex, ethnic or racial origin (Schaefer, 2002). In most cases men are prejudiced against women when issues of promotion are considered (Marshall 1984). More men are promoted because those who hire employees feel that men are more confident enough than women to work with little supervision.

The prejudice against women is not always based on sound judgment. Women's performance is disregarded. It is often concluded that as long as it is a woman she will not manage the job. Cole (2004) notes that prejudices against women exist in the workplace when considering those to go into higher office and, unless these prejudices are overcome, women will continue to be disadvantaged.

In many cases, women who are competent and have good qualifications are not considered. Hill and Ragland (1995) explained that people in positions of power, not only frequently decide finalists for other positions but they also quite often determine their successors. These gatekeepers mentor their successors and most cases, men are at an added advantage because

male managers are afraid of mentoring subordinates to avoid misconceptions of the society. One misconception that negatively affects the advancement of women is that women do not get decision making positions on merit but through unaccepted way such as "bottom power". Bottom power refers to a situation where women gain favours from men in position of influence or power in exchange for sex.

2.4.5 Discrimination

In the 1980s, and 1990s, many studies carried out in different countries looked at reasons why women are less likely than men to become headteachers or other senior leaders in education (Ouston, 1993; Ozga 1993; Shakeshaft, 1989). According Coleman (2000), these studies discussed overt and covert discrimination particularly related to appointment and questions of domestic responsibility in relation to child care which prevent many women from becoming full time formal workers. Some surveys done in other countries, such as in Nigeria in the 1990s, revealed results which to some extent were similar to those in European countries. Coleman (2000) and Coleman (2001) reported that female secondary headteachers felt isolated as leaders with about two thirds reporting experiencing of discrimination and sexism. They felt sometimes that they had to justify their existence as female leaders. The male heads never experienced such situations.

2.4.6 Concentration of female headteachers in urban areas

The 1990s surveys discovered that geographical position matter when appointing female headteacher. For example, in England, more female teachers were appointed into headteacher positions in London and fewer in the country side. This experience is similar to other countries including Malawi (Kadzamira and Chibwana, 2000; Semu, 1992) where more female headteachers are found in urban areas. Rural areas are often deprived of qualified

female teachers partly because of poor conditions in the rural areas. It may also be because urban-based teachers are more visible than their rural counterparts since most of the Ministry of Education headquarters and most of the appointing authorities are based in urban areas.

2.5 Attitude of females towards decision making positions

2.5.1 Lack of self-confidence

Women have, in certain instances, been victims of their own behaviour and actions. Lack of confidence has acted as a barrier to the advancement of some women. Their fear of challenging cultural expectations sometimes makes them fail to attain leadership positions. As a result, this promotes the status quo as far as women's status is concerned.

Seguret (1993) agrees that society recreates itself and cultural models repeat themselves. Women in most societies feel that they cannot go beyond the limits of their respected homes because of the cultural settings. It, therefore, becomes hard for women to progress in a cultural set up which is not conducive to them and which many women are not confident enough to challenge. For example, in most societies, women are expected not to talk in the presence of men. This set up does not give them confidence to express their own views in the presence of men.

Ikiriza (1995) point out that lack of self-esteem also helps to explain why females internalise failure and males externalise it. Generally, when a female fails to do something, she blames herself for performing poorly and this makes her to not try again, while a male blames factors that are external to him. Women overlook the fact that sometimes they are rejected because of the negative perception the society has on them. As a result, they find themselves enmeshed in a tangle of little encouragement and probable reprobation, which make them hesitate about

struggling to advance in professional or political careers. This contributes to their lack of confidence and self-esteem (Marshall, 1984).

Strickland and Duvry (2003) claims that, it may be the case that women are not cut out for managerial responsibility and management roles, because in most cases women do not seek such appointments or promotions. It can be argued that most women want these appointment and promotions but some of them lack confidence to seek them. They feel that they cannot compete favourably with men in interviews for promotions.

Ouston (1993) points out that women's lack of confidence in taking up management roles could be due to the fact that they do not have a common perception of how women in management roles should behave. They rarely discuss what would be expected of them if they got into higher offices, while men tend to enquire from others in management positions, what is expected of them so that they build up confidence in themselves before they even apply for post. As a result, it is difficult to promote somebody who has not applied for the post. Some of these negative responses lead to the "pull her down" (popularly referred to, ironically, as the PhD) syndrome which refers to women's tendency to try and bring a fellow woman down by not supporting her because of petty jealous. When women experience this they have negative attitudes towards managerial positions. However, it has been observed that not only women experience the PhD syndrome; men, too, have reported to have experienced the PhD although the focus has been on women. The PhD syndrome may just be a universal phenomenon due to intense competition for position and jealousies among employees.

Some women comment negatively when a fellow woman has been promoted. They feel the promotion is not based on merit but rather earned in a dirty and unacceptable way. Okeke (1998), for example, explains that some women fail to attain leadership positions because of fear of challenging cultural expectations of their role by referring to what is known as "bottom power." Some women do not apply for or accept these positions because they do not want to be associated with the bottom power syndrome.

While bottom power may be anathema to some women, others thrive on it in order to attain their life's goals. This bottom power syndrome has a negative effect, because it demeans women as they are treated like sex objects. Women who are full of self-confidence are very unlikely to use "bottom power" to attain decision-making positions. However, the issue of bottom power, just like the PhD syndrome is not experienced by females only; even some men in junior positions experience it. A man in junior position may feel obliged to have a sexual relationship with a female boss in exchange for promotion. However, bottom power is more common among females since men in higher position can always force themselves on women subordinates as a way of exercising their power in a way female bosses may not. Although the situation may equally apply to men, the fact that men are predominant in positions of power, there is a sense in which the bottom power phenomenon may be peculiar to women, and, indeed, makes the probability less for men in junior positions to endear themselves to women in higher position.

Self-confidence, as Bush (1994) puts it, is the necessary pre-requisite for successful job application, and it has been suggested that women are more likely to be lacking in self-confidence than their male colleagues. That is why, for example, men tend to be more visible in school life than women. They accept chairing committees or represent their schools than

women. Men are exposed at an early age to decision-making situations. A comparative study done by Maieze in 1981 (cited by Bennett and Le Compete, 1990) indicates that men who enter the administrative careers appear to have decided to do so early in their years. In contrast, women do not decide to become administrators until later years (Bennett and Le Compete, 1990). Owen and Drake (1998) observe that good educational management in many cases is the cumulative result of a long period of apprenticeship and training. In other words, self-confidence is built over a long period of time.

Ouston (1993) argues that women have been taught that womanly virtue is modesty. Sometimes they give others credit for the work they have done themselves. Some women feel embarrassed or that they are being mocked when somebody praises or acknowledges their work. This can be attributed, in part, to lack of self-esteem.

Furthermore, women who aspire for leadership positions often keep their aspirations secret. Pigford and Tonnsen (1993) observe that the unwillingness to risk negative reactions from both men and women make some women not to reveal that they aspire for the leadership positions. They feel that if they indicate so, they will be seen to be "pushy." To avoid being perceived as "pushy," they do not indicate that they are interested in the positions. In addition, females are more likely than males to apply only for posts which they are fully qualified for, while males are more likely than females to take risks (Ozga 1993) and apply for jobs which they do not qualify for.

2.5.2 Gender differences in leadership styles

Historically, school management and leadership, worldwide; have been considered as a male domain. To a large extent, masculine images of management overlay and strengthen existing

prejudices about women in leadership positions and serve to rationalise management positions as suitable for men. In his study, Coleman (2002) found that the perception of both female and male headteachers was that there was a stereotypical if not outdated norm of authoritarian leadership held by governors and parents that endorsed masculinity. As a result, male leadership was preferred to female leadership (Coleman, 2002). This is the case because males have historically managed most schools.

Morris (1998) reports that research on whether men and women have different managerial styles have yielded mixed results. Most studies have found no significant differences in administrative behaviour between male and female principals (Adkison, 1981; Davies and Gunawarden, 1992). However, in their qualitative studies, Shakeshaft (1989), Rosener (1998), Kelly, Hale and Burgess (1999) found that management styles by headteachers were gender related. These three studies are supported by Eagly, Karua and Johnson (1992) American study on gender and leadership styles in management of organisations including schools, found some evidence of gender differences in managing the schools. It was discovered that female heads were more democratic when conducting their duties and would involve every individual in their management; while men were very authoritative; they did not like participative style. The argument has been advanced that any differences observed may be the result of women managers drawing on the skills and attitudes developed from different life experiences (Court, 1994).

It has been observed that the structure of the education system is similar to that of traditional home where a man is the head of the family. According to Al-Khalifa (1989), traditional traits and qualities associated with males, which are expected to be demonstrated by both male and female headteachers are aggression, competitive behaviours, an emphasis on

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control rather than negotiation and collaboration, and the pursuit of competition rather than shared problem-solving. The male headteachers demonstrate these qualities in the school environment while female headteachers bring their nurturing qualities from the traditional home into the school environment. Every institution has its own culture and expected behaviour of its leader. Ramphele (1995) notes that institutional cultures reflect the collective and cumulative customs, rituals, symbols and preferences of the people following through them overtime. Since most of the schools in Malawi have been headed by male headteachers, the society expects that when a female teacher has been promoted into the headteachers' position she should behave like a man. As Ramphele suggests, female managers who fail to display the masculine leadership style in formal institutions are regarded as outsiders in the broader perception of the society and have no mandate to negotiate for their position in such institutions. The leadership styles that a female or male headteacher displays are influenced by many factors in addition to gender roles. The other factors include the type of school (co-education, boys' or girls' only school, mission or government school, etcetera), the attitude of teachers, pupils and the community towards the headteacher, on the one hand, and higher authorities such as the PEA and the DEM, on the other hand. It is important that females are allowed to display their unique qualities and leadership styles that realize their full potential. As Hargreaves (1992) suggests, what matters in the management of schools is not the sex of an individual person which matters but the individual's performance and capabilities.

2.6 Experiences and reflections of women on gender-related barriers

This section presents some observations about the situation and experiences of women and the gender-based barriers to women's participation in decision-making.

2.6.1 Participation of women in various sectors

Hirschman (1981) found that 52% (5,547,460) of the population of Malawians was female and that 30% of the heads of household in rural areas were women. It also found that the overwhelming majority of women were smallholder subsistence farmers. The study established that in the formal civil service planning machinery, women's participation was negligible and there were no women in any of the three central planning agencies on any of the ministerial planning units. All principal secretaries and all deputy secretaries were men. This was due, in part, to higher illiteracy rate among women (about 80%) than among men (about 61%). Some of the participants in Hirschman's study observed that culture, history and tradition explained the situation of women. Other participants said it was natural for women not to participate in some kinds of job, while yet others blamed the missionaries for aggravating the situation. The views of a male participant and a female participant below indicate the role played by socialisation in a patriarchal society. The male participant observed that:

Our custom is that women should be subordinate to men and support them. This is how it always has been and it will not change easily. We always have been a male dominated society. Ask any woman about decisions they will talk but in the end they will say: you must ask the man. So this is culture (Hirschman 1981:6).

The female participant's observation was that:

Women are slotted into roles right from the start. The home roles are exclusive to women. She is completely tied to them. Right from the start boys are treated differently. Boys are allowed to go out and play... Girls have to help mothers. In the family fathers have the final word? Women just listen even if they know he is wrong and fathers teach sons that this is the man's rightful role (Hirschman, 1981:6).

Nearly three decades after Hirschman's (1981) survey, the situation of women in Malawi has not remained the same. The attitudes may not have changed much, but the political landscape has changed from a monolithic one party authoritarian regime to a multiparty democracy.

This political dynamism has been reflected in the appointment of women to the positions of Principal Secretary and Director in the key ministries such as Agriculture, Education and Labour. And as has been observed, the Ministry of Education has a clearly-defined policy concerning girls and women at primary and secondary school whose ultimate aim is to improve the status of women in the country. But the aim of the Hirschman's study above suggests that the women themselves have to be the main driving force for success.

Recent studies conducted in South Africa concerning women representation in the education sector established that although women constituted 64% of all teachers in South Africa, the majority of women were under-qualified. This under-qualification was solved by the introduction of new policies (Hofmeyer and Hall 1996) where under-qualified teachers were expected to go for further education. This situation and the responses to it are similar to those found and expressed throughout the developing world. However, it must be realised that policies may remove the visible prejudices but not the underlying ones.

2.6.2 Improvement in women's representation in management positions

In a study done by Hasibuan-Sedyono (1998), it is reported that in spite of the male-dominated management scene in Indonesia, women managers have been increasingly making their mark, gradually gaining management positions. Hasibuan-Sedyono (1998: 83) observed:

Indeed the sounds of the shattering glass ceiling have been heard in many organizations as the 40 per cent of Indonesian women who are in the work force having slowly and gradually gained management positions.

The road to managerial success in Indonesia is nonetheless fraught with difficulties imposed by traditional cultural values. The average Indonesian woman manager still has to cope with conflicting demands which arise from her activities as an executive, and as a wife and mother. The Indonesian society still closely relates family welfare with the mother.

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The road to managerial success in Indonesia is nonetheless fraught with difficulties imposed by traditional cultural values. The average Indonesian woman manager still has to cope with conflicting demands which arise from her activities as an executive, and as a wife and mother. The Indonesian society still closely relates family welfare with the mother.

Traditionally, the woman is still expected to be a wife and mother, to keep house and bring up the children. If by any chance the family of the said successful career woman is in a less than ideal situation, she will be ruthlessly condemned as a failure. The few women who have "made it" mostly attributed their success to their own hard work and support from their boss or mentor and most of all their husbands (AIM, 1987). AIM conducted a survey on women managers in business organizations, which indicate that women who have been successful as managers went through a long route to success than their male counterparts did. The study reports that:

For men, starting at "zero" and getting to a "plus" is easier. For women, starting from "negative point", they have to erase the "negative" first before they can even get to "zero"! In this sense, a woman has to prove herself first. She has to work harder to be accepted at the same level as men (AIM, 1987-89).

Women managers cannot avoid being judged as women. Although it is unfair to judge somebody by his or her gender, this is what is happening in almost every society worldwide and women must cope with and address this reality than attempt to ignore it.

2.7 Women's participation in the education sector in Malawi

The Civil Service statistics indicate that the teaching profession in Malawi has more females than any other profession (Republic of Malawi, 2008). This is because it is perceived that the teaching profession is suitable for women as it is more compatible with a woman's family responsibilities because it has short working hours (Tizifa, 2000). One would have expected that their larger numbers would be reflected in appointments to senior management positions in the Malawi schools system. The women in the education sector are, however, mostly concentrated at the lower levels of management, usually placed in non-strategic positions, for example, infant section at primary school level (Croft, 2000).

2.8 Training of fewer female teachers than male teachers

The teaching profession has more females compared to many other professions and that the Ministry of Education has more female civil servants as compared to the Ministry of Health, for example.¹¹ However, these female teachers numerically are outnumbered by the males. Table 2 is showing the number of teacher trainees and their qualifications as well as the percentage accounted for by female trainees. These were trainees who were recruited into the teacher training colleges to pursue a teacher training course between 1991 and 1996.

Table 2: Percentage of female trainees, 1991-1996

		YEARS					
Qualifications		1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1991-96
		% F	% F	%F	%F	%F	%F
JCE		35.2	45.0	43.7	33.3	32.3	38.9
N		1,771	2,180	2,158	1,403	1471	8,983
MSCE		34.2	30.4	37.2	40.0	46.2	37.7
N		1,574	1,364	1,466	1,643	1,483	7,530
JCE & MSCE		34.8	39.4	41.1	36.9	34.6	38.3
N		3,345	3,544	3,624	3,046	3,354	16,513

SOURCE: Data from Kunje & Lewis (2000) & Kunje and Chimombo (1999)

¹¹ As of 2007 the Ministry of Health had 5,778 females while the Ministry of Education had 19,489 female teachers.

From 1991/92 to 1995/96 academic years, about 38% of the 16,513 teacher trainees enrolled in TTCs such as Blantyre TTC, Lilongwe TTC, Kasungu TTC, Mzuzu TTC,¹² and Karonga TTC, were female. The percentage of females increased from about 35% in 1991/92 to about 41% in 1993/94 but it declined afterwards to about 35% in 1995/96. During this period, the female in-take was lower than male in-take in each of the academic years. The in-take for these Colleges was at 540 for each college. Out of this, 390 (72%) were males and 150 (28%) were females. The highest percentage of females was recorded in the 1993/94 academic year when females accounted for 41.1% of the trainees. Only very few primary schools teachers were trained outside the country. Therefore, the in-take of female and male students to undergo a teacher training course at TTCs in Malawi reflects the imbalance of female and male primary school teachers in the country.

