

**INVESTIGATING CONTRIBUTION OF SISTERS OF CHARITY OF OTTAWA
TOWARDS GIRL EDUCATION IN MALAWI FROM 1946-2014**

MASTER OF ARTS (THEOLOGY) THESIS

By

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned declare that this is my own work and has not been presented or submitted elsewhere for any award. All additional sources of information have been acknowledged.

Full Legal Name

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

We hereby declare that this thesis is the student's original work and where assistance has been sought, this has been acknowledged. It is therefore submitted with our approval.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this to my wife, three children and parents.

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ABSTRACT

Despite the profound contribution of the Grey Nuns to the promotion of girl education in Malawi, their history is missing from textbooks and library shelves, leading to ignorance about them. The purpose of this qualitative and phenomenological study was to examine the lived experiences of these sisters in their quest of promoting girl education. The designed methods for data generation included: interview guides, focus group discussion guide and observation. The data was generated, after which it was analysed, interpreted and presented descriptively, according to the themes and sub themes based on the research questions, in the light of liberation theology. The findings from the study revealed several reasons for the Grey Nuns' involvement in girl education which included: gender equality in education; and faith and service in the lives of the nuns. It also revealed that relentless emphasis on discipline, supporting the poor girl child and provision of conducive physical environment in terms of security, proper food, provision of adequate teaching and learning materials; and supporting the education of men or boys, were used as means. The findings appreciated the contribution of the nuns in promoting girl education. The study revealed some factors that blocked the success of the methods applied. These included: social-cultural, economic, geographical, religious, and educational factors. The study concluded that the Grey Nuns have contributed greatly to the promotion of girl child education in Malawi since 1946, driven by their charism and application of proper methods.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	xiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	xiv
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	1
1.0 Chapter Overview	1
1.1 General Introduction	1
1.2 General Historical Background of the Grey Nuns Sisters	4
1.3 Mission of the Grey Nuns in the World.....	5
1.4 The Grey Nuns in Malawi.....	8
1.5 Justification of the Study	13
1.6 Statement of the Research Problem	17
1.7 Critical Research Question	17
1.8 Theoretical Framework.....	18
1.9 Significance of the study.....	20
1.10 The Role of the Researcher.....	21
1.11 The Outline of Chapters.....	21
1.12 Chapter Conclusion.....	22

CHAPTER 2	23
LITERATURE REVIEW	23
2.1 Introduction.....	23
2.2 Philosophy and girl/woman education.....	24
2.3 The Benefits of Educating a Girl Child	25
2.4 Education of Women and Girls in History	27
2.5 Catholicism and Sisters’ involvement in Education	29
2.6 Gender, Nuns and girl/woman education.....	32
2.7 Inadequacy of the “Feminist Solution” to Girl/Woman Education	33
2.8 Nuns Working for Girl Education Today	36
2.9 Mechanisms for Promoting Girl Education in a Catholic School.....	37
2.10 Challenges to Girl Education.....	41
2.11 Chapter Conclusion.....	46
CHAPTER 3	47
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	47
3.1 Introduction.....	47
3.2 Research Design.....	47
3.3 Study Area	49
3.4 Sampling	51
3.4.1 Sampling Techniques	51
3.5 Data Sources, Data Generation and Methods	54
3.5.1 Document analysis	54
3.5.2 Face to Face In-depth Interviews.....	54

3.5.3 Focus-Group Discussion.....	55
3.6 Data Analysis.....	57
3.7 Credibility and Trustworthiness of the Study	62
3.8 Ethical Consideration.....	63
3.9 Limitations of the Study.....	66
3.10 Chapter Conclusion.....	67
CHAPTER 4	68
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	68
4.1 Introduction.....	68
4.2 Factors that led to the Grey Nuns Getting Involved in the Promotion of Girl.....	
Education in Malawi.....	69
4.2.1 Gender Equality in Education	69
4.2.2 Commitment to Faith and Service in the Church.....	74
4.3 The Methods Used by the Grey Nuns to Promote Girl Education in Malawi	77
4.3.1 Emphasis on Discipline of Teachers and Students.....	78
4.3.1.1 Provision of Sound Leadership.....	79
4.3.1.2 Careful Recruitment of Teachers.....	84
4.3.1.3 Guidance and Counselling of Students.....	85
4.3.1.4 Involvement of Parents in Conduct and Progress of their Children	87
4.3.2 Supporting the Poor Students	89
4.3.3 Provision of Conducive Physical Environment	90
4.3.4 Education of Boys	98

4.4 How the Participants Perceived as the Contributions of the Grey Nuns to the	
Promotion Girl Child Education in Malawi	99
4.5 Limiting Factors to the Grey Nuns' Efforts of Promoting Girl Education in	
Malawi.....	106
4.5.1 Poverty of Parents	107
4.5.2 Social-Cultural Practices	110
4.5.3 Poor Health of Girls and Women.....	113
4.5.4 Negative Religious Practices.....	114
4.5.5 Weak Laws Protecting the Girl Child and Parents Ignorance.....	115
4.5.6 Insufficient Educational Facilities.....	117
4.5.7 The Geographical Location of the Schools	118
4.6 Chapter Conclusion.....	120
CHAPTER 5	121
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	121
5.1 Introduction.....	121
5.2 Conclusions.....	122
5.3 Recommendations of the Study	123
5.4 Areas for Further Research	126
5.5 Chapter Conclusion.....	127
REFERENCES	128
APPENDICES	137

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Holy Cross Boarding School (Guilleme).....	10
Figure 2: Factors Affecting Girl Education in Malawi.....	15
Figure 3: Continuum of Girl Education.....	20
Figure 4: Benefits of Educating a Girl Child.....	26
Figure 5: An Overview of Data Analysis from Bottom to the Top.....	61

LIST OF TABLES

Table1: Countries, year of establishment, type of apostolate.....	7
Table 2: Educational Activities.....	9
Table 3: Sampling Techniques.....	53
Table 4: The Colour Codes and Main Themes Identified.....	60
Table 5: Primary School Leaving Certificate or Examinations Results for Guilleme Girls' Primary School	102
Table 6: Malawi School Certificate of Examinations Results for Ludzi Girls' Secondary School for four years.....	103

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A:	Interview guides.....	137
Appendix B:	Consent Letter	143
Appendix C:	Letter from Chancellor College	146
Appendix D:	Letter from Ministry of Education.....	147

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BM	Boarding Mistress
CDSS	Community Day Secondary School
CST	Catholic Social Teaching
DHT	Deputy Head Teacher
GGPS	Guilleme Girls Primary School
LGPS	Ludzi Girls Primary School
LGSS	Ludzi Girls Secondary School
MSCE	Malawi School Certificate of Examinations
PSLCE	Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations
SBVM	Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary
SCO	Sisters of Charity of Ottawa
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activity (United Nations Population Fund)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter introduces the study on the contribution of Sisters' of Charity of Ottawa towards girl education in Malawi from 1946 to 2014. It first outlines the general introduction to the study. This is followed by the general background of the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa of the Catholic Church, otherwise known as Grey Nuns. Next a justification of the study, statement of the research problem, purpose of the study, research questions, the role of the researcher, significance of the study, the general outline of the dissertation and concludes with a chapter summary.

1.1 General Introduction

There have been several indications in the past hundred years of the religions' social significance in the lives of Malawians. Of late there has been growing interest in the relationship between religion and politics. For instance, different religious groups have been involved in development, fight for peace, justice and freedom which cannot be ignored in both colonial and post-colonial periods. In the past two decades, it has been so intense that religion has been considered as a major player in political landscape of the

country¹. The Catholic Church is particularly praised for its involvement in this endeavour by the provision of healthcare, education, establishment of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace and so on. In the Catholic Church, women religious groups like The Grey Nuns have played a considerable role especially in the provision of education to young girls. Since the Grey Nuns are women, most whom are Malawians, a glance at the general religious history of women in Malawi would be of great importance here.

In the religious history, as a sub-discipline, there has been a significant increase in research too. In women's history there has been a steady stream of articles and chapters in books, which relate particularly to religion in women's lives. In her two editions, Isabel Phiri, a renowned feminist theologian, accounts for women in African Traditional Religion. She discusses the role of women in Chisumphi cult in preserving the environment. She shows that the cult is still functioning in Dedza under the female leadership². In her other article, "the womanist/feminist challenges for wholeness",

¹ This is substantiated in publications by: Linden, Ian and Jane, "Chiefs and Pastors in the Ntcheu Rising of 1915", in R. Macdonald (ed), *From Nyasaland to Malawi: Studies in colonial history*, (Nairobi: East African Publishing House: 1975), pp.169-188; Mijoga, Hilary B.P., "The Lenten Pastoral Letter: a First Public Declaration of the Hidden Transcript", *Journal of humanities* (University of Malawi), Nos.

10/11 (1996-97), pp. 55-68; Msukwa, Lewis A.H., "The Role of the Churches in Development of Malawi: the work of the Christian Service Committee of the Churches of Malawi", *Religion in Malawi*, Vol. 1 (1987), pp. 22-27.

² Apawo Isabel Phiri, "African Traditional Women and Ecofeminism: The Role of Women at Chisumphi Cult in Preserving the Environment", *Religion in Malawi*, Vol. 6 (1996), pp. 14-19; Apawo Isabel Phiri, "The Chisumphi Cult: The role of Women in preserving the Environment", in Rosemary Radford Ruether (ed), *Women Healing Earth: Third World Women in Ecology, Feminism and Religion*, (London: SCM Press, 1996) pp. 161-171

Isabel protests against patriarchy in the life of the church and she calls for a structural transformation in church's life in order to create a community of discipleship of equals.³

In the specific area of the history of religious women in the Catholic Church in Malawi, it has not been meticulously documented. In 1975, a document was published on the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Congregation of the Servants of the Blessed Virgin (SBVM) in Malawi. It outlined their contribution to the Catholic Church.⁴

In 1987, Bonongwe wrote a 12 paged research paper on the Grey Nuns. She gives a summary of the role of the Grey Nuns in Malawi, particularly in Mchinji⁵. Though both documents are a kind of institutional history and hagiographic in nature, a beginning seems to have been made to incorporate research in this area in Malawi into the academic mainstream. It is undoubtedly true that religious women and their apostolates are perceived by many as a significant group in Malawian history. Further research into their work in health, education and pastoral is certainly a right way forward.

In the history of education, Catholic schooling by religious women like the Grey Nuns has remained relatively untouched apart from broad educational studies made by scholars on missions in general.⁶ Otherwise there has been little focus on Catholic schooling by

³Apawo Isabel Phiri,, "Womanist/Feminist Challenges for Wholeness", in H.S. Wilson and Nyambura J. Njoroge (eds.), *New Wine: The challenge of the emerging Ecclesiologies to Church Renewal*, (Geneva: World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1994) pp. 53-62.

⁴*Mbiri ya Chipani cha Atumiki a Maria Virgo Woyera, 1925-1975*, (Limbe: Montfort Press, 1975).

⁵Mary. J. Bonongwe. *The establishment and the role of the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa in Malawi From 1946-1986*. (Zomba: Chancellor College. (Unpublished). 1987).

⁶Many scholars have written on the history of education in Malawi, which is closely linked to missions. J.L. Pretorius (Junior), "The story of Education in Malawi, 1875-1941", in Gordon W. Smith, Bridglal Pachai and Roger K. Tangri (eds.), *Malawi Past and Present*, (Blantyre: Claim, 1971; Roderick J. Macdonald, "A History of African Education in Nyasaland 1875-145", (University of Edinburgh, 1969); Kelvin N. Banda, *A Brief History of Education in Malawi*, (Blantyre: Dzuka, 1982).

religious women as teachers. In 1973, Masiku traces the history of the Roman Catholic St. Mary's School for girls in Zomba from 1939 to 1974⁷. Since then, there seem to be silence on the role of religious females in teaching. Even less attention has been paid to their schools. However, with the appearance of gender issues in recent times, especially in the last decade, it has been a work up call to look at what role they (religious women) have played in uplifting the status of fellow women in the country. From the arguments presented, it seems clear that the education history in Malawi canvasses the educational system as such with its institutions and schools. It falls short of extending it to the specific area, for instance, of how the Grey Nuns as female religious teachers, engaged themselves in the process of educating the girl child. Narrowing this historical research to this has benefit to the society. Its great value to the society 'lies in the fact that in limiting itself to clearly defined, manageable questions, it can offer clear and well-substantiated answers.'⁸ This permits the in-depth work to be done. In view of this, the overriding question in this research was: as Catholic female teachers, how did the Grey Nuns contribute to girl education in Malawi from 1946 to date?

1.2 General Historical Background of the Grey Nuns Sisters

The Grey Nuns, who are called so because of their dress, are also called the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa. It is one of the women congregations within the Roman Catholic Church in Malawi, based in Lilongwe Archdiocese. It was founded in Canada on 4th September, 1854, by Elizabeth Bruyere, who was a member of the Sisters of Charity of

⁷B.C. Masiku, "*The Establishment and Development of St. Mary's School*", (Zomba: Chancellor College, 1973-74).A History Seminar Paper.

⁸ Arthur Marwick, "The new nature of history: knowledge, evidence, language", (Palgrave: Basingstoke, 2001, p. 6.)

Montreal.⁹ The Sisters of Charity of Montreal were founded by Marguerite d'Youville, born in 1701 and died in 1771.¹⁰ Elizabeth joined the Sisters of Charity of Montreal and was sent to Bytown, present Ottawa, on mission to assist the unfortunate and for the education of the young girls. Driven by her boldness in faith and active hope, she multiplied her acts of love and charity in response to the needs of her time and milieu. She became involved in school, home and hospital care, home for the elderly, orphanage, and evening courses for mothers.¹¹

1.3 Mission of the Grey Nuns in the World

The Grey Nuns are guided by God's "boundless Love and Compassion for the poor" in their mission.¹² One of their commitments is to offer education to girls especially the most neglected. They respond to the new challenges in the field of education of the girl child in accordance with their charism, which is the gift of the Holy Spirit.¹³

Within few years of its founding, the congregation grew very fast in Canada and other regions of the world. Initially, the congregation developed itself in three main apostolates: the education of the youth, the service of the poor and the care of the sick. Committed to the education of the youth, Elizabeth Bruyere personally initiated a boarding school at Cornwall, in Ontario, in 1848. Their first school of its kind outside

⁹Angelo Mitri, *Mother Elizabeth Bruyere: Foundress Sisters of Charity at Ottawa*, (Ottawa: Sisters of Charity at Ottawa, 1983) p. 19.

¹⁰Elizabeth A. Iles, *Ask the Grey Sisters*, (Canada: Dundurn Press 1998), pp. 29-30.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹²Estelle Mitchell, *The Spiritual portrait of Saint Marguerite D'Youville: The Rule of the Grey Nuns*. (Quebec: Depot Legal-Bibliothèque nationale du Québec, 1993) p. 132

¹³Angelo Mitri, *Mother Elizabeth Bruyere: Foundress Sisters of Charity at Ottawa*, (Ottawa: Sisters of Charity at Ottawa, 1983) pp. 8-9.

Canada was opened in 1857, in Buffalo, New York, in USA.¹⁴ In the service of the poor, the Grey Nuns embarked on visiting them, establishing the home for the orphans and accommodating them. For instance, in 1849, the Grey Nuns opened a home for Irish orphans. In 1857, the Grey Nuns welcomed certain Mr. and Mrs. Joseph-Felix Larocque as refugees in their community to live out the end of their life closer to God. In their effort to care for the sick, their house was turned into a dispensary in 1850 and later, to the fully fledged hospital in 1860. This was due to the increasing number of the sick in the area. Later this hospital became the famous Ottawa General Hospital.¹⁵

Today, the Grey Nuns are found in 13 countries in the world, namely; Cameroon, Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia, Canada, the United States, Brazil, Japan, Thailand, Papua New Guinea, Haiti and South Africa. The Table 1 shows where they are found in Africa, when they established themselves and the type of apostolate they do.¹⁶

¹⁴Ibid, p. 10.

¹⁵Ibid p. 11.

¹⁶Iles, *Ask the Grey Sisters*, 29-30.

Table 1: Countries, year of establishment, type of apostolate

COUNTRY	YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT	TYPE OF APOSTOLATE
Lesotho	1931	Boarding primary and secondary schools, agricultural and industrial schools, gardening, sewing, clinics and hospitals and pastoral work.
Malawi	1946	Boarding primary and secondary schools, formation of major seminarians, pastoral and hospital care, taking care of orphans.
Zambia	1961	Primary school, boarding secondary school, taking care of orphans, and health centre.
Cameroon	1996	Youth ministry, formation of catechists, formation and promotion of women, social pastoral care, hospital pastoral care, prison visitation.
South Africa	2000	Health and pastoral work.

Source: Adapted from Iles, 1998, Ask the Grey Sisters. Reprinted with permission

In summary, the Grey Nuns have been involved in four main types of apostolates in the world, namely; schools, hospitals, orphan care and pastoral care. They have remained true and committed to their charism through youth ministry even in Malawi.

1.4 The Grey Nuns in Malawi

They came to Malawi in 1946 at the invitation of Bishop Oscar Julien, a White Father and the then Bishop of Nyasa Vicariate, and now Lilongwe Archdiocese of Malawi and Chipata Diocese of Zambia. The invitation was extended in 1944, but because World War II was still on, the Sisters did not come immediately.¹⁷ When the war was over, they first established themselves in Mchinji at Guilleme in 1946, in what was formally known as Fort Manning. In 1949 they moved to Ludzi Parish.¹⁸ Later, they established themselves at Kachebere in 1958. They crossed the border to Chipata in Zambia in 1961.¹⁹ In 1992, they opened a new community at Mkanda, cementing their presence in Mchinji.

It is worth noting that at Guilleme, Bishop Julien had the Teresian Sisters, a local women's congregation, working in the school established temporarily, before he had invited the Grey Nuns. The Grey Nuns actually took over from the Teresian Sisters.²⁰ The four pioneer sisters who started their different apostolates were: Sisters Jacob, Joseph, Felicia and Theresa. Sister Joseph was teaching in the school; Sister Jacob worked in the dispensary and maternity; Sister Felicia was doing some pastoral work in the villages and Sister Theresa did not stay long in Malawi because of frequent attacks from malaria. She was transferred to Lesotho where there was less malaria.²¹

¹⁷ Report by Sister Adelaida Jere: *The History of the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa in Malawi from 1946 to 2011*: 11th August, 2011.

¹⁸ Ludzi is a Chichewa name originating from English expression: Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. Lourdes is place in France where Mary the Mother of Jesus appeared to some young people.

¹⁹ M. J. Bonongwe. *The establishment and the role of the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa in Malawi From 1946-1986*. (Zomba: Chancellor College. (Unpublished). 1987).

²⁰ Adelaida Jere. *The History of the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa in Malawi from 1946 to 2011*.

²¹ Ibid.

The Grey Nuns have mainly been involved in three types of apostolate or work in Malawi: education, hospitals and pastoral. This research is interested in education aspect of the Grey Nuns. They run girls' primary schools at Guilleme and Ludzi, a secondary school at Ludzi. They are also present in a co-educational government community day secondary school at Kholoni, near Kachebere.²² Despite these endeavours, very little has been documented on their contribution towards women and girl education in Malawi. Table 2 contains some details of Grey Nuns' involvement in education in Malawi.²³

Table 2: Educational Activities

Name of the school	Year established	Nature of the school	Headship	Deputy Headship	Boarding Mistress
Guilleme Girls Primary	1946	Boarding Primary	Lay Person	Lay person	Grey nun
Ludzi Girls Primary	1949	Boarding Primary school	Grey Nun	Lay Person	Grey nun
Ludzi Girls Secondary	1949	Boarding secondary school	Grey nun	Lay person	Lay person

Source: Adapted from Sister Adelaide Jere's notes on The History of the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa in Malawi from 1946 to 2011. Reprinted with permission.

²² Mary J. Bonongwe. *The establishment and the role of the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa in Malawi From 1946-1986*. (Zomba: Chancellor College. (Unpublished). 1987). Report by Sister Adelaide Jere. *The History of the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa in Malawi from 1946 to 2011*:11th August, 2011.

²³ Interview with Sister Adelaide Jere, Mother Superior of the Province of Malawi and Zambia, 29th June, 2014.

The school establishment at Guilleme has been for girls only since 1946. The first Grey Nun to teach in the school was Sister Joseph who started with 300 pupils.²⁴ The school was originally known as Holy Cross (See figure 1) but the name changed to Guilleme Girls Primary School because in 1960s typical Catholic names were not accepted by Dr. Banda's government.²⁵ There was a conflict between the Catholic Church and Dr. Banda. It was triggered by the Church's mistrust of Dr. Banda and his Malawi Congress Party soon after independence. The Church encouraged the formation of Christian Democratic Party led by Mr. Chester Katsonga, a Catholic. This did not go well with Mr. Banda.



Figure 1: *Holy Cross Boarding School (Guilleme)*

Source: The researcher's photographs. Reprinted with permission.

Barely three years after opening Guilleme, Ludzi Primary School opened in 1949. It was called St. Francis Primary school and was for both girls and boys. In 1960s the name

²⁴ Adelaide Jere. *The History of the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa in Malawi from 1946 to 2011*.

²⁵ Interview with one of the sisters, with a lot of experience in education of girls.

was changed to Ludzi because of politics. It is a school where Archbishop Tarcisius Ziyaye got his primary education.²⁶ The story of Ludzi Girls Secondary School is different. Though it also started in 1949, it developed from the sisters' apostolate of taking care of girls and women. The women and girls were taught cooking and sewing. The group was called "Chibanja" which literally means "family".²⁷ The sisters thought of offering some kind of education which eventually was developed into a fully fledged secondary school.

The community at Kachebere Major Seminary was established in 1958 with the original apostolate of working in the seminarians' dispensary, kitchen and laundry. Today, the sisters have taken advantage of their presence at Kachebere Major Seminary to reach out to the community secondary school next-door called Kholoni Community Day Secondary School. Some sisters teach in the school although it is a government run school.²⁸ Their presence in this school has to be recognised since it is within youth apostolate.

In this study, the researcher will use several terms in relation to the Grey Nun's contribution towards girl education in Malawi. The terms are:

Girl education: is used to refer to the keeping of girls in both primary and secondary schools by the Grey Nuns.

Nuns or Sisters: These words will be used interchangeably to mean a group of consecrated women who devote themselves in various religious

²⁶Interview with one of the sisters.

²⁷ Report by Sister Adelaide Jere. *The History of the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa in Malawi from 1946 to 2011*:11th August, 2011.

²⁸Ibid.

orders or congregations to the life devoted to God, for the service of the community. It can be traced from the time of the Coptic Church and monasteries in the early Church.²⁹

Grey Nuns: This will be used instead of Sisters of Charity of Ottawa.

Charism: This is the gift that the founders of religious orders receive from God through the Holy Spirit. It is meant to be shared with the community. Like the case of the Grey Nuns, their charism of Compassion is being shared with the community to change the situation of girls by offering them education.³⁰

Feminist: This is an individual or group of people who are radicals, “believing that women will never achieve recognition and freedom unless they stage confrontation with men.”³¹ They think that men are the ones behind the woman’s position today as they have demeaned and suppressed them.

Sexism: This is gender discrimination or prejudice based on one’s sex or gender. It is also known as chauvinism.³²

Founder/Foundress: In church matters, the founder is the person who received the gift of the Holy Spirit charism to start the congregation. The female person is called *foundress*.

²⁹Pope John Paul II. *The consecrated life: Post-synodal apostolic exhortation*. (Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 1996), 10.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹Luetta Reimer. A Christian Response to the Women's Liberation Movement. In *Direction Journal*, April 1974.Vol.3 No. 1.p. 167.

³²*Free Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. Merriam-Webster.com. August 31, 2012.Retrieved on 27th December, 2014.