The basic requirement for enrolment into primary teacher training has been a junior school certificate. A study conducted by Kunje and Lewis in 2000 indicates that from 1991/1992 to 1993/94 there were fewer female students holding MSCE certificates than those holding JCE certificates among the trainees (Kunje and Chimombo, 1999), as table 1 shows. The table also shows that in each of the 5 academic years from 1991/92 to 1995/96, female trainees, whether with JCE or MSCE were outnumbered by male trainees. Female trainees continued to be outnumbered even in the 1999 intake. In 1999, out of 9,404 students that took the teaching course in the six colleges of Karonga, Kasungu, Lilongwe, St. Joseph, Blantyre and Montfort Teacher Training College which were there then, 5,786 were males and 3,615 were females giving a gender gap of 2,171 in favour of males. Females represented 35.4 percent of the teachers (WILSA/SADC 2005). The selection of fewer women than men to pursue the teacher training courses from 1991 to 1996 helped to perpetuate the existing gender gap

¹² It changed from Mzuzu TTC to Mzuzu University in 1999.

between male and female teachers in primary schools. The effects of the gender disparity in the selection to TTCs in the 1990s are being experienced today.

In a study conducted in Malawi by Swainson between 1980 and 1995 established that female enrolment in Malawian teacher TTCs varied little and was around 38% at the beginning and up to the end of the period of the study (Swainson, N., Gordon R. and Kadzamira, E. 1998). This was a reflection of government policy that reserved only around third of all boarding places at the residential colleges for women (Kunje and Chimombo, 1999). Males outnumbered females across all the Malawi Integrated Teacher Training Programme (MITTEP) cohorts, and only 36% were females (Kunje and Lewis, 2000). Croft (2000) reports the findings of a similar study conducted between 1997 and 2000 which established the continued under-representation of women in the teaching force. There were relatively low numbers of women in the profession (39%) of the teaching force and also under-qualification of many women teachers. However, Croft attributed this to the legacy of a historic lack of equity in access to primary and secondary education for girls. He further said, "as long as gender gaps continue in the school systems it will continue to affect the future supply of teachers" (Croft, 2000:12).

2.9 Participation of women in education management

The position of women in the labour market is partly mirrored by their performance in the educational system. Davies and Gunawardena (1992) indicate that although women are in majority in education in most rich countries only a few of them occupy the top management positions, such as supervisory leadership, head of department as well as directors in the ministries' sections.

In a recent research conducted in Malawi, it is reported that participation of women in education management at secondary school level and other education departments, for example, District Education Offices, Education Division Offices, TTCs and Ministry of Education Headquarters was fair in the sense that the proportion of women in school management corresponded or matched with the proportion of women in the education system at that level (Tizifa, 2000). It was recorded that the percentage of female teachers ranged from 29% to 33% and that female secondary headteachers in three divisions was 22% while in the sampled schools it was 39%. These percentages imply that there is still need to increase the participation of women in management position as well as the percentages of female teachers in secondary schools.

Tizifa's study further established that the further away one moved from the school level, the lower the representation of women in management. Women became less and less at district and division levels until they almost disappeared at the Ministry Headquarters. These levels were seen to represent the economic or political sphere where all the economic and political rewards were where decision- making, status and prestige lay. This situation was attributed to the socialisation process in the patriarchal order which made men gatekeepers to important positions and also made women accept the status quo (Tizifa, 2000).

A study in the Gambia and South Africa that examined teachers' explanations of what teaching is, found that they often used the "language" of parenting as the basic metaphor for primary teaching (Jessop and Penny, 1998). In the early standards, parenting was sometimes interpreted as mothering (Croft, 2000). If this particular understanding is similar to Malawian context, then this could be the reason for stereotyping even in management levels.

Furthermore, teaching has always been one of the first professions open to women, making the number of women teacher a revealing indicator of employment opportunities. As reported by United Nations (Robinson, 1997), teachers are important as role models for young girls. Female teachers are a benefit to the society including pupils in schools. As part of providing greater equity for women, access to teaching as a career, is important because female teachers in schools are often thought to be potential role models for girl pupils (Kunje and Chimombo, 1999). Kadzamira and Chibwana (2000) found that when school pupils had role models these tended to be a person of the same sex in formal employment. The United Nations reports that in Latin America and the Caribbean women constitute two thirds and three fourths respectively of all primary school teachers. It further says that in Asia and the Pacific region nearly half the primary school teachers are women, compared with the percentages in the past years. Increasingly, primary and secondary teachers are women in most regions. Between 1985 and 1995, the global percentage of teachers who were women slightly increased from 55 to 56 percent at primary school level and from 42 to 47 percent at secondary school level (World Bank 1995 and ILO 1998). Although these figures are rising, women are still under-represented in teaching at higher level as well as decision-making positions in the education system.

Morris (1998) and Hasibuan-Sedyono (1998) report that research done in countries, such as Indonesia, Bangladesh, West Indies, Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago, Ghana and South Africa show that the traditional view that women should be engaged in activities that are more suitable to their roles as mothers and caregivers, discourage women from enrolling in the fields traditionally occupied by men, hence fewer women in decision-making positions. Danish Publications (2000) reports that the education system is still gender segregated in a number of areas, and this leads to a gender segregated labour market. It has been observed

that women who work in the field of education are employed at the lower levels and a low representation of women is found among school principals at all level.

A study conducted by National College of School Leadership in Nottingham in England provides an exemplar of the leadership situation in English large primary schools (Southworth and Weindling, 2002). It was established that in 2001, 56.7% of all headteachers of large schools were men even though women made up the majority of all teachers. Men comprised only 11.8% of primary school teachers yet as much as about 39.8% of all the 17,922 schools¹³ were headed by men.

It was also established during Southworth and Weindling's study that, of primary teachers with over twenty years experience, one in every two males was a headteacher compared with one in every five females who was a headteacher. The study attributed this gap in leadership positions between male teachers and female teachers to different patterns of career aspirations between men and women. Some of the factors contributing to low availability of females in leadership positions were that most women accommodated family responsibilities and thought of leadership later, whereas men had these aspirations from the beginning of their career. In addition, career breaks, part-time teaching often used by women to balance family and work, contributed to low participation in school management. The other issue worth noting was relocation. Most females indicated that they could not relocate themselves and disturb their children's studies and their spouses work for the headship position elsewhere. This factor deterred women from seeking promotions (Coleman 2000), because in some cases the headship vacancy was far from where they were. By refusing to relocate for the promotion purpose, they gave the chance to male teachers who had no problems to relocate.

¹³ The 17,922 schools includes large and small schools and 37.8% male headteachers includes all schools(17,922)

A similar study was done in Greece between 1999 and 2000 by Kyriakoyssis and Saiti with the aim of investigating the factors accounting for the lack of ambition among Greek female teachers in reaching managerial positions in the higher echelons of education's hierarchical structure (Kyriakoyssis and Saiti 2006). The analysis was performed on data collected from 304 female primary school teachers during 1999-2000 academic year. These were randomly selected from the 10 Greek Prefectures. An anonymous questionnaire was administered to female primary school teachers from the 10 prefectures. The study established that there were more female teachers than male teachers in Greece public schools and yet very few were in administration. This arose from the findings that 81.9% of 304 female primary schools teachers who were involved in the study indicated that family responsibilities was the main reason for a woman's lower likelihood of promotion. This was so because in Greece men had not yet fully accepted an equal share of responsibility in raising children and doing household chores.

Some 37.2% of the teachers shared the belief that women were less likely than men to desire promotions due to the extra managerial responsibilities. The women were less attracted and unwilling to apply for administration positions because it was attributed to the extra-managerial responsibilities and work pressure, which could affect their personal and social life. The respondents further indicated that there were disincentives to pursue a position in school administration which were largely attributed to unreliable Greek Education System. In addition, women were not ready for displacement through promotions. Another notable result worth mentioning was the failure of the Greek government to encourage and motivate women seeking promotions early in their career.

Grace's (1995) findings in England, contradict Kyriakoyssis and Saiti's. For Grace, the English women headteachers did not report any gender relation as a relevant issue of educational management. According to Grace, although there were more male headteachers and fewer male teachers as compared to more female teachers and fewer female headteachers gender was in no way a factor for the variation. It just happened that there were more male headteachers than female headteachers. Having more male headteachers was not because women were sidelined. Grace suggests the reason may be that, the female teachers were unwilling to take up the headship positions.

A study by Coleman (1999) investigated leadership styles of headteachers in England. The sample of this survey was drawn from headteachers of secondary and primary schools in England, including headteachers of special schools. The findings for the study were that women were favoured as headteachers of all girls schools. And it was also established that, for female headteachers to be allocated to a co-education school or boys school was comparatively difficult. In relation to perception of leadership styles of heads, the perception of both female and male headteachers were that there was a stereotypical or outdated norm of authoritarian leadership held by governors and parents that endorsed masculinity as traits for headteachers and therefore male headteachers. Contrary to masculine and feminine stereotypes, the self-perception of both male and female headteachers was similar in relation to their management and leadership styles. Both men and women saw themselves as collaborative and people-centred leaders, incorporating a number of both feminine and masculine qualities, but tending towards the feminine. However, there was a significant minority of older female headteachers who tended towards a more masculine style of leadership. For this study female headteachers saw advantages in being women because they could diffuse aggression and felt free from male stereotypes of headship.

Another study by Coleman was conducted in 2004. The aim of this study was to investigate the leadership styles by male and female headteachers. This was a follow up study to the 1999. Both male and females confirmed that there were still gender-related barriers, to becoming headteachers. Gender-related barriers were most common among secondary school female headteachers. On the other hand, most men in primary education experienced gender-related barriers and were not comfortable to head the primary schools while females felt unwelcome to head secondary schools.

Another study entitled "Low Participation of Women in Education Management and Leadership" was done by Chinguwo et al (2007) of Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) between 2005 and 2006. The goal of the study was to investigate factors that contribute to the low participation of women in leadership positions in education. This was a comparative study among three countries, namely, Malawi, Zambia and South Africa. The findings were that in Malawi, the PEAs and the Teaching Service Commission appointed most of the headteachers in primary schools, while the secondary schools headteachers were selected through interviews. Unlike South Africa and Zambia, in Malawi most headteachers indicated were not ready or prepared for headship position because they felt they lacked the necessary training. According to the findings, it seems that qualification was a potential pre-requisite for one to attain leadership position. Most females in South Africa had enough qualifications for leadership than those in Malawi and Zambia. There were more male than female managers in all the three countries. Women managers were 15 per cent for Zambia, 22 per cent for Malawi and 38 per cent for South Africa respectively. Women in the three countries seem to enter leadership position at an older age. For Malawi and Zambia, there seems to be no formal recruitment policy of teachers to headship position or other management positions

because in most cases it is the Ministry of Education which appoints them into the managerial positions without interview.

The literature which has been reviewed in relation to women's participation in headship position in primary school has contributed to this study in a number of ways. The studies reviewed focused on female and male teachers' aspiration to headship position, gender differences in leadership position, stereotyping and the lack of support from education administrators. While these studies are relevant to the current study, there is a gap in understanding the situation in that the past studies on women's participation in leadership position or headship position were of a general nature. They did not focus on primary school headship. The present study, on the other hand, is focused to primary school headship. It seeks to gain a better insight and understanding of the causes of the problems uncovered by the more focused study. In addition, some of the studies were done in developed countries where the experiences are bound to be different because of differences in the social, historical and economic contexts. With these differences, and with the fact that no study in the literature reviewed has concentrated on investigating women's participation in headship position in primary schools in Malawi, it is significant to investigate the women's participation in primary school headship position.

2.10 Summary

The literature has demonstrated that women are under-represented in formal employment. Although 52% of the world's population is women, those employed and those in management positions are few. The literature has attributed this to the lack of support system to females, stereotyping, lack of self-esteem and lack of self-confidence by women themselves and the male prejudice over females, which the society perceives.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This Chapter discusses the design and methodology of the study. Some of the major sections of the chapter are on the research design, sampling and data collection methods, data analysis, and limitations of the study.

3.2 Research design

The overall approach which guided the study was qualitative phenomenological design. The study is an exploratory and explanatory one. As Rossman and Rallis (2003) point out, a phenomenological study seeks the deep meaning of a person's experiences. It is for this reason that in-depth interviews with female headteachers were done in order to investigate factors affecting women's participation in primary school management. This was done to obtain the headteachers' personal experiences.

This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative techniques because of the nature of information sought. The qualitative technique was employed because as Merriam (1988) points out, in such a case a researcher's interest concentrates on how people make sense of their lives, what they experience and how they interpret these experiences and structure their social world.

In addition to the qualitative approach the study used the quantitative approach, when collecting teachers' statistics from the schools and district education offices. The quantitative strategies were used to complement the more qualitative approaches employed. Qualitative techniques were involved in this study because the technique helped to bring out hidden information to the open. The instruments used gave the participants freedom to express their views.

3.3 Area of study

Malawi has six Education Administrative Divisions, namely South West Education Division (SWED), South East Education Division (SEED), Shire highlands Education Division (SED), Central West Education Division (CWED) and Northern Education Division (NED). This study however, was conducted in Lilongwe District which is in CWED. Lilongwe District was selected purposively because of the two main reasons presented below:

Firstly, Lilongwe has a large number of female teachers as compared to other districts in the Central region (handout from CWED 2007-8). Despite this, it has few female headteachers in its primary schools. This is the problem this study was investigating. Secondly, Lilongwe District has three education district offices, namely, Lilongwe Urban or City Education Office, Lilongwe Rural West and Lilongwe Rural East Education District. This helped the researcher to have a broad catchment area catering for both rural and urban schools. The three education districts also provided an adequate sample of female and male headteachers and other respondents to meet the objectives of the study.

3.4 Study population

Lilongwe District has 486 primary schools and out of these, 68 primary schools are in Lilongwe Urban, Lilongwe Rural East had 190 primary schools and Lilongwe Rural West had 228 primary schools. The study population from which a sample was drawn was composed of the following:

- a) All primary school headteachers (male and female) in the 486 primary schools in Lilongwe District..
- b) All primary school teachers (male and male) from the 486 schools.
- c) All standard 8 primary school pupils from the 486 schools.
- d) All three DEMs from Lilongwe Education District.
- e) All PEAs from Lilongwe Education District.
- f) The Chairperson for the TSC of Malawi.

3.5 Sampling methods

The sampling of schools, headteachers, teachers, pupils and key informants was done by using stratified, random and purposive sampling techniques.

3.5.1 Sampling of schools

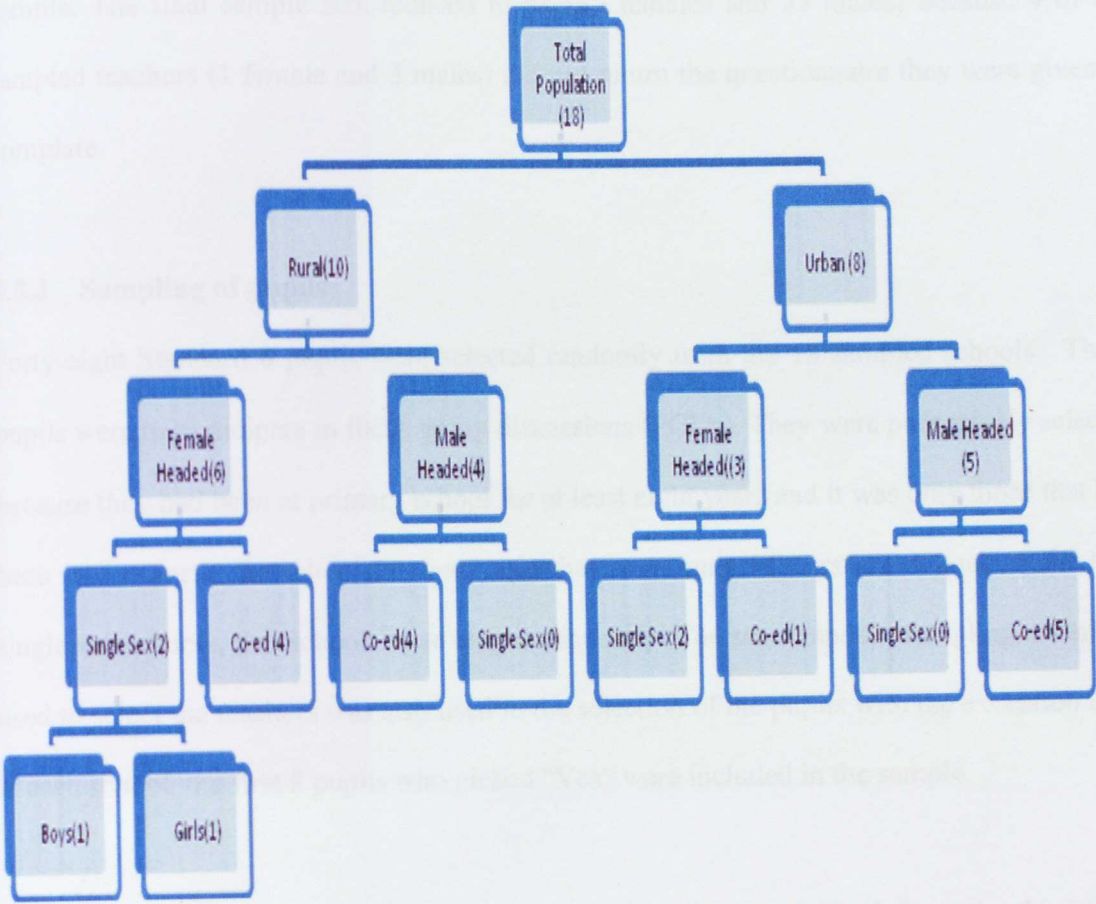
Stratified, random, and purposive sampling techniques were used to select 18 schools whose headteachers, teachers and pupils were to participate in the study. The schools were sampled using the following criteria: rural and urban location, sex of headteachers and whether the schools were single sex or co-education. This stratification was necessary to ensure that headteachers', teachers', and pupils' experiences in rural and urban settings, in single sex and co-education schools, and under female and male headship were taken into consideration.

As Figure 1 shows, 10 and 8 schools were sampled from rural and urban areas, respectively. Of the 10 schools from rural areas, 2 were single sex (1 girls' and 1 boys') schools which were selected purposively from the 3 girls' and 2 boys' schools respectively in the rural area, and 8 were co-education schools which were sampled randomly from 190 co-education schools in the area.

Of the 8 urban schools, 2 were single sex (1 girls' and 1 boys') schools which were sampled purposively and these were the only single sex schools in the Lilongwe Urban area and 6 were co-education schools which were randomly sampled from the 66 co-education schools in the area. Purposive sampling was utilised to ensure that at the end of sampling, the sample had the same number of female and male headteachers. The schools sampled from the rural areas were 10. All of these schools except two schools (one boy's and one girl's) were co-education schools. The schools sampled from the urban area were 8. All of these schools, except two, were co-education schools. The names of the schools appear in section 4.2.2.

Of the 18 sampled schools, 9 were female-headed and the other 9 were male-headed schools. Being a gender study, it was important to have a sample with the same number of female and male headteachers. Of the 18 schools, 4 were single sex schools (2 girls' schools and 2 boys' schools), and 14 were co-education schools.

Figure 1: Stratification of the sample population of primary schools selected for the study



3.5.2 Sampling of headteachers and teachers

All 18 headteachers (9 males and 9 females) from the 18 schools were included in the sample. Stratified random sampling was used to select 72 teachers from the 18 schools. At each school, the population of teachers was stratified on the basis of sex before randomly choosing two teachers from within each stratum. This ensured that the number of male and female teachers was the same (36).

The random selection process was simple. At each school, slips of paper with either “Yes” or “No” written on each of them were put in a box and the teachers were asked to pick one slip each. The first 2 females and the first 2 males who picked “Yes” were included in the sample. The final sample size reduced to 68 (35 females and 33 males) because 4 of the sampled teachers (1 female and 3 males) did not return the questionnaire they were given to complete.

3.5.3 Sampling of pupils

Forty-eight Standard 8 pupils were selected randomly from the 18 sampled schools. These pupils were to participate in focus group discussions (FGDs). They were purposively selected because they had been at primary school for at least eight years and it was only those that had been to one particular school for four years that were sampled. First, from each of the four single sex schools, two schools were chosen randomly. The same random sampling technique used to select the teachers was also used in the selection of the pupils with the exception that, at each school, the first 8 pupils who picked “Yes” were included in the sample.

In addition to select the remaining 32 Standard 8 pupils, one school from the 56 female headed co-education schools, and another school from the 423 male-headed co-education schools were sampled randomly. From each of these two schools, 16 pupils were selected randomly following the procedure using slips of paper with “Yes” and “No” described in the preceding paragraph. From each selected school, 8 girls and 8 boys were randomly selected. Both were co-education schools: one was headed by a male teacher (urban school) and the other was headed by a female teacher (rural school). Of the 48 sampled pupils 24 were boys and 24 were girls.

3.5.4 Sampling of key informants

The study also involved two DEMs from Lilongwe Rural East and Lilongwe Rural West Education Districts,¹⁴ the Chairperson for the TSC female and three PEAs (one from each of the three education divisions in Lilongwe). These key informants were selected purposively by virtue of their offices.

3.6 Instruments

Several instruments were used in the collection of the data for the study. These instruments were developed by the researcher with assistance from the supervisors.

3.6.1 Questionnaires

Two different types of questionnaires were developed. The questionnaires were semi-structured with some open-ended and close-ended questions. These questionnaires were administered to the male headteachers and teachers. The questionnaires also used the attitudinal scale with adjectives describing attitudes towards female headteachers from which the participants were required to choose.

3.6.2 In-depth interview and focus group guides

Interview guides were also developed and used to guide the researcher during in-depth interviews. The interview guides had open-ended questions. They were administered to female headteachers and the DEMs and PEAs. In addition, a focus group guide was developed and used during FGDs with standard 8 pupils.

¹⁴ The DEM for Lilongwe Urban was on study leave the time of the study

3.6.3 Data collection form

A data collection form was designed and used to collect statistical data from schools as well as from the DEMs' offices. The statistical data form supplemented other methods which were used in this study. Data forms are regarded as unobtrusive measures as they are used to collect data that do not require the cooperation of the subjects. This information included the number of male and female teachers in the schools, number of pupils, and the sex of previous headteachers.

3.7 Pilot study

The pilot study is a small initial study which researchers conduct before the actual study is conducted to test whether the instruments are clearly worded and understandable and address the objectives (Guba, 1978). Pilot studies are important. As Wiersma (1991) says, a pilot study provides the opportunity to the researcher to identify the confusing language problems and experiences as well as the information in relation to the possible results.

In order to test the reliability and validity of the instruments, a pilot study was conducted in some schools in Blantyre District. These pilot schools were Chichiri Full Primary School, Catholic Institute (CI) Full Primary School, St Kizito Boys Primary School and St Maria Gorretti Girls Primary School. Four teachers, two female and two male from each of these four schools were randomly sampled, making a total of sixteen respondents to whom a questionnaire was administered. Standard eight pupils from CI and St. Kizito were involved in piloting FGDs, while the headteacher for Chichiri Primary School and St. Kizito were involved in pre-testing of the interview guides. Through the piloting study some ambiguous and confusing questions were identified and corrected in readiness for the main study.

3.8 Data collection methods

In this study, four data collection instruments were used for collecting data. It was a mixed method type of study where both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed in gathering the required information. These were a review of available documents some of which contained statistical data, in-depth interviews, and FGDs.

3.8.1 Documentary review

Documentary review is the process which systematically examines official documents for a particular study or investigation. Marshall and Rossman (1995) point out that documentary review are very useful in developing an understanding of the setting or group studied. Marshall and Rossman (1995) argue that a documentary review can be conducted without disturbing the setting in any way. It was, therefore, very important to analyse the documents which were available in school libraries and elsewhere because they provided useful information on issues relevant to the study, such as, the gender representation in headship at primary school in Malawi. In this study, a number of documents were reviewed, such as class registers, monthly returns and time book. In addition, articles from journals and books and other scholarly documents relevant to the study were reviewed. The review helped to address, among other things, the first objective which was to determine gender representation in management positions at primary school level.

3.8.2 In-depth interviews

As suggested by Rossman and Rallis (2003) interviews are the hallmark of qualitative research. In-depth interviews help to uncover the participants' meanings to issues not as the researcher looks at them. In-depth interviewing takes the researchers into the participants' world. This is described by Kahn and Cannell (1957) as a conversation with a purpose.

Marshall and Rossman (1995) observe that many qualitative researchers rely extensively on the in-depth interview because it brings hidden information to the surface. The in-depth interviews were carried out with key informants who included female headteachers, the chairperson for the TSC, DEMs, and PEAs. The in-depth interviews with headteachers solicited information pertaining to the challenges they experience when managing schools and how these are addressed. The procedures they took to get into that higher office at primary school level were also the focus of the interviews. A total of 9 female headteachers were interviewed.

The interview with the chairperson for the TSC focused on issues concerning criteria used to select those to undergo interviews and why some qualified teachers fail interviews. This generated information which complemented data solicited from the teachers and headteachers as well as from other key informants. Two DEMs and three PEAs (one from each education district) were interviewed. They were interviewed because they are the ones who recommend teachers to be appointed to become headteachers in the absence of interviews. The DEMs and PEAs were interviewed on the criteria they use and qualities they look for when appointing a teacher into headship position.

3.8.3 Focus group discussions

The second data collection method used, was the Focus Group Discussions (FGD). An FGD is an organized group discussion focused around a single theme, to stimulate peoples' thinking and bring in ideas, which are analysed together as a group (Krueger, 1988). It is a useful way of gathering information from a group of people, as it has the potential for discussion to develop and yield a wide range of responses. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) stipulate that FGDs might be useful for gaining insight into what might be pursued in

subsequent individual interviews. According to Marshall and Rossman (1995), focus groups are generally composed of 7 to 10 people, who have been selected because they share certain characteristics that are relevant to the question of the study.

In this study, the main target was standard 8 pupils. Forty-eight 48 pupils were involved in the FGD. Six FGDs were conducted. Each focus group had 8 pupils. The researcher was the moderator and note-taker. A tape-recorder was used during the FGDs to capture the discussions pertaining to their attitude towards their female headteachers. The FGDs with pupils were conducted in order to find out their attitudes towards female headteachers.

3.9 Data analysis

According to Marshall and Rossman (1995), data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data. The data collected in this study were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

3.9.1 Qualitative data analysis

This involved data collected from in-depth interviews and FDGs. This was a descriptive analysis of the trends as observed from the responses by respondents to the study. The data gathered were categorised into themes relevant to the objectives of the study and in some instances the data were quantified, while in other instances, the qualitative data were then interpreted without first turning them into numerical data. Some qualitative data were then presented as case studies.

3.9.2 Quantitative data analysis

Marshall and Rossman (1995) point out that in data analysis, generating categories, themes or pattern is the thesis of analysing. Information collected from the questionnaires was analysed quantitatively using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The data were then presented as percentages and numbers in frequency tables and figures.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

3.10.1 Procedure

The study was conducted during school session. Wiersma (1991) advises that the researcher needs to gain access to (his or her subjects) to address the problem which may require special arrangements before the actual research is done. In line with Wiersma's advice, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training and the CWED as well as the head of the selected schools were informed about the study prior to the commencement of data collection. An introductory letter to the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training was obtained from the Faculty of Education at Chancellor College. The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training responded by writing an introductory letter to the CWED. The CWED Manager in turn wrote a letter of introduction to the DEM for Lilongwe Urban, Lilongwe Rural West and Lilongwe Rural East education districts, as well as to the headteachers of the sampled schools, informing them that permission had been granted to the researcher to do research in their schools.

3.10.2 Informed consent and confidentiality of the participants

The study involved interviews and discussions with the participants¹⁵ and respondents¹⁶. Therefore, there was need to consider research ethics. The participants were not forced to get involved in this study. Their individual rights and freedoms were respected, as suggested by Wiersma (1991). The participants were assured of confidentiality. Therefore, their names were not recorded although discussions and interviews with them were recorded on tape to ensure that all important information was captured. The participants were told about this well in advance.

3.11 Challenges faced during data collection

The researcher experienced some minor challenges during the study and this led to the study having some limitations. Firstly, one school had to be replaced by another because of the conduct of the headteacher. The headteacher was uncooperative. He refused to give back to the researcher the data collection form and some of the questionnaires completed by the teachers. Thus only 2 completed questionnaires were collected from this initial school. For the study not to be affected, the researcher chose the nearest school which had similar characteristics as the one which was dropped. The change was done in such a way that the results could not be affected. Purposive sampling was done to choose the replacement school because the researcher did not want to come up with a school with different characteristics from the dropped one.

¹⁵ Participants are defined in this study as those people sampled to be involved in FGDs and in interviews as key informants.

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¹⁶ Respondents are defined in this study as people who completed questionnaires.

Secondly, in some cases it was difficult to interview the female headteachers, DEMs and the PEAs because they were out of office. The researcher failed to interview the DEM for Lilongwe Urban because she kept on rescheduling the interview, and subsequently she was not available for the interviews. In one instance acting DEM was new in the office and had inadequate information pertaining to teacher recruitment, promotions and administrative arrangement into headteachers' office. Instead a PEA who was equally involved in recommending teachers into headship positions was interviewed. Information solicited from her was as important as that collected from the DEMs of Lilongwe Rural West and Lilongwe Rural East.

Finally, some teachers were reluctant to complete the questionnaires because they expected to be given some financial inducement. The researcher had to explain to them that it was an academic research with no sponsorship before these teachers accepted to complete the questionnaires without receiving any incentive.

The challenges did not seriously affect the results of the study since almost all challenges were addressed. The study solicited data that were reliable and adequate for the purpose of the study.

3.12 Limitations of the study

This study has two limitations. First, the sample size of 9 female and 9 male headteachers was small. This was due to inadequate financial resources which made it impossible for the researcher to have a bigger sample. As a case study, generalisations about factors influencing women's participation in headship positions in primary schools in Malawi can only be restricted because social groups differ.

Second, since the sample was small it was not possible to do more rigorous statistical comparisons between the male and female headteachers than conducting significance tests and, occasionally, X^2 test of independence. Despite these two limitations, the study has achieved its objectives.

3.13 Summary

The chapter has discussed research design and methods employed in the study. The study used both qualitative and quantitative techniques which helped to solicit information pertaining to factors which affect women in primary school management. Stratified, random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select schools, teachers, standard eight pupils and key informants. It used questionnaires, in-depth interview guide, focus group discussions guide and data collection forms to obtain data. Qualitative data were categorised into themes relevant to the objectives. SPSS was the main quantitative data analysis tool used.

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CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter discusses the study findings in relation to its objectives. It describes the characteristics of the schools in Lilongwe District before examining gender representation in headship positions, challenges faced by female headteachers in their professional work, factors influencing female under-representation in headship position and those do not explain the gender gap and attitudes of female teachers towards headship positions, the views of teachers and pupils on female headteachers. The discussion centres on the factors influencing women's participation in primary school headship position.

4.2 Characteristics of primary schools in Lilongwe district and gender representation in management position at primary schools in Malawi

This section describes the primary schools in Lilongwe District, which include the 18 schools sampled in the study. The purpose is to illustrate the situation in which headteachers in the sampled schools operate. It focuses on the locality of the schools, the number of teachers and pupils by sex, and the type of schools in the district.

4.2.1 Distribution of primary schools in Lilongwe District

Table 3 below gives a summary of the distribution of schools and teachers by sex, in Lilongwe District. In 2007, Lilongwe District had 486 primary schools. As the Table shows, at the time of this study, females accounted for 56% (3, 518) of all teachers in these schools,

yet only 13% (63) of the 486 schools were headed by females. Only 3,518 (1.8%) of the females, compared to 2,867 (12.9%) of the males were in headship position.

Table 3: Number of headteachers and teachers by sex and education district

Education District	Number of Schools	Number of headteachers		Number of teachers		Total number of Teachers
		M	F	M	F	
Lilongwe City	68	42	26	373	2,101	2,401
Lilongwe Rural West	228	206	22	1,444	800	2,244
Lilongwe Rural East	190	175	15	1,050	617	1,667
Total	486	423	63	2,867	3,518	6,312

Source: Central West Education Division-planning section and DEM's offices for Lilongwe District EMIS section 2007.