1.5 Justification of the Study

The motivation of the proposed study initially arose from the researcher's informal contacts and conversation with some parents, teachers and students with whom he was familiar at Guilleme. During these conversations, most of them indicated their appreciation of the Grey Nun's dedication in educating the girls. This was observed to be anecdotal evidence as very little is known as to the Grey Nun's contribution towards girl education in Malawi. As such documented information on the Grey Nun's contribution towards girl education was necessary.

Globally, in 2005 development report showed that there were still 31 million girls who were out of school and another 58 million girls in primary schools whose right to education was threatened by different factors like lack of fees, distance to and from school, low image held by parents and guardians in educating a girl, discrimination in class and many more.³³ The report observed that there has been systematic exclusion of girls from school, in countries like Pakistan, which has translated into less educated labour force, inefficient labour distribution; hence, retarding the world development.³⁴ With these alarming figures, the Grey Nuns' work is worth being considered as to how they have contributed to the reduction of the gravity of the problem.

Contextually, the girl's situation has not been different from the world situation. In 2005 studies have shown that there are many girls who enrol at the primary school in Malawi but the number decreases at the secondary school. According to World Bank report, it is

³³ Louise Tickle, "The silent emergency", *The International Development*, Issue No. 20, 2005, 32.

³⁴ Ibid.

purported that only 27 % of the entire girls enrol at the secondary school.³⁵ Of these, only 13 % report at the secondary school and a fraction of 13 % actually finish form four.³⁶ Those who manage to pass Malawi School Certificate of Examinations (MSCE) nationally make 5% only.³⁷ This situation is translated into poor representation of women in many fields. For instance, the recent tripartite elections that Malawi had on 20th May, 2014, has voted into parliament 30 women only out of a total 191 seats. According to Seodi White, a renowned women's activist, this is retrogression since the percentage is lower than the previous parliament which stood at 42%.³⁸ Furthermore, some women activists like Dr. Ngeyi Kanyongolo, a lecturer at Chancellor College's Law Department, bemoans few representation of women in the new cabinet of Professor Peter Mutharika. There are only 3 women in cabinet of twenty, representing a meagre 15%, down from 28% in the previous Dr. Joyce Banda's cabinet.³⁹ The 50-50 campaign advocated by activists is facing a huge challenge here. This can only be achieved if a lot is invested in girl education.

According to Age Africa, an American based organisation, working for the advancement of girls education in Africa, there are a number of factors that impedes a girl from getting education in Malawi. Some of the notable factors include: institutionalised gender violence in the home and at school due to some cultural practices and beliefs, post secondary opportunity knowledge gaps, lack of knowledge and resources on sex education and reproductive health which leads to unwanted pregnancies, lack of female

³⁵World Bank: world databank. <http://web.worldbank.org>, retrieved on 10th January, 2014.

³⁶Malawi Ministry of Education Science and Technology: Education Statistics 2010.

³⁷Education Statistics 2010.

³⁸Seodi White, "Law and Women", *Weekend Nation*, Saturday, June 7, 2014, 12.

³⁹The Nation, Wednesday, 25th June, 2014, 2

role models, inability to pay fees due to abject poverty, long school commuting distances, and lack of quality education.⁴⁰ The factors are well illustrated in Figure 2.

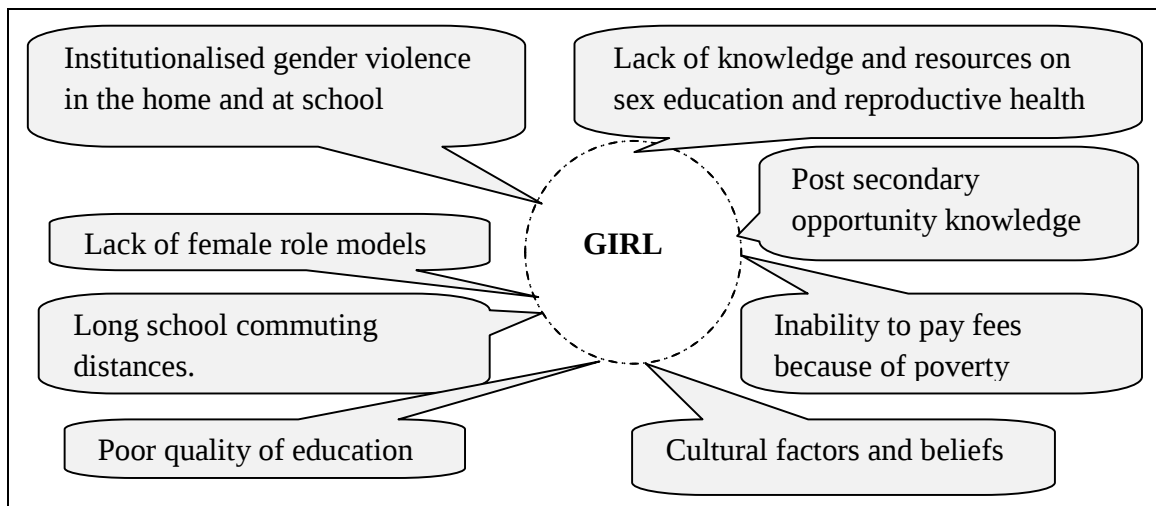


Figure 2: Diagram showing the factors affecting girl education in Malawi

Source: Adapted from Age Africa, <http://ageafrica.org/about/why-girls-education/>, 2012, retrieved on 24th May, 2014. Reprinted with permission.

Other players in girl education have faulted the child age in Malawi which stood at 16 as of 2013. They argued that the abuses against children especially girls would continue if the age remained at 16.⁴¹ This was contrary to the definition of the child by the United Nations which stands at 18.⁴² Although the age has changed to 18 in 2014, the child age at 16 aggravated the problem of child marriages in which children who were considered mature got married before the age of 18. The girls were deprived of their right to

⁴⁰ Age Africa. <http://ageafrica.org/about/why-girls-education/>, (2012). Accessed on 24th May, 2014.

⁴¹ This age changed to 18 in 2014 after passing the marriage Bill in parliament.

⁴² Boniface Phiri, "Should Malawi have a definitive age for child", *Weekend Nation*, Saturday, June 7, 2014, p.4.

education.⁴³ The girl would be considered mature for marriage yet she was not. Despite the gloomy picture depicted here, there seem to be a light at the end of the tunnel. Some remarkable progress in gender equality in education has been observed too since 1999. Globally, in 1999, around 106 million children were out of primary school. Almost 61 million (58%) were girls compared to 45 million (42%) boys. In 2009, around 35 million girls were still out of school compared to 31 million boys.⁴⁴

In Sub-Saharan Africa, where Malawi is, almost 50% of the world's out of school girls are found here. However, the number of out-of-school girls has decreased more slowly, from 25 million in 1999 to 17 million in 2008. The girls' enrolment in primary schools has also been seen to increase more than boys at the secondary school level. More young people are enrolled at primary, secondary and tertiary levels than it was two decades ago.⁴⁵

It can therefore be argued that there is need to investigate more on the contribution of the Grey Nuns towards girl child education in Malawi as their work has gone unnoticed. This will be aimed at closing the gap of knowledge that is there so that the society appreciates and recognises the work the Grey Nuns are doing in the name of the Church.

⁴³*Weekend Nation*, June 14, 2014, p.8.

⁴⁴World Bank. "The Gender Gap and Education around the World", *EdStats newsletter*. (Washington, DC: World Bank.<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2011/08/14944826/edstats-newsletter>, 2011). Retrieved on 14th March, 2014.

⁴⁵See EdStats Newsletter, August, 2011.

1.6 Statement of the Research Problem

Volumes of texts about organisations and individuals advocating for girl education in Malawi are readily available in the libraries. Different individuals and organisations have meticulously highlighted problems of child labour, high rate of school drop-outs and girls being ambushed to and from school, among others. Missing from those texts are how the Grey Nuns have contributed to the alleviation of these problems, in the light of their charism, in the boarding schools they run. For over sixty years, the Grey Nuns have been silently working for the same values that the giants in this field pursue, providing revolutionary opportunities to women and girls. This has very often gone unnoticed as they have remained relatively unknown.

The purpose of the study is to investigate the contribution of the Grey Nuns of Lilongwe Archdiocese towards offering education to the girl-child in Malawi, following their charism of love and compassion. The hope is that the study will contribute to the general understanding and appreciation of the work done by the Grey Nuns in uplifting girl education in the boarding schools they run, in order to achieve gender balance.

1.7 Critical Research Question

The study will be guided by the following critical research question: What is the contribution of the Grey Nuns to the girl-child education in Malawi, within their charism of compassion? To investigate this question deeply, the research will employ the following sub-questions:

1. Why do Gray Nuns promote girl education in Malawi?
2. What have been the methods used by the Grey Nuns in promoting girl education in Malawi?
3. How the participants perceive the contributions of the Grey Nuns to the promotion of girl child education in Malawi?
4. What have been the limiting factors to Grey Nuns' efforts of promoting girl education in Malawi?

1.8 Theoretical Framework

In order to put research questions in perspective, a theoretical framework is required to investigate the contribution of the Grey Nuns towards girl education in Malawi. To establish a vantage point, a set of lenses is selected: a logical framework to clarify and sharpen the focus of the study. In this study liberation theology theory has been selected to explain the contribution of the Grey Nuns towards girl education in Malawi. This explication of a theoretical framework will provide focus to subsequent steps in planning and constructing the inquiry.⁴⁶ It will also provide a basis for including or excluding literature based on its relevance to it.

Liberation theology theory originated from Latin America and was coined by a Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutierrez. He wrote a book entitled *A Theology of Liberation* in 1971. His contemporaries included Leonardo Boff of Brazil, Jon Sobrino of El Salvador, and Juan Luis of Uruguay. It arose as the political movement in Christian Theology, interpreting

⁴⁶Michael Q. Patton. *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002) 53.

Jesus Christ's teachings as the basis for liberating people from the unjust economic, political, or social conditions. It promoted Churches as centres for the defence of human rights, preserving ideals of democracy in the teeth of repression and authoritarian rule. Its intent is to emancipate the individuals and groups in an egalitarian capitalistic society. Its methodology is seeing theology from the point of view of the poor and the oppressed by considering them as the privileged channel of the God's grace.⁴⁷

Liberation theology theory has been selected for analytical and interpretation purposes. The researcher will assume that the Grey Nuns who run both primary and secondary schools in Malawi serve as liberators in their mission of Girl education. They fight for social justice and work for the emancipation of the girl child. It seems the Grey Nuns have provided the venue for the change since 1946, when they arrived in Malawi. The researcher will also assume that all who have interacted with the Grey Nuns are creative and compassionate, able to liberate the girls from the powers that oppress them as false consciousness. In the end the findings will help to redress the inequality and promote the girl education in a democratic society like Malawi⁴⁸ as shown in the continuum in

Figure 3:

⁴⁷ Ron Rhodes, "Christian Revolution in Latin America: The Changing Face of Liberation Theology" in *Christian Research Journal*, (Winter 1991) 8. <http://home.earthlink.net/~ronrhodes/Liberation.html> retrieved on 30th August, 2014; Daniel H. Levine, The future of Liberation Theology appeared in *The Journal of International Institute*, (Michigan Publishing. Volume 2, Issue 2, winter, 1995).

⁴⁸ Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion and Keith Morrison, *Methods in education: third edition*. (Canada: Routledge.2008), 28.

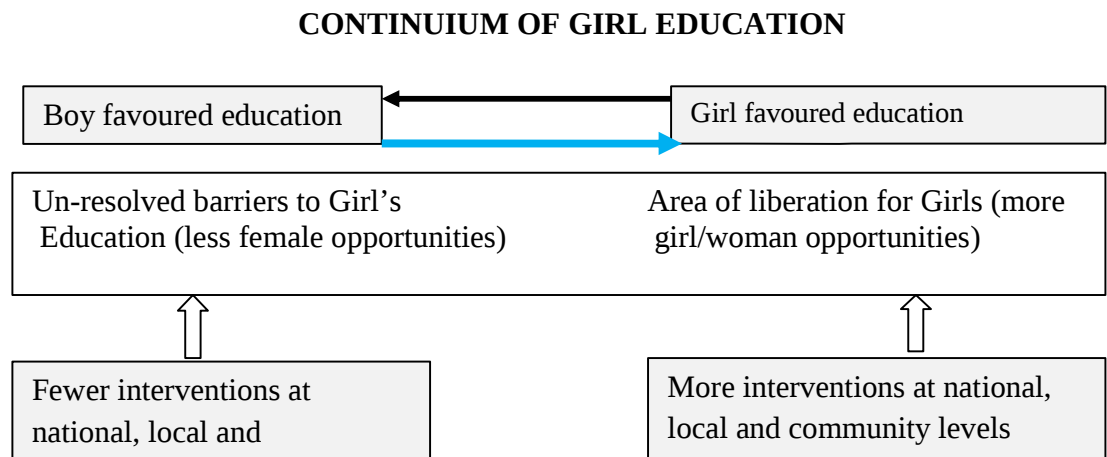


Figure 3: *Continuum of Girl Education*

Source: Adapted from UNDP: Gender and Human Development in Malawi: 2010.

Reprinted with permission.

1.9 Significance of the study

The study will be significant in many ways. First, it will enrich the policy makers in the Ministry of Education, especially those concerned with secondary and primary education, with the emphasis on the ways of promoting girl child education in religious institutions. Secondly, the findings will reveal to the administrators, the best way to promote girl child education and evaluate the effectiveness of the girl education in institutions they set up in their schools. Thirdly, the best way to effectively promote girl education together with the learners and teachers will be revealed to other Nuns and institutions who manage girls' schools. Lastly, the Catholic Church will be provided with the basis for the assessment of the work done by the girl education promoting institutions they put in place especially by nuns.

1.10 The Role of the Researcher

A research that has a qualitative aspect requires a researcher to be an active participant. The researcher acted as an interviewer in data generation. He was also involved with the participants who entailed him to note the biases, values, feelings and interests of the participants. He was able to analyse the data himself. The researcher also took a role in applying ethical issues from time to time.⁴⁹

1.11 The Outline of Chapters

The following is the layout of the study:

Chapter 1: *Introduction to the study*

The Chapter serves as an introduction to the study of specific cohort of women called the Grey Nuns of the Catholic Church, who have served as the contributors to girl education in Malawi.

Chapter 2: *Literature Review*

In this Chapter the researcher will present a review of literature pertaining to girl education in the Catholic Church by women institute and historical factors contributing to the Church's involvement in girl education.

Chapter 3: *Research Methodology*

In this chapter, a description of the research design and methodology for a disciplined inquiry, ethical issues related to the research and limitations of the study will be discussed.

⁴⁹Kobus Maree, (ed.) *First steps in research*. (Pretoria: Van Schaik, 2007), 42.

Chapter 4: *Presentation and Discussions of the Research Findings*

Chapter Four will provide an in-depth interpretation and analysis of participants' responses to interview questions: the findings.

Chapter 5: *Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations*

The Chapter will discuss conclusions, implications of this research study and recommendations for future studies.

1.12 Chapter Conclusion

The Grey Nuns have been revolutionary in their approach to girl education, when she is expected to remain at home, get married and have children. Failure to include their contributions in our libraries by knowing what they do and how they do it, would mean great disservice to the history of girl child education in Malawi. Furthermore, lived experiences of these sisters and all those involved, would serve as a classroom for other stakeholders in girl education. Although this chapter serves as an introduction to specific group of women in the Catholic Church in Malawi involved in girl education, Chapter two will review the publications in line with the subject under study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the publications in line with the girl education in Malawi. Due to the limited number of published works in Malawian context, the research depended on broader texts from the internet and the Church. The review also has included articles from newspapers, magazines and journals. For the sake of logical flow, it has been presented in a number of sections.

When asked how much superior, educated men were to those uneducated, the legendary Greek philosopher Aristotle, answered, “as much as the living are to the dead.” In agreement with Aristotle’s thought, William Ellery Channing, a U.S. clergyman and writer, also asserted that ‘man is to be educated because he is a man and not because he is to make shoes, nails and pins.’⁵⁰ These remarks of learned men of history underpin the fact that education is an inalienable right of every human being; even as far back as Aristotle’s era and even before. Aristotle believes that without education man is the same as dead. It is not surprising to see that, throughout history, governments, religious bodies and individuals have been investing in education; above all, in girl and woman education.

⁵⁰Daily Graphic, *Its Human Rights Abuse to Dismiss Pregnant Girls from Schools*. (2007, August 08). pp.8

In order to understand the contributions of the Grey Nuns towards girl education in Malawi, the phenomenon will be traced in relation to some historical events: women and girl education in history, Nuns involvement in girl and women education and Catholic Education. The literature deals with the benefits for investing in girl education and challenges faced by a girl in her education too. The Grey Nuns founded schools in Malawi to educate girls who, culturally are expected to stay in the home, rearing children and providing for their families.⁵¹

2.2 Philosophy and Girl Child or Woman Education

According to Liz Stanley, “philosophy seems to be dominated by the idea of genderless, disembodied reason...”⁵² Philosophy has nothing to do with gender. Women seem to have been excluded from the philosophy which tries to see the universal truths. Perhaps because of the conceptualisation dominated by men, girl and women education is rarely touched in philosophy. However, philosophy is given a credit for developing critical scepticism because it teaches that no “truths” are final and no appearances are certain. This empowers partners in girl education like the Grey Nuns to challenge the conceptions of reason. For example, that the girl child should be at home and get married; that it is better to educate a boy than a girl because she will get married. Philosophy opens up the way to come up with balanced arguments either for or against girl and woman education so that they become truly liberated.

⁵¹ Carl Coburn, & Martha Smith, *Spirited lives: How nuns shaped Catholic culture and American life, 1836-1920*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 91.

⁵² Liz Stanley, *Knowing feminism: on academic borders, territories and tribes*, (London: Sage Publications 1997) p. 24

2.3 The Benefits of Educating a Girl Child

Before looking at the general history of the education of women and girls, it would be of great importance to look at reasons for investing in girl and women education. These benefits are the same whether the girl education is by the church or otherwise. What differs is the approach. Investing in girl education has had significant impact on women's participation in all development spheres such as social, political and economical. "Education strengthens women's self-reliance; it promotes access to both institutions of governance and to factors of production in the agro-based economies..."⁵³ like Malawi, where 75 % of women are involved in food production.

An old Spanish proverb had it that to educate a man was to educate one person, to educate a woman was to educate a nation. There is no doubt that this proverb is as powerful today as it was then. One of the greatest benefits of educating a girl child is that she tends to marry later which results into women having fewer children. She is also in a position to better care for herself and her children as she is able to feed them and take them to the hospital when they are sick.⁵⁴ For instance, most women consider education as a catalyst for their work-based self-sufficiency that contributes to the improvement of their lives and the lives of their children. It helps them to be role models as mothers. It also helps them to be role models to their children as they become more autonomous from their husbands. Studies have shown that children work harder in school as a result

⁵³ UNDP: *Gender and Human Development in Malawi*: 2010, p.25

⁵⁴ Ibid p. 25.

of their mother's achievements in school. Women who are educated are likely to teach and model their values and behaviours that they hope would benefit their children.⁵⁵

In summary, investing in girl education has the following benefits, presented in

Figure 4.

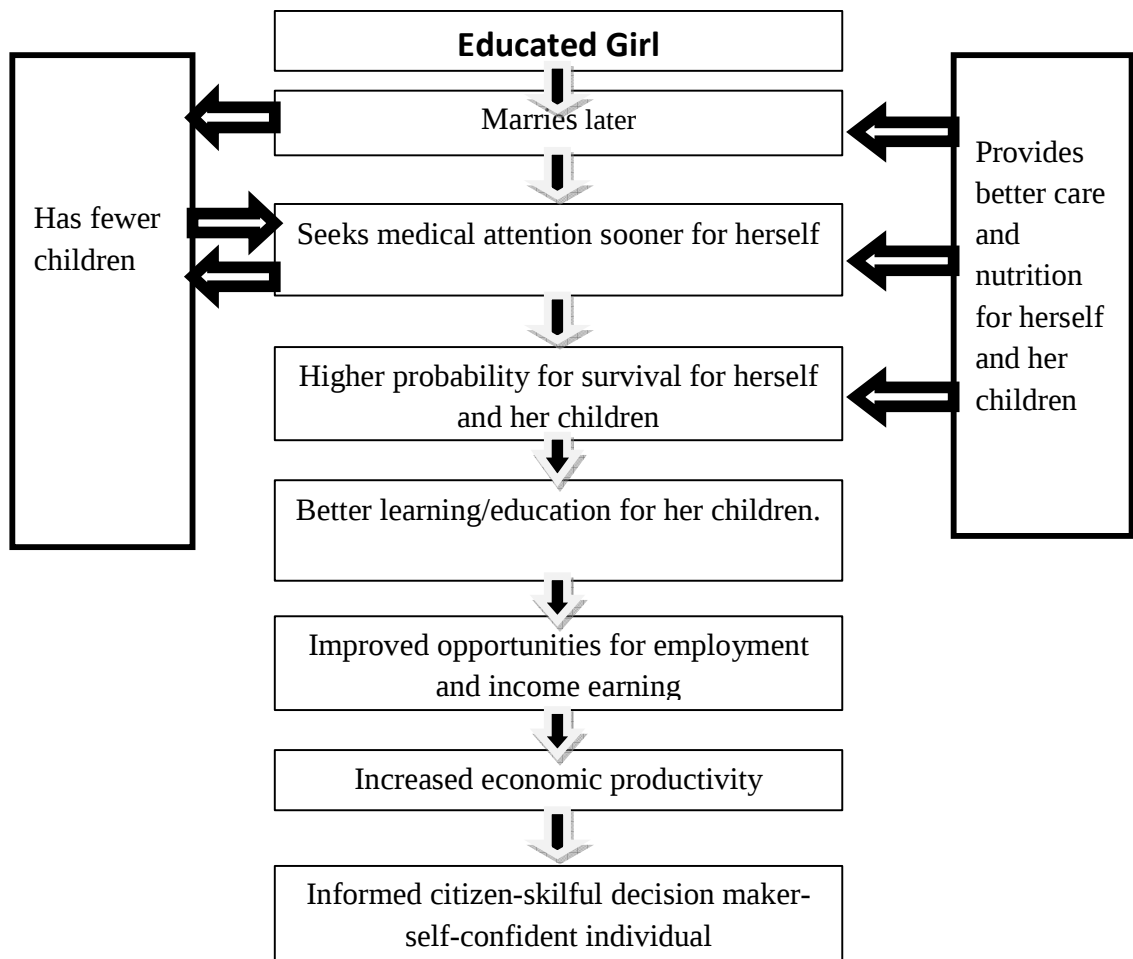


Figure 4: Showing the benefits of educating a girl child⁵⁶

Source: UNDP: Gender and Human Development in Malawi, 2010. Reprinted with permission.

⁵⁵ Andrew London, Ellen Scott, Kathryn Edin and Vick Hunter. Welfare reform, work family tradeoffs, and child well being. *Family Relations*, No.53, p.148-157.

⁵⁶ Adapted from UNDP: *Gender and Human Development in Malawi*: 2010, p.25.

These benefits have been paramount to anybody who is engaged in girl education throughout history. Women and girls, who have gone through the hands of the Grey Nuns, may have enjoyed these benefits. The next section attempts to look at the literature on historical background to the education of the girl and women and related issues.

2.4 Education of Women and Girls in History

The volumes of information on women and girl education in magazines, advertisements, television and radio talk shows, radio programmes and many more, may push one to think that the issue of women and girl education is a 21st Century innovation. It seems the issue is addressed with great urgency and pomp. However, the education of girls and women goes back to antiquity and it has significant Jewish and Greco-Latin roots. It has been at the roots of Christian tradition too.