Comparing different education districts of Lilongwe District shows that Lilongwe Rural West Education District had the largest share of primary schools (228), while Lilongwe City Education District had the smallest share (68) yet the latter had the largest number of teachers (2,401) of whom 2,101(88%) were females. In Lilongwe City Education District, 26 (38%) of the schools were headed by females while 42 (62%) were headed by males. Females in headship position represented 1.2% of the female teaching staff in Lilongwe City Education District.¹⁷ On the other hand, male headteachers represented 10.1% of the male teaching staff. Women's representation in headship position was lower in Lilongwe City Education District than in Lilongwe Rural West and Lilongwe Rural East Education Districts.

¹⁷ The term teaching staff as used in this thesis includes headteachers, deputy headteachers and teachers.

Although it had the smallest number of schools, Lilongwe city Education District had the largest number of teachers, female teachers, and female headteachers. In fact, about 60% of all the teachers in Lilongwe district were in this education district. This concentration of female teachers in the urban area of Lilongwe may be explained by the fact that Lilongwe is the capital city of Malawi and as such has amenities which attract many people from rural areas including female teachers. When they get married to men who live and work in urban areas, most women living in rural areas join their husbands in the urban areas. Some men prefer marrying teachers because the teaching profession is believed to be compatible with family life. Another reason could be that a higher percentage of females than males are either assigned to work in urban areas or prefer working in such areas than to working in rural areas.

4.2.2 Characteristics of the sampled schools

The sampled schools were classified as government or mission-owned. Out of the 18 schools, 7 (Likuni Boys, Lilongwe Boys, Lilongwe Girls, Kaning'a, Kalumba, Nambuma Girls and Nkhukwa) were mission-owned while 11 (Biwi, Chagogo, Chimutu, Chisamba, Ching'ombe, Chinsapo, Chipoka, Kawale, Kasiya, Mwenyekondo and Njewa) were government-owned. Out of the 18 schools, 8 (Biwi, Chimutu, Chisamba, Ching'ombe, Chinsapo, Lilongwe Girls, Lilongwe Boys and Mwenyekondo) were in urban areas while 10 (Chagogo, Chipoka, Ching'ombe, Kalumba, Kaning'a, Kasiya, Nambuma Girls, Njewa and Nkhukwa) were in rural areas.

According to the DEMs, headteachers for the mission schools are selected by the proprietors of the schools and not by the DEMs. The DEM's role in this matter is to endorse the name of the headteacher chosen by the mission's administration.

Table 4 below shows the primary schools, the sex of the headteachers and their deputies, and the number and sex of teachers and pupils in the sampled school. It shows that out of the 18 schools, 9 were headed by females and the other 9 by males. An equal number of female-headed and male-headed schools were chosen on purpose to enable meaningful gender analysis at the headship level. Out of the 9 female headteachers, 3 were heading urban schools and the rest (6) were heading rural schools.

Females accounted for only 5 (28%) of the 18 deputy headteachers at the sampled schools. In these schools, there were 520¹⁸ teachers of whom 420 (78%) were females. The percentage of female teachers was highest in urban schools such as Biwi which had 40 (93%) females out of a total of 43 teachers, Chisamba which had 39(93%) females out of 42 teachers, Kawale which had 44 (92%) out of 48 teachers, and Lilongwe Girls which had 23 (92%) females out of 25 teachers. The number of teachers was lower at Chagogo which had 4 (31%) females out of 13 teachers and lowest at Kasiya which had 2 (18%) out of 11 teachers. The preceding section indicated why there is this rural-urban.

¹⁸ This figure excludes headteachers and deputy headteachers.

Table 4: Headteachers, their deputies, teachers and pupils by sex and school

Name of primary school	Sex of head-teacher	Sex of deputy Head	Number of teachers		% of teachers		No. of pupils	% of pupils	
	M or F	M or F	M	F	M	F	M & F	M	F
Biwi	M	F	3	40	7	93	1,083	50	50
Chagogo	F	M	9	4	69	31	672	50	50
Chimutu	M	F	5	46	10	90	1,000	51	49
Chipoka	F	M	1	2	33	67	290	48	52
Chisamba	M	F	3	39	7	93	1,622	48	52
Ching'ombe	F	M	11	12	48	52	1,008	46	54
Chinsapo	F	M	6	59	9	91	4,941	49	51
Kalumba	M	M	6	7	46	54	970	57	43
Kaning'a	M	M	7	8	47	53	904	47	53
Kasiya	M	M	9	2	82	18	952	54	46
Kawale	M	M	4	44	8	92	1,828	54	46
Likuni Boys	F	M	5	27	16	84	923	100	0
Lilongwe Boys	F	F	5	27	16	84	492	100	0
Lilongwe Girls	F	F	2	23	8	92	503	0	100
Mwenyekonda	M	M	7	43	14	86	2,435	48	52
Nambuma Girls	F	M	7	5	56	44	591	0	100
Njewa	M	M	8	22	27	73	1,385	51	49
Nkhukwa	F	M	2	10	17	83	1,013	51	49
All 18 schools			100	420	22	78	22,612	51	49

The number of teachers per school ranged from 3 at Chipoka (with the smallest number of pupils) to 65 at Chinsapo (with the largest number of pupils). The average teacher-pupil ratio was 1:42¹⁹ which is lower than the recommended ratio of 1:80. It ranged from 1:15 at Lilongwe Boys to 1:97 at Chipoka. Girls accounted for about 49% of the 22,612 pupils in the 18 school.

¹⁹ In calculating the teacher-pupil ratios, the number of headteachers and their deputies was excluded.

4.2.3 Female representation in headship positions

Statistics all over the world indicate that women numerically form the majority of the world's population. However, studies show that throughout the world women are under-represented in management positions. Women hold 28.6% only, of decision-making positions (Wirth, 2004). As table 3 in section 4.2.1 shows, although most (56%) of the 6312 primary school teachers in Lilongwe district were female headteachers accounted for only 13% of all headteachers in the district. The 63 female headteachers represented only 1.8% of the female teaching staff, while male headteachers represented 12.9% of the male teaching staff. Women's representation in headship positions was worse in Lilongwe City Education District than in Lilongwe Rural West and Lilongwe Rural East Education Districts.

Table 4 in section 4.2.2 indicated that 420 (78%) out of 520 of the teachers in the sampled 18 schools were females.²⁰ Despite this high percentage, female headteachers represented only 2.1% of the female teaching staff. The corresponding percentage for the males was 8.3%. Only 5 (28%) of the deputy headteachers were female. In addition, the 5 female deputy headteachers accounted for only 1.2% of the female teaching staff while the 13 male deputy headteachers represented 10.7 % of the male teaching staff. This seems to lend credence to Weber et al (1981) observation that men run the schools and women nurture the learners. Management and policy-making in education have been and still in the province of men although women make up a large proportion of workers in the education sector.

²⁰ Among the 18 samples schools, female teachers accounted for 83% of all teachers in government schools while mission schools they accounted for 76% of all teachers.

As Greyvestein and van der Wessthuizen (1992: 32) put it:

The common assessment that women teach and men manage... still holds true, despite a multitude of strategies to rectify the gender imbalance in education management.

The main question to be addressed then is: Why are women poorly represented in headship positions?

4.3 Challenges faced by female headteachers and factors Influencing females' under-representation

4.3.1 Challenges faced by female headteachers

Like their male counterparts, female headteachers faced challenges as they discharged their duties. About 78% of the female headteachers indicated that they experienced challenges to the extent that they had to put extra effort when discharging their duties to make sure that the community, teachers, pupils, and the DEMs' appreciated their work. The remaining 22% said the challenges they experienced were similar to what men experienced. As a result they worked normally as their male counterparts did. Most of the challenges facing the female headteachers were related to the factors that explained why females' representation in primary school management positions is low.

In addition there are several factors underlying women's low participation in primary school management. Some of these factors are internal to the education system while others are external. The main ones are presented and discussed in the following sections.

4.3.2 Socialisation and the devaluation of women's work

The roles that women play and their abilities are undermined and often go unrecognised by society, particularly in a patriarchal society. This devaluation takes the form of attitudes that favour males over females for administrative positions.

During an FGD, a Standard 8 boy said:

By 2020 I wish all schools to have male teachers because women cannot manage male pupils. They are easily threatened. They have no potential because they are women. They are supposed to be in their homes taking care of their children.²¹

This boy's thinking represents the thinking in a patriarchal society. He was socialised into the perception that what is masculine is better than what is feminine. How females and males are perceived and treated at home and at work is a product of a long process of socialisation. This was also commented by Key Informant 2.²² He reported that some community members in his education district did not want him to appoint female teachers to head schools in their communities because they perceived females as weak and would not manage to head schools. Liberal feminists argue that patriarchal society thinks women are ideally suited only for certain occupations, for example, teaching and not headship position.

Firestone (1970) explains that the process of socialisation is perpetuated through ideology and sustained by institutional methods. Many people accept without questioning society's perceptions such as that women do not have the capacity to be leaders (Biklen and Pollard, 1993). In societies where for many years men have dominated such decision-making positions as traditional leaders and professionals, women's leadership is not wholly accepted, not because women cannot perform as well as or even better than men, but because the

²¹ This was a Standard 8 boy from one of the co-education schools. The FGD was conducted on Friday, 27th July, 2007.

²² Key Informant 2. See Section 4.4.8.

society is used to having male leaders. Feminists argue that, within any class women are less advantaged than men in their access to goods, power, and status and in their efforts towards self-actualization (Lovell, 2003).

4.3.3 Delayed promotion of female teachers to headship position

Using the data in Table 5, it was found that the length of service before teachers are promoted to head schools depends on the teachers' sex.²³ While 4 of the males and none of the females served for less than 10 years before being promoted to headship position, all females and another 4 of the males served for 10 to about 15 years.

Table 5: Headteachers' length of service as teachers before promotion to headship position, by sex

Length of Service	Males	Females	Total
Under 5 years	1	0	1
5 < 10 years	3	0	3
10 < 15 years	4	9	13
15 < 20 years	1	0	1
Total	9	9	18

These findings suggest that females have to serve for a longer period of time than males before they are promoted to head schools. This is contrary to what the policy says. The policy stipulates that an individual has to be promoted from an entry grade, PT4 to the next grade PT3 after working for four years if he or she is an MSCE (T2)²⁴ holder or six years if she or he is JCE holder. The devaluation of women's work is at the root of this delayed women's promotion. By serving for a longer period of time, female teachers are being left behind as

²³ Using a Yate's continuity correction factor, the X² value of 16.08 with v = 3 exceeds the critical score of 7.81.

²⁴ Information from Teaching Service Commission and District Education Manager.

their male counterparts, with whom they joined the teaching profession together with same academic qualifications, are promoted to headship positions.

The liberal feminists believe that women have the same mental capacity as men. Therefore, they expect women to be given the same opportunities in political, social and economic spheres. The liberal feminists observe that positions of power are generally held by men (Robbins and Barnwell, 2002; Lovell, 2003). However, it is noted that promotions do not depend on the length of service only. The ability and skills of an individual also matter.²⁵ In this study, some of the male and female teachers were on PT2 which is a recommended grade for an individual to be a headteacher yet they were not headteachers.

There is more to teachers' appointments to headship positions than length of service. As female headteacher 1 argued:

Not only the length of service but the capability is also looked into. There might be other factors which make headteachers to be headteachers.²⁶

This female headteacher suggests that those in decision-making positions would appoint or recommend teachers to head schools depending on their perception towards one's sex or some particular traits of individual teachers. This process of appointing teachers in headship positions without any formal interview is likely to lack transparency and other teachers may be dissatisfied with appointed headteachers.

4.3.4 Selection of teachers to headship positions

How headteachers are selected is an important factor influencing the representation of females at the headship level. According to the DEMs, headteachers for mission schools are

²⁵To promote an individual there are several factors which are considered apart from length of service and the academic qualifications. (The hidden promotion policy).

²⁶ Interviewed on Friday 27th July, 2007 in her office.

selected by the proprietors of the schools. This study did not investigate the criteria that are used in the selection of headteachers in mission schools. However, it was established that the DEM's role in this matter is to give a list of names of teachers of a particular church then the church selects from the list. The second role of the DEM is to endorse the name of the chosen headteacher by the mission's administration. As noted in section 4.2.2, among the 18 sampled schools, 7 were mission-owned. 71% of the sampled mission schools were headed by females. As was noted in Chapter 1, generally, the early missionaries did not have a positive attitude towards the education of girls and the elevation of women to leadership positions within the church and elsewhere. The above result shows that the early missionaries' view that men were more able to lead than women appears not to be shared by many contemporary missionaries.

All four single sex mission schools, namely Likuni Boys, Lilongwe Boys, Lilongwe Girls and Nambuma Girls were headed by females while only one (Nkhukwa) of the three co-education schools was headed by a female. The other two Kaning'a and Kalumba were headed by males. It is not clear why females are more likely to head single sex schools than co-education schools. However, it may be that the authorities' view is that, because of the difficulties that come about when boys and girls are mixed, the former schools are easier to manage than the latter schools. It may be on this premise that females were given the responsibility of heading single sex schools.

For a teacher to manage a government primary school he/she is selected in one of the two ways: either through "administrative arrangement," or through interviews. During interviews with DEMs and PEAs and female headteachers, it came out clearly that headteachers are not handpicked anyhow. The criteria and qualities which the authorities look for in a teacher who

is supposed to be appointed headteacher include hardwork, discipline, and good relationships with fellow members of the teaching staff and the community. Academic qualifications and experience are also taken into account.

Some of the sampled female headteachers indicated that during interviews they experienced a tough time because the interview panel was dominated by males. This made the female candidates feel uncomfortable. Female headteacher 2 said:

I have failed the promotion interviews twice. I went in well prepared and answered the questions very well. There is more to promotion than interviews. Actually it is the new DEM who has appointed me to this position. We get affected during interviews because of the unbalanced number of male and female panelists. In most cases there are few females. This makes us fail.²⁷

The absence or under-representation of female panelists during interviews is often accepted as part of the culture of education institutions. This absence of female panelists is at once the “cause” and the consequence of having few females in top management positions.

The feminist ideology sees this as a result of division of labour based on sex and the separation between the public (economic and political sphere) and the private (domestic) sphere and the patriarchal order. In a male-dominated society, males participate more in the public sphere while females participate more in the domestic sphere which is less visible and less appreciated than the former.

4.3.5 Inadequate numbers of role models for female teachers

Although most (7 out of 9) of the female headteachers indicated that their role models are progressive women in the society, there are very few women in headship positions in primary schools and in other decision-making positions in the education sector. Pretorius and Lemmer

²⁷ Interviewed on 20th July, 2007 at her house. Chose to be interviewed at home.

(1998) observe that the structure and staffing of schools provide women with less role models of female leadership.

The female headteachers mentioned the DEMs and some female headteachers as their role models. None of them mentioned teachers or role models outside the education sector. Not having role models outside the education sector could mean that the headteachers were focused on advancement within their current career path rather than diverting to other careers in the health, legal, or political professions, for example. It is not very surprising that the headteachers did not have primary or secondary school teachers as their role models. This is because in Malawi teaching is not a high profile profession as it is in some other countries where it is given the recognition and the monetary rewards it deserves. Almost all of the teachers with degrees teach at secondary schools or colleges. In more advanced countries, primary school teachers are diploma or degree holders. It is also observed that teaching in general is not regarded as a profession at all regardless of whether one is teaching at primary school, secondary school or college. Teaching is regarded by many people as a transition to other better jobs or professions. That is why sometimes teachers are asked questions such as, **"Are you still teaching?"** This is a result of labeling teaching profession as a transition to other jobs.

The pull-her-down syndrome and lack of networking among females discourage some females from aspiring for headship positions. When the performance of female headteachers is negatively affected by this syndrome, the message sent to authorities involved in promoting teachers and to society is that females are not good managers and they should not be promoted to such positions.

4.3.6 Community's negative attitudes towards female headteachers

Some communities do not accept or support female leadership including female headteachers. There is strong evidence that in some societies men are prejudiced against women. Women are devalued even before they are given a chance of displaying their talents and skills because of their sex. Cole (2004) says that prejudice against women may not always be based on sound evidence of a woman's performance. Headteachers and key informants observed that, as a result of this, some female teachers do not apply for headship positions or they refuse the offer to head the schools. Key informant 2 reported that:

I appointed a female teacher to head one of the schools in my education district but when the community heard about this they sent PTA executive members to my office. These members complained bitterly that they did not want a female headteacher because schools headed by female headteachers do not excel in all corners. They said these schools experience, for example, a lot of indiscipline cases and few or no pupils are selected to secondary schools. I convinced them that it was a fallacy that schools headed by female teachers do not excel and that female headteachers were equal to male headteachers and in some instances they do better than men²⁸.

That some communities do not accept female leadership is supported by what a DEM experienced when she was a secondary school headteacher. A member of her staff died and she recalled that before the funeral ceremony started she was approached by a prominent male member of the society because he wanted to know who was to speak on her behalf as a representative of the school since she was a woman. In the traditional context, only men are expected to speak during funerals. Tradition has programmed people to have such expectations. The man's view was, therefore, a reflection of the community's perception that men, rather than women, are leaders. He was eventually persuaded by some officials from the Ministry of Education to allow the female headteacher to speak at the funeral.

²⁸Key informant 2 was interviewed on 18th July in his office.

Both the incidents cited above happened in the rural areas while no incident was reported in urban areas. Findings of this study indicate that rural communities show more resistance to the appointment of female headteachers than urban communities do. This can be accounted for by the fact that the rural areas are mostly traditional societies and as such they are slow to change. To such communities men in leadership positions are the norm. The resistance to female headship appointments could be the result of resistance to change since such communities have not been exposed to female leadership. Rural communities tend to resist change as they are not sure about the outcome of the change or they realise that the change will result in cost to them. In urban societies change is the norm; female headteachers are therefore, more readily accepted. There is more exposure to modern ways of living and thinking in the urban areas than in the rural communities. The urban residents are more educated and exposed to the print and electronic media which sometimes present women in decision-making positions than their rural counterparts do. The view of men in the rural communities is that the elevation of women to decision-making positions will cost the men some of their power and authority in society. Some people fear that they may not be able to adapt to such change.

Ogburn (1964) uses the term “**cultural lag**” to explain that various parts of culture do not change at the same rate. Where this occurs there is bound to be confusion and disharmony between related agents of society’s culture such as traditional communities and urban communities which are changing at different rates. Hobbs and Blank (1995) observe that since there is correlation and inter-dependence of parts, a rapid change in one part of culture requires readjustments through other changes in various correlated parts of the culture. Examples from the last two key informants presented in this section show that when provided

with evidence that good leadership does not depend on sex, communities can change their negative view of female leadership, but at different rates.

4.3.7 Lack of monetary incentives

Headteachers who are on "administrative arrangement" do not get headship allowances while those on "substantive" position get a headship allowance of only K200 per month. The two categories of headteachers do the same work. Even when they have to travel long distances, especially in the rural areas, to attend meetings or to report management issues at TDCs or when the headteachers (or teachers) accompany pupils to other districts for sporting or other activities, the headteachers do not receive duty allowance. They have to use their salary to pay for transport if they have to avoid cycling or walking the long distance. The money is not adequate to both the female and male teachers.

4.3.8 Insubordination from teachers who are under the female headteachers

Some female headteachers reported that some of the deputy headteachers and teachers' under-rate them and are disobedient to them. Some juniors go to the extent of holding meetings where to plot the headteachers downfall. Out of the 9 female headteachers, 4 said men had been more supportive to them than their fellow women.

The female headteachers felt that their juniors under-rate them because of petty jealousy. However, this could be a result of stereotypes which are upheld by various cultures. These women under-rate fellow women without due regard to their individual potential and ability because of the society's perception that certain jobs demand emotional toughness and psychological stability which, it is claimed, is lacking in women. Because of the supposed

psychological make up of women there is a tendency of viewing women as the weaker sex in many societies (See section 4.3.6 and comments by Key informant 2).

4.3.9 Balancing family responsibilities and the role of headteacher

Balancing family obligations and the demands of a headship position is a major challenge for female headteachers. In addition to working at the school, they are expected to perform their duties as wives and mothers at home and sometimes during school hours. Although some female headteachers said the roles they play at home help them to boost their abilities and skills at work to some extent these roles play as hindrance to their work. Govinden (1998) observes that most women in management positions have to juggle difficult and often competing roles of authority and subordination. Generally, male headteachers have few engagements when they return home after work. As observed by most (76%) respondents, lack of encouragement from husbands and superiors and lack of supportive facilities and services, such as crèches near the schools and reliable house servants, and other supportive measures make management life difficult for the female headteachers. Female headteacher 4 commented the following:

My husband told me to withdraw from the post of headteacher because he felt I was spending most of my time at TDC. The TDC is far away from our school.²⁹

In fact, this headteacher wrote a resignation letter but the then PEA discussed the issue with her husband and she was still heading the school at the time of the study. The demands of a headteacher's position sometimes require that he or she works long hours in the office or that he or she travels away from the school. When female headteachers do that, it is common for husbands and society at large to suspect that she is having an affair.³⁰ When it is a male

²⁹ Interviewed on Friday, 3rd August, 2007 in her office.

³⁰ Two people: headteacher 6 interviewed on 20th August, 2007 and Key informant 5, on 22nd Aug. 2007

headteacher nobody raises his or her eyebrows. Torrington (1997) observes that women are seen to be unwilling to be away from home due to family commitments, but this fails to explain the fact that sometimes the women are unwilling to do so because they want to avoid suspicion. In addition there is a "super woman" syndrome where a woman is expected to work up early in the morning prepare hot water for the husband and children to bath and prepare breakfast for them before she goes to work.

Work commitment in many organisations is measured by the number of hours spent at work. If less hours are put in then it is a sign of non-commitment. It is difficult for women in headship position to spend many hours at work because they have to balance their professional work and domestic work. Culturally, as women they are expected to be good housewives and mothers. On the one hand, women experience situations which Drew and Murtagh (2000) describe as "**or-or situation**." In an "**or-or situation**" women allocate their time either to their career or children. With dual roles women are seen as not dedicated to both work and family life. When they do not dedicate much time to both (or more) obligations they are described as failures. On the other hand, men face "**and-and situation**" in which they allocate their time to their career and children. As a result, males unlike females do not get affected by their responsibilities towards their children.

4.3.10 Working in hostile communities

Headteachers and key informants reported that some communities do not accept the headship of a female headteacher. Some of them have reported their experiences in such communities. Case study 1 in section 4.3.13 mentioned an incident whereby a female headteacher had been beaten up by the community after she had punished pupils at the school. Working within a hostile community poses an even more serious challenge to female headteachers. The

headteacher has to work in close collaboration with the school committee and PTA which are essentially composed of members of the community. Running the school requires the support of this committee, PTA, the entire community and other stakeholders such as teachers, pupils, PEAs and higher authorities. A hostile community can frustrate the efforts of the headteacher to manage the school since a community wields a lot of power and influence.

4.3.11 Society's expectation that female headteachers must behave like males

Morris (1998) notes that there has been a perception that the job of a headteacher needs certain traits and qualities generally associated with males. Indeed, in Malawi and elsewhere, decision-making positions are generally associated with masculine traits since, historically, such positions have been a male preserve. Women who occupy such positions are expected to behave like the males in such positions. Generally, on the one hand, men are perceived and expected to be aggressive, assertive and competitive, while, women, on the other hand, are perceived and expected to be passive, meek and to have nurturing characteristics (Feldman, 1987). However, most of these characteristics are learned through socialisation. They are not inborn. Although biologically it is said that men have the hormone called testosterone which makes them aggressive, socialisation plays a bigger part in influencing to their characteristics behavior.

Al-Khalifa (1989) argues that a manager is supposed to demonstrate aggressive, competitive behaviours which include an emphasis on control rather than negotiation or shared problem-solving. These characteristics are associated with men. It is a challenge for a female who is expected to behave like a female in the home and in the wider society, to behave like a man once she is in the headship position. Women who seek professional equality discover that the

yardstick for their performance is compared to male patterns of success. When they are unable to attain the male patterns, this is often seen as a failure on the part of the women.

This study's findings show that many women who have been characterised as lacking in the masculine traits have succeeded as headteachers. As shown in section 4.6.1 and 4.6.2 comments made by teachers, PEAs and pupils indicate that many female headteachers use their feminine traits to their advantage in managing their schools. Some of the pupils' argue that male and female teachers complement each other because they have different personalities and approaches to work; this is also applicable to headteachers. This argument suggests that female and male headteachers should be accepted, promoted and supported as they are.

4.3.12 Roles females play in their homes

Most of the female (89%) and male (88%) teachers said that the roles of home caring, such as taking care of family members' needs and making sure that everything in the home is in order, help female headteachers to perform effectively in their profession. They said that such roles are compatible with the roles of a headteacher and they help female headteachers to take into account teachers' and pupils' needs in their (headteachers') plans at school. These roles help female headteachers to manage teachers and pupils at school. The respondents also indicated that overcoming problems encountered at home and enforced rules under which a family runs, help them to play a leadership role and solve problems at school. The respondents identified the following about women's abilities, and skills which they use at home and apply in their professional work as teachers and headteachers:

- They are reliable and innovative at home.

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- They are reliable and innovative at home.

- They advise children at home such as on the importance of going to school and inculcate cultural values in them.
- They delegate certain chores to their children or dependants at home. At school, they also delegate responsibilities to teachers within and outside the school.

These roles that female teachers play at home, therefore, do not necessarily disadvantage women when it comes to “competition” with men for headship positions in primary schools. In fact, such roles support the women’s professional work. Although women’s profession may at times be affected negatively by some of the roles they play in their families, their roles as mothers and wives generally help them to run the school effectively. When they are given support and enabling environment, most women are able to balance their family roles with their professional roles without either of the roles being impacted negatively. In other words, these roles are not a hindrance to their professional career advancement.

4.3.13 Limited support from spouses

In the Malawian situation, support from family members, particularly spouse in the case of married people, is important for a person’s professional advancement. In this study, 7 out of 9 of the female headteachers indicated that their families had been supportive in their day-to-day work life. A female headteacher reported that whenever she woke up late her husband made sure that he did some of the house chores so that she did not get to work late. He encouraged her to work to the best of her ability. Female headteacher 4 said that:

My husband had seen the circular letter on promotion and encouraged me to apply for the post of PT3. He made me read administration books in readiness for the interviews. He was very supportive throughout my preparations for the interview. This made me pass.³¹

³¹ Interviewed on Wednesday, 8th August, 2007 at her home.

Although only 2 of the 9 female headteachers said that their appointment was resisted by their husbands, as many as 5 of the 9 female headteachers reported that they experienced some family pressure against accepting the post or they did not get family support once they accepted the post. This situation can be explained by the fact that traditionally wives are not expected to rival their husbands where jobs or positions are concerned. They are expected to be subordinate to, or be behind the man. This attitude lends support to the popular saying: 'behind every great man there is a woman.'

Most of the key informants who were involved in the promotion of teachers observed that lack of support from husbands makes some female teachers turn down the offer of becoming headteachers. Tizifa (2000) argues that women find themselves enmeshed in a tangle of little encouragement and probable reprobation, which makes them hesitate about struggling to advance in professional or political careers.

Just like other societies in the world, Malawian society likes to keep its families intact. Society expects wives to follow their husbands when the latter are transferred since traditionally men are leaders and women are followers. In such a situation a woman in headship position loses her position because of family prerogatives. Some women may refuse to take up the post because their husbands would not follow them. It was found that 5 out of the 9 female headteachers were at their current schools because they had followed their husbands. As key informant 3 observed:

When I got into this office, my plan was to promote and appoint many female teachers into headship positions because I discovered that the education district had a good number of female teachers but only few were in management positions. But I was disappointed when most of them refused to accept the positions because some indicated that their husbands would not accept to move away from the semi-urban to go to the remote /rural area.³²

³² Interviewed in her office on 16th August, 2007.

Only when a husband is transferred does the wife follow but when it is the other way round, then the man tends to resist.

Female headteacher 5 explained that when she told her husband that the PEA had approached her and asked her to head a school; he refused to let her accept the post.

She said he felt it was impossible to have two leaders under one roof. She further noted that he thought she would be liberated and be equal to him and he would be powerless to control her. She reluctantly turned down the offer. Ouston (1993) observes that in most cases women lack support systems. This includes support from their husbands. Husbands are expected to be the sole final decision makers at family level and they see their wives advancement in their career as a threat to their (the husbands') authority within the home.

Black feminists argue that for the black women, the family is much desired. Tizifa (2005) points out that for a black woman the family is experienced as a network for survival and support. The view of the black feminists is that husbands are breadwinners who are desirable for the women's survival. Some women give up challenging assignments and greener pastures because they put family obligations first (Biziwick, 2005). Women's close association with the family is difficult to change quickly because, as Chidam'modzi (1995) observes, traditional systems of thought entrenched in customs and supported by religion and myth die hard.

The following two case studies in boxes 1 and 2 are examples of female headteachers' experiences with their husbands and communities they worked in. The first case indicates that

some female headteachers face major difficulties while the second one shows that others face minimal difficulties with their husbands and communities. In Malawi the former case is more common than the latter.

Case study 1: Female headteacher who faced a hostile husband and community³³

This female headteacher 5 has been a widow since December 2006 and has four children. She underwent a two-year teacher-training course at Lilongwe TTC. After teaching for 12 years, in 1998 she was promoted from PT4 to PT3 and then she was offered the headship position which she wanted but turned it down. The reasons were that her husband was totally against her becoming a headteacher. He said "A tambala awiri salirira nyumba imodzi; wina ayenera kuphedwa" (Implying that one house cannot have two heads; one has to be killed.)

The husband was also a headteacher at a different school but he did not want his wife to be a headteacher. She was also afraid of the male teachers, because she was of the opinion that those who were at her school were stubborn and troublesome and she felt she would not be able to manage them. The PEA and the DEM intervened. They talked to her and her husband who then allowed her to accept the headship.

After six months in her headship position the husband asked for a transfer to a different school far away from the school she was heading. They were transferred to a new school which had a head and she and her husband went back into the classroom to teach. She felt relieved because someone else carried the responsibilities but at the same time she felt betrayed by her husband. At the school she was posted to, she helped the headteacher with administration work although she was just a teacher.

She was relocated to her current school as a headteacher after the death of her husband. At this school there was poor infrastructure and the community was hostile. Previously there was a female headteacher who was beaten by the community for punishing one of the pupils at the school. When she arrived they openly told her that she was not welcome. They said females were not good leaders because even in the Bible there were no females who were given leadership positions by God.

This case study shows that some husbands are not supportive of their wives because they feel that when the wife is in higher position than them, the wife will not be submissive to them.

³³ Interviewed on Tuesday, 17th July, 2007 at her house

Case study 2: Female headteacher who had a supportive husband and Community³⁴

This female headteacher 6 started work on 25th October 1993 after completion of a 2 year course at St. Joseph College. She taught for ten years in Nathenje. In 2004 was offered a post of headteacher but, refused because she recalled how teachers ill-treated the then headteachers at her school. However, one of her friends got promoted and encouraged her that it was alright. Despite the encouragement from her, she still turned down the offer. In 2006 she was offered the post again. She was reluctant again but after consulting her husband, he encouraged her to accept the offer. At the new school she was posted to, she felt welcome.

She cited the following as challenges she is facing as a headteacher: (1) Absenteeism, especially teachers who are residing in town since it is hard to keep tabs on them. (2) Younger female teachers are more problematic than the rest because of lack of training. (3) Absenteeism among pupils especially on market day. (4) Lack of classes resulting in pupils learning outside which is not motivating.

She further said most people were happy with her, they accepted her as the manager of the school. Most women were glad to talk with her about their children's education and she felt respected. She believed that for the Ministry of Education to appoint someone to headship position they monitor him or her if s/he is hard working, good at public relations and honest which she believed she was. She complained that there were a lot of anomalies with promotion issues. She applied for promotion from PT4 to PT3 but was not called for interviews even though she qualified. She received a "Personal to holder" PT3 promotion. She said she was not aware of the promotion policy and wished she knew about it.

The following challenges that this headteacher said she faced as a headteacher are challenges faced by most headteachers, both male and female:

- (1) High absenteeism rate especially among teachers who were residing in town. She said it was hard to follow up on them.
- (2) Some teachers complain about her because she was strict unlike the former headteacher who was said to be flexible.
- (3) Young female were more difficult to manage than other teachers because many of them (the former) were not trained. As a result, they did not appreciate the responsibilities of a headteacher.
- (4) Many teachers were reporting late to work especially because they were residing in town and far away from the school, where public transport was costly and unreliable.
- (5) High absenteeism rate among pupils on market day.
- (6) Inadequate classrooms, resulting in some pupils learning in the open. She said that this de-motivates both teachers and learners.

When asked why there were a few female headteachers, she said that it is because of lack of headship allowance or other incentives and lack of confidence among many female teachers. The other issue she raised was the problem of proper headteachers' offices as headteachers' offices are regarded as storerooms.