As Tkacz notes, one of the earliest educated women whom the Old Testament mentions is Susanna in the book of Daniel.⁵⁷ Her parents took the responsibility of instructing her according to the Laws of Moses because these parents were just (Dan.13,3). Her parents, both father and mother, had a responsibility of making sure that Susanna is well educated. This speaks volumes about her later words and actions that she was really an educated woman in Jewish Law and Scripture. She was a real theologian.

⁵⁷Catherine Brown Tkacz, *Is the education of women the modern idea?*
<http://www.catholic.com/magazine/articles/is-the-education-of-women-a-modern-idea>, retrieved on 16th January, 2014.

Tkacz further observes that even the New Testament had its own women who were educated. She argues that the most prominent women are Martha and Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Martha's profession of faith at Bethany, after the raising of Martha's brother, Lazarus, to life, reveals how she managed to incorporate faith and reason. She showed that she was knowledgeable. She confessed that "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God who has come into the world" (John 11:27). Martha uses the word 'I believe' which in Greek is (*pisteuo*) which means "I have come to know". The word is the origin of the word "epistemology." She was an educated woman.⁵⁸

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was another educated woman. She manifested her knowledge of the scriptures in her Magnificat. According to Tkacz, for 2000 years the Christians have accredited Mary as the author of the Magnificat. Whether this is true or not, her recitation of these scriptures shows her unquestionable and well formed intellect on the scriptures. She was an authority in Jewish law and Scriptures.⁵⁹

The teachings of the Church Fathers and Early Christianity on the appreciation of well educated women in the Church cannot be overemphasised. The Church Fathers are prized for their relentless encouragement of parents to educate, not only their sons, but girls too. They based their teachings on Susanna in the Old Testament. St. Jerome, for instance, took an advantage of the development of monasteries and monastic schools to become a spiritual and intellectual mentor to some noble women in Rome. It was St. Jerome too

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

who is associated with the founding of the first double monastery in Bethlehem, which today may be called “Coeducation school”.⁶⁰

This progression of broad women and girl education through history sheds light on the fact that girl and women education has not been the pre-occupation of the 20th and 21st centuries only. It has been there for centuries. As shown in the next section, girl education is related to how Catholicism affected women religious in history. It has not always been easy.

2.5 Catholicism and Sisters’ involvement in Education

Despite the rosy picture painted in the previous section about women education, women seem to be invisible in history. As noted by Weaver, their invisibility has not been accidental.⁶¹ The landscape of history, as of every discipline, has been shaped and defined by men, at the exclusion of women. Catholic Nuns who founded schools and hospitals are missing from history books, just like the Grey Nuns are missing from the history books of Malawi. This has been partly attributed to the patriarchy of the Church and their stories rich in cultural traditions are yet to be told.

During the medieval times, women were considered inferior to men, incapable of Christian ministry. There were hot debates as to whether or not women had souls.⁶² Prominent Greek philosophers and scientists like Hippocrates and Aristotle regarded

⁶⁰Ibid

⁶¹ Mary Weaver, *New Catholic women: A contemporary challenge to traditional religious authority*. (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row Publishers, 1985) 1-2.

⁶² Ruth Tucker and Walter Liefeld. *Daughters of the Church*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House. 1987) 134.

womanhood as deformity, weakness and inferiority. The greatest personality whose clarity and strength of mind harnessed this view was St. Augustine (354-430), the Bishop of Hippo, in North Africa.⁶³ His thinking, which was rooted in Hellenistic philosophy, was incorporated into the realm of theology. With the backing of the Holy Scriptures account of creation of Genesis, woman was considered as not made in the image of God. They were not even accepted to receive the Holy Communion with their bare hands. During their menstrual cycle they were not allowed to partake in the Holy Communion or the Eucharist since they were considered unclean.⁶⁴

During middle ages, from 11th to 15th century, women were still largely seen as inferior to men. They were victimised in many different ways like sexual harassment and were obliged to endure both verbal and physical abuse. It was during this period that saw the rising and the decline of the papacy, reformation and counter-reformation.⁶⁵ Despite this situation many women entered the convents where they met strict rules and regulations, again influenced by the patriarchal structures. They endured this situation up to the Catholic Reformation in the 16th Century when women sought a life of service to the poor and the oppressed, as an alternative to domesticity of cloistered life. However, this did not go well with the Church authorities who wanted them to remain cloistered.⁶⁶

⁶³ Mastone Mbewe, *The Muted Voice of Women in the Church*, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, Chancellor College, University Malawi, 2014, (Unpublished).

⁶⁴ Ruth Tucker and Walter Liefeld, 134.

⁶⁵ John B. Noss. *Man's Religions, 6th Edition*. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. 1980) 459-468.

⁶⁶ Karen M. Scolforo. *The Leadership of Catholic Sisters Who Have Served as College Presidents : The Impact of Gender and Religion on Leadership Efficacy*. (2012). *UNF Theses and Dissertations*. Paper 397. (Doctoral Theses.)

During the same middle ages, there arose in Europe the movement toward individualism, freedom and reform. It was during this time that classical learning was revived in what was known as the great Renaissance which challenged the supernatural by stressing the innate strength of human reason over divine revelation. Eventually, it bore Protestant Reformation which was geared at defining religious life.⁶⁷ The Catholic Church responded to Protestant Reformation by calling for her own reformation called Catholic Reformation, but termed Counter Reformation by Protestants.⁶⁸ The Council of Trent, (1545-1563) was specially designed for this. Among other things, it redefined some medieval Catholic doctrines which affected women.

In 1959, Pope John XXIII summoned the Second Vatican Council to continue the reformation which started in the Council of Trent. This council sought to adjust to the 20th Century world and the promotion of Christian unity.⁶⁹ One thing we can give it credit for, in relation to religious women, is that the Vatican Council II opened up many opportunities for women, both lay and religious to work for the Church. The Grey Nuns must have benefited from this council.

It was against this background, in the light of the Second Vatican Council, that Pope John Paul II wrote an apostolic exhortation on consecrated life in which all Institutes of Consecrated Life are:

⁶⁷ John B. Noss. *Man's Religions*, 469.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 478.

⁶⁹ Ibid,

invited courageously to propose anew the enterprising initiative, creativity and holiness of their founders and foundresses in response to the signs of the times emerging in today's world.... it is also a call to pursue competence in personal work and to develop a dynamic fidelity to their mission, adapting forms, if need be, to new situations and different needs, in complete openness to God's inspiration and to the Church's discernment.⁷⁰

The congregations like the Grey Nuns have benefited a lot from this council, as they work for the promotion of girl and woman education in Malawi and other countries where they are found, in the footsteps of their foundress. The next section shades light on gender, nuns and education.

2.6 Gender, Nuns and Girl child or Woman Education

In Catholic circles, the word "gender" is not key to understanding and analysing women's contributions in the church and in larger society. However, a closer look at their ways, one would no doubt see them having "negotiated their roles within the gendered powered dynamics of ... religious traditions."⁷¹ The research done in America identified four unique characteristics of sisterhoods there: ethnic and class diversity, lifelong education and work, perpetual vows and distinctive environment and tradition. According to Coburn and Smith, these "created unprecedented female power base that enabled independent activity, limited patriarchal interference and control and significantly shaped American Catholic culture and public life."⁷² Of particular interest here is their vowed life and lifelong education and work. As Coburn and Smith asserts "the sisters' vow of holy obedience to their female superior provided a buffer to patriarchal authority,

⁷⁰Pope John Paul II. *The consecrated life: Post-synodal apostolic exhortation*, no. 37.

⁷¹Coburn and Smith, 1999, p.6.

⁷²Ibid, p.8.

permitting them to resist pressure from male clerics, who utilised gender and hierarchal privileges to manipulate the sisters.”⁷³ In addition, their celibate life and living to serve the poor “created strong, disciplined, selfless organisations..”. Karen concludes that the convent “provided an alternative to marriage and motherhood.”⁷⁴

This is true to the Sisters in Africa today. They have acted as role models to girls and young women. Many sisters have pursued their ambitions like excelling in studies, running great projects, which have defied the gender stereotypes in the communities they live. Some of them have become very good managers of schools or hospitals they run. There is no doubt that the sisters’ religious vocation transcends gender roles considered normative in many communities, as the vowed life they live is above all the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is meant to make visible the marvels of God in the frail humanity of those who are called.⁷⁵ This transcendence exposes the weaknesses of feminist solutions to woman girl child education as discussed in the next section.

2.7 Inadequacy of the “Feminist Solution” to Girl child or Woman Education

From mid-sixties in the USA, there arose feminism as we know it today because of the Civil rights movements. There was the massive unrest due to the decline of Christian values’ influence in people’s lives. Instead there was a rise of humanist influence in which new generation was trying to find its own answers, rather than accepting the traditional ones. Remarkable to this period is the Maslovian Doctrine of Self-actualisation

⁷³Coburn and Smith, p.9, quoted in Karen M. Scolforo.

⁷⁴Karen M. Scolforo.

⁷⁵Pope John Paul II. *The consecrated life: Post-synodal apostolic exhortation*, no. 20.

associated with the theory of growth through gratification⁷⁶. Maslow led millions of people into a desert of “self-fulfilment” which contradicted the Christian ethic of self-transcending love of self-renunciation like the one pronounced by nuns and their founders and foundresses.

Today, in Malawi, like in other countries, there are still many people and organisations which champion girl education following feminist path. Not everybody who cries “feminist liberation” is a true friend of women and girl education. They could be less a friend for married couples, of families and other new human beings who will make up the Malawians of tomorrow. In general, the outspoken feminists have been seen to be unrepresentative of women. They have been prescribing doctors to an exaggerated imaginably disease. They seem not to have anything in common with the women they claim to serve. To say that professional conference-going feminists and Non-governmental organisation founders’ feminists are singularly elite group is not to overlook at their good faith in any way. This is simply to state a fact which may raise other important questions about their empathic contact with the grass roots and their effectiveness as agents of local social transformation. It is a known secret that some of them have just been complying with the ideological views of those who pay the bills rather than with indigenous people and the poor girl.⁷⁷ Many of them have pretended to monopolise the compassion for women and promote a perception of non-feminists as intellectually and morally dwarf.

⁷⁶ Leonard Geller, The failure of self-actualisation theory: A critique of Carl Rodgers and Abraham Maslow. In *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, (No.22, Spring 2, 1982.)pp.56-73.

⁷⁷ Billy Kaunda, in a song *Ana Amasiye*.

The argument here is that there must be clear distinction between women's rights movement and feminism. The former is a basic human rights movement which fights for equal treatment for women just like there are men's rights movement for basic human rights which fights for equal treatment of men. The later, whose proponents are feminists, is an extremist offshoot of women's rights movement that, rather than fighting for women's rights, it just attacks men's human rights and everyone else's, too guided by misinformation⁷⁸ and sexism.⁷⁹

The point here is that the best friends of women and girls to uplift their standards should be people like the Grey Nuns, who are ready to follow the programme of Christ. Perhaps that is what Luetta Reimer means when she says, "the church should take the initiative in teaching children healthy attitudes towards their own sex and towards the other."⁸⁰ Young people like girls, must be assured that the true satisfaction will come as a result of discerning and following God's plan for their lives, "rather than in yielding to society's pressures and patterns for success."⁸¹ Those who promote women and girl education should be able to convince young people of spiritual responsibility to become all that God wants them to be by being exemplary. With this in mind, then it becomes easy to differentiate between those who work for girls and women education and those who work on girl and women education.

⁷⁸Luetta Reimer. In *Direction Journal*, April 1974.Vol.3 No. 1. Pp. 169

⁷⁹ Allan J. Barron. *The death of Eve: Women liberation disintegration*. (Bullsbrook WA: Australia VERITAS,1986) pp.3-4.

⁸⁰Luetta Reimer. In *Direction Journal*, April 1974.Vol.3 No. 1. Pp. 169

⁸¹Ibid.

2.8 Nuns Working for Girl Education Today

Nuns have been considered as a power to reckon with in education since the time of Coptic Church and monasteries in the early Church. Monasteries were institutions in which men and women, who dedicated their lives to the service of God, voluntarily gave up their life and belongings to serve God through religious principles lived.⁸² As a concept, Nuns means a category of women popularly known as sisters who devote themselves in various religious orders to the practice of a life of perfection built on religious and moral uprightness. Nuns form a percentage of women that may claim with pride that they were the first to embrace religion for its own sake, practically using their lives and conduct.⁸³ This forms the basis for engaging nuns in education in Catholic founded academic and vocational institutions.

It is argued that Nuns fostered education and social transformation through their lives. Traditionally, the nuns and monks followed certain vows known as “counsels of perfection” including poverty, perfection and obedience.⁸⁴ Church Canons 603 and 604⁸⁵ gave official recognition to the nuns and monks as the hermits and consecrated virgins that were members of this special Holy Catholic religious institution known for the devotion to the service of God. The role of nuns in social activities like education is further stressed in the declarations of the Vatican Council II in February 1962 outlining the functions or the roles of the nuns. Notable duties include teaching religious instructions to Catechumen, elementary formal education and other church duties.

⁸²Pope John Paul II. *The consecrated life: Post-synodal apostolic exhortation*, 13.

⁸³Pope John Paul II. *The consecrated life: Post-synodal apostolic exhortation*, 7 and 88.

⁸⁴Pope John Paul II. *The consecrated life: Post-synodal apostolic exhortation*, 7.

⁸⁵Canons are laws found in the Code of Law for Roman Catholic Church.

They are also to act as role models for the aspiring nuns and responsible citizens.⁸⁶ Contextually, in Malawi today, the nuns mainly serve in private and grant aided institutions founded by the Catholic Church. Catholic founded schools in Malawi are distributed across the country especially in areas traditionally dominated by the Catholics. Girls' Secondary Schools with nuns in Lilongwe Archdiocese include: Likuni and Ludzi. There are numerous Girls' primary schools too, which are a common sight in most parishes of the Archdiocese. Some notable ones with boarding facilities include: Ludzi, Guilleme, and Nambuma. In these schools nuns assume several responsibilities such as: administrators, secretaries, bursars, matrons, catechists, and subject teachers, among others.

In addition, some Nuns are under obligation to assume headship of their schools in order to influence education and social transformation according to their charism. Based on the Coptic setting nuns also use their lives as living examples for the students to emulate.⁸⁷ The next section of the literature review looks at the mechanisms found in a Catholic School which promote girl education.

2.9 Mechanisms for Promoting Girl Education in a Catholic School

A Catholic School has its ethos emanating from the Catholic philosophy of education. The Catholic Church's involvement in education stems from her understanding of her evangelising mission as having two dimensions: spiritual and material.⁸⁸ In her material dimension of evangelisation, the Catholic Church has put much emphasis on education

⁸⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷ Ibid

⁸⁸ *Living Our Faith*: Pastoral letter of the Catholic Bishops of Malawi, (8th March, 1992.)

throughout the ages. From the earliest times, she established schools, which have benefited human kind. The education has responded to the needs of every time and place, including Malawi.

According to Vatican II's Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis*, the Church says that education should equip young people with the necessary and useful skills with which will make them "participate actively in the life of society in its various aspects".⁸⁹

The document goes further to declare that "the Catholic school should be able to offer young people the means to acquire the knowledge they need in order to find a place in a society which is strongly characterized by technical and scientific skill" (par.8).⁹⁰ The Church considers education as bringing about the nurturing of the intellectual faculties of students and helping them to develop "a capacity for sound judgment" and introducing them "to the cultural heritage bequeathed to them by former generations" (par.9).⁹¹

The Catholic school stands out to be a school for the human person and of human persons. It is backed by the wisdom from the Catholic Social Teaching (CST) which emphasizes that 'each woman and man is spiritual and material, mortal or immortal,'⁹² which is the heart of Christ's teaching. It is the will of Christ that both spiritual and

⁸⁹ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis*, 1. (Rome: 1965).

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ *Gravissimum Educationis*, 5.

⁹² New People, No. 151, July-August 2014, (Balaka: Montfort Media) p.22

material needs of the person of each individual human should be met. This is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school".⁹³

Catholic education policy puts the child in front of all the educational activities. For the Catholic Church it is neither the family nor the state that is at stake of Catholic education, but child, which includes a girl. A Catholic School becomes a place where people are genuinely at liberty because they are living in the freedom given by the gospel. In this school, network of practices take place which constitute life experiences of teachers and students.⁹⁴

It is against this background that Miller outlines the special marks common to all Catholic Schools. He says that Catholic school should be inspired by a supernatural vision, founded on Christian anthropology, animated by communion and community, imbued with a Catholic worldview throughout its curriculum and sustained by gospel witness.⁹⁵ Catholic education emphasises on the importance of structures to deliver proper education to their students. It is obvious that the basic requirement for any school is the infrastructure needed for the school. Physical structures like classrooms, good libraries, science laboratories, computer laboratories, dormitories are needed in a school. The Catholic Church has done her best to build many schools. A Catholic school is believed to be an extension of the home where "some of the amenities which can create a pleasant and family atmosphere are available." Miller puts it forward like this:

⁹³ *Gravissimum Educationis*, 5.

⁹⁴ Stuart Fowler, Harro Van Brummelen and John Van Dyk, *Christian schooling: education for freedom*. (Transvaal: Potche Fstroom University for Chritian Higher Education, 1998), 64.

⁹⁵ Michael J. Miller. "Five essential marks of Catholic Schools." chap. 3 in *The Holy See's teaching on Catholic Schools* (Atlanta: Sophia Institute Press. 2006), 17.

It is especially important that this "school-home" be immediately recognizable as Catholic: From the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic school, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment, one illumined by the light of faith, and having its own unique characteristics.⁹⁶

The Catholic education believes in the role parents play in the education of their children. The church understands that education does not start in the school, but at home. Parents have the serious duty to educate their children. They are the principle and primary educators. According to Canon 1136, "Parents have the most grave obligation and the primary right to do all in their power to ensure their children's physical, social, cultural, moral and religious upbringing."⁹⁷ In cooperation with other stake holders, parents work to make choices that promote counter-action of individualistic self-promotion tendencies, by encouraging solidarity instead of competition; assisting the weak instead of marginalisation, and responsible participation instead of indifference.⁹⁸

Catholic schools cherish the good interaction between teachers and students. Good interaction between the teacher and the students fosters harmonious intellectual growth with spiritual religious, emotional, and social growth. Teachers are expected to accompany students to achieve genuine formation. As St. John Bosco observed, "education is a thing of the heart."⁹⁹ As one of the founders of the institutes specialised in education, he was convinced that "during childhood and adolescence, a student needs

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷ Code of Canon Law: 1983 Edition: No. 1136.

⁹⁸Michael J. Miller. "Five essential marks of Catholic Schools." chap. 3 in *The Holy See's teaching on Catholic Schools* (Atlanta: Sophia Institute Press. 2006), 17.

⁹⁹Don Bosco. *An exhortation to educators*. Rome, May 10, 1884. Available in the informal education archives. 1884. http://www.infed.org/archives/christian_youthwork/ retrieved on 31st March, 2014.

to experience personal relations with outstanding educators, and what is taught has greater influence on the student's formation when placed in a context of personal involvement, genuine reciprocity, coherence of attitudes, lifestyle, and day-to-day behaviour."¹⁰⁰ A Catholic school believes that a student has a role to play in this interaction. It is aware that it has all kinds of students. Some are well behaved and disciplined while others are not. As young people they can be guided to become good citizens.

In a Catholic School, teaching does not end in the classroom. Evening believes that teacher-learner relationship is fostered and nurtured in numerous small ways beyond the actual class lessons. The activities such as counselling, student Christian groups and sometimes retreats play a very important role in every child in order to excel in education.¹⁰¹ In a Catholic School, there is an awareness of the place of values in education and education in values.¹⁰² The Catholic school could be an ideal place for a girl child. The next section deals with the literature on the challenges faced by the Grey Nuns in educating the girl child.

2.10 Challenges to Girl Education

Although education policies in most African countries do not discriminate against girls and women, there is a serious gender disparity in enrolment and transition from one level to the next, especially in rural Africa. Many reports and scholars have hinted on the

¹⁰⁰ Don Bosco. *An exhortation to educators*. Rome, May 10, 1884. Available in the informal education archives. 1884. http://www.infed.org/archives/christian_youthwork/ retrieved on 31st March, 2014.

¹⁰¹ Margaret Evening, *Approaches to religious education*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1972), 74.

¹⁰² Mark Halstead, and Monica Taylor (eds.) *Values in education and education in values*. (London: The Falmer Press. 1996), 111.

challenges faced by the girl and woman in education. UNFPA report on world population in 2005 highlights poverty as one of the challenges facing a girl child in Africa. Most of the adolescent girls, about 25% in developing and low income countries like Malawi, live in extreme poverty. According to this report, extreme poverty means that people lack all basic amenities for survival, like food, water, housing, clothing, sanitation, health care and education. Parents and guardians find it difficult to pay fees for children. They may decide to leave the girl completely out of school or choose the lesser evil of educating the boy.¹⁰³

The other challenge is the low image held by parents and guardians in educating a girl child. Girls are valued far less than boys and this translates into girls having less chance of going to school than their counterparts, boys. Girls are denied their right to education and denied their dream of the future career.¹⁰⁴ Some cultural beliefs that women are meant to be married and be in the kitchen have perpetuated the situation of low prospects of getting a girl educated.¹⁰⁵ Tickle, notes that when girls near puberty, their parents or guardians may discourage them from continuing with school. Sometimes they are even pressured to drop out, in order to preserve their reputation and marriage prospects. She argues that:

¹⁰³ Louise Tickle. The silent emergency, *The International Development*, (Issue No. 20, 2005), 32.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Mercy A. Oduyoye and Musimbi R.A. Kanyoro, (eds.) *The will to arise: Women tradition and the church in Africa*. Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers.1992

Girls are often left at a disadvantage. As they enter puberty, bias against girls puts them at higher risk than boys for dropping out of school, sexual violence and child marriage. Boys' freedoms and opportunities may expand, while girls' experiences are often the opposite. During this period, differential treatment may become more pronounced, with girls schooled to become wives and mothers and boys groomed to become providers. Girls are typically expected to be compliant, while boys are encouraged to project strength and control. The expectations placed on boys may contribute to aggressive or risky behaviour, with harmful effects for them and others.¹⁰⁶

According to Tickle, the other challenge faced by girls is the distance they travel to and from school in the country side. Many girls travel distances which make them risk being raped. She adds that other challenges come from structures in the schools and from fellow students especially the boy.¹⁰⁷ Some boys tend to discriminate against and discourage girls in class. United Nations Fund for Population Activity (UNFPA) aware of this problem recommends that:

Adolescent boys and young men are critical allies in the battle for gender equality and must be proactively and positively engaged at an early stage. They can be educated to challenge gender stereotypes, promote positive constructions of masculinity, and practice attitudes and behaviours based on equality and respect for human rights.¹⁰⁸

With these challenges, statistics show that, globally, there are still 31 million girls who are still out of school and another 58 million girls in primary schools whose right to education is threatened by different factors mentioned, like: lack of fees due to poverty, distance to and from school, low image held by parents and guardians in educating a girl, discrimination in class and many more. The report observes that this has been translated

¹⁰⁶ Tickle, The silent emergency, *The International Development*, 35.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ UNFPA: Adolescents and Youth: 58th session of the Commission on the Status of Women: 12 March 2014. <http://www.unfpa.org/public/home/adolescents>. Retrieved on 1st April, 2014.

into less educated labour force, inefficient labour distribution, hence retarding the world development.¹⁰⁹

The recent studies on the situation of the girl child education in Malawi show that there are many girls who enrol at the primary school, but the number decreases at the secondary school. According to World Bank report, it is purported that only 27% of the entire girls enrol at the secondary school.¹¹⁰ Of these, only 13% report at the secondary school¹¹¹ and a fraction of 13% actually finish form four.¹¹² Those who manage to pass Malawi School Certificate of Examinations (MSCE) nationally make 5% only.¹¹³ This is a pathetic situation.