³⁴ Interviewed on Tuesday, 24th July, 2007

4.3.14 Low levels of self-confidence among female teachers

Self-confidence has been regarded as one of the required attributes for a successful leader. Although female teachers aspired for headship position, when approached many of them feel they are not courageous enough to take up the position. A female headteacher reported that while she was working in Blantyre she refused to take up the post of headteacher for three consecutive years (2003, 2004 and 2005) because she thought it was a tough job: the duties and responsibilities were too many.

Flander (cited in Beardwell and Holden, 1994) points out that women's lack of confidence and ability to perform the job is a hindrance to their advancement. When women lack confidence they become incompetent and this becomes an inhibitor to their performance.

Findings of this study indicate that many female teachers lack self-confidence. They have the feeling that they will not do well during the interviews. As a result, they do not apply or attend interviews for promotion. A key informant from the TSC noted that a higher proportion of female than male teachers do not apply for promotion. Some female teachers wait for their husbands or the headteachers to encourage them to apply. When they refuse promotions, women send wrong signals to those who recommend them for promotion, that they lack self-confidence and are not capable of managing the schools. This is reflected in what key informant 4 said:

There are more women who have the potential of heading a school but the DEMs office and other concerned offices related to education may feel that the female would say "No," if they are offered headship position that is why they are not considered when it comes to promotion.³⁵

³⁵ Interviewed on 13th August, 2007 in his office.

Culturally, men are exposed to decision-making situations at an early age. They are taught an early age to be responsible for their female relatives. As a result when given a chance to act as headteachers male teachers accept without giving it a second thought. Women have been taught that womanly virtue is modesty. This modesty and their lack of self-esteem explain why sometimes women do not accept decision-making positions when approached even when they want such positions. Many women are not as assertive as are men because, through socialisation, women learn to be submissive to men. Interviews with PEAs and DEMs showed that female teachers wait until they are approached by a PEA or a DEM to apply for promotion because they do not want to be seen to be pushy. On the other hand, men go to DEMs' offices to promote themselves. They tell the DEMs that they have the potential to head a school.

4.3.15 Lack of good infrastructure in Malawian primary schools

Six out of the nine female headteachers explained that the other reason why there were few female headteachers in schools was the poor infrastructures. The headteachers commented that many schools in Malawi do not have proper storage for school properties. In most cases the headteacher's office which is not very secure is regarded as storeroom. In some cases the headteachers' houses double as storeroom. This puts off many teachers as they fear for their lives, more especially when they think of robbery cases. As female headteacher 2 commented:

Headteachers are custodians of teachers' salary. They are responsible for collecting teachers' salaries for their respective schools from the TDCs. In the absence of a proper headteacher's office the money is kept in the headteacher's house. This issue of keeping teachers' salaries in headteacher's office or home makes female teachers uneasy. This makes many female teachers to refuse the headship position when approached by the DEMs office. Female teachers feel threatened when they think of collecting pay for the teachers and walk with it

to their respective schools. They fear to be robbed,³⁶ as a result they turn down the offer when approached or appointed headteacher.³⁷

4.4 Factors that do not explain women's under-representation

There are a number of factors that, according to evidence from previous studies contribute to the low representation of women in decision-making positions. In this study four of such factors were found not to explain why the proportion of females in headship position in primary schools is lower than that of males. These factors are discussed next.

4.4.1 Profiles of the sampled headteachers

At the time of the study, 83% of the 18 headteachers were in the age range of 41-50 years. All but one of the males and all but two of the females were in this age category. The one male was in the age range of 51-60 years while the two females were in the age range of 31-40 years.

In order to understand further the profile of the sampled headteachers, the study solicited data on their educational and professional qualifications. Further information was also sought regarding their present grades. This is presented in Table 6.

³⁶ This fear came out true few months after data collection, when it was reported in the news paper that a male headteacher was robbed teachers salary as he was coming from the DEMs office to collect the teachers' pay for his school. Nation newspaper-5th March, 2009.

³⁷ Interviewed on 16th August, 2007 at her house.

Table 6: Sampled headteachers according to educational and professional qualifications

Education and Professional	Male		Female	
Qualifications	Number	%	Number	%
MSCE and T2	8	89	7	78
JCE and T3	1	11	2	22
Total	9	100	9	100

The results show that most (83%) of the headteachers were MSCE holders (T2) while a few (17%) were JCE holders (T3). As can be seen from the Table, 5 of the 9³⁸ female headteachers and 8 of the 9 male headteachers were MSCE holders. About 61% of the headteachers were at PT³⁹ grade followed by those at PT2 (28%), and then those at PT1 (11%). Table 6 indicates that, generally, the females' grades were lower than the males. At PT1 there was 1 male and one female, but at PT2 there were more males (4) than females (1). However, at PT3 there were fewer males (4) than females (7). None of the headteachers was at P8 at the time of the study.

³⁸ Where the total is less than 10, the percentages are not reported as they can be misleading.

³⁹ In the Ministry of Education the entry grade for primary school teachers is PT4, PT4 is lower than PT3, PT3 is lower than PT2, and PT2 is lower than PT1 which is lower than P8.

Table 7: Female and male headteachers’ grades at the time of the study

Grade	Males		Females	
	Number	%	Number	%
PT1	1	11	1	11
PT2	4	44.5	1	11
PT3	4	44.5	7	78
Total	9	100	9	100

The study found that 13 (72%) of the 18 headteachers had served as teachers and or deputy headteachers for 10 to 15 years, before they were promoted to the position of a headteacher. The rest had served for 5 to less than 10 years (17%), less than 5 years (6%), and 15 to 20 years (6%) before they were promoted to head the schools.

From the data presented in this section, it can be concluded that the typical headteacher is in his or her mid-forties, has an MSCE, is on PT3 grade, and served as a teacher and/or a deputy headteacher for 10 to 15 years before being promoted to head a primary school

4.4.2 Female teachers’ educational and professional qualifications

It is often claimed that poor representation of women in management positions is due and in part, to women’s lower educational and professional qualifications than men’s. This study found that this does not apply to the headship of primary schools. The educational and professional qualifications of the sampled female teachers were similar to those of their male counterparts.

Out of 35 female teachers who responded to the relevant questions 20 (57%) had MSCE and 15 (43%) had JCE. The corresponding percentages among the 33 male teachers who also responded to the questions were 19 (58%) and 14 (42%) respectively. The difference between the percentages of females and males with MSCE is not statistically significant.⁴⁰ This means that the males' and females' qualifications were similar. Also, an X^2 test of independence showed that teachers' professional qualifications (T2 or T3) do not depend on the teachers' sex.⁴¹

The results support the fact that sex is not a factor which affects an individual's professional qualifications. A possible explanation for the under-representation of females in headship positions could be what liberal feminist theorists hold, namely that women are oppressed because of the way in which men and women are socialised. They argue that because many societies support the patriarchy order, positions of power are generally held by men (Lovell, 2003).

Figure 2 below compares the academic qualifications of females and males within urban and rural settings. It indicates that the percentage of teachers with MSCE was significantly higher among the 30 urban-based teachers (60%) than among the 38 rural-based teachers (55%).⁴²

⁴⁰ All tests of significance in this study are done at 5% level of significance. A Z score of .0834 < Pu of .5751

⁴¹ A X^2 Value of .2024 with $v=1$ is less than the critical score of 3.84. The data used were: 19 males and 20 females were T2 teachers while 12 males and 15 females were T3 teachers.

⁴² A z score of 1.28 > Pu of .572

between 53% and 58%)⁴⁴ are not statistically significant. This means that there was no significant difference between the academic qualifications of male and female teachers in both rural and urban areas.

4.4.3 Female and male teachers' grades

According to the TSC's promotion policy, to be a headteacher on substantive headship position (promotion through interview) one has to be at PT2, PT1 or P8 grade. A teacher at PT3 grade can become a headteacher only through administrative arrangement, as did the 7 female and 4 male headteachers.

This study compared female teachers' and male teachers' grades in order to find out if the former were lower than the latter, which could be one of the factors explaining the under-representation of females in headship position. Table 8 summarises the results.

Table 8: Female and male teachers' grades, by number and percentage

Grade	Male		Female		Both Male & Female
	N	%	N	%	N
PT2	3	9.4	1	2.9	4
PT3	11	34.4	14	40.0	25
PT4	18	56.2	20	57.1	38
Total	32	100	35	100	67

⁴⁴ A z score of $-0.415 < P_u$ of 554.

An X^2 test of independence shows that there is no dependence between teachers' sex and their grades.⁴⁵ In other words, even though a higher percentage of male teachers than of female teachers were on PT2 grade, male teachers were not at significantly higher grades than were their female teachers. Therefore, teachers' grades do not explain females' underrepresentation in headship position.

4.4.4 Knowledge of promotion policy and application of promotion criteria

The study assessed whether female teachers are denied opportunities for promotion due to their ignorance of the promotion policy in the Ministry of Education. The sampled teachers were asked if they knew that the Ministry of Education had a promotion policy. About 45% (31) of the 68 respondents said that they had heard about it while the rest (55%) were not sure whether it existed. The results show that 51% (19) of the respondents said it described teachers' academic and professional qualifications, behaviour and experience required for promotion. Out of the 51% who indicated knowledge of the promotion policy, 47% (9) were female teachers while 53 % (10) were males.⁴⁶ A statistical test shows that there is no significant difference between the two percentages.⁴⁷ Therefore, lack of knowledge of either the existence of the policy or of its contents does not explain why women are underrepresented in headship positions.

Key informant 1 who has participated as an interview panelist on promotions before said that:

During interviews we focus on how somebody is performing at that time and how he/she answers the questions. Appointing someone to the position of headteacher is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education through DEMs. They look at the qualities of an individual teacher if they suit those of

⁴⁵ Using a Yate's continuity correction factor, the X^2 value of .604 with $v=2$ is less than the critical score of 5.99.

⁴⁶ Although only 19 out of 68 indicated that they knew what the promotion policy stipulates, 9 out of 19 teachers were females. Both males (23) and females (26) did not know what the policy stipulates.

⁴⁷ A z score of xxxx is $< P_u$ of xxxx.

leadership. This is why there are many teachers at PT2 grade but are not headteachers because of their behaviour.⁴⁸

Key informant 2 also commented that:

It must be noted that it is impossible for all teachers at PT2 grade to be headteachers because there are fewer schools than there are teachers at that grade. It is probably because this fact that many teachers at PT2 grade who have the required qualities, qualifications and experience and have demonstrated exemplary behaviour, are not headteachers.⁴⁹

Some 35 (80%) of the female and 33 (77%) of the male teachers respectively, were of the opinion that female and male teachers were promoted equally based on their qualifications, behaviour, experience, and performance during interviews. A small proportion of the teachers (17% of the females and 16% of the males) indicated that the criteria are not equally applied. These teachers, who included females, observed that the Ministry of Education officials favour female teachers over male teachers.⁵⁰ This comment, which says officials favour female teachers the radical feminists would claim, is a result of socialization perpetuated through ideology and sustained by institutional methods which enable men to dominate and control women. Both female and male teachers are used to a male supremacy. When only few females are promoted they feel they have been favoured. Although there are fewer women in headship positions their promotion is still perceived negatively. There is a minority opinion which, for example, regards the women's elevation to position of power as a result of "bottom power". This scarcely applies to men.

⁴⁸ Key informant 1 was interviewed in her office on Thursday, 26th July, 2007.

⁴⁹ Key informant 2 was interviewed on 18th July in his office.

⁵⁰ This perceived favouritism towards women is given credence by the number of female headteachers who are appointed to head schools by administrative arrangement yet they are on PT3 grade. See section 4.4.1

4.5 Attitude towards headship position

4.5.1 Female teachers' attitude towards headship position

The study assessed the attitudes of female teachers towards headship position in order to find out if the poor representation of females in headship position is due to female teachers' negative attitudes towards that position. A significantly higher percentage of the 34 (56%) females than of the 32 (47%) males who provided information, said that they aspired to become headteachers.⁵¹ In general, the women's attitude towards headship positions was positive.⁵²

The conclusion drawn from the results above was supported by the finding that the percentage of the teachers who said that they would accept the headship position was significantly higher among the 35 (57%) females than among the 33 (46%) males.⁵³ Those who said they would not accept accounted for 31% and 26% of the females and males respectively.

Most of the female teachers who said that they would accept the position said that they deserved to be headteachers as they felt they had the qualities, experience and the qualifications required for that position. Some of them said that the post was a gateway to higher positions since headteachers are known by those in higher positions, while others indicated that they would want to challenge the culture of undermining women by showing society that women can become headteachers and perform at least as well as men do.

⁵¹ A z score of .7911 is $> P_u$ of .515

⁵² Because 3% of the female and male cases each were missing, the percentages of the females and males who said they had never aspired for the position were 44% and 54% respectively.

⁵³ A z score of .9901 is $> P_u$ of .522.

Although female teachers aspire for headship position, most of them were allocated to teach infant and junior classes, which according to one of the key informant, is accorded low status. This observation by the key informant is supported by the liberal feminists' claim that in most societies there's division of labour which oppresses women. There is separation of the public sphere (economic and political) and the private (domestic) sphere. In the public sphere there are rewards of social life, for example, power, status and freedom. Women, according to liberal feminists, are located to the private sphere which is associated with the undervalued tasks associated with housework. Women who teach in the junior classes are, therefore, regarded as not capable of managing schools.

However, much as it might be prestigious to teach in senior classes,' male teachers know that there is more work involved in infant classes than at senior level. Most male teachers therefore shun teaching infant and junior classes because they cannot cope with the demands of the job at that level. The opinion of teachers who experienced teaching both infant and senior classes is that it is tough to teach pupils at infant level. This is so because most pupils at this level are being initiated for the very first time into school discipline and the 3Rs: reading, writing, and arithmetic. Those who teach in senior classes teach those pupils who have already been moulded by infant and junior class teachers. The senior class teachers' work is to polish up what has already been moulded.

As Table 9 below shows, the teachers' responses to the question about what they would like to do in the next three years further confirm the conclusion that the attitude of female teachers, like that of their male counterparts, towards decision-making positions in the

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As Table 9 below shows, the teachers' responses to the question about what they would like to do in the next three years further confirm the conclusion that the attitude of female teachers, like that of their male counterparts, towards decision-making positions in the

Education system is positive. A X^2 test showed that the plans of the teachers depended on the teachers' sex.⁵⁴

Table 9: Teachers' plans on their career in the next three years

Vision	Males		Females		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.
To become a headteacher, deputy headteacher, or head of section	16	49	19	54	35
To become a PEA or DEM	4	12	10	29	14
To go for further studies	5	15	6	17	11
Change career ⁵⁵	5	15	0	0	5
Other	3	9	0	0	3
Total	33	100	35	100	68

The results show that while 15% of the male teachers said they want to change their career, none of the females planned to do so. Although the difference between the proportion of females (54%) and males (49%) who plan to become heads of section, deputy headteachers, and headteachers is not significant.⁵⁶ The percentage of teachers who said they would like to become PEAs or DEMs was significantly higher among females (29%) than among males (12%).⁵⁷ About the same percentage of females (19%) and males (15%) reported that they would like to go for further studies such as diploma or a degree in education so that they could become DEMs or secondary school teachers. Female teachers' future plans are to remain in the education system but on a higher position in the system.

⁵⁴ A X^2 value of 11.48 with $v=4$, is less than the critical value of 9.49.

⁵⁵ The teachers meant leaving the education system.

⁵⁶ A z score of .4946 < P_u of .5109.

⁵⁷ A z score of -1.728 > P_u of .2075.

4.5.2 Headteachers' attitude towards female teachers

Headteachers' attitudes towards female teachers in their schools can affect the female teachers' attitudes towards headship positions. In order to find out if headteachers thought female teachers in their schools were capable of heading the schools, the 18 headteachers were asked who, between females and males, they thought would head their schools if they left the schools. Although, as table 4 in section 4.2.2 shows, only 5 of the 18 deputy headteachers of the sampled schools were female, 13 (72%) of the 18 headteachers (7 out of 9 females and 6 out of 9 males) felt their schools would be headed by females. The major reason they gave for their view was that females were experienced, capable, well qualified, dedicated, understanding, co-operative, and constructive. All this suggests that irrespective of their sex, most of the headteachers had a positive attitude towards female teachers in their schools.

4.5.3 Assignment of female teachers to junior classes

The assignment of teachers to classes is at the discretion of headteachers. Those who teach senior classes were more easily recognised and have better chances of promotion to headship positions than those who teach junior classes. It was found that more female than male teachers were given infant and junior classes (Standard 1 to 5) rather than senior classes (Standard 6 to 8) because of the perception that female teachers cannot manage senior classes. The reverse can also be true. Men cannot manage infant classes. Female headteacher I pointed out that:

When I was at one of the schools in Balaka, I tried to convince the headteacher that I should teach in standard 8. He said I would not manage.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Interviewed on Friday, 27th July, 2007 in her office.