Other reports have noted that there has been remarkable progress in gender equality in education since 1999. Globally, in 1999, around 106 million children were out of primary school. Almost 61 million (58%) were girls compared to 45 million (42%) boys. In 2009, around 35 million girls were still out of school compared to 31 million boys.¹¹⁴

In Sub-Saharan Africa, where Malawi is, almost 50% of the world's out of school girls are found here. However, the number of out-of-school girls has decreased more slowly, from 25 million in 1999 to 17 million in 2008. The girl's enrolment in primary schools has increased too; there are more than boys at the secondary school level. More young

¹⁰⁹ Tickle, The silent emergency, *The International Development*, 35.

¹¹⁰ World Bank: world databank. <http://web.worldbank.org>, retrieved on 10th January, 2014.

¹¹¹ Malawi Ministry of Education Science and Technology: Education Statistics 2010.

¹¹² Ibid

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ EdStats Newsletter, August, 2011.

people are enrolled at primary, secondary and tertiary levels than it was two decades ago.¹¹⁵

Scorsone, writing on the Roman Catholic Church's perspective argues that the Catholic Church has promoted the education of the girl child and woman for 2000 years. She claims that the Church continues to be actively involved in girl and woman education as evidenced by number in Catholic schools and colleges. She observes that:

Today there are more than 21.3 million women and girls being educated in Church-run institutions: 84,194 Catholic primary schools teach 11.5 million girls; 237,640 secondary schools teach 6.2 million girls; 3,163 Catholic colleges or universities currently have 1.2 million women students.¹¹⁶

Reuther thinks that the Church has not always been friendly to women especially on gender and sexuality. She particularly mentions the teachings of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas as sources of some teachings which plague the Catholic Church on women and girls. Right in the 4th Century St. Augustine believed that women should be under men, though they are created in the image of God. This should be their fate for being responsible for the fall of humanity into sin. St. Thomas Aquinas, following the philosophy of Aristotle, taught that women were intrinsically inferior, being produced biologically as incomplete human beings. As a result of this, women have been excluded from leadership positions, education opportunities and many more.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Suzzana Scorsone, The Statement on 42nd Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, in *L'Osservatore Romano, Weekly Edition in English*, v31, n17(1539), 29 April 1998.

¹¹⁷ Radford R. Ruether. *Women, Reproductive rights and the Catholic Church*. (May 2006). <https://www.catholicsforchoice.org/topics/reform/documents/2006womenreproductiverightsandthecatholicchurch.asp>. Retrieved on 29th March, 2014.

2.11 Chapter Conclusion

Despite this rich history of the Church towards girl and woman education, historians and researchers have offered limited insight into the contributions of the Grey Nuns towards girl education in Malawi. Many questions have been left unanswered as to how the Grey Nuns have contributed to the girl education in Malawi. Their work remains, to the large extent, undocumented. Knowledge and understanding of the Grey Nuns contribution towards girl education can offer insight that those involved in girl education can apply in their endeavours. Throughout history, Catholic Sisters like the Grey Nuns have served as leaders in education of fellow women and girls long before the present drive began. An investigation into the role of the Grey Nuns towards girl child education in Malawi will fill a gap in the body of knowledge on how they have manoeuvred their way through in pursuing this path, in the light of their charism of love and compassion.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes and justifies the research design and methodology used in this study. It covers the proposed research design, sampling procedure, data generation techniques and methods of data analysis, ethical issues and limitations of the study. This study used a qualitative phenomenological research study design to investigate the contribution of the Grey Nuns towards girl education in Malawi.

3.2 Research Design

This study followed a qualitative method which was constructivist phenomenological model. In a constructivist epistemology, the study sought to discover knowledge from the existing facts, “as invention of an active, engaging mind” of the participants. It also sought to understand the experiences from the point of view of the participants.¹¹⁸ As a phenomenological study, it focused on what the participants experience and its language of expression was “in the language that is loyal to their lived experience.” Small number of participants was studied through extensive and prolonged contacts to develop patterns

¹¹⁸Kjell E. Rudestam and Rae R. Newton. *Surviving your dissertation: A comprehensive guide to content and process*.(Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2007), 70.

and relationship of meanings.¹¹⁹ It attempted to describe and elucidate the meanings of human experience that the participants ascribe to.¹²⁰ The study followed a qualitative phenomenological model as a strategy of enquiry.

As a qualitative phenomenological oriented research, in-depth interviews and extended conversation with the participants was used as a source of data. The qualitative interview was used at “the production sight of the knowledge.” The nature of this research warranted a qualitative interview study because:

- (a) the study was a field-focused naturalistic inquiry;
- (b) the researcher, an educationist, served as an instrument, or a tool, in the research process;
- (b) data collection and analysis was interpretive;
- (d) data generated represented the voices of participants through expressive language;
- (e) research sought to address the particulars including the unique perspectives and perceptions of each participant; and
- (f) the success of the research was judged by the coherence, insight, and instrumental utility of the study.¹²¹ The research sought to

¹¹⁹W.J. Creswell, *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approach: third edition*. (Los Angeles: University of Nebraska, USA.2009), 13.

¹²⁰Rudestam et al. *Surviving your dissertation: A comprehensive guide to content and process*, 39.

¹²¹Eisner Eisner. *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*, (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998), 102.

evoke constructed realities through a holistic approach and to elicit subjective interpretations.¹²²

However, the researcher was aware of some limitations of qualitative research design. It consumed a lot of time to conduct in-depth interviews. In case large amount of data was collected, it would be difficult to make sense of it. Because of the involvement of casual relations, it would be difficult to validate or test the findings.¹²³ Being aware of these limitations, the researcher employed a number of methods to deal with them. To avoid bias the researcher continuously monitored the interpretations so that the study becomes scrupulously accurate. Proper sampling assisted to deal with time problems. The number of participants to be interviewed was properly determined.

3.3 Study Area

The study was carried out in Mchinji district of the Central Region of Malawi, in Lilongwe Archdiocese. It is here where the Grey Nuns have established themselves since their arrival in 1946. In other words, it is the seat of the Grey Nuns in Malawi where they have three school communities: Guilleme Girls Primary School, Ludzi Girls Primary School, and Ludzi Girls Secondary School. Kholoni, a community day school at Kachebere was also considered. Mchinji being the seat of the Grey Nuns gave it an upper hand in the coordination and control of the girls' schools under their jurisdiction. This means that first hand and reliable information was accessed from this district. Secondly, Mchinji has three main tribes of Chewa, Nsenga and Ngoni. The Chewa and Nsengas

¹²² Catherine Marshall, & Gretchen Rossman. *Designing qualitative research* (4th ed.) (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2006), 104

¹²³ Maree, *First steps in research*, 94.

practise matrilineal system while the Ngoni practise patrilineal system. It is believed that the matrilineal systems tend to favour women while patrilineal system tends to exercise a lot of authority on women.¹²⁴

As such, it provided the ground that was needed for assessment and logical comparison between the yields from the efforts of the Grey Nuns and the three cultures. Besides, the Grey Nuns are also found on the other side of the boarder, Chipata, Zambia, which provided an international taste of the findings. Mchinji as a boarder district was also expected to have high level of girl child education challenges. The most notable challenges included high dropout rate among girls, early marriages and high illiteracy rate among women. These characteristics made Mchinji the most suitable district for this study.

Great interest in the issues of girl education has been aroused in the researcher, by the belief that when a girl child is educated, she would be in a better position to liberate others in the same way as the Grey Nuns have done. She will be in a position to fight against any type of discrimination held against women in her area and the nation as a whole.

¹²⁴ Hans Haselbarth. *Christian ethics in the African context*, (Nairobi: Uzima press, 1976), 81-82; Oduyoye et al. *The will to arise: Women tradition and the church in Africa*, 196.

3.4 Sampling

Depending on the structure of the study, it demanded a carefully targeted sample of participants. It included Grey Nuns, current student girls, teachers, former students and parents, who have lived with the Grey Nuns and are conversant with the work of the Grey Nuns.

3.4.1 Sampling Techniques

Random sampling with an advantage of getting unbiased representative group was impracticable in this study. For the purpose of this study, non-probability sampling was applied. In non-probability sampling, the researcher identified the participants based on exact characteristics, fitting the focus of the study.¹²⁵ The researcher selected the sampling units that were to be representative of the particular group or section of the wider population. The sample units did not pretend to represent the wider population. They were “deliberately and unashamedly selective and biased.”¹²⁶ Since the chance that a particular sampling unit would be selected depended on the subjective judgement of the researcher; it did not satisfy the probability-sampling requirement where every unit has a known probability chance of being selected. The researcher knew that there would be little benefit in seeking a random sample which would be largely ignorant of the Grey Nuns, and would not comment on matters of interest to the researcher. Since the primary concern in the sample chosen was to get “in-depth information from those who are in a position to give it,”¹²⁷ the researcher used non-probability sampling.

¹²⁵Cohen et al. *Methods in education: Third Edition*, 113-115.

¹²⁶Ibid.

¹²⁷Ibid .

The study suited non-probability because this was a small scale research. The other reason was that non-probability samples were considered by the researchers as far much less complicated to set up; and they were less expensive. Above all, the researcher did intend to generalise the findings beyond the sample in question.¹²⁸

Specifically, the researcher used three types of non-probability sampling, namely: purposive sampling, convenience sampling and snow ball sampling. As the name suggests, in purposive sampling the samples were chosen for the specific purpose. For instance, the head-teachers of schools, the boarding mistresses and students were chosen for they were considered possessing knowledge about the Grey Nuns.¹²⁹ Convenient sampling involved choosing those that are near to serve as participants. This is done until the required sample size is obtained. Snow ball sampling involves identifying a small number of individuals which have the required characteristics. The identified individuals are used as informants for the researcher to be in touch with other informants who are also used as informants.

In purposive sampling, five students were identified from Ludzi Secondary school for focus group discussion based on their capabilities to express themselves freely in the language of their choice. According to Cohen, the members of each focus group discussion could be between four and twelve.¹³⁰ The number five was convenient to facilitate proper participation during focus group discussions and proper group management. Purposive and snow ball sampling was used on nuns. Those who were well

¹²⁸Ibid

¹²⁹Cohen et al. *Methods in education: Third Edition*, 116

¹³⁰Ibid 377

experienced and have been a nun for not less than two years were picked. Nuns who qualified to be interviewed and were well experienced in girl education were put in touch with the researcher by fellow nuns. Convenient sampling was used on teachers as they were picked for being with the Grey Nuns for not less than a year, and those who were near and accessible at the time. Parents were sampled using snow-ball after which they were interviewed. After the interview the participant parent directed the researcher to another parent with the same qualities. This made it easy for the researcher to access the participants.¹³¹ Table 3 shows the summary of sampling techniques, category of respondents, target population and sample size.

Table 3: Table Showing Sampling Techniques

CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS	SAMPLING TECHNIQUE	TARGET POPULATION	SAMPLE SELECTED
Current Students	Purposive sampling	3 320	12
Grey Nuns	Purposive and snow ball sampling	20	6
Teachers	Purposive and Convenient sampling	60	15
Head teachers	Purposive sampling	3	3
Boarding mistresses	Purposive sampling	3	3
Parents	Snow ball sampling	10	4

Source: Adapted from Cohen, 2007, Methods in education. Reprinted with permission.

¹³¹Ibid.

3.5 Data Sources, Data Generation and Methods

The Study used two types of data sources, namely, primary and secondary sources. Primary data sources included data from in-depth interviews. This formed the main focus of the analysis comprising data sets from nuns, teachers, students and parents. The main set of data was from the nuns themselves. Different methods of data generation were used.

3.5.1 Document Analysis

The main set of data was from the nuns themselves. Secondary data sources comprised books, journals, magazines and individual writing exercises. It involved intensive reviewing of relevant literature on girl education in relation to Grey Nuns. Supplementing these sources was the data generated during field work.

3.5.2 Face to Face In-depth Interviews

In this study, several instruments were used to generate data. As a qualitative study interviews were used, particularly face to face in-depth interviews. The interviews were unstructured with an interview guide or schedule which contained open ended questions. The participants were guided and asked to elaborate their experiences about girl education while with the Grey Nuns. These questions were developed during probing. This increased the likelihood of getting useful responses from the informants.

The in-depth interviews were used on Nuns, boarding personnel, matrons, parents and head-teachers. The advantage of having in-depth interviews was that the researcher was

able to see the participants behave and act in their actual context or natural setting. The other advantage was that the researcher had an opportunity to establish a working relationship with them before and during the interviews that could assist in high response rate. The researcher was in the field for a month. It also assisted him to be in a position to control the line of questioning.¹³² In one of the schools, the researcher had planned to interview the head teacher and the nun individually, but instead the interview was done together. This was because the nun expressed unwillingness to meet her alone because she would be busy that afternoon. Despite the incident, both the nun and the Head-teacher were free to contribute.

3.5.3 Focus-Group Discussion

The study used focus-group discussion on teacher and student participants with a focus group discussion guide. The focus groups were used for the following reasons: because the data generated was qualitative; data was generated quickly which saved time and at low cost; the data generated was on attitudes, values and opinions; participants were empowered to speak out and in their own words; groups were encouraged rather than individuals to voice opinions; and groups provided a greater coverage of issues.¹³³ Besides, focus group discussion provided an opportunity for the researcher to triangulate the information generated with the information from interviews.¹³⁴

¹³² John Creswell. *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approach: third edition*. (Los Angeles: University of Nebraska, USA.2009), 180.

¹³³ Cohen et al. *Methods in education: Third Edition*, 376-377.

¹³⁴ David Morgan. *Focus groups as qualitative research*, (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, (2006), 41-48.

The researcher was aware of the problems associated with using focus groups in data generation. First, it would be difficult to gather the participants at one place at once like teachers and students. Second, it would be difficult to analyse the data succinctly. Third, the information gathered would be less than if the questionnaire was used. Finally, some group dynamics like the dominance by some members and status differences would be at work.¹³⁵ The researcher made sure that these challenges were minimised in several ways. To cushion for the participants not turning up on the day of the interview, the researcher over-recruited by 20%. The researchers decided on the proper size of the focus groups so that it is neither too small nor too large; and encourage participation. Each focus group had five participants in order to absorb the negative effects of group dynamics and for easy management. Sampling was done carefully so that each participant was “the bearer of the particular characteristic required.” The meeting was chaired by the researcher and he made sure that participants had something to say and felt comfortable enough to say it.¹³⁶ Both the interviews and focus group discussions were audio-taped. The researcher had originally planned to video-tape them, but this was not possible because of electricity problems. Not all the interview rooms had electricity. The audio taping was done using a tape recorder. To give full attention to the interview process, the researcher avoided anything that would disturb attention, for example, taking notes. He employed this to effectively engage the participants by asking appropriate questions, depending on the responses being given out. When the interviews were over the researcher transcribed verbatim and then internalised the emerging issues.

¹³⁵Cohen et al. *Methods in education: Third Edition*, 396.

¹³⁶Morgan, *Focus groups as qualitative research*, 43-44.

Apart from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the researcher used other instruments to generate data. The researcher referred to his reflective diary or daily journal which he kept. This contained his thoughts and ideas throughout the duration of the study. It included ideas and thoughts from proposal presentations from different departments, public debates and presentations in class. This assisted him in making timely adjustments to the study in order to perfect it. The researcher analysed documents such as autobiographies and biographies of the founder and some Nuns. Some minutes, records and photographs related to Grey Nuns and their involvement with the girls were also examined.¹³⁷

Before going into data generation, the researcher made sure that he had collected a letter of introduction from Chancellor College, Theology and Religious Studies Department. He was also supported by introductory letters from the Ministry of Education to allow him to carry out a research in both primary and secondary schools run by the Gray Nuns. The researcher also made a visit to the site for familiarisation. He also made sure that the participants or their representatives had signed letters of consent. Then in the end, focus group discussions and interviews were carried out. For the interviews and focus group discussions to proceed with minimum huddles, the researcher used an interview protocol. This guided him in asking questions and recording answers during the interview. The interview protocol had instructions for the interviewer so that uniform procedures are followed from one interview to another. It had five main questions which were sub research questions, with an introductory ice breaker question. It had a concluding statement too. The probing questions were included to follow up the interviewee's ideas

¹³⁷Creswell. *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approach*, 182-183.

in more detail. Space of time between questions was allowed so that the responses are recorded. Lastly, 'a thank you statement' followed to acknowledge the time and effort the participant has spent during the interview.¹³⁸

3.6 Data Analysis

The data generated from interviews and focus-group discussions was made sense of qualitatively. It was organised, accounted for and explained according to the participants' definitions of their life experiences. It was analyzed thematically basing on the variables identified in the research questions, with a predetermined theoretical frame work. The researcher imposed his own theory of liberation theology on information, and then used it to analyse the interview transcripts. He followed a deductive approach. It could not be inductive because the inductive approach would have involved analysing data with little or no predetermined theory, structure or framework. It would have used the actual data itself to derive the structure of analysis. The deductive approach was chosen because it was time saving and simple. The multiple realities potentially present in the data were identified in the participants' contexts to reach the best possible understanding.¹³⁹

In the early stages of the analysis, the researcher applied informal analysis through reflection and journaling at the time of data generation. The process allowed the researcher to capture the initial impressions and reactions of participants throughout the

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Maree, *First steps in research*, 37.

¹³⁹ Maree, *First steps in research*, 3

data collection process. These impressions were juxtaposed with the research question and sub-research questions.¹⁴⁰ This was viewed in the lens of liberation theology theory.

The data generated was analysed using the six stages suggested by Creswell.¹⁴¹ First, the raw data in form of transcripts, field-notes and images was organised, ready for analysis. The interviews were transcribed; field-notes were arranged in different types depending on the source of information. The material was scanned under the lens of liberation.¹⁴² Second, the transcribed data was read through in order to get the general sense of the information. The data was reflected upon to get the general meaning. In other words, the researcher immersed himself in the data to become familiar with them.¹⁴³ Third, the researcher analysed data in detail in the process called coding, in which data was organised in chunks or segments or themes before bringing meaning.¹⁴⁴ Segments of sentences were put in categories and were labelled based on the actual language of the participant called *vivo term*.¹⁴⁵ The researcher saw some unexpected and unanticipated codes crept in. Fourth, the researcher generated a description of the setting, the people and categories for analysis. Eventually, small number of themes was generated. Fifth, the themes were conveyed as findings of the analysis. The researcher then wrote a preliminary summary of the main findings, issues, ideas and concepts. Sixth, the researcher made interpretations or meanings out of the findings. Comparison with past findings was made in which some affirmations were seen. Then synthesis with the

¹⁴⁰Rudestam et al. *Surviving your dissertation: A comprehensive guide to content and process*, 185.

¹⁴¹Creswell. *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approach*, 185.

¹⁴²Ibid.

¹⁴³Sotirios Sarantakos. *Social research*.(New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2005), 303; Cohen et al. *Methods in education: Third Edition*, 184.

¹⁴⁴Gretchen Rossman and Sharon Rallis. *Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998), 171.

¹⁴⁵Creswell. *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approach*, 185.

literature to draw some conclusions about the contribution of the Grey Nuns towards girl education was made. The researcher came up with new questions to be addressed. Using the lens of liberation theology theory interpretation for call of action or reform was made.¹⁴⁶

In order to adopt these stages well, I reliably and consistently recognised the codable moments, develop appropriate codes. Through my own skill, I identified patterns or themes within a priori typologies and I used colour codes as follows:

Table 4: Showing the colour codes and main themes identified

Research Question	Colour Codes	Theme Identified
1	Green	Gender Equality; Faith and Service
2	Blue	Discipline; Supporting poor students; Conducive physical environment; Supporting the education of boys.
3	Yellow	Appreciation; satisfaction and dissatisfaction.
4	Red	Economic factors; geographical factors; religious factors; legal factors; and social-cultural factors.

Source: Adapted from Creswell 2009, Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approach. Reprinted with permission.

The transcripts were colour-coded to identify themes. The first level themes of Gender equality and faith and service in the church were coded in green. Second level themes of discipline, supporting poor students, conducive physical environment and supporting the

¹⁴⁶Creswell. *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approach*, 190.

education of boys, were coded in blue. The third level themes were coded in yellow and these included the indicators of appreciation and dissatisfaction. The fourth level themes were economic, geographical, religious, legal and social-cultural factors. These were coded in red. All the stages were subjected to ‘constant comparison,’ especially in the data analysis, in order to validate or verify the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. The findings were read and re-read with the intent of searching or identifying emerging themes in the constant search for understanding and the meaning of the data.¹⁴⁷

Figure 5 is the summary of the stages used in the analysis of information in the light of liberation theology:

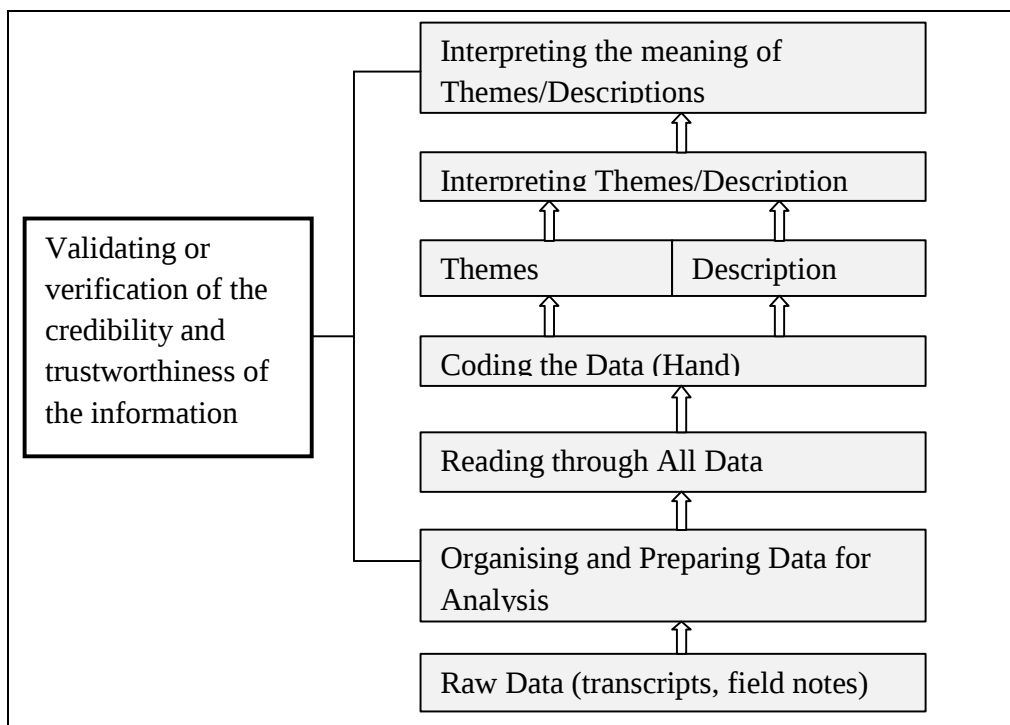


Figure 5: An overview of Data Analysis from Bottom to the Top¹⁴⁸

Source: Reproduced from Creswell, 2009, Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approach. Reprinted with permission.

¹⁴⁷Sarantakos. *Social research*, 86.

¹⁴⁸Creswell. *Research Design. Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approach*

3.7 Credibility and Trustworthiness of the Study

In this study the researcher endeavoured to achieve credibility and trustworthiness by employing several things. First, he employed triangulation. He triangulated the data from interviews and field notes to build a coherent justification of themes. The researcher further increased the trustworthiness by constantly reflecting on the findings in order to reduce bias.¹⁴⁸ The researcher is known to be a Catholic which may influence his view of the study findings.

The credibility, both internal and external, will be achieved by using a member to check and review the whole project in order to determine the accuracy of the interviews. The themes and descriptions were revisited to establish the accuracy.¹⁴⁹ The researcher also used the degree of generalisability of the findings as means to establish the trustworthiness. Generalisability is defined as ‘the capacity of a study to extrapolate the relevance of its findings beyond the boundaries of the sample’.¹⁵⁰ This means the researcher would be able to transfer the findings to other contexts regarding the role the Grey Nuns in girl-child education in Malawi.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Ibid

¹⁵⁰ Sarantakos. *Social research*, 98.