Some headteachers assume that female teachers' nurturing qualities are suitable for junior classes and ignore the fact that such qualities are also useful in handling pupils in senior classes. These headteachers also ignore other skills and abilities that female teachers have that enable them to teach senior classes effectively. As Hills and Ragland (1995) explain, men are like "gatekeepers" who often decide who their successors will be and deals are made within the circle before outsiders are involved. At school level, it is therefore hardly surprising that male teachers are often assigned senior classes. Ramphele (1995) argues that women have been seen as "outsiders" in the broader society. This is reflected in the education system. The assignment of female teachers to junior classes effectively reduces the females' chances for promotion to headship positions since it is those who teach senior classes that tend to be promoted to such positions.⁵⁹

The tendency of assigning males to senior classes consolidates male hegemony in the education system. Although there are no monetary benefits attached, status is more important in this case. When one teaches in senior classes he or she is regarded as more capable and more intelligent than the one teaching in infant and junior sections and he/she is also taken very seriously by both pupils and the community. He/she is respected and it is regarded as a special honour to teach in senior classes at primary school. Blackmore and Kenway (1993) explain that historically, the consolidation of male hegemony in administration is connected to the expansion of bureaucratic organisation in education. With increased bureaucratisation, the different roles within an organisation become even more clearly defined. This allows those in power (the males) to gain more control over their subordinates (the females).

⁵⁹ From experience the senior teachers gain experience in public speaking as they are used to speak to grown-ups in senior classes than those who teach infant classes. Those in senior classes gain confidence which help them pass the interviews.

4.6. Teachers' and pupils' views about female headteachers

This section describes the views of teachers on the qualities of a good female headteacher. It also presents the teachers' views about the qualities that female headteachers have. The teachers' views on the male headteachers are included for comparison purposes. In addition, it presents the preferences of teachers and pupils on female and male headteachers. Issues of perception are important to this study because they may influence promotion or lack of promotion of female headteachers. The assumption being made here is that the more positive perception towards the female headteachers is, by their colleagues and pupils, the more the society will value them and hence more of them will be promoted. This is expected to result in many female teachers becoming interested in, and applying for and accepting, headship positions or vice versa.

4.6.1 Qualities of a good headteacher

Table 10 summarises the responses of teachers who were asked to describe the qualities of a good headteacher. The qualities such as dedication, discipline, friendliness, and knowledgeable are in some agreement with the criteria and qualities that DEMs and PEAs said they look for (see Section 4.3.4 and 4.4.4). The DEMs and PEAs mentioned hard work, discipline, good relationships with the teaching staff and the community, and academic qualifications and experience. It was noted that 64% of the female respondents mentioned friendliness while 71% of the males mentioned dedication. On the one hand, significantly higher percentages of the females than the males mentioned friendly,⁶⁰ honest⁶¹, tolerant,⁶² and disciplined.⁶³ On the other hand, significantly higher percentages of males than females

⁶⁰ A z score of 2.972 > P_u of .4884.

⁶¹ A z score of 1.2748 > P_u of .4220.

⁶² A z score of 3.2508 > P_u of .1073.

⁶³ A z score of 2.1450 > P_u of .3273.

mentioned knowledgeable,⁶⁴ transparent⁶⁵ and democratic.⁶⁶ A higher percentage of the females than males mentioned qualities of a nurturing person.

Table 10: Female and male teachers' views on qualities of a good headteacher

Qualities	Females		Males		Females & Males	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Friendly	30	64	15	33	45	49
Honest	24	51	15	33	39	42
Dedicated	15	32	32	71	47	51
Accommodative	8	17	6	13	14	15
Democratic	8	17	12	27	20	22
Tolerant	10	21	0	0	10	11
Disciplined	20	43	10	22	30	33
Transparent	10	21	17	38	27	29
Knowledgeable	16	34	20	44	36	39
N	47		45		92	

Note: Although each teacher was required to mention 3 qualities, some male teachers mentioned less than 3 qualities.

⁶⁴ A z score of .9833 > P_u of .3889.

⁶⁵ A z score of 1.7895 > P_u of .2932.

⁶⁶ A z score of 1.2048 > P_u of .2189.

4.6.2. DEM's, PEA's and Teaching Service Commission's attitudes towards female headteachers

The study assessed the attitude of DEMs, PEAs and TSC towards female headteachers. Key informant 6 commented that:

When there are vacancies, we encourage both females and males to apply, we indicate this on the advert to avoid misconceptions. In the past two years we had an awareness campaign where we informed the teaching staff for both primary and secondary school what is expected during interviews. During this awareness we emphasized government's plans towards women. Actually during interviews both males and females are asked equal and similar questions and nothing is based on one's sex. Every teacher is considered on how he/she performed. Infact female managers are best managers, so we encourage them. In addition, both DEMs indicated that, during their term of office they had promoted several female teachers to the level of headteacher. However, some of them turned down the offer due to their own reasons.

4.6.3 Teachers' perceptions about the qualities that female headteachers have

In order to gauge their perceptions about the qualities that they felt female headteachers had, the teachers were given 12 positive statements about the qualities of female headteachers and they were required to say what their view was on each of the statements. Table 11 indicates the results.

Table 11: Female and male teachers' views on the qualities of female head teachers

Statement: Female Headteachers are	Females (%)			Males (%)		
	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Good caregivers	62	11	27	63	17	20
Good at public relations	57	38	3	40	47	13
Understanding	70	0	30	57	27	16
Good listeners	53	15	32	47	0	53
Patient	53	35	12	64	13	23
Efficient	53	15	32	36	34	30
Good judges	36	24	40	40	40	20
Well organized	50	20	30	50	30	20
Reliable	50	24	26	56	10	34
Keepers of secrets	26	24	12	77	20	3
Innovators	28	60	3	28	60	12
Sympathisers	64	26	10	70	13	17
No. of Respondents	35			31		

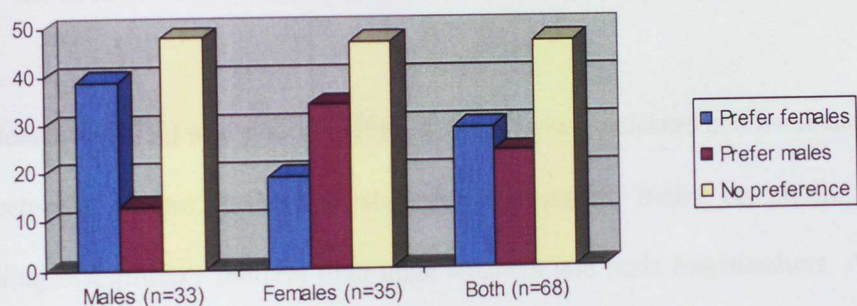
The table shows that the majority of the respondents agreed with most of the statements. The statements that the least percentage of respondents agreed with were that female headteachers keep secrets; they are good judges; good listeners and that they are efficient.

There is not much difference between males' and females' opinions except on the statement that the female headteachers are innovators. While as many as 77% of the male teachers agreed with this statement, only 28% of the female teachers did so while 60% of the female teachers were not sure. It is not clear why such a high percentage of the females were unsure.

4.6.4 Teachers' and pupils' preferences between male and female headteachers

Data was also collected to find out if teachers prefer female to male headteachers and if there are any differences between female and male teachers in their preferences. Figure 3 below shows the results.

Figure 3: Teachers' preference for female and male headteachers



As figure 3 above shows, 32 (47%) of the 68 teachers indicated that they had no preference for either male or female headteacher. The percentages among the 33 male teachers and the 35 female teachers were similar (48% and 47% respectively). These teachers explained that anyone, irrespective of their sex, matters, as long as he or she works hard, is dedicated, and performs according to expected standards. Of the 36 teachers who expressed some preference, 11 (30%) preferred female headteachers while 9 (25%) preferred male headteachers. Generally, these teachers preferred headteachers of the opposite sex as shown

by the fact that a higher percentage of the males 13 (39%) than females 7 (20%) preferred female headteachers while a higher percentage of the females 12 (34%) than males 5 (15%) preferred male headteachers.⁶⁷

During FGDs, it was found that 32 (67%) of the 48 Standard Eight pupils preferred having female teachers to having male teachers. The rest 16 (33%) said they preferred the latter to the former. Most 28 (58%) of the 48 pupils said that they would like to have more female (75%) than male (25%) headteachers by the year 2020. The teachers and pupils who expressed preference for female headteachers and teachers focused on the nurturing characteristics associated with women. Some 33 (69%) of these pupils felt that the nurturing role which female teachers demonstrate in schools helps both female and male pupils to work hard. They claimed that male teachers favour girls, not because they would like them to do very well in class but because they want sexual favours from the girls.

The teachers (44%) and pupils (31%) said that female teachers and headteachers are friendly, sympathetic, patient, honest, trustworthy, transparent, better on public relations, and at handling disciplinary matters than male teachers and male headteachers. About 83% of the boys complained that in their respective schools the male teachers and male headteachers are very harsh to them and they are not patient enough to understand their problems while their female counterparts take pupils as their own children. Teachers and pupils who said they preferred male headteachers stated that the males are dedicated to work: they go to work early in the morning and leave late in the afternoon or early evening. They also said that they

⁶⁷ However, when asked who between male and female superiors they find it easier working with, most of the teachers 21 (60%) of the 35 females and 17 (52%) of the 33 males) said superiors of the same sex as themselves. This suggests that some of the teachers interpreted "working with" differently from "working under." The former suggests interaction at a more personal level than the latter.

keep secrets and understand problems better than their female counterparts. They complained that family obligations often keep the females away from the school.

4.7 Conclusion

This study found that there is a paradox when one considers the numbers of women in the teaching profession and those in the headship positions. The study found that the women's poor representation in headship positions is influenced by many factors. The patriarchal order explains much of this under-representation of women. Other main factors include socialisation and devaluation of women's work; promotion procedures, and assignment of female teachers to junior classes, negative attitude of communities towards female headteachers, limited family support, and women's low self-esteem. Many of these factors are inter-related. These inhibiting factors and the challenges the female headteachers, as well as female teachers face must be addressed with urgency if female representation in headship positions is to be at par with male representation in the foreseeable future.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter is a conclusion on the findings of this study on women's participation in headship position at primary school level. It also explores the policy implications of the findings. Finally, the chapter makes some specific implications aimed at improving the participation of women in primary school management.

5.1 Summary

This study was to investigate factors affecting women's participation in primary school management. It has established that although females account for a higher percentage of the population of Malawi than males and that Lilongwe District in particular has more female teachers than male teachers, there are more male than female primary school headteachers in the said district.

Still on numbers, the study further found that there are more female than male teachers in urban areas while in the rural areas female teachers are outnumbered by male teachers. This is due to the fact that traditionally, women are expected to follow their husbands wherever their profession takes them. This is done to preserve the family unit. Female teachers are no exception to this tradition. This is why there is more concentration of female teachers in the

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urban areas than in the rural areas. However, the numerical advantage enjoyed by the females in urban areas has not translated into equivalent numbers in decision-making positions in these areas.

It was also the objective of the study to establish the attitudes of female teachers towards management positions. The findings have shown that the majority of the female teachers have positive attitudes towards these positions. They aspire to headship positions.

This study also sought to establish the attitudes of male and female teachers, pupils, DEMs, PEAs, and the TSC towards female headteachers. The findings showed that 78% of these stakeholders had expressed no preference for male or female headteachers; there was a general positive attitude towards female headteachers. However, the findings indicate that the level of support for female headteachers among female teachers was low as evidenced by the fact that only 42 percent of females preferred male to female headteachers.

Furthermore, the study aimed at showing factors that influence the relatively poor participation of women in primary school management. It has been established that the main underlying factors are the patriarchal nature of the Malawian society and socialisation. The negative perceptions about women's capabilities and abilities, and practices that undermine women's achievements are at the root of the major challenges facing female teachers.

Another objective of this study was to establish the female teachers' attitude towards management position. It has been established that more female teachers stated that if approached they would accept to head a school. This indicates that their attitude towards management position was positive.

Another objective of the study was to identify challenges females encounter once they assume headship positions. The major challenges identified included balancing headship and family roles, lack of incentives, insubordination from other teachers, and working in hostile communities where the expectation was that female headteachers would behave like males.

Despite the many challenges they face within their household, community, school, and the MoESC, in their quest to participate in headship positions, some female teachers have broken the barriers and become successful headteachers. In order to increase the numbers of such women, there is need to modify some of the policies in line with the findings of this study.

5.2 Policy Implications

The major policy initiative, PIF and NSTED were designed to achieve gender parity in terms of numbers of males and females in accessing educational institutions. The fact that there is still a long way to go in achieving this parity indicates that the process of implementation is lagging behind or that there is non-implementation. The reasons for this may be varied and many but they are well beyond the scope of this study. The longer term policies such as Vision 2020, MPRS and Millennium Goals also have parity of participation between women and men in power and decision-making as a major objective since this is considered as a fundamental right.

While gender parity can be fixed by pieces of legislation and enforced by law, other factors cannot be so fixed. The study's major findings have shown that the main factor affecting women participation in management is the patriarchal nature of the Malawi society and socialization; the negative capabilities and abilities and practices that undermine women. The

existing policies have failed to take cognizance of the fact that gender equity can only be achieved if there is a fundamental change in attitudes towards women, and the way society is organized. This paradigm shift is well beyond the existing policies. This may explain why Malawi as a country is lagging behind in the area of gender equity. Since various pieces of legislation are in place, it is now time to tackle the more problematic and subtle issue of negative attitudes towards women.

5.3 Theoretical Implication of the Results

This study has exploited feminist theories to explain the participation of females in headship positions. The theories have, to some extent assisted in explaining why there are few female headteachers in primary schools of Lilongwe District. The approach was eclectic because no single theory could explain the complexity of the problem. However, there are certain issues, for example, the low self-esteem among some female teachers which the feminist theories have failed to account for. In addition, in some instances the feminist theories have overlooked the fact that certain experiences are sex blind – they apply both to males and females equally. Feminist theory must reflect the contradictions in women's experiences both as victims and agents of patriarchy. Only then will feminist theory be able to account for the diversity and dynamics of women's experiences. The inadequacies of the feminist theories only confirm the complexity of education as a mechanism for reproduction of gender inequalities and justify my eclectic approach to the issue.

5.4 Recommendations

This section presents recommendations to the Ministry of Education policy makers at various levels and other stakeholders, which are aimed at increasing female participation in headship position at primary school level. All the recommendations made here are based on the findings of the study. The recommendations are:

- **Train and recruit more female teachers**

The government must take affirmative action by training and recruiting more females to become teachers and make sure that there is equal enrolment between females and males in both public and private TTCs.

- **Conduct management training for teachers**

The Ministry of Education through the DEMs and PEAs should conduct education management courses for teachers in order to prepare them for leadership positions. In this regard, the Ministry should encourage female teachers to familiarise themselves with the promotion policy and to apply for headship positions when opportunities arise.

- **Advertisements of vacancies**

Vacancies for primary school teachers' promotions must be widely advertised in the media, through DEMs' offices, TDCs, and schools to allow a wide range of potential and eligible applicants to become aware of the vacancies. All criteria for the job need to be transparent and stated before the interview processing stages. For fair competition, NSTED recommendations for promotion criteria should be

implemented. Additionally adverts could target women teachers, for instance, by stating that female applicants are encouraged to apply.

- **Give hardship allowance to female headteachers in rural areas**

NSTED (2008) recognises the need to improve teachers' conditions of service generally. For example, salaries are very low. However, to attract more female teachers to headship positions, government must increase headship allowances and take affirmative action by giving hardship allowance to female headteachers in rural areas.

- **Sensitise communities on gender equality**

The Ministry of Education in collaboration with NGOs involved in gender awareness should sensitize communities through school committees and PTAs on the abilities of female teachers and headteachers and the need to accept female headteachers.

- **Ensure gender equality in the promotion of teachers to other positions at primary school level**

DEMs are fully aware of opportunities of both women and men accessing headship positions in primary schools. The relative equity for men and women that now exists in respect to senior roles in primary schools prior to headship should therefore be extended to the role of deputy headteacher and acting head.

- **Encourage the establishment of female teachers' formal networks by female teachers**

The DEMs should encourage female teachers to establish formal networks through which female teachers can share their experiences and the challenges they face in their quest to become headteachers and, as a group, route their concerns to appropriate higher authorities. These networks should be used as a platform to promote the females' advancement and co-operation with their male counterparts.

- **Building of modern schools**

The government of Malawi to build well secured schools with proper storage facilities. Schools built by DFID and EU took into account the security concerns. The model schools are already there and could be modified. This would lessen the fear which many female teachers have. In addition, the DEM's office should pay salaries to individual teachers and not through headteachers.

- **Enforce all gender policies**

Government must enforce and implement all policies on gender, including having an equal number of males and females on interview panels for the promotion of teachers to headship positions, so that gender-based inequalities existing at the primary school management level are eliminated and women participate at this level as much as men do. A balanced interview panel will make interviewee both male and females feel comfortable, to demonstrate their skills and abilities during interviews. It will also bring a range of perspectives from both genders to the final decision-making.

5.5 Further research study

The experiences gained from carrying out this study have shown that if a deeper understanding of the factors underlying females' participation in management is to be gained, it is important to adopt a more qualitative than quantitative approach to the study. Qualitative methods used in this study yielded much more useful data than the quantitative methods. It is recommended that:

- More qualitative studies should be done on factors underlying females' participation in management since these seem to yield deeper understanding than quantitative ones.
- A study should be conducted to investigate why female primary school headteachers are appointed when they are at a relatively more advanced age than their male counterparts.
- The relationship between the sex, the age of a headteacher and the size of the school to head.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI



CHANCELLOR COLLEGE
Department of Educational Foundations

PRINCIPAL
Emmanuel Fabiano, B.Ed., MSc., Ph.D.

P. O. Box 280, Zomba, MALAWI
Tel: (265) 01 522 222
Telex: 44742 CHANCOL MI
Fax: (265) 01 522 046
Email: edf@chanco.unima.mw.

Our Ref.: Edf/6/19
Your Ref.:

Dear Sir/Madam

INTRODUCING MRS ROSE KALIZANG'OMA

I have the pleasure to introduce to you Mrs Rose Kalizang'oma, our Masters of Education student. To fulfill some of the requirements for the program, she is required to carry out a field research to collect data for her research report. I, therefore, write to kindly ask for your support towards her study as she collect the data and related literature.

I thank you in anticipation for your cooperation and support.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Dr. Bob Wajizigha Chulu'.

Dr. Bob Wajizigha Chulu
Lecturer in Psychometrics & Head, Educational Foundations Department

Appendix 2

telegrams: MINED LILONGWE
telephone: +265 1 789422
fax: +265 1 788064/164

communications should be addressed to:
the Secretary for Education



In reply please quote No.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND
VOCATIONAL TRAINING
PRIVATE BAG 328
CAPITAL CITY
LILONGWE 3
MALAWI

Ref. No. HRD/4/1

13th July, 2007

Dear Sir/Madam

**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION: MRS. ROSE D. KALIZANG'OMA DEPUTY
HEADMISTRESS, CHINSAPO SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Mrs. Rose Kalizang'oma is a Civil Servant who has been sponsored by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to pursue a Masters Degree in Sociology of Education. One requirement of the programme is that she should conduct research, which will input into her dissertation.

In light of the above I ask for your support to help her collect data for the above stated reason.

Yours faithfully,

B.K.M. Mjojo
for : SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND
VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Appendix 3

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEADTEACHERS

NAME **OF** SCHOOL.....
DIVISION.....

EDUCATION

Please go through the items below according to the order in which they are presented. Most of the questions require you to choose the right alternative with a tick (✓) where boxes are provided. The other questions require open response as they are factual.

PERSONAL DETAILS

(Tick in the box next to the appropriate responses below)

1.

Female 01	Male 02
☐	☐
☐	☐

2. Age

21 – 30 01	31 – 40 02	41 – 50 03	51 – 60 04	61 above 05
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Marital status

Single 01	Married 02	Separated/Divorced 03	Widowed 04
☐	☐	☐	☐

4. What is your highest academic qualification?

PSCL 01	JCE 02	MSCE 03	Other (specify)
☐	☐	☐	☐

5. (a) Do you have a teaching qualification?

☐	Yes 01	☐	No 02	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

(b) Teaching qualifications

T3	T2
01	02

PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION

6. (a) Have you ever been promoted?

No	No
01	02

(b) If Yes go to 6 (c) If No go to 8

(c) If yes, indicate your promotions.

Post held at the time of promotion	Promoted to	Grade	Year
Headteacher			
Deputy Headteacher			
Head of Section			

(d) For how long did you serve as a teacher before you were promoted to the position of headteacher for the first time?

< 5 Years	5 – 9 Years	10 – 14 Years	15 – 19 Years
01	02	03	04

7. How long have you held this position (including years in position at other schools)?

< 1 Years	1 – 3 Years	4 – 6 Years	7 – 10 Years
01	02	03	04

8. (a) Do you know if the Ministry of Education has a promotion policy?

Yes	No (go to 9)
01	02

(b) If Yes, what does it say? If No go to 9

9. (a) What position(s) of responsibility have you held so far? (Tick all those applicable to you from the list below).

Post held	Promoted to & Grade	Date & Year
Head teacher		
Deputy Headteacher		
Acting Headteacher		
Head of Section		

- (b) Were you promoted because you (You may tick in more than one box)

Are a woman 01	Are a man 02	A hard worker 03	Have enough experience 04	Qualify for the post 05	Other (specify) 06

10. What position(s) of responsibility have you held so far? (Indicate all those applicable to you in the list below).

Responsibilities ever held	Tick Applicable Boxes	Year
Headteacher		
Deputy Headteacher		
Teacher		
Head of Section		
Staff, Secretary, Sports Master/Mistress, Club Patron		
Others (Specify)		

11. (a) Have you had any management training after you attained headship position? (Tick in the box next to the correct answer)

Yes 01	No 02

- (b) If Your answer to 10(a) is **Yes** specify the training.

(c) Why do some qualified teachers not been promoted?

12. (a) Are women promoted on equal basis as men ?

(b) Explain your answer.

13. (a) If you left your school today, who do you think will take your position within your school?

A male	A female	May be a male or female
01	02	03

(b) Why do you think she or he definitely will take your position?

14. (a) What influence does your family have on your position as a head teacher?

(b) Explain your answer.

15. What roles do you think women play at home that helps them in their effective professional performance?

16. (a) Are women headteachers get affected professionally by their immediate family?

Yes 01	No 02

If your answer to question 16 is No, skip 16(b).

(b) If your answer to question 16 is Yes, how does the family affect them?

17. (a) Do people's attitude towards women headteachers hamper their professional performance (e.g. pull her down syndrome)? If answer to 17 (a) is yes, go to 17 (b)

Yes 01	No 02	Not Sure 03

(b) Why do you think people pull each other down?

18. If your answer to 17(a) is Yes, how do women's/men's attitude towards female headteachers affect their professional performance?

19. What do you do to ensure that you perform effectively in your position?

20. What are some of the things which people do to show that they are not supporting the headteacher in his/her duties?

a _____

b _____

c _____

21. Do you have to go an extra mile and work extra hard to prove your worth as compared to your male/female counterparts in similar positions?

Always	Most of the times	Sometimes	Never
01	02	03	04

22. Who is your role model? Explain.

23. What obstacles have you faced when conducting your duties?

24. Profession-wise what do you want to achieve in the next five years?

25. What needs to be done to increase the number of female heads in primary schools?

26. Why do you think there are few women holding headship positions in Malawi?

- a) Women are discriminated against
- b) Lower levels of education by most women
- c) Stereotyping (women cannot hold challenging jobs)
- d) Other reasons (please state)

27. For each statement given below, tick against the description that best suits your opinion.

	5	4	3	2	1
Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Female headteachers a good care takers					
Female headteachers are good at public relations					
Female headteacher are very good at understanding their juniors and pupils					
Female headteachers are patient. Female headteachers are efficient in doing things					
Female headteachers are good listeners					
Female headteachers are good judges					
Female headteachers are well organized					
Female headteachers are reliable					
Female headteachers keep secrets					
Female headteachers are innovators					
Female headteachers usually assertive and decisive					
Female headteachers are sympathetic					
Female headteachers are more competent than male headteachers					
Female headteachers are liked by many					

I thank you very much for spending your time in answering to this questionnaire.

APPENDIX 4

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

NAME OF SCHOOL..... EDUCATION DIVISION.....

Education District.....

The items below need to be read carefully. After going through them choose the right alternative by ticking (✓) that best suits your opinion.

1. What sex are you?

Female 01	Male 02

2. Age

21-30 years 01	31-40 years 02	41-50 years 03	51 & above 04

3. Marital status (Tick the box next to correct answer below.)

Single 01	Married 02	Widowed 03	Divorced 04	Separated 05

4. (a) Highest Educational qualifications

PSLC 01	JCE 02	MSCE 03	Others (Specify) 04

(b) Professional qualifications

T3 01	T2 02

5. Present post held: _____

Class Teacher 01	Senior teacher 02	Head of Section 03	Acting Deputy Head 04	Deputy Headteacher 05	Acting Head 06	Head- teachers 07

6. Grade of Post e.g. PT4, PT3, PT2, PT1, S8, etc

PT 4 01	PT3 02	PT2 03	PT1 04	S8 05	Others specify 06

7. How long have you been teaching?

8. a) Have you ever been promoted?

Yes 01	No 02

b) If Yes, please complete the chart below.

Post held at the time of promotion	Promoted to Grade	Year

c) Other responsibilities in addition to teaching what have you ever held at the school? (Tick all those which are applicable to you).

	Tick applicable box	Year
Headteacher		
Deputy Headteacher		
Head of Section		
Staff Secretary		
Sports Master/Mistress		
Club Patron		
Staff Secretary		
Other (Specify		

9 (a) what are criteria's for promotion to headship position?

(b) Do these criteria's apply to both male and female teachers?

Yes 01	No 02

Explain _____

10. Do you ever aspire to become a headteacher, in your career?(If your answer is NO go to 12)

Yes 01	No 02	Not sure 03

Why?

11. If Yes, to what extent have your ambitions been fulfilled?

To a large extent 01	To some extent 02	Never 03

12. (A) Have you ever turned down an offer to become a headteacher?

Yes 01	No 02	Not sure 03

(b) If Yes, why?

Too busy with other things 01	Family obligations 02	Lack of interest 03	Lack of confidence 03	Not born a leader 05

Other reason specify (06)

13. (a) Have some obstacles affected your ambitions to achieve your career goals?

If No, go to 14.

Yes 01	No 02	I am not Sure 03

- (b) If Yes, what obstacles?

14. (a) Given a chance of headship position at primary school level would you accept it?

Yes 01	No 02	I am not Sure 03

- (b) Explain why.

15. How did you overcome these obstacles?

16. (a) Despite the obstacles what are your plans for next three years?

- (b) Why?

- 17 (a) What are the qualities of a good headteacher?

- (b) Does the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training look that when promoting teachers?

Yes 01	No 02
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- (c) Explain your answer

18 a) whom do you prefer working with as your superior?

Male 01	Female 02	No preference 03	Not sure 04

b) Explain your choice.

19. a) How easy do you find it to work with superiors of the same sex as you?

Very easy 01	Quite easy 02	Rather difficulty 03	Very difficulty 03	Not sure 05

b) Explain your answer.

20. a) How easy do you find it to work with a junior of the same sex as you?

Very easy 01	Quite easy 02	Rather difficulty 03	Very difficulty 03	Not sure 05

b) Explain your choice

21. a) If you attained headship position, which would you prefer to working with?

Workmates of the same sex as myself	Workmates of opposite sex from me	A mixed groups of males and females	No preference
01	02	03	04

- b) Explain your answer _____
- _____

22. If you were being given a chance to choose your superior, you would go for –

One of the same sex as myself	One of the opposite sex	No preference
01	02	03

23. For each statement below given, tick against the description that best suits your opinion.

	5	4	3	2	1
	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Female headteachers are good care givers					
Female headteachers are good at public relations					
Female headteacher are very good at understanding their junior and pupils					
Female headteachers are patient.					
Female headteachers are efficient					
Female headteachers are good listeners					
Female headteachers are good judges					
Female headteachers are well organized					
Female headteachers are reliable					
Female headteachers keep secrets					
Female headteachers are innovators					
Female headteachers are usually assertive and decisive					
Female headteachers should their pupils and members of staff					
Female headteachers are sympathetic					
Female headteachers are more competent than male headteachers					
Female headteachers are liked by many					

I thank you very much for spending your time in completing this questionnaire.

APPENDIX 5

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

KEY INFORMANT'S POSITION: SCHOOL.....
KEY INFORMANT'S SEX:..... MARITAL STATUS.....

1. How did you feel when you were promoted?
2. What made you feel like that?
3. What are the challenges of your position?
4. Describe the attitude of people (men, women, pupils, parents, general public) who you meet through your position towards your position.
5.
 - a) What qualities do they look for when promoting someone to headship position
 - b) Do you think you have the qualities?
 - c) Explain
6.
 - a) what advice can you give to people who admire to become a headteacher?
 - b) what advice can you give to people who have no interest in becoming a headteacher?
7. Suggest procedures which government should follow to have an equal number of male and female in headship positions by 2020.

APPENDIX 6
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DISTRICT EDUCATION MANAGERS AND PRIMARY
EDUCATION ADVISORS

QUESTION 1

How many schools do you have in your district? No.

QUESTION 2

How many (a) female headteachers and

(b) Male headteachers do you have

QUESTION 3

How many of your headteachers are in that position substantively?

(a) Female

(b) Male

QUESTION 4

How would you describe the Qualities of your headteachers?

(a) Female Headteachers

(b) Male Headteachers

QUESTION 5

How many of your headteachers were appointed by your office?

(a) Female

(b) Male

Explain why that number.

QUESTION 6

(a) In cases where there are no interviews, you use administrative appointments, what criteria do you use to recommend somebody to be a headteacher?

(b) Do these criteria's apply equally to both male and female teachers? Explain

(c) What qualities do you look for when appointing someone to headship position?

QUESTION 7

(a) Does the Ministry of Education have a promotion policy?

b) What does it say?

QUESTION 8

What do you think are the reasons why some teachers despite their experience do not make it to headship positions?

QUESTION 9

What needs to be done and by who, to improve the number of female headteachers in primary school.

APPENDIX 7

Data Collection form

Women participation in primary management statistical data collection form

1. Name of School _____
2. Year of establishment _____
3. Number of Teaching staff _____ female _____ male _____
4. Number and sex of staff, by post

POST		FEMALE	MALE
Headteacher			
Deputy Headteacher			
Head of section	Infant		
	Junior		
	Senior		
S8			
PT1			
PT2			
PT3			
PT4			

5. Number of female and male headteachers in the past five years:

Female	Male	Total

6. Number of female and male deputy headteachers in the past five years:

Female	Male	Total

7. Enrolment at the beginning of the current term

Standard	Girls	Boys	Total
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
Total			

I thank you very much for providing this information.

APPENDIX 8

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHING SERVICE COMMISSION CHAIRPERSON

QUESTION 1

a) As chairperson of the Teaching Service Commission, what is the purpose for interviews for headteachers?

b) What are some of the questions you ask?

QUESTION 2

What are the qualities one must demonstrate to become a headteacher?

QUESTION 3

Is the interview process enough to warrant a decision to appoint someone as headteacher?

QUESTION 4

What do you think are the reasons why most female teachers do not make it to headship positions?

QUESTION 5

In your view, can female teachers make good headteachers as their male counterparts?

APPENDIX 9

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR PUPILS

Name of School	
Date Focus Group Discussion Conducted	
Length of Focus Group Discussion	

FGD Participants' Profile

Participant's Name	Sex	Age (Yrs)	Standard

Questions

1. There are other primary schools in this area that you could be attending. Why did you or your parents/guardians choose this school?
2. You have been taught by both female and male teachers. If you were given a choice, would rather be taught by a female teacher than by a male teacher or vice versa. Why?
3. From your point of view, do male teachers respect female teachers as their equal? Why do you say so?
4. Do male teachers accept/obey female headteachers as their superiors? What supports your views?
5. Who would you prefer to have as your headteacher a male or a female? Why?
6. Between male headteachers and female headteachers, who is better in terms of the following (for each item explain why you say so):
 - a) public relations (kulandira ndi kukhala bwino ndi anthu)
 - b) understanding (kumvetsa)
 - c) efficiency (changu)
 - d) reliability (kudalirika)
 - e) competence (kudziwa ntchito)