¹⁵¹ Creswell. *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approach*, 192.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

In order to protect the participants in this study, an understanding of the “concrete powers and vulnerabilities that are in play in particular situations” was attended to. The researcher employed an “intellectual virtue of recognising and responding to what is most important in a situation”.¹⁵² The researcher applied ethics in addressing the practical issues, such as interview process, probing, empathy and confidentiality.

The researcher paid attention to seeking informed consent from the participants in which they chose whether to participate in an investigation or not. The participants were told about the facts that would likely influence their decisions. A brief explanation was done to the participants before the interviews begin. This was in view of the fact that the participant will be able to withdraw at any time, freely. The participants were not forced to participate in the study but they were given a chance to be free to choose or decide whether to participate or not, after being given the correct facts about the research.¹⁵³ This involved the introduction of the study; explanation of the study; explaining its objectives, benefits and risks. For instance, the researcher identified himself properly to the participants, without giving false impressions.¹⁵⁴ It was also explained to the participants that the study would be undertaken in a natural setting, where the Grey Nuns work; that the study was communicative, operating within communication of which it is part; and that it would study a small number of people.

¹⁵² Steinar Kvale, & Svend Brinkmann. *Interviews: learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing: Second Edition*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2009), 61.

¹⁵³ Sarantakos. *Social research*, 23.

¹⁵⁴ Sarantakos, *Social research*, 18.

Knowing that the schools are run by the Grey Nuns, the researcher sought permission from their Mother Superior of the District of Malawi and Zambia and the school administrators before the actual date of the interviews and focus group discussions. Considering the fact that the study would involve children at a certain time, who could not make mature logical decisions, the researcher explained the benefits and risks of involving children in the study to the school administrators. This was based on the belief that in the absence of their parents, the school administrators bore more authority in the school environment than anybody else. With the exception of girls at the secondary school, from all the other participants, the researcher sought an oral consent. This involved explaining the study objectives to each respondent or focus groups, notifying them of possible risks and benefit of participating in the study. Confidentiality with which the findings were treated was emphasized. The respondents were also assured of their free will to participate in the study and those who were not interested in the study were given chance not to participate at all.

During the interviews and focus group discussions, the researcher paid attention to body language. The questions were formulated in such a way that they manifest concern and respect to the participant in order to reduce the stress brought about by the interviewing process. The participants were promised of confidentiality in order to promote clever responses to the interview questions. They were assured that during analysis, interpretation and reporting of the findings, the true characters of the participants would be concealed. This would include their geographical location and their place of work or schooling. The researcher followed the principles of non-maleficence and beneficence which assured them that there would be no harm to the participants while at the same

time making sure that there were maximum benefits to both the participants and the society.¹⁵⁵

In an effort to convey personal characteristics and maintain a human factor participants were assigned letters from the alphabet. These letters were selected alphabetically and assigned to the nun participants arbitrarily.

3.9 Limitations of the study

With purposive sampling, the study involved much of travelling. Some participants were not in a position to express themselves fully and honestly, as some of the responses required appeared to be a betrayal of their personal, school or church beliefs. For instance some teachers were uncomfortable for they risked being transferred. These affected the generation of quality data.

It was particularly difficult to meet parents and former students to be interviewed as they lived far away from the schools and away from each other. Some participants declined to answer some questions and others declined to participate in the study. Some declined to be audio taped for their own reasons. Some did not like the idea of signing the consent forms. They preferred verbal consent to written one. Few informants expected material gains from the study. They wanted to be given finances before they could respond to questions. To overcome the limitations, the researcher explained to them and convinced them by explaining the social benefit of the study.

¹⁵⁵Nigel Gilbert. *From postgraduate to social scientist: a guide to key skills*. (London: Sage Publications.2006), 47.

Above all, the study involved students who were still children. They could not make mature decisions whether to participate in the study or not. This meant seeking consent from them was not feasible yet they were supposed to take part in the study. It was not even possible to seek their parental consent since they were far. To solve this problem, the consent was sought from the school administration on behalf of the parents and the same time the children themselves, after detailed explanation of the objectives, process, benefits and risks of participating in the study. They were assured of total confidentiality with which the findings would be treated. Another problem with the children is that most of them falsified information with the intention of protecting the nuns and school administration. The researcher observed this through body language and their hesitance to respond when asked about the negative side of their engagement with the nuns.

Interpretation and analysis of the findings were based on participant perceptions of reality and means of communication. Most of the participants attested that their stories were accurate; however the study represents only their perspectives. In addition, analyses of participant responses were based on one point in time- the time period of the interviews. Many factors may have contributed to participants' perspectives and perceptions on the specific days of the interviews when the interviews were conducted. Furthermore, participants filtered the data as they determined events and perceptions they were willing to share with me. As an educationist, I further filtered the data as I selected information I considered to be relevant to the study during analysis process.

3.10 Chapter Conclusion

This study investigated the lived experiences of the Grey Nuns, teachers, students, former students and parents. The research sought to understand their perspectives about the contribution of the Grey Nuns to girl education in Malawi. The six stages adapted from Creswell¹⁵⁶ were used to analyse the findings within the theoretical framework of liberation theology. The researcher was used as a tool for the analysis process, being a Catholic and an educationist. The interpretation and analysis of the research findings of this study are presented in chapter four. They were supported by the excerpts from the participants. Chapter Five will provide the conclusions, implications and recommendations.

¹⁵⁶Creswell. *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approach*, 190.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the research findings on the contribution of the Grey Nuns of Lilongwe Archdiocese towards offering education to the girl-child in Malawi, following their charism of love and compassion.

The findings in this chapter are presented and discussed in form of themes and sub-themes under titles corresponding to the study research questions. The data generated revolved around the Liberation theology theory which has guided the interpretation of the findings of the study. The theory has permitted the exploration of the evolution of the girl education by the Grey Nuns, in collaboration with teachers, parents and students through their lived experiences and reflection on the Grey Nuns and their contribution towards girl education in Malawi.

4.2 Factors that led to the Grey Nuns getting involved in the Promotion of Girl

Education in Malawi

This section presents and discusses the factors that pushed the Grey Nuns to get involved in the promotion of girl child education in Malawi. In an effort to handle the section effectively, the researcher sought views of each nun participant as to the reasons she perceived motivated her congregation to get involved in girl education. He also sought the views on what each nun participant perceived as the reasons that motivated her to join the Grey Nuns. Each nun was assigned a letter, W, X, Y and Z, in alphabetical order, depending on who came first in the interviews. Participants' responses were examined using the lenses of liberation theology.

Within the liberation component of the theoretical framework, two main themes were identified in relation to women and girls: Gender equality in education and lives committed to faith and service. Under the theme of Gender equality, the sub-themes of freedom from domestic violence, restoring dignity and empowering emerged. The following sections present some of the responses and interpretations within the theoretical frame work of liberation theology.

4.2.1 Gender Equality in Education

Nun participants described their involvement in girl education in Malawi because they wanted to achieve gender equality in education for women and girls. Though it was difficult to envisage the term gender equality in 1946 and before, participants believed it

was because of that. For instance Sister X said “that with the issue of gender... I think it is now that this thing is coming out that there is equality between men and women.”

The argument of Sister X is that when her congregation got involved in the education of women and girls, the issue of gender equality was not yet the talk of the day as it is today. This seems to be in agreement with the recent research on the place and history of women in the society and gender parity.¹⁵⁷ Three phases of history have been identified in this regard. First phase covered the years from 1850s to 1920s when women were seen to be deciding and looking for support against male chauvinism and oppression. Most of the people came to be aware that male chauvinism was not normal. The second phase was from 1960s to 1980s. During this period women fought for equity in work places and also started fighting for birth control. The third phase, from 1990s to 2000s was marked by a conflict between substantive equality and formal equality of men and women. This was the period when women fought for their independence by defining their rights in the light of the law. Women did not want outward appearance only but real equality.¹⁵⁸

The first phase of the history coincided with the founding of the congregation of the Grey Nuns which was founded in 1845. The second coincided with the period when the congregation started its work in Malawi in 1946. The third phase is the present situation of women in which the congregation is working. Let us turn to three sub themes of gender equality.

¹⁵⁷Karen M. Scolforo, p. 20.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

Firstly, the nun participants expressed their congregation's involvement in girl and women education as stemming from their desire to free them from domestic violence. On this subtheme Sister W explained that:

When I look at our history, I see that our foundress was touched, seeing young women being chased from homes.... She took care of battered women.....who could leave their homes.....looking for help from different people.¹⁵⁹

Sister X agrees with Sister W's observation that:

For instance the issue of marriages, I can say the early sisters saw how most of the women were suffering in marriages, like being abused by their husband..... women and girls being suppressed...¹⁶⁰

Sister X further observed that the sisters realised that most of these women and girls “had no access to education”. So the sisters felt that one way of trying to alleviate these problems was to provide them with education. The Grey Nuns, through their foundress¹⁶¹, Elizabeth Bruyere, founded the Grey Nuns of the Cross in 1845 at Baytown.¹⁶² Three years after, they founded their first boarding school at Ontario in 1848. This is in agreement with the observation by Scolforo that according to the history of gender equality, the founding of the congregation and founding of the first school was indeed during the period when women were looking for support against their cause.¹⁶³ The pioneers of this initiative were the nuns in their convents. Most of them were recruited as adolescents, leaving their parents and their traditional roles as mothers. These nuns eschewed traditional female roles like wife and mother and displayed unprecedented female independence while in the convent, through their vowed life of chastity,

¹⁵⁹ Interview with sister W, December, 2014.

¹⁶⁰ Interview with sister X, December, 2014

¹⁶¹ The female person who received the gift from the Holy Spirit to start the congregation. The male counterpart is called a founder.

¹⁶² Notes from Sister A. Jere.

¹⁶³ Scolforo, p. 20.

obedience and poverty. When other women saw this, it was a kind of an eye opener to start thinking about how a woman can become independent from men's domination.

Secondly, the study also revealed that the gender equality issue resonated from the fact that the nuns believed that both men and women were equal before God. Some nun participants expressed their belief that both men and women are equal before God, for instance sister X said that:

God created everyone and gave every human being the gifts and talents. So we believe that every human being, whether a man or a woman, a girl or a boy, each one is gifted in his or her own way. So we feel that at least it is important to promote the girl child education.¹⁶⁴

The argument is that if we are to fight for genuine equality between men and women in any field, particularly education, then we should consider each one as equal before God. This will check the extremes of both women and men who may want to take advantage of the situation. The teaching of the Bible becomes the authority or the point of reference.

Thirdly, the nun participants expressed their convictions that their involvement in the education of female education through gender equality was meant to empower women and girls so that they become independent and self-reliant. For instance, sister W said that: "we educate them, because we think that if they have problems in their families, they will go and settle on their own, having something to do." She also believed that:

As these girls are educated, they will educate their families in a better way than may be a boy or may be young men may do..... We feel that once we

¹⁶⁴Interview with sister X, December, 2014.

have helped a girl to be educated we know that she will help much in the society.¹⁶⁵

In order to achieve this, the sisters had embarked on education that is not only academic but also integral, as sister W further observes:

We educate a child, may be not only in class, academically, but we also help them with life skills. So in such a way that when they go out they will be able to stay on their own, if they are still not attached to their parents.¹⁶⁶

The sisters' observations and convictions are in agreement with some researches made elsewhere that indeed "education strengthens women's self-reliance; it promotes access to both institutions of governance and to factors of production in the agro-based economies..."¹⁶⁷ Educated women are also in a position to better care for themselves and their children as they are able to feed them and take them to the hospital when they are sick.¹⁶⁸ They are also able to become more autonomous from their husbands; teach their children to work hard in school as they did; and able to teach and model their values and behaviours that they hope would benefit their children.¹⁶⁹

Asked whether there was a specific situation of girls and women that lead to their coming here in 1946, most nun participants expressed ignorance. However, this suggested that the situation of women in America and Canada at that time was not any different from the situation here in Malawi. Sister Y had said that the time she was joining the congregation,

¹⁶⁵Interview with sister W, December, 2014.

¹⁶⁶Ibid.

¹⁶⁷UNDP: *Gender and Human Development in Malawi*: 2010, p.

¹⁶⁸Ibid p. 25.

¹⁶⁹Andrew London, Ellen. Scott, Kathryn Edin and Vick Hunter. Welfare reform, work family tradeoffs, and child well being. *Family Relations*, No.53, p.148-157.

the belief that the woman's place is the kitchen was rampant in Malawi. She believed that:

Women had nothing to do apart from washing dishes. Girls at a certain age were not allowed to go to school. This obliged the Catholic Church in Malawi, through Bishop Oscar Julien of Lilongwe Diocese, to invite the sisters to start educating girls in order to liberate them. Most of the girls were ignored.¹⁷⁰

The point here was that though the sisters were invited by Bishop Oscar Julien, the then Bishop of Lilongwe and Chipata Vicariate, now Lilongwe Archdiocese and Chipata diocese, at the observation that women's education was still very low in Malawi. This bishop was far much ahead of his contemporaries to engage the sisters in the education of girls. The situation of women in Malawi and elsewhere needed to be improved through education as torque. Let us turn to the second main theme.

4.2.2 Commitment to Faith and Service in the Church

The nun participants described the reasons for coming to religion, and why they were in this ministry. Some nun participants in this study conveyed their deep devotion and great love for their chosen faith. They said that they were dedicated not only to their careers emanating from the institutional mission of their fore-sisters and Catholicism, but also their personal lives. In an attempt to describe the background of their involvement in girl education further, Sister W brought forward the point that in the early times of the congregation, the teaching aspect was mainly on church matters or what was called religious education. It was concentrating on education in faith as backed by her words:

¹⁷⁰Interview with sister Y, December, 2014.

The foundress then instead of just teaching church matters to the people around, young women and girls, she thought of adding this teaching, especially teaching in schools. So from the five branches of the congregation of the Grey Nuns, it was only the Grey Nuns who introduced that we should be teaching.¹⁷¹

The argument here is that the early sisters received the mission from God, to educate in faith. It was the commitment to the fulfilment of their mission of the founding sisters that pushed them to engage in the education of the girl child. Some nun participants expressed how they have been influenced by the spirit of service illumined by the Grey Nuns, which later obliged them to join them. For instance, one of the reasons she joined the Grey Nuns, Sister W said that:

What attracted me, was seeing them teaching and sometimes seeing them staying together in a happy way. Then I said I think in future I should be one of them. But also I said, the way they help in different ways, I saw them helping in the Church, teaching in schools, working here and there.¹⁷²

Another sister, Sister Y, narrated how the aspect of offering education to girls attracted her attention. She said that:

When I was at Providence Teacher Training College, in Mulanje, I came across the book entitled '*Hands to the Needy*' which described the charism of the Grey Nuns. I was specifically touched by the work done by the early sisters towards orphans, the handicapped, the old aged and the needy. After I had read the book, I decided to find out more about them and contacted the people who knew more about them and they showed me the way. When I met them, I found out that they were involved in girl education.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹Interview with Sister W, December, 2014.

¹⁷²Interview with Sister W, December, 2014.

¹⁷³Sister Y, December, 2014. The Providence Teachers Training College was run then by the Daughters of Wisdom, commonly known as Montfort Sisters in Blantyre Archdiocese. Now it houses Providence Secondary School by the Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary Sister, a female congregation founded in Blantyre Archdiocese.

The boarding mistress, Sister X described the foundation of Christian teachings about service to others as her motivation for getting involved in girl education. She learnt through experiences to reach out to others who were weak to help themselves. She explained that she had joined the sisters not on her own, but because she was in their school and she saw the nuns sponsoring many girls.¹⁷⁴ The spirit of service shown to her by the sisters assisted her to embrace the dedication to the education of girl child. Sister Z said it all that “as Grey Nuns we serve in the Church, sharing in the mission of the Church to the world.”

The findings revealed that it is not impossible to find enthusiastic education workers like the Grey Nuns to be motivated by the service work ethic, primarily because they are religious teachers. In short, it was because the Grey Nuns cared about their religious profession that they committed themselves to the formation of girls in their intellectual, ethical and spiritual development, guided by the charism of *love compassion*.

According to Chioza Bandawe, compassion is the consideration of the needs of others. He argues that as human beings we need compassion and we are designed for it. All human beings have failings which are part of us, and it is the same compassion that makes us overcome them and lifts us up to the positive. This drives one to serving others, which in return brings mutual happiness between the server and the served.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴Interview with Sister X, March, 2014.

¹⁷⁵Chioza Bandawe, The Psychology of Compassion, in *Weekend Nation*, March 14, 2015, p.15.

Almost all nun participants expressed their conviction that “educating a woman means educating the nation.” More than half a century ago, a famous Egyptian poet, Hafez Ibrahim,¹⁷⁶ was quoted as saying: “when you educate a woman, you create a nation.” Little did he know that his statement would become a *cliché* for educating women and girls in the world, replacing the word ‘create’ with ‘educate’. Indeed, as noted by the nun participants, there is overwhelming evidence that an educated woman or girl is more likely to challenge harmful social, cultural, economical, educational and health adversaries facing them and the world at large. It was not surprising that the Grey nuns have engaged themselves in the work liberating fellow women and girls.

It might be argued that the Grey Nuns capitalised on the quest for gender equality and the spirit of faith and service to get involved in liberation initiatives through the provision of education to girls. These values were evident in the ways they led and managed their schools and lives. Their initiatives and service components led to the growth of their institutions. The participants described their involvement in girl education which had touched the lives of many girls since their arrival in 1946. The next section examines the means used by the Grey Nuns to promote girl education in Malawi.

4.3 The Methods Used by the Grey Nuns to Promote Girl Education in Malawi

In the previous section, the researcher presented and discussed the findings on why the Grey Nuns got involved in the promotion of girl education in Malawi. The present section is aimed at establishing the different methods used by the Grey Nuns to promote

¹⁷⁶ Edgar Lungu. Keeping girls in school to improve newborn health in *Weekend Nation*, Saturday 14th March, 2015.

girl education in Malawi. The promotion of girl education at both primary and secondary school levels is a very sensitive exercise that calls for effective mechanisms if the results are to be positively realised. Girl education forms one of the essential aspects for Catholic founded schools. Apparently, the study findings revealed this as one of the reasons for the Church's recruitment of reverend nuns to be involved in this mission. Thus, in this section, the researcher discussed the findings on the methods employed by the Grey Nuns in an effort to effectively promote girl education in their schools.

In an effort to squeeze proper views for this section, several questions were designed. The key question was about the particular approaches which have been used by Grey nuns in promoting girl education. It was directed towards all the participants. In response, the participants revealed that the Grey Nuns applied different strategies to keep the girls in school. These included: relentless emphasis on discipline, supporting the poor girl child and provision of conducive physical environment in terms of security, proper food, provision of adequate teaching and learning materials; and supporting the education of men or boys.

4.3.1 Emphasis on Discipline of Teachers and Students

On the issue of discipline, the studies revealed that the Grey Nuns advanced the notion of uncompromising discipline in both teachers and students, as one way of promoting girl education in their schools. As expressed by senior teacher at Ludzi Girls Secondary, the Grey Nuns "put much emphasis on discipline on both sides: both students and teachers

are supposed to be disciplined.”¹⁷⁷ This had been done through several means like: provision of sound leadership, guiding and counselling, involvement of parents in the discipline of their children, and careful recruitment of teachers.

4.3.1.1 Provision of Sound Leadership

Firstly, the findings revealed that the Grey Nuns demonstrated certain leadership styles in the promotion of the girl education in the country through discipline. The participants described the Grey Nuns’ indispensable managerial and moral leadership skills in pursuing the promotion of girl education. According to Dwight D. Eisenhower, leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it.¹⁷⁸ In case of the Grey Nuns, they have been leading by motivating the people under their control, teachers and students alike, so that they do their jobs well.

According to another teacher at Ludzi Secondary School, he thinks that

The Grey Nuns have a rationale for offering education to girls, for setting up institutions like this; they have a rationale, they have the intended outcomes which they want to achieve at the end of the day. They stick to those goals.¹⁷⁹

These intended outcomes could not be achieved in isolation. As leaders and managers of girl education Grey nuns required consideration of work policies, ethics and procedures to ensure that this is achieved. They listened to the teachers and students and readily

¹⁷⁷ Focus Group discussion, December, 2014.

¹⁷⁸ Mind tools: *Essential skills for an excellent career*:

http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_41.htm, downloaded on 28th March, 2014.

¹⁷⁹ Focus group discussion with teachers at LSS, December, 2014.

supported and guided them properly. Indeed discipline has been championed through good managerial skills as the same teacher further explained:

That is why all the discipline comes because they still want to achieve their goal. If they want 100% pass rate, it will be 100%, no minus, no addition. If they want six points at MSCE, they will fight hard to get a six.¹⁸⁰

The same teacher expressed views that this has had an advantage in that both teachers and students were punctual and hardworking. “There is a lot of discipline here unlike in other schools. And also students as well as teachers, they work hard. No time is wasted here. No period goes without anybody in class.”¹⁸¹ Another teacher observed that there is a spirit of working as a team, “no one works as an individual, so there is team work. So we find that members belonging to the same department, they are working together, no one works in isolation.”¹⁸²

Another thing that one teacher explained further was that “the administrators themselves, some of whom are Grey Nuns, were there to make sure that things were done in the right way. They did not just leave things to go any way, but everything should be done the way it was supposed to be.” This meant there was no *laissez-faire* type of leadership. In fact teachers have to perform as first teacher put it forward:

Once you have been given a responsibility, you have to make sure that you are performing. The willingness should be there that I have to work, even if you are given a subject, you make sure that the students will do well in that subject. So each one of us makes sure that the learners understand what teachers have brought for them on that particular or during that particular lesson.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰Ibid

¹⁸¹Ibid

¹⁸²Ibid.

¹⁸³ibid

However, this type of management has not gone well with some of the teachers who claimed that it brought about difficulties to retain teachers. “Sometimes teachers do not stay for long for one reason or another.” Regardless of what was said, this way of leading has greatly benefited the girl child who has been trained to be disciplined and hard working, hence more liberated.

The findings have also revealed that the Grey Nuns used another type of leadership which is known as moral leadership in order to reinforce discipline. According to Leithwood et al this type of leadership focuses on values, beliefs and ethics of leaders themselves. Authority and influence are to be derived from defensible conceptions of what is right or good.¹⁸⁴ Grey Nuns seemed to have taken the opportunity of their values, beliefs that take on sacred or cultural characteristics to instil discipline in both teachers and students. For example, one parent when asked what she likes about the education by the Grey Nuns she said:

I like their moral authority. When we send our children there, we do not expect them to learn something bad. We know that even the teachers cannot abuse our children as it happens in government schools or private schools. Teachers in some government schools and private schools end up having affairs with girls. Sometimes even if they do not propose to our children, it also concerns us when teachers have affairs among themselves, which may act as bad example to our children. This is all absent in nuns’ schools.¹⁸⁵

Knowing that a health seedling means a bumper harvest, the Grey Nuns have implemented religious observances in order to prevent their students from what they

¹⁸⁴Kennedy A. Leithwood., Doris Jantzi, & Rossane Steinbach. *Changing leadership for changing times*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1999, p.10.

¹⁸⁵Interview the mother, March, 2015.

perceived as dangerous or pollutants. They did this by marrying the girls' religious and moral development with discipline. This is what the Deputy Head-teacher (DHT) of Ludzi girls' secondary school meant when he said:

The students are also encouraged to attend prayers, may be on Sundays, Wednesdays, even before they start lessons, they have to pray. So this is serving on the part of their spiritual life, and then on the discipline, making sure that learners are on the right path all the time.¹⁸⁶

A student at the same school, student A, concurred with the teacher that indeed the nuns "help us to pray hard. They encourage us to pray hard like during Wednesdays, we have masses and Sundays alike. So we grow spiritually and work hard and develop in everything we do."¹⁸⁷ This gave the Grey Nuns an upper hand in the promotion of girl education in Malawi through their life style which was a classroom on its own. In other words, the girls learnt a lot from the life style of the Nuns.

The direct fruit of discipline as described by the participants was found to be respect. A student at Ludzi Secondary school said that "we tend to respect our teachers, like in terms of dressing, the use of language. So they help us to be good students. We always think of success and we are sharp, we grow like that."¹⁸⁸

The study also found another moral aspect of the leadership executed by the sisters from their life style and this was modelling. Although there have been numerous methods used by the nuns to encourage discipline, this one stood out because it was not commonly

¹⁸⁶ Interview with DHT of LSS, December, 2014.

¹⁸⁷ Focus Group discussion with students of LSS, December, 2014.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

found in other schools where the nuns are not found. Most of the students consider nuns as role models, not only morally but educationally too. Another student at Ludzi secondary school had this to say about the significance of the nuns in their lives:

We can emulate their examples as others are teachers, they are head-teachers. So we know that we can also make it and have a profession like them. In addition to that, most of them go outside the country like Canada, Lesotho. So when they go to other lands, so we also think that may be one day we are going to do the same.¹⁸⁹

The argument here is that the girls are advised to be modest and reserved taking from the life styles of the vowed life of obedience, poverty and chastity lived by the sisters. The boarders are particularly immersed in the religious atmosphere and regimented routines modelled at convent life. The boarders are of course influenced not by their classroom teacher or teachers only, but by the mistress in charge of boarders and the pervasive presence of all others in the nearby convent and lay sisters working in their boarding house.¹⁹⁰ To the girl child this becomes a signal influence by powerful women, which remains with her the whole of her life, even in her place of work after school.

It can be said that, as models, Grey Nuns are human beings in touch with their transformative potential. The relationship between them and the students and even with teachers, very often has deep personal and emotional links. Grey Nuns, as women teachers, have realised their own capabilities, freedom and functioning against immense obstacles which suggest to fellow women and girls that they should have the same opportunities, as men and boys have done, to activate their potential. This character is

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Observation by the researcher.

also reflected in the teachers whom they recruit carefully in view of having solid discipline.

4.3.1.2 Careful Recruitment of Teachers

The teacher and nun participants described how teachers and other members of staff were recruited with an aim of reinforcing discipline. All is about the intersection between religion and education. For instance, the point of intersection of the two has been stressed when recruiting teachers and other officers for their schools. Teachers were recruited carefully to shield girls.¹⁹¹ They had to be of good morals and provide positive teaching to the girl, offering them the double challenge. They looked for officers who are more of educators than teachers. They looked for officers who can witness because they believe that “children will pick up far more by example of their educators than by masterful pedagogical techniques, especially in the practice of Christian virtues.”¹⁹² This poses a great challenge to the retention of teachers because not all teachers have both qualities.

The study also found that the recruited teachers were supported in every way possible. They were given incentives such as good houses which were always renovated if they were problems with them. The house rentals which they were paying were found to be very minimal. All this is done to promote cooperation from them so that they do not play but work.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ Interview with DHT of LGSS, December, 2014.

¹⁹² Miller

¹⁹³ Interview with the DHT, LGSS, December, 2014.

The argument is that girl education requires special strategies like recruitment of suitable members of staff. A member of staff should be able to respect the girl child. A member of staff should not find in a girl child a wife to marry, like in the case of some male members of staff. It is thus obvious that the blending of managerial and moral leadership is imperative to the success of girl education in Malawi. However, this would not be perfect if it was not supported by guidance and counselling.

4.3.1.3 Guidance and Counselling of Students

The study revealed that the most mentioned means which came out in the interviews and focus group discussions was guidance and counselling. Both Grey Nuns and teachers have been involved in the process in an effort to motivate the girl-child and sometimes to effect transformation in case of indiscipline. One lady teacher at Guilleme Girls Primary School emphasised that guidance and counselling involves directing girls in proper conduct so that she should achieve her aims of being at school. Several other participants affirmed the application of guidance and counselling in encouraging girl education by nuns. A nun at Ludzi Girls Secondary School accurately noted that:

Some of the girls' lack motivation may be from within or from among themselves and also from their parents. And some negative comments come from their parents..... even lacking self-confidence. And you know girls believe they can't do as better, or as best as boys. That is carried with them even if they come to our good school or to any other good school. So they have that attitude, 'I can't do well in this' and this brings them back.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ Focus Group discussion with teachers at GGPS, December, 2014

In such type of scenarios, nuns came in through guidance and counselling to quell the situation. Very often this was appreciated by parents who easily took note of the developments in their children. For example, the father of one of the girls at Guillemme had this to say:

There is no doubt that Grey Nuns are specialists in counselling our daughters. Our daughters usually respect and listen to the advice and guidance given by the Grey Nuns. We see this in our children when they come home. The results are clear. We know that other members of staff like teachers are also involved in counselling our children.¹⁹⁵

The former teacher at Ludzi Girls' Primary School also confirmed the same idea that:

Grey Nuns have been known for guiding and counselling students, especially adolescents in their relationship with parents, in academics, in morals and personal challenges. Because of who they are, girls have been more willing to listen to them and comply to their pieces of advice.¹⁹⁶

The point from the above descriptions was that guidance and counselling was found to be the most effective way of promoting girl education because of the fact that it involves exchange of ideas between the girl-child and the Grey Nuns; or between the teacher and the student. It helps them to get an explanation to the conduct of the girls, the situation of the girls, in a friendly environment. It also affirms the girls in whatever positive endeavour they are doing about their education. This has rendered it the most effective method of encouraging girl education in the schools run by the Grey Nuns.¹⁹⁷ Though the counselling and guidance was accorded such a position, parents had a role to play too.

¹⁹⁵Interview with the parent on the Closing day, December, 2014.

¹⁹⁶Interview with the former teacher of LGPS, March, 2015.

¹⁹⁷Interview with Sister W, December, 2014.

4.3.1.4 Involvement of Parents in Conduct and Progress of their Children

Besides guiding and counselling the girls, the study also revealed that the Grey Nuns have been using the parents in the education of girls. According to the interviewed nun at Ludzi Girls Secondary School, the nuns have been inviting parents on regular basis in order to inform them about the conduct and progress of their children. Nuns took advantage of the parents days, for instance and sometimes invited them specifically to discuss the child, if the matter is very urgent. The significance of the involvement of parents in the education of the girls was clear in a supplement made by the interview respondents. For example, one of the interviewed nuns, sister W, noted that:

We look at the background where some of the children are coming from, and we assess the situation. We try as much as possible that if we have identified them..... we help in different ways, either through the parent or helping that girl alone.¹⁹⁸

The nuns did not only work with the parents whose children or daughters they knew or they kept in their schools, but even those who did not have their children in the schools as highlighted by Sister W that: “not only do we look at may be some of the girls we have known, but some parents we do not know. We help them to realise that education of the girl child is very important.”¹⁹⁹

The point of focus here was that parents could not be ignored from the upbringing of their daughters in schools. This is supported by the Pope John Paul II’s statement on the rights of parents which the Grey Nuns have been influenced by. He said:

¹⁹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹⁹Interviews with Sister W, December, 2014.

Parents are the first educators of their children in human values and the Christian faith; and they have the fundamental right to choose the education suitable for their children. Schools assist parents in exercising this right by helping students to develop as they should. In some situations, the Catholic School is the only contact parents have with the community of the Church.²⁰⁰

Despite all the efforts to try to be in contact with the parents, all was not well with the Grey Nuns. As one nun noted that ‘some parents can ask the girl to get the transfer from here to another school’ for one reason or another. Some parents had limited time or too busy to be involved in the education of their daughters. Some parents refused to cooperate with the Grey Nuns as put forward by sister X:

....some parents do not understand and do not turn up. Some parents do say plainly that their child cannot behave in the way the boarding mistress says.....because she does not do A, B, C, at home..... So they are like they do not understand us and some of them do not accept. So we feel threatened. Though we feel like that we do not look back but continue educating girls in truth.²⁰¹

As noted by this nun, this brought with it some challenges to all stakeholders like parents, the child and the nuns themselves. Despite these challenges, the Grey Nuns were relentless in their pursuit of girl education in the spirit of their foundress. From the above findings it can be noted that Grey Nuns employed a number of strategies under the same banner of discipline in order to promote girl education. They justifiably used the proper leadership styles, carefully recruited teachers, employed guidance and counselling and involved parents just like most of the efforts aimed at effecting true social change in liberating them. Now let us turn to how the Grey Nuns supported poor students.

²⁰⁰Pope John Paul II, *The Church in Oceania*, (2001) no.33.

²⁰¹Interview with sister X, December, 2014.

4.3.2 Supporting the Poor Students

The study findings also showed that the nuns used the support given to needy students as a means of promoting their education. Education for girls is seen as economically and socially costly to most of the parents. These costs come from tuition fees, PTA fees and teacher's levies for development, transport, uniforms and others. In this type of situation, it has been found that these costs have had a significant impact on the choice by parents on whether the children should be educated and which children, boys or girls, should be educated. This problem has not spared the Grey Nuns' schools, especially the secondary section. According to a teacher at Ludzi Secondary school:

Students are not sent back home because fees balances or their inability to pay fees. The Grey Nuns have their own resources. So the needy girls are allowed to attend the classes.²⁰²

This situation was particularly rampant at the secondary school because students are selected to the secondary school without looking at their economic status. Rich and poor alike, are selected to the secondary school. In other words, the majority of the parents do not choose to have their children at Ludzi Girls Secondary School. The situation at the primary school was different from the secondary school. Both primary schools were principally boarding schools, with some students from the community around who commute as day scholars. In such cases the parents made deliberate decision to send their children. Most of the parents were either from middle class or high class. Despite this, still some of them did not manage to pay fees at once. Their children still benefited from

²⁰² Focus Group Discussion with teachers at LGSS, December, 2014.

the sisters' good will or generosity by allowing the parents to pay the fees in instalments or late, depending on the complaint forwarded.²⁰³

However, the studies also showed the assistance given to the poor students did not in any way suggest that the congregation receive special funding from donors or the Ministry of Education. Usually the schools were able to live within their means. Most of the funds which they use come from the sale of produce from the farm of the secondary school. Sister W complained about this that:

Nowadays there are so many problems outside and of what we are receiving is completely different from that we give out like school fees.... The little funding we get from the government just assists us to go further, but we have never closed due to lack of funds.²⁰⁴

All in all, this gesture by the Grey Nuns has seen a number of students benefiting from it by making education possible and affordable. The sisters believe that if these poor girls are educated they would be in a better position to take care of themselves and their families too. They would be liberated from the bondage of poverty through education.

4.3.3 Provision of Conducive Physical Environment

The study also revealed that the Grey Nuns provided proper physical environment in order to promote girl education. According to the Deputy Head-teacher of Ludzi Girls Secondary School, this involved the "coming up with the existing structures that are there that are in the schools in order to assist a girl child." He particularly mentioned the establishment of Ludzi Girls' Secondary School as remarkable and a turning point in the

²⁰³ Interviews with Sister X, December, 2014.

²⁰⁴ Interview with Sister W, December, 2014.

promotion of girl education in Malawi, as that meant a lot of investment from the sisters themselves.

The participants expressed their satisfaction with the structures erected by the Grey Nuns in all their schools. Guilleme was the first establishment in 1946. Though they found it already being run by the Teresian sisters, a local congregation of Lilongwe Diocese, they tried to bring it to the level of what it is today, with all structures suitable for the education of the girl child. Ludzi Girls Primary School started in 1949 as a co-education primary school. After looking at the needs of the Malawian girl child, the Grey Nuns decided to separate girls from boys by constructing their own structures.²⁰⁵ According to Sister Adelaida Jere, Bishop Joseph Fady, the one who replaced the retired Bishop Julien, supported a lot the efforts of the Grey Nuns in acquiring land and putting up some structures we see today.²⁰⁶

The study revealed that Ludzi Secondary School started in 1972 as Junior Secondary school. It stemmed from the initiative of the Grey Nuns who started a group of Women called “Chibanja” to support girls and teach them cooking and sewing.²⁰⁷ According to some sourced documents from the ministry of education, Ludzi Secondary School benefited from the second International Development Agency credit that Malawi Government got in mid 1970s, for the provision of teachers’ houses, student hostels, classrooms, laboratories, libraries and other institutional facilities. It was not only Ludzi

²⁰⁵ Today Ludzi Girls primary school is completely different entity from Ludzi Boys Primary school. Both schools are within a distance of 400 metres between each other.

²⁰⁶ Notes by sister A. Jere.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

Secondary school which benefited from this aid, but also schools like Nkhamenya Girls, Likuni Girls, St. Mary's Girls, Stella Maris Girls and Robert Laws.²⁰⁸ The Grey Nuns were also supported by the Government in erecting some structures, as a grant aided school to support girl education.

Provision of the proper physical environment also involved trying to procure many resources, for example, some text books, equipment used in the laboratories, land and all those things.²⁰⁹ The conducive physical environment was observed by students as central to their education as emphasised by one student that:

We are provided with a number of books. We have a good library there covered with books. So we have some research in the books, then we find appropriate information that help us to excel in our education. We are also allowed to borrow books from the library.²¹⁰

Another student added that:

We have also good diet. The food is good; you know studying goes together with the stomach. We have lunch, we have supper, we have good breakfast. They also give us some food stuffs, container items, from Canada. So this encourages us to work hard.²¹¹

Confirming this was the deputy Head-teacher of Ludzi girls' secondary who had this to say about the conduciveness of Grey Nuns School to girl education:

So if you ask them (girls) to say why do you like Ludzi? They will tell you there is good education; we get all the facilities needed for us. So they are comfortable. Even this time when they are living for home, some of them are not even happy to go back home because of the treatment that we give, starting from the boarding, the kitchen and the academic area.²¹²

²⁰⁸ *Ministry of Education*, Heads of Secondary School Seminar, 5th – 9th October, 1981, Ref. No. CO/11/vol.II/39.

²⁰⁹ Interview with the DHT of LGSS, December, 2014.

²¹⁰ Focus group discussion with students of LGSS, December, 2014.

²¹¹ Ibid

²¹² Interview with the DHT, December, 2014.

The situation at the primary schools was not any different as they tried to provide what is necessary for the girl child. According to the deputy Head-teacher of Ludzi Girls' Secondary, whatever was provided to them had an advantage of enhancing discipline among the girls. He noted that "the meals that we provide to them they are not actually being given at random. We have got at least a good menu and that menu is followed."

Some participants particularly mentioned the central role that sporting activities played in the life of the girl in Grey Nuns Schools. The Head-teacher of Guilleme Girls Primary school noted that in his school they 'believe that for a learner to perform in class it is not only being seated in the classroom; she needs to refresh her mind as well.'²¹³ The Deputy Head-teacher of Ludzi Girls Secondary School concurred with this view and he highlights that:

We have sporting activities which are well stipulated on the timetable.
Every Tuesday they go for sports. We have got physical education period.
And every Saturday they also go for physical exercises.²¹⁴

According to key informants, physical activities like sports have a comparative advantage over other physical activities. According to the senior teachers at Ludzi Girls' Primary, the fact that the method involved the need to go out and meet some schools, girls were exposed to what happens outside their location. They were able to exchange ideas between them and their colleagues in other schools. In so doing they were able to learn more and refresh their brains. This rendered it a very effective means in the promotion of girl education in the schools run by the Grey Nuns.

²¹³ Interview with the Headteacher, GGPS, December, 2014.

²¹⁴ Interview with the DHT of LGSS, December, 2014

Apart from good food, good library, enough classes and physical activities, the participants revealed that Grey Nuns have been providing the girl child in their custody with good accommodation. Good accommodation here meant provision of such amenities as enough beds, enough toilets, showers or bathing places and above all, maximum security. According to one of the boarding mistresses at Ludzi Girls' Primary, the Grey Nuns believe, if at all they have a good shelter for the girl child, then the girl child "would concentrate on her studies." As a boarding institution the girls were well protected here.²¹⁵ A senior lady teacher, who is also a former student of the Grey Nuns, was proud to say that Grey Nuns' schools had enough toilets for girls. She noted that even in the hostels the beds are enough where each girl has a bed, unlike in other schools.²¹⁶ Additionally, the DHT of Ludzi Secondary School credited the system of security found in these schools. He said that:

As a boarding secondary school, girls are well protected as compared to may be day scholars, those who attain their education at the Community Day Secondary School (CDSS) and some other schools where there are no Grey Nuns. Those students may not be well protected. And within the boarding we have got some trusted watchmen who actually look after them, day and night. So they do not think of any interference from outside and so forth, just because they have such a good environment.²¹⁷

However, despite the apparent successes in the protection and security of children from outside influences, there still stood some minor challenges. One male teacher at Guilleme Girls Primary expressed concern over what he called sporadic theft cases from the boarding. He said that "the school at a certain time experienced sporadic theft cases from the boarding where some mattresses were stolen, as well as computers. This was short-

²¹⁵Interview with Sister X, December, 2014.

²¹⁶Focus group discussion with teachers at LGSS, December, 2014.

²¹⁷Interview with DHT of LGSS, December, 2014.

lived since the situation was arrested soon afterwards, through vigilance and cooperation with the watchmen.²¹⁸

On this issue of protection or security of the girls, some participants observed that sometimes it has turned from protection to protectiveness which was observed to be negative. For instance, one teacher observed that “in the name of security and protection, the girls have been denied the opportunities to mix with others from other schools like in sports, drama and other activities at the district level.”²¹⁹

Citing an example, a teacher participant at Ludzi Girls Secondary School expressed concern that the girls at their school “do not take part in the yearly science fair, which make them lose a lot. Had it been that they were taking part in science fair, they would have improved in one way or another in sciences.”²²⁰ Commenting on the same issue, another teacher believed that “learning in Grey Nuns’ schools does not just occur in class, there are several avenues. So it’s like seeing on doing. So our girls are limited in that arena apart from classroom situation.”²²¹ However, in view of such allegations, a logical interpretation of these findings points to idea that there are some vices still prevalent in Catholic schools like those run by the Grey Nuns which downplay the efforts in the promotion of girl education.

²¹⁸ Focus group discussion with teachers, GGPS, December, 2014.

²¹⁹ Focus group discussion at GGPS, December, 2014.

²²⁰ Focus group discussion at LGSS, December, 2014.

²²¹ Ibid.

The studies also found out that there were other remarkable physical structures that are provided to girls, especially the day scholars, in order to balance their position with those at the boarding. For instance, at the two primary schools there were boreholes which served as a complementary source of water as well as supporting the special needs of adolescent girls like managing menstruation while at school. For example, at Guilleme Girls' Primary School, one lady teacher expressed satisfaction with how girls were treated in an effort to promote their education using boreholes erected:

Some girls start menstruation right here at school. In this scenario lady teachers come in very quickly to assist the girl and advise her in every way possible. Here at Guilleme there is a borehole that has been erected assist in these situations. This is not common in schools without Grey Nuns, especially government schools where the girl may be exposed to boys who can laugh at her, and eventually withdrawing from school.²²²

This was found to be very advantageous to the girl child who feels accepted, understood and encouraged by fellow women. The girl child is seen to continue with her schooling without many disturbances. As noted by this lady teacher, this is very different from other schools where there were no Grey Nuns, especially government schools where boys are all over and very often no special facilities are provided for the girl child to support her education in a special way. Most girls feel shy or fear the presence of boys who may laugh at them and eventually drop out of school.

In addition, some participants commended the Grey Nuns for supporting the day scholar girl child in her education. After observing that there were differences in the access to education by the day scholars and the boarders, the Grey Nuns introduced temporary

²²²Focus group discussion at GGPS, December, 2014.

boarding facilities for the day scholars so that they are at par with other girls who are boarders. This has been advantageous since the scholars have benefitted from evening classes or early classes conducted by teachers on boarders. Many day scholars are also selected to different secondary schools, uplifting the women from the surrounding communities.

All the arguments on the provision of proper physical environment to a girl child point at one thing: a girl child education is like special education for physically challenged persons. The Grey Nuns' schools are specially fitted for this education. Being Catholic schools, this is supported by the education ethos that:

A school's physical environment is also an integral element that embodies the genuine community values of the Catholic tradition. Since the school is rightly considered an extension of the home, it ought to have "some of the amenities which can create a pleasant and family atmosphere." This includes an adequate physical plant and adequate equipment.²²³

Following the Catholic education ethic of making or considering a school "an extension of the home," the Grey Nuns created a pleasant and family atmosphere that is very liberating and beneficial to a poor Malawian girl. Despite some huddles, "in the boarding school, it is a cheerful homely place where some friendships are formed, both with the sisters and other school companions."²²⁴ Catholic education realises too that girl education cannot be done in isolation as noted in the next section.

²²³Miller, "Five essential marks of Catholic Schools." chap. 3 in *The Holy See's teaching on Catholic Schools*, Atlanta: Sophia Institute Press. 2006.

²²⁴Interview with former student, December, 2014.

4.3.4 Education of Boys

The study also revealed that the Grey Nuns have not only been involved in girl education. They had been revolutionary enough to educate even boys. Although they did not have a particular school for boys, they had assisted boys in one way or another. One senior sister observed that:

When we go to this department there are girls who were educated by the Grey Nuns. When we go to different departments, we meet both boys and girls who were supported in their education by the Grey Nuns..... You know Archbishop Tarcisius Ziyaye, Father Patrick Thawale and other prominent people, were supported by the sisters. We feel proud.²²⁵

This statement revealed the revolutionary and visionary endeavour of the sisters in promoting girl education. They realised promoting girl education only would not be enough, but educating men equally, who would support their efforts. This is supported by the statement by the United Nations that:

Adolescent boys and young men are critical allies in the battle for gender equality and must be proactively and positively engaged at an early stage. They can be educated to challenge gender stereotypes, promote positive constructions of masculinity, and practice attitudes and behaviours based on equality and respect for human rights.²²⁶

The true liberation for women and girls should indeed involve men for they can contribute positively. If you cannot defeat them, work with them. Some of them become good ambassadors for this cause.

²²⁵Interview with sister W, December, 2014.

²²⁶UNFPA: Adolescents and Youth: 58th session of the Commission on the Status of Women: 12 March 2014. <http://www.unfpa.org/public/home/adolescents>. Retrieved on 1st April, 2014.

This section of the study revealed that there have been numerous methods used by the Grey Nuns to promote the education of the girl child. All in all the nuns have been providing the girls with holistic education. According to a key nun participant, that means:

bringing up a girl to be a full human being. We teach them not only to do very well in class, but we also teach them outside how they should behave. They should be hard working; they should be at one time be self-reliant....take care of themselves...²²⁷

According to the Catholic Church, holistic education means that Christian values and virtues were to be ever present in the teaching and practices of the schools. It is what the Grey Nuns have been doing in the promotion of girl education in Malawi. This brings real freedom and liberation to a girl child. In the next section the researcher looked at how efficient the Grey Nuns have been in using these methods as perceived by the community.

4.4 How the Participants Perceived as the Contributions of the Grey Nuns to the Promotion of Girl Child Education in Malawi

In the first section the researcher presented and discussed the reasons cited by the nuns as to why they got involved in girl education. In the previous section, he presented and discussed the means used by the Grey Nuns to promote girl education in their schools. The methods used have been seen as the intersection point between religion and education. The Grey Nuns have been undertaking many initiatives in order to give the holistic education to the girls so that they become truly liberated.

²²⁷Interview with Sister W, December, 2014.

In this section, the researcher presents and discusses how the participants perceived as the contribution of the Grey Nuns towards girl education in Malawi. In an effort to handle the section effectively, the participants were asked to compare the education standards in the Grey Nuns schools and other schools where the Grey Nuns were not present. The question was directed to all participants. It was aimed at assessing the effectiveness of the methods used by the Grey Nuns in promoting girl education in their schools. The responses obtained in this section were from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions conducted.

From the descriptive responses, it seemed all the participants recognised the efforts employed by the Grey Nuns to promote girl education in Malawi as effective.

For example one teacher participant had this to say about Ludzi Girls Secondary School:

There is no doubt that the Nuns have been very effective. I look at this school as a model. If you were to have good quality education, then this is a model. Whatever happens here, inclusive of all things, it is a model school....What a school is supposed to do in essence, that's what is being here. All factors being equal, I think the quality of education, will be achieved, punctuality, discipline, hardworking, name it, everything done procedurally, no pushing, no running around looking for girls, whatever. Everything is done in time and perfectly. That's why I called it a model school.²²⁸

Another teacher participant at the same school compared the nuns' school with the school where she was, before being transferred here in order to give credit to efforts by the Grey Nuns in promoting education for girls. She recognised the eagerness of the girls to learn which pushed the teachers to work hard too.

²²⁸Focus group discussion of teachers at LGSS, December, 2014.

As for me, at first it was like very tough for me because I had to read hard or get prepared thoroughly because the girls are very active. So when you were not prepared, you were like you will be fired with questions. So at first I was like looking at it as very tough because it's different from the school where I was. So here I think this time I am used now but it's quite involving because you need to get prepared, yearly.²²⁹

What interested most of the teachers, was the attitude of the learners themselves. Teachers noted that “every girl is willing to learn. Once a teacher had entered the class, they participated fully throughout.” This could be because they were happy with the education offered to them by the Grey Nuns. In a gesture to appreciate this, one girl participant said that *“We do not have much free time to waste. All the time is used for other activities or academic activities. So we do have much time to do academic work so that we should be passing well.”*²³⁰

A boarding mistress from Ludzi Girls' Primary school depended on the attitudes of parents and guardians to assess the effectiveness of their contributions to girl education. If the Grey Nuns were not effective in promoting girl education, then the parents would have lost confidence in them. The great “numbers of students found in our schools is a testimony that parents and guardians have confidence and trust us.” According to her, parents were encouraged because they saw their children behaving differently from their friends and other children. The children exhibited improved trends of behaviour when they go back to their homes.²³¹

²²⁹Ibid.

²³⁰ Focus Group discussion with students at LGSS, December, 2014.

²³¹ Interview with sister X, LGPS.

A critical look at the responses given by parents, guardians, students and teachers, there is a general consensus appreciating the efforts by the Grey Nuns in promoting girl education as effective. In order to establish the level of effectiveness of the methods used by the Grey Nuns to promote girl education, the researcher asked the participants to describe the reasons championed by parents for sending their girls to these schools. This effectiveness is based on a number of issues or indicators as identified by the participants. These include: better academic performance which is coupled with strong religious and moral values, low indiscipline cases, community participation, high levels of confidence by parents, degree of respect between teachers and students.

On the academic performance as an indicator of the effectiveness of the methods used by the sisters in promoting girl education, the head-teacher of Guilleme Girls Primary School was sure that one of the reasons for parents to send their girls to the nuns' schools is for better academic performance. For instance, he noted that his school had been improving for the past four years. The story was not different from the other two schools. The results shown in the following tables were for Guilleme Primary School and Ludzi Secondary School respectively.

Table 5: *PSLCE results for Guilleme Girls Primary school for the past three years.*²³²

Year	No. of candidates entered	Passed	Selected	To national secondary school
2012	163	157	77	5
2013	157	150	84	9
2014	144	144	97	20

Source: Guilleme Girls' Head teacher's Office, 2014. Reprinted with permission.

²³² Source: Guilleme Girls' Primary school Head-teachers' Office.

Table 5 shows that the number of candidates entered and those who passed has been decreasing. However, those getting selected to secondary schools and national secondary schools had been increasing for the past three years. The results show how efficient the methods used by the Grey Nuns have become even sharper. This was an indicator that in the primary schools they have been contributing a lot to the number of girls getting selected to secondary schools in Malawi.

Table 6: Showing MSCE results for Ludzi Girls' Secondary School.²³³

Year	No. of candidates entered	No. of candidates passed	No. of candidates failed	Pass Percentage (%)
2010	81	78	3	96.2
2012	73	73	0	100
2013	71	71	0	100
2014	79	79	0	100

Source: Ludzi Girls' Secondary School: Deputy Head-teacher's office, 2014. Reprinted with permission.

These results substantiated that the Grey Nuns were indeed experts in girl education. It was not surprising therefore that most parents have confidence in them. It should be noted that these tabulated results do not suggest that the findings in this study were qualitative. They were there just to give weight to the descriptive results obtained from in-depth interviews and focus group discussion.

Additionally, Ludzi Girls Secondary School, in 2012 and 2013 was on record as having produced the best results in the country because some girls got six points. Some of these

²³³ Source: Ludzi Girls' Secondary School: Deputy Head-teacher's office.

girls were sent to China and United States of America for further studies.²³⁴ This showed how the Grey Nuns' efforts in educating girls are greatly appreciated.

The study also revealed that the parents, guardians and students themselves had a lot of trust and confidence in the Grey Nuns for their religious and ethical contribution among the students. Parents considered high morality found in the schools as an indicator of effectiveness. For instance, it was learnt during the interviews that some parents chose these schools after considering the moral history of the school. One of the teachers revealed this when he said that:

Through experience I have noted that most of the parents are eager to send their girl children to a morally good school. To such parents, what matters is the good moral record of the school. They want to be sure that the future of their child is guaranteed. They obtain information from friends, teachers and even the nuns themselves.²³⁵

The study also showed that the low rate of indiscipline cases was another indicator of the methods used by the sisters. As indicated by the boarding mistress of Ludzi Girls' Primary:

We have had some indiscipline cases here and there. This is due to the reason that the girls we have here have different backgrounds. The other reason is that they are human beings. Where there are human beings you cannot avoid indiscipline cases. Whenever we have them we apply whatever necessary to correct the problem.²³⁶

Another indicator identified was the degree of respect that is there among teachers and students. This was clearly stated by one of the students at Ludzi Girls' Secondary School

²³⁴ Interview with DHT, LGSS, December, 2014.

²³⁵ Focus group discussion with teachers at GGPS, December, 2014.

²³⁶ Interview with sister Z, December, 2014.

that ““we tend to respect our teachers, like in terms of dressing, the use of language. So they help us to be good students. We always think of success and we are sharp, we grow like that.”²³⁷

The study also revealed another indicator of the sisters’ effective endeavour in girl education. Around Ludzi vicinity, the community members participated in some initiatives initiated by the sisters to facilitate the smooth running of girls’ education. For example, they participated in the maintenance of the road from the junction, M4 road, to Ludzi. They did this without demanding any payment. This was a gesture of appreciation from the community around for the developments undertaken by the sisters.²³⁸ This proved that the sisters’ methods of promoting girl education have been somehow effective. The sisters have not only changed the lives of the girls but have also transformed them.

However, the participants were also asked to describe reasons they would not choose the Grey Nuns’ schools. It was aimed at establishing the ineffectiveness of the methods used by the Grey Nuns in promoting girl education. In response, most of the participants showed that they were not ready to give reasons. One parent described by the sister was reluctant to send his child to Ludzi Girls Secondary School because of faith, Jehovah’s Witness.²³⁹ However, after seeing the attitude of the sisters, he even asked the girl to become a Catholic Christian. In addition, the researcher observed that some girls choose not to appreciate the efforts by nuns because they have an impression that they are very

²³⁷ Focus group discussions with girls at LGSS, December, 2014.

²³⁸ Interview with the DHT, LGSS, December, 2014.

²³⁹ Interview with Sister Z, December, 2014.

strict.²⁴⁰ It was crucial to note that there were some negative reactions as these. The negative comments were based on the existence of some vices in the schools where nuns operate. These shortcomings were also attributed to some individuals who deliberately chose not to appreciate the contributions of the Grey Nuns towards girl education. However, despite such allegations, the findings point to the idea that there were some vices still prevalent in Catholic Schools like those run by the Grey Nuns, which downplay the efforts of the nuns in this endeavour of promoting girl education.

Basing on the above findings about the effectiveness of the methods used by the Grey Nuns in promoting girl education, it can be said that, despite their imperfection, their methods are worth appreciating. In the descriptions given, it can be said that the efforts of the nuns were either appreciated or not. The assumption was that the participants' positive attitude and appreciation towards the nuns' work was the effectiveness of their contribution, while the opposite points to their ineffectiveness. Knowing that the Grey Nuns have not been perfect in their pursuit of girl education, it means there have been some limitations. The next section tries to find out what have hampered the efforts of the Grey Nuns in the promotion of girl education.

4.5 Limiting Factors to the Grey Nuns' Efforts of Promoting Girl Education in Malawi

The first section in the presentation and discussion of research findings established the reasons for the Grey Nuns' involvement in the promotion of girl education in Malawi. It was revealed that it was mainly due to their desire for gender equality in education and

²⁴⁰Girls' conversation in the bus on their way home from school, December 2014.

their commitment to faith and service in the Church. The second section established methods that have been employed by the Grey Nuns in the promotion of girl education. It was found that they have been using several methods which included execution of sound leadership, provision of proper physical environment and supporting the poor girls. The third section established how the participants perceived as the contribution of the Grey Nuns towards girl education. It also attempted to establish the effectiveness of the methods used.

The present section is aimed at presenting and discussing the factors that limit the effectiveness of the efforts of the Grey Nuns in promoting girl education in their schools. Owing to the fact that in the school setting the process of educating the girl is not a monopoly and obligation of the Grey nuns, even other staff members are bound to participate. Thus, the answers to this question were obtained from all participants. The participants, which included nuns, teachers, parents and students, were asked as to whether they have encountered any problems in promoting girl education. Girls too, were asked whether they met problems in their education. All the participants seemed to agree that the problems were there which could be classified as economic, religious, social-cultural, health, geographical and educational.

4.5.1 Poverty of Parents

The in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with nuns, students and teachers revealed that most of them recognised the importance of education of the girl and were willing to assist in the pursuit of this noble cause. However, most of them felt that most

parents could not afford to pay for their girls especially at the secondary school level. It was difficult for some parents to afford the costs of maintaining families and also to send their daughters to school. Some parents live in tough conditions which was the reason for failing to pay fees for their daughters. One of the parents who failed to pay fees for his daughter at Ludzi Secondary School said:

My daughter was selected to Ludzi Secondary School. I failed to pay fees for her. Instead we chose that she should go to a community secondary school where we could manage to pay within our means. We wanted our daughter to get educated but we are poor. As you can see from our home, we are not rich, we have many problems. We could not manage to meet all the school costs, especially school fees.²⁴¹

This was also observed by the DHT of Ludzi Secondary School who said that:

Being a grant-aided institution, now and again sometimes, after a certain period of time, we tend to raise some school fees. That one also threatens the turn up of the girl child. For example, this other time you find that the school fees, I mean the boarding fees has gone up to K55,000.00, how many would afford to pay that? We have had some instances whereby may be parents would say I want to withdraw my daughter from here because I cannot afford.....so with the exorbitant amount of school fees that is being offered, most of the girl children are being actually discouraged.²⁴²

Not only do paying what is called direct costs like school fees become a problem to many parents, but also indirect costs like transport and uniforms.

For instance the DHT's other observation was that:

At the same time also others you find that, since it is a national secondary school, somebody from the south has been selected here, they look at transport costs coming here. On top of schools fees, they should think about transport. That also threatens the girl child.²⁴³

²⁴¹Interview with the father parent, March, 2015.

²⁴²Interview with the DHT of LGSS, December, 2014.

²⁴³Ibid.

The observations show that one of the significant problems in the nuns' efforts to uplift the girl child educationally was that parents were still required to meet the costs of the children's education through paying for direct costs or indirect costs. The situation at the secondary school was found not to be any different from that of the primary schools. Although some parents for the boarders seem to meet most of the costs with ease, there were still some parents who were not rich but struggle to pay fees for their daughters in order to accord them a better education. In addition to this, although the primary school education was conspicuously free, parents were still required to share the costs of their daughters' education through buying of uniforms, exercise books, pens, school development fund, school reports, examinations and other requirements which were often hard to obtain. This is remarkably adverse to the day scholars in the primary schools. These have been very detrimental to girls more than boys in the household.

These findings are echoed in the report by Gender and Human Development in Malawi 2010, that although boys were susceptible to being excluded from school because of poverty, girls were much more likely to be deprived in this sense. Girls are at greater disadvantage than boys because households with very limited resources appear to prefer educating a boy to girl since boys would be breadwinners in the family. This denies a girl of an equal chance to be a family's breadwinner. Very often this has been cited as the common reason for children, especially girls, to drop out of school or to be withdrawn from school. The commonly held view in this sense is that more girls drop out of school than boys.²⁴⁴

²⁴⁴ UNDP: Gender and Human Development in Malawi 2010, p. 30.

4.5.2 Social-Cultural Practices

The study also revealed that some cultural practices have had a remarkable dent in as much as girl education is concerned in the Grey Nuns' schools. Although these schools are multicultural in nature, it is undeniably true that the girls come from communities which are tied to culture. As such it becomes almost difficult and sometimes very difficult to separate these girls from their cultural practices. Practices such as early marriages, wedding ceremonies and early pregnancies denied girls from acquiring formal education. This is perpetuated by patriarchal structures of the communities which disadvantage women and girl education. On the issue of early marriages, while interviewing the teachers, one lady teacher remarked:

It is very disheartening to see that some girls do not come back when they go for holidays. We just hear that they have been married to a man. Sometimes the men who marry these girls are even older than the girls. As a woman this pains me a lot because these marriages sometimes do not take long.²⁴⁵

Early pregnancy in particular was observed as being a great hindrance to girls' education in these schools, particularly at the primary school. Various participants, teachers and nuns explained the way this problem pushed parents, especially fathers not to send girls to school or to send them to the boarding school like that of the nuns. One of the male parents complained about girls getting pregnant:

I like educating girls while they are young. I like sending them to a boarding school like this one just to protect them from boys who would sometimes take advantage of the girl. Many of us fear one thing, to come back home from school while pregnant. It becomes very disappointing and regrettable to us as parents.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵ Focus Group discussion with teachers at GGPS, December, 2014.

²⁴⁶ Conversation with the father with the researcher, September, 2014.

On other cultural practices such as marriage ceremonies, bridal showers and engagement ceremonies the study showed that they have had their negative effect on the girl child education. According to the senior lady teacher,

Parents allow their girls to take an active role in the marriage ceremonies, bridal showers and engagement ceremonies. The problem with the involvement of young girls is that after these functions they want to think and act in that way. This put the girls at a disadvantage since most of them may not do well at school or decide to drop out of school.²⁴⁷

These observations are enriched by the report on Gender and Human Development in Malawi 2010, that early marriages and pregnancy had become a significant cause of drop out for teenage girls especially at the secondary school level. The report said that the pregnancy rate at the secondary school accounts for 18 percent of the drop outs as compared to 13 percent of the primary school. On the other hand, their counterparts, boys, the drop-out rate is only 2 percent. The report also revealed that some girls marry at the onset of their puberty, while boys tend to marry a little bit later. These were real threats to the girl education.

The study also revealed that most of the girls suffer psychologically because of poverty and their belief systems. Sister W observed that most of the girls worry a lot about what they do not have. They like comparing themselves with fellow girls. And if the girl is “lacking some of the things, though she comes here....” she is de-motivated.²⁴⁸ As a result she does not do very well in class because she lacks self confidence. Sometimes she may indulge herself in inappropriate methods to get what she needs.

²⁴⁷ Focus group discussion with teachers at GGPS, December, 2014.

²⁴⁸ Interview with sister W, December, 2014.

Additionally, the study revealed that most of the girls have problems with their belief systems. According to sister W, “girls believe they cannot do as better or best as boys. So.... they carry it with them when they come to our good school or if they go to any good school.”²⁴⁹ They do not have that positive attitude to fight so that they achieve what boys can achieve. According to sister W, another psychological factor that affects girls’ education is the tendency for girls to work as individuals when they are in school. She observes that:

And of course they do not encourage one another, like when they are here they do not encourage one another. Each one is sometimes working individually. So working like that cannot promote them.²⁵⁰

The observation is substantiated by other researches made into the behaviour of adolescent girls. There is a strong argument that girls generally tend to be more competitive not only in appearances but also academically. They keep on comparing themselves with each other. The problem is that this results in fewer tendencies among girls to work as a team. They lean towards working as individuals. Consequently they are deprived of a chance to learn from each other especially academically.²⁵¹

The research also revealed no significant differences in the attitude of the main ethnic groups found in Mchinji. The Chewa and the Nsenga being matrilineal while the Ngoni patrilineal; have almost the same attitude towards girl education. Sister W said that she observed the same thing in all the tribes that what the girl experience in all the tribes was

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid

²⁵¹ FeiHuang, and Jian-Xin Zhang. "Self-efficacy, self-esteem, and positive/negative affect in 2247 adolescents." *Chinese Mental Health Journal* 24.2 , 2010: 149-152.

the same: they were oppressed domestically. They still considered girls as dish washers and second class citizens. Some people still did not encourage their daughters to go to school. The research further revealed that even across the border, in Zambia, the situation was not very different as substantiated by Sister W that:

“Though Malawi and Zambia are different Nations, they face the same challenges in the promotion of girl education. In the Eastern part of Zambia which borders Malawi, have the same ethnic groups as Malawi which include, Ngoni, Chewa and Nsenga. What differ are the laws governing the two countries. This is also one of the reasons that led to the establishment of the communities in Zambia by the Grey Nuns.”²⁵²

4.5.3 Poor Health of Girls and Women

The teacher participants at Guilleme Girls’ Primary revealed that early pregnancies and marriages brought a lot of sufferings to the girls and their families. One lady teacher had this to say:

Some girls who get married in the villages are very young. As a result they face problems in giving birth since they are not yet mature. Some of them may even die. It is even a burden to some parents who take care of both the new born baby and the mother. This puts the child and the mother in danger of losing life.²⁵³

The above argument suggested that some girls rush into marriages. This is supported by recent research that there are 26 million adolescent girls, between the ages of 15 and 19, who give birth annually which accounts for about 11% of all births in the world. In Malawi it is about 26 percent of the teenagers who give birth. If the girls are kept in school, which is known as girl education, they are prevented from taking early

²⁵²Interview with Sister W.

²⁵³Focus Group Discussion with teachers at GGPS, December, 2014.

pregnancies and having early marriages. This in turn prevents its negative effects on the adolescents and their new born.²⁵⁴

4.5.4 Negative Religious Practices

Some teacher participants expressed their concern about some religious practices which did not respect the value of sending girls to school. They described them as tantamount and counter- productive. The two common religions in the area were found to be Christianity and Islam. A lady teacher had this to say:

On one hand some churches bless marriages of very young people yet they know quite well that doing so is wrong. It is a kind of double standard as they preach about sending girls to school and later they found themselves blessing child marriages. On the other hand, Moslems, though few mainly in trading centres, have their own initiation ceremonies which sometimes keep children out of school. Sometimes they are too tired to go to school as it happens overnight.²⁵⁵

The argument show that, although most religions have been supportive to women and girl education, sometimes perpetuate male dominance in the society as most of them are also led by men. They tacitly and covertly reinforce low female status. This has had a lot of influence on the enrolment of girls since most of them drop out or assume their traditional role as second class citizens. Still on religious matters, some participants observed that some parents may decide not to send their daughters to these schools because of denominational differences. This is noted by sister Z:

Some parents are afraid to send their daughters here because they think they will be converted to Catholicism. Though the atmosphere of our school is catholic, we do respect the religions of our students. We do allow

²⁵⁴ Edgar Lungu, Keeping girls in School: to improve new born health in *Weekend Nation*, Saturday, 14th arch, 2015.

²⁵⁵ Focus Group Discussion with teachers at GGPS.

them to pray in their churches freely. We do not force anybody to become Catholic.²⁵⁶

The argument revealed that religious differences in faith or denominations may impede girl education. Out of sheer ignorance or knowledge, some parents feared the loss of their daughters to another faith or denomination. Not sending the girl child to school because of this disadvantaged the girl, for sending this girl to her faith school is a dream not realised. Some denominations like the Jehovah's Witnesses have almost no school in the area for the girls to go to.

However, as noted by the DHT of Ludzi Girls Secondary, some parents had come to realise that the sisters were not primarily pursuing the conversion of girls to Catholicism. They were meant to offer integral education to girls in the Catholic liberating atmosphere. One parent was so excited with the transformation seen in his daughter that he announced to the Headmistress that the daughter was no longer a Jehovah's Witness faithful but Catholic faithful.²⁵⁷ The next section looks at legal factor.

4.5.5 Weak Laws Protecting the Girl Child and Parents Ignorance

A lady participant at Guilleme Girls Primary associated the early pregnancies and marriages to weak laws which fail to protect the girl child. She bemoaned young girls getting married helplessly as she said:

As a mother I watch helplessly when a girl as young as 13 or 14 gets married because our laws are silent of this. Even the legal age when the child can get married is 16 in Malawi. Further, still, when the girl gets

²⁵⁶ Interview with Sister Z, December, 2014.

²⁵⁷ Interview with the DHT of LGSS, December, 2014.

married, she is not protected against violence from the husband which very often end up in divorce.²⁵⁸

The other lady teacher at the same school bemoaned the ignorance and illiteracy rate among parents especially women which make them fall victim to the situation. She had this to say:

The problem is that most parents are illiterate. They are also ignorant of some laws which even defend them. Passing the laws to protect the girl is one thing while applying them is another thing. I suggest that if there could be massive civic education in the rural areas about laws that can protect girls, then parents who allow their children to get married early can be prosecuted in the court of law.

What the arguments suggested was that there was still a lot to be done to protect a girl child by law. Malawi was identified by the United Nations as one of the 10 countries in the world with the highest rates of child marriage. This was partly attributed to the law which the children could marry with parents' consent at 15. However, this lady expressed these concerns about the lower legal age for children to marry in Malawi without knowing that in few months, the Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Bill would be enacted in Parliament. This was done in February, 2015. The enacted bill, among other things, changed the age to 18.²⁵⁹ Though this was seen as a milestone, the problem of its application in the rural areas still remains a challenge because of ignorance and illiteracy.

²⁵⁸ Focus Group Discussion with teachers at GGPS, December, 2014.

²⁵⁹ Daudi Kayisi. Marriage Bill gives girls hope in *The Daily Times*, Monday, February 23, 2015

4.5.6 Insufficient Educational Facilities

Interviews with some teacher participants showed that although the sisters have made remarkable progress in erecting structures in order to promote girl education, they still had some areas which were lacking. It was very difficult for them to accommodate all the girls wanting to come to their schools because of lack of teachers' houses, enough classrooms especially in the primary schools they run. For example one male teacher at the Guilleme Girls' Primary school had this to say:

We appreciate what these sisters are doing towards the promotion of girl education in Malawi. However, most of the teachers here have no accommodation. We lack teachers' houses. In addition, we lack classrooms. The problem is that the government think that sisters are self-sufficient, they lack nothing. The government and other development agencies seem reluctant to assist in developments such as these. Sometimes we feel neglected.²⁶⁰

The argument suggested that the basic requirement for any school is infrastructures needed for the school. The school needed physical structures like classrooms, good libraries, science laboratories, computer laboratories, dormitories, etc. Though the sisters have done their part through the church, to build these schools, they often faced great financial problems maintaining them or building new ones. In view of the church's partnership with the state, it is necessary for the government to supplement the efforts by the church in the provision and maintenance of school buildings. The commonly held view that the sisters were rich should be debunked. This was supported by Pope John Paul II's letter advising that "concrete stepsbe taken to implement true equality for

²⁶⁰ Focus Group Discussion with teachers at GGPS, December, 2014.

non-state schools and state schools which at the same time respects the latter's educational program," in all democratic countries.²⁶¹

The lack of necessary infrastructure impacts adversely on the girl child. If a teacher has no proper accommodation, his or her morale is really diminished. He or she may come late to school. In response the girl child may increase her absenteeism from school; she may get discouraged, eventually deciding to drop out of school. Her performance and achievement levels may remain low, to the advantage of the boy.

4.5.7 The Geographical Location of the Schools

Some nun and teacher participants expressed concern about the positioning of the schools. All the schools are of reasonable distance from the main road, M4. Guilleme Girls' Primary school was situated 3 kilometres from the main road while Ludzi Girls Primary and Secondary schools are situated about six kilometres from the main road, M4.

One of the male teachers at Guilleme had this to say:

Our girls find it difficult to travel from and to the main road. This becomes more dangerous when they come late without being escorted by parents. Boys from the nearby boys' school, Guilleme Boys School, have no problem with that. This adversely affects girls than boys.²⁶²

This concern was also echoed by one community member from Ludzi who said that: "though the nuns have bought a vehicle for the secondary school, the road problem still remains. It becomes almost impassable during rainy season as the road become

²⁶¹*L'Observatore Romano*, English Edition, July 23, 1997, p.2.

²⁶²Focus group discussions with teachers at GGPS, December, 2014.

muddy.”²⁶³ Another problem with the location of the secondary school was that some girls from the North or the South who have been selected to this school, found it difficult to find transport to and from school. The DHT of Ludzi Secondary School already observed that:

Since it is a national secondary school, somebody from the south or from far north may be selected here. When this happens, the parents or guardians have to look for costs for transport coming here, top of schools. This threatens girl child education.²⁶⁴

These views by the participants suggested that though the efforts have been made by the Grey Nuns and the community to alleviate these problems in the light of liberation theology, some still remain which disadvantage the girl child. This is supported by the UNDP’s report on Gender and Human Development 2010 that Malawi is very far from realising the adequate infrastructures such as roads, paths, bridges and transport to ensure easy reach to school for all school-age children.²⁶⁵ The problem is particularly acute in rural areas like Ludzi and Guilleme. Some girls may decide to drop out of school because of this.

²⁶³ Conversation with bicycle commuter from Ludzi Turn Off with the researcher.

²⁶⁴ Interview with the DHT of LGSS, December, 2014.

²⁶⁵ UNDP: Gender and Human Development in Malawi 2010, p. 32.

4.6 Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented, analysed and interpreted the major findings of the research pertaining to the Grey Nuns' contribution towards girl education in Malawi. From the participants' responses I have shown that the Grey Nuns have had some reasons to get involved in girl education. Their desire for gender parity, the spirit of faith and service in the sisters are major motivations. It also came to light that there are several methods used by the Grey Nuns to promote girl education in their schools. Though these methods have been presented as largely effective, somehow somewhere they have been imperfect as evidenced by the society's perception of the Grey Nuns' contributions. In the same chapter, I have also presented some factors that have impeded the successful promotion of the girl education in their schools. These factors ranged from education, legal, religious, geographical, social-cultural to economic. All in all, the nuns' contribution towards girl education has been seen to have liberated many women and girls. The next chapter presents conclusions, implications and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the researcher presented, analysed and interpreted the research findings in the light of the research questions which generated some themes. In this chapter, which is the last one, the researcher has made conclusions and some recommendations from the research findings.

The whole study attempted to investigate on the contribution of the Grey Nuns towards the promotion of girl education in Malawi since their first establishment in 1946. The study was guided by the following research questions: (1) Why do Grey Nuns promote girl education in Malawi? (2) What have been the methods used by the Grey Nuns in promoting girl education in Malawi? (3) How the participants perceive the contributions of the Grey Nuns to the promotion of girl child education in Malawi? (4) What have been the limiting factors to Grey Nuns' efforts of promoting girl education in Malawi? In order to explain this well, the nuns', teachers', parents' and students perspectives were sought based on their experiences with the Grey Nuns. Findings were based on the observations, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with these groups of people.

The nuns had described their reasons for getting involved in girl education. They emphasised their desire for gender equality and the spirit of faith and service in their lives as the main powers behind it. On the other hand, participants described the means used by the Grey Nuns in promoting girl education. Although some participants had positive attitudes about the effectiveness of these methods, some still held negative stances concerning the effectiveness of the means used by the Grey Nuns in promoting girl education.

5.2 Conclusions

On the question of what motivated the Grey Nuns to get involved in the promotion of girl education in Malawi, it can be concluded that feminist solution is not sufficient in the promotion of girl education. It is accompanied by faith aspect, the fight is enriched. Like in the case of the Grey Nuns, they seem to have been successful because of faith in their lives while advocating for gender equality through education. However, there is still a long way to go if this is to be realised.

On the question of what approaches the Grey Nuns take to promote girl education in Malawi, it can be concluded that there are numerous ways which can be termed liberating as well as counter liberating, effective and non-effective. Although they are not all perfect but can contribute significantly to the plight of the promotion of girl child education in Malawi if only liberating and effective ones are adopted. Hence, those involved in girl education should take heed to adopt only those methods that can work.

On the question of how the participants perceived as the contribution of the Grey Nuns towards girl education in Malawi, it can be concluded that the methods which have been used by the Grey Nuns can be rated as effective. This has been found from the confidence and trust that the parents have in the sisters. The Catholic Church's approach to girl education is one of the best approaches because it includes the faith aspect which provides a girl child with holistic education. Nevertheless, the approaches are yet to be adopted by many schools trying to promote girl education.

On the fourth question of what hampers the promotion of the girl child education by the Grey Nuns, the conclusion is that the impediments are multi-sectored which need multiplicity of ways to tackle them. They cannot be tackled by the Grey Nuns only, but by the corseted efforts of all the stake holders in girl education which include the government, the nongovernmental organisations, the community leaders like chiefs, religious organisations and others. Thus, it is of great importance to support any efforts in this direction.

5.3 Recommendations of the Study

Following the above conclusions, the study made several recommendations to the stake holders in girl child education.

- *Creating girl friendly schools:*

There is need to create more girl friendly schools in Malawi modelling them on the Catholic Schools like those of the Grey Nuns. There is need to re-emphasise the point that more single sex schools should be constructed

with adequate physical and academic facilities for both teachers and students, probably one in each constituency. These schools should adopt the balanced methods of promoting girl education, secular and religious, in order to give full liberation to girls. The methods should be both secular and religious. This will be education for the girl child not education on the girl child.

- *Educating parents and the community at large:*

As a way of creating access to the girl-child education, parents, guardian and the community leaders should be educated and be reminded of the primary responsibility in caring for and ensuring that their children, especially the girl-child obtain maximum formal education. Both boys and girls can go to school. Fathers should equally take special interest in their girls, spend time with them and get involved in their upbringing for that will change their attitude which will eventually encourage girls' participation in their education. If need be, village committees should be established to look into the welfare of the education of the girl in early years.

- *Introducing targeted trainings and exchanging visits:*

There is need for the government, through the ministry of education to introduce special training courses after the pre-service teacher training, teachers, matrons or head-teachers in the girl-friendly schools. For the already existing schools, there should be able to arrange exchange visits with those schools that are doing well in girl education promotion.

- *Re-enforcing Laws on Early Marriages:*

Despite the fact that early marriages continue to occur, it is undoubtedly a form of human rights violation. The researcher hails the just enacted marriage bill but what remains is its enforcement and advocacy. It is important that parents should know the consequences of pushing their children into marriages. This equally applies to religious organisations or faiths who bless the child marriages. They must be made aware that there is a price to pay when they do that. Girl-child victims can be used as part of the educating process in the campaign in which churches and other faith-based organisations should take part. The irony is that while some churches tend to violate these laws, people tend to listen to them more. Parents need to be empowered economically since most of these violations come as a result of economic incapacitation-poverty.

- *More financing of Religious organisations:*

Religious organisations like the Grey Nuns are more efficient in promoting girl education. There is need for more financial resources from donors to be directed towards these organisations so that they reach where they are intended. At the same time, the religious organisations should be encouraged to write proposals to ask for the funds from donors. When accessed, these funds can be used to build structures, start projects to alleviate the poor communities around and sometimes pay fees for the poor girls. However, these will have to be jealously taken care of and secured to avoid unnecessary damage.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

The researcher in this study found out that there was great impact of the Catholic education in the promotion of girl education in Malawi. However it was impossible to tackle everything in one study. The study punched some holes which need to be filled by carrying out further researches. The study recommends further studies to be undertaken in the following areas:

- Investigating the role of the leadership and teacher commitment to the promotion of girl education in Catholic Schools.
- Investigating the perceptions of women towards single sex education experiences in Catholic Schools.
- Investigating the role religious identity plays in the promotion of girl education in Malawi.
- Exploring the development of the student leadership in Catholic Girls' Schools

5.5 Chapter Conclusion

The contribution of the Grey Nuns towards the promotion of girl education has been positive and significant as revealed in the research. They have contributed in formal education which has seen many women and girls attaining greater education heights.

The provision of formal education has been considered a power behind the reduction of poverty.²⁶⁶ There have been arguments in favour of formal education for girls as rendered by the Grey Nuns, because of how it affects their well being and empowerment. Educated girls are better equipped to extract the most benefit from available services and existing opportunities and to take the advantage of the alternative opportunities, roles and support structures. These are shown through increased income-earning potential, ability to bargain or negotiate for resources within the household; decision-making, autonomy, participation in decision making and many more. It is for this reason that the Grey Nuns have unreservedly undertaken this task of liberating girls by offering them education, in the light of the Gospel, from 1946 to date and they are continuing.

²⁶⁶Eileen Kane. *Girls' Education in Africa, What Do We Know About Strategies That Work? Africa Region Human Development Working Paper Series*. Washington, D. C. The World Bank.. 2004; Paul Schultz. 'Why Government Should Invest More to Educate Girls.' *World Development* 30 (2) 2002. pp. 207-25:

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: INTERVIEW GUIDES

1. WITH THE NUNS:

Factors that led to the Grey Nuns getting involved in the promotion of Girl education in Malawi.

(Zinthu zomwe zinachititsa kuti ma Grey Nuns ayambe ntchito yopititsa maphunziro a atsikana patsogolo muno mMalawi.)

- a. What do you perceive as reasons for your congregation to be involved in the promotion of girl education in Malawi since 1946?
(Mukuona kuti ndi chifukwa chiyani chipani chanu chakhala chikuthandiza kupititsa maphunziro a atsikan apatsogolo kuchokera mchaka cha 1946 muno mMalawi?)
- b. How did your congregation become involved in girl education in Malawi?
(Fotokozani momwe chipani chanu chinayambira kutenganawo mbali pa maphunziro atsikanamuno Mmalawi.)
- c. What factors contributed to your decision of becoming a Gray Nun?
(Ndichiyani chomwe chinakuchititsani kuganiza kuti mukhale mmodzi wa masisitere a Grey Nun?)
- d. In what ways do you feel Catholic education ethos have contributed to the society's acceptance of your role as the promoters of girl education in Malawi?
(Ndi njira ziti zomwe mukuganiza kuti chiphunzitso champingo pa maphunziro chathandiza kuti anthu avomereze ntchito zanu ngati gulu limodzi lopititsa maphunziro atsikana patsogolo?)
- e. How would you describe the education of the girl in other Catholic founded schools?
(Mungafotokoze chiani pankhani ya maphunziro a mwana wamtsikana msukuluzina za Chikatolika?)

- f. How would you describe the relationship between Grey Nuns and Girl education in Malawi?

(Mungafotokoze kuti palikugwirizana kwanji pakati chipani chanu ndi maphunziro a atsikana kuno Malawi?)

- g. In what ways do you feel the Gray Nuns have contributed to the society acceptance that the girl child and women should be educated?

(Ndinjira ziti zomwemukuganiza kuti ma Gray Nuns athandiza kuti anthu avomereze kuti maphunziro a mwana wamtsikana kapena azimayi ndi wofunika?)

- h. In what ways do you feel you have impacted on girl education in Malawi?

(Ndi njira ziti zomwe mwamukhudzanazo mwana wamkazi pomulimbikitsa pa maphunziro ake?)

- i. How do you think Malawi will change as a result of your Congregation encouraging many girls to go to school?

(Kodi mukuganiza kuti Malawi adzasintha bwanji kutsatira Chipani chanu pokweza maphunziro a atsikana?)

The participants' perceptions of the Grey Nuns' Contributions to Girl Education

- a. Describe the reasons cited by parents and the community around as to why they send their children to your schools.

(Fotokozani zifukwa zomwe mukuganiza kuti makolo ambiri azitumiza ana awo ku sukulu zanu.)

Limiting factors to Grey Nuns' efforts of promoting girl education in Malawi

- a. Describe some ways in which the success of girl education by the Grey Nuns is threatened in your school?

(Fotokozani zipsyinjo zomwe mumakumana nazo polimbikitsa maphunziro a mwana wamtsikana pasukuluyanu?)

- b. Describe your personal experience pursuing the promotion of girl education in Malawi.
(Fotokozani zomwe mwazona inu ngati a sisitere popitsa maphunziro atsikana potsogolo.)

2. WITH THE TEACHERS:(Focus group discussion with teachers and interview with headteachers or deputy headteachers)

**The Participants' perceptions of the Grey Nuns' Contributions to Girl Education
(Momwe anthu ena amachiwonera Chipani cha ma Grey Nuns pa nkhani yolimbikitsa maphunziro a atsikana mMalawi.)**

- a. Describe some factors you think has pushed the parents to send their daughters to this school run by the Grey Nuns?
(Fotokozani zomwe mukuganiza kuti zimapangitsa makolo ambiri kutumiza ana awo ku sukulu yanu ino?)
- b. Describe some ways in which the education offered to girls in the school is different from other schools where there are no Grey Nuns?
(Fotokozani njira zomwe maphunziro womwe akulandira mwana wamtsikana pa sukulu pano ali wosiyana ndi maphunziro atsikana komwe kulibe ma sisitere a chipani cha ma Grey Nuns.)

Mechanisms or Methods used by the Grey Nuns to promote girl education:

(Njira zomwe ma Grey Nuns amagwiritsa ntchito polimbikitsa maphunziro a atsikana.)

- a. How do the gray nuns support or encourage the education of girls in your school?
(Kodi a Grey Nuns amathandizapo bwanji pamaphunziro a atsikana pasukulu yanu?)
- b. Describe ways in which you teachers have been encouraging girl education in your school?
(Fotokozerani njira zomwe inu aphunzitsi mumathandizira pa maphunziro a mwana wamtsikana?)
- c. Describe things found in this school that promote girl education?

(Fotokozani zinthu zomwe zili pasukulu pano zomwe zikuthandizira kupititsa maphunziro a atsikana patsogolo.)

Limiting factors to Grey Nuns' efforts of promoting girl education in Malawi

- a. Describe some ways in which the success of girl education by the Grey Nuns is threatened in your school?

(Fotokozani zipsyinjo zomwe mumakumana nazo polimbikitsa maphunziro a mwana wamtsikana pasukulu yanu?)

- b. Describe your personal experience in pursuing the promotion of girl education in Malawi.

(Fotokozani zomwe mwazona inu ngati a sisitere popitsa maphunziro atsikana potsogolo.)

3. WITH PARENTS:

The Society's perceptions of the Grey Nuns' Contributions to Girl Education

- a. Describe factors that led you to send your child to the school run by the Grey Nuns?

(Fotokozani zifukwa zomwe zinakupangitsani kuti mutumize mwana wanu wamtsikana kusukulu ya ma Grey Nuns?)

- b. Describe some ways in which the education offered to your daughter in the school is different from other schools where there are no Grey Nuns?

(Fotokozani njira zomwe maphunziro womwe akulandira mwana wanu ali wosiyana ndi maphunziro atsikana komwe kulibe ma sisitere a chipani cha ma Grey Nuns.)

- c. How satisfied are you with the education offered to your daughter by the Grey Nuns?

(Ndinu wokhutira bwanji ndi maphunziro atsikana womwe ma Grey Nuns akupereka?)

- d. As parents, how do you assist the Grey Nuns in the promotion of girl education in Malawi?

(Ngati makolo, mwakhala mukuthandizana bwanji ndi ma Grey Nuns potukula maphunziro a atsikana muno mMalawi?)

Mechanisms or Methods used by the Grey Nuns to promote girl education:

(Njira zomwe ma Grey Nuns amagwiritsa ntchito polimbikitsa maphunziro aatsikana.)

a. How do the grey nuns support or encourage the education of your daughter in her school?

(Kodi a Grey Nuns amathandizapo bwanji pamaphunziro a atsikana pasukulu yanu?)

b. Describe things found in this school that promote girl education?

(Fotokozani zinthu zomwe zili pasukulu pano zomwe zikuthandizira kupititsa maphunziro a atsikana patsogolo).

Limiting factors to Grey Nuns' efforts of promoting girl education in Malawi

a. Describe some ways in which the success of girl education by the Grey Nuns is threatened in the school of your daughter?

(Fotokozani zipsoyipo zomwe masistere amakumananazo polimbikitsa maphunziro a mwana wamtsikana pasukulu ya mwana wanu?)

b. Describe your personal experience pursuing the promotion of girl education in Malawi.

(Fotokozani zomwe mwaziona inu ngati makolo a ana popitsa maphunziro a atsikana potsogolo).

4. WITH STUDENTS:

(A Focus Group Discussion Guide with Present Students)

Mechanisms or Methods used by the Grey Nuns to promote girl education:

a. What do you think are the ways in which the Grey Nuns have been promoting your education as girls in this school?

(Ndinjira ziti zomwe ma Grey Nuns akhala akuthandizapo pamaphunziro anu ngati atsikana pa sukulu pano?)

b. Describe things found in this school that promote girl education?

(Fotokozani zinthu zomwe zili pasukulu pano zomwe zikuthandizira kupititsa maphunziro a atsikana patsogolo).

Limiting factors to Grey Nuns' efforts of promoting girl education in Malawi

- a. Describe some ways in which you think your education with the Grey Nuns is threatened in your school.

(Fotokozani njira zomwe mukuganiza kuti maphunziro anu msukulu za ma Grey Nuns akhala akuwopsyezedwa.)

- b. Describe your personal experience in pursuing your education with the Gray Nuns.

(Fotokozani momwe inu mwakhala mukumvera popitiriza maphunziro anu ndi masisistere.)

APPENDIX B: Consent Letter:

THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

Chancellor College



Faculty of Humanities

Theology and Religious Studies Department

Your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary. By signing this consent form and completing the interview, you are giving your consent to take part in this research. If at any point you decide that you do not want to complete the interview, please inform the administrator. Your refusal to participate will not result in any penalty or loss of benefit.

(Kutenga nawo mbali pakafukufuku uyu sikokakamiza ayi. Muli ndi ufulu wotenga nawo mbali kapena ayi. Mukalola kutikitira ndiye kuti mwavomereza kuti muchita nawo kafukufukuyu. Mkati mochita kafukufuku, ngati mutaganiza kuti simukufuna kupitiriza nawo chonde tidziwitseni. Kusapitiriza nawo sikudzapangitsa kuti mulangidwe kapena kukulandani mwayi wina uli wonse.)

A CONSENT LETTER FOR THE RESPONDENTS

Dear respondent,

I am carrying out a study on the above topic for which I need your assistance. The study has arisen from a research problem that: there is very little research in the women congregations like the Gray Nuns, who are involved in girl education promotion in Malawi. In this regard the research would like to investigate the contribution of the Gray Nuns in promoting girl education in Malawi.

The findings of the study may assist Ministry of Education Officials correct the problem by allowing school administrators to adopt appropriate practices and policies which will in the long run promote the girl education. Lessons from this study may be an eye opener to the girls who would like to excel in studies while at school. The study may also contribute positively to the general performance of Catholic schools in promoting girl education.

Your contributions therefore, will be very significant in my study and will help me to come up with reliable information for both primary and secondary sector in Malawi. Thank you for your cooperation and your time within your busy schedule to support this study.

Amon A. Masanda

.....
Your Name and Signature

.....
Today's Date

.....
Name and Signature of the Researcher

.....
Today's Date

**KALATA YOFUNSA KUVOMEREZA KUTENGA NAWO MBALI
PAKAFUKUFUKU**

Ndikuchita kafukufuka pa mutu wakuti: *Kufufuza zomwe masisitere a chipani cha Sisters of Charity of Ottawa (SCO) kapena kuti ma Grey Nuns achita potukula maphunziro atsikana kuchokera mchaka cha 1946 mpaka 2014*, ndipo ndidzasowa chithandizo chanu. Kufukufukuyu wachokera pa vuto lakuti pali kusadziwa kapena kusazindikira kwakukulu pa zomwe zipani za a Amayi mumpingo zachita popititsa patsogolo maphunziro a tsikana muno mMalawi. Choncho kafukufukuyu akufuna kufufuza zomwe a chipani cha masisitere a Grey Nuns achita panthitoyi m'dziko muno.

Zopezeka mukafukufukuyu zingadzathe kuthandiza akuluakulu a ku Unduna wa zamaphunziro kuchepetsa vuto pakuwalola woyendetsa sukulu kutsatira njira ndi malamulo oyenera womwe pomalizira pake akhoza kutukula maphunziro a atsikana. Zochitika mukafukufukuyu zingadzatsekule maso a atsikana womwe akufunitsitsa kuchita bwino pa sukulu. Kafukufukuyu adzathandizanso masukulu a Chikatolika kuchita bwino kwambiri pankhani yotukula maphunziro a atsikana.

Choncho maganizo anu adzakhala wofunika kwambiri ndipo adzathandiza kupeza zinthu zoyenerera pamaphunziro a atsikana msukulu za primary ndi secondary muno m'Malawi. Zikomo kwambiri chifukwa cha chidwi chanu komanso nthawi yanu ngakhale kuti muli wotanganidwa, pokuthandiza pakafukufukuyu.

Amon A. Masanda.

.....
Your Name and Signature
.....

.....
Today's Date
.....

Appendix C: Letter from Chancellor College



CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

PRINCIPAL
Christopher Kamlongera, B.A., DipTEO., M.A., Ph.D

Our ref: TRS DPT
Your Ref:

P.O. Box 280, Zomba, Malawi
Telephone: (265) 01524 222
Fax: (265) 01524 046
E-mail: principal@chanco.unima.mw

To: Whom It May Concern
From: Head of Theology and Religious Studies Department, Chancellor College,
Date: University of Malawi
6th March, 2014

Letter of Introduction for Mr. Amon Masanda (MA Student)

This is a letter of introduction for Mr. Amon Masanda as one of our Masters student in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Chancellor College. He will need assistance to access and collect information for his studies. Please assist him accordingly

For further information please, contact the undersigned.

Many thanks

Mastone L.K. Mbewe
Head of Theology and Religious Studies Department
Chancellor College
P.O. Box 280
Zomba

Email: mastonembewe@yahoo.com or mmbewe@cc.ac.mw



Appendix D: Letter from Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

Telegrams: MINED, Lilongwe
Telephone: (265) 01 789 422/ 01 789404
Telex: 44636
Facsimile: (265) 01 788 064



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
PRIVATE BAG 328
CAPITAL CITY
LILONGWE 3
MALAWI

BED/1/26

2nd April, 2014

TO : Whom it May Concern

Dear Sir,

RE: RESEARCH ASSISTANCE – AMON MASANDA (MA STUDENT)

The above named student is an MA student in the Theology and Religious Studies Department at Chancellor College, University of Malawi. He has been permitted to go to Mchinji District in primary schools to find out about the contribution on the Gray Nuns towards girl child education in Malawi.

Your assistance to the officer will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

DR. J. CHIMOMBO
DIRECTOR FOR BASIC EDUCATION
For: SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY