THE ROLE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL INSPECTION REPORTS IN THE EDUCATION POLICY FORMULATION PROCESS IN MALAWI

MASTERS IN EDUCATION

CHIKONDANO C. KADZAMIRA MUSSA

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

MARCH, 2009

THE ROLE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL INSPECTION REPORTS IN THE EDUCATION POLICY FORMULATION PROCESS IN MALAWI

A Dissertation

By

CHIKONDANO CHRISTINA KADZAMIRA MUSSA BEd (Malawi) 1990

Submitted to the Faculty of Education
University of Malawi
In partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of
Master of Education

MARCH, 2009

Policy Planning and Leadership
Chancellor College

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the text of this dissertation entitled:
THE ROLE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL INSPECTION REPORTS IN THE EDUCATION POLICY FORMULATION PROCESS **IN MALAWI**
is substantially my own work

CHIKONDANO CHRISTINA KADZAMIRA MUSSA
Full Legal Name

_____
Signature

_____
Date

University of Malawi
Chancellor College
Faculty of Education

The undersigned certify that they have read and recommend to the Postgraduate Studies and Research Committee and the Senate for acceptance of this thesis entitled:
THE ROLE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL INSPECTION REPORTS IN THE POLICY FORMULATION PROCESS IN MALAWI submitted by CHIKONDANO CHRISTINA KADZAMIRA MUSSA in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of education

_____
Professor Paul A. Kishindo
Main Supervisor

_____
Dr. Bob Chulu
Head of department

_____
Dr. R. Nyirongo
Internal Examiner

DEDICATION

To the sweet loving memory of my late husband Aboo Majid Abdul Mussa whose hard working spirit inspired me to defy all odds and take up the challenge of studying for my second degree even in his very painful absence. His love still lingers, and it is to me and the children, a sweet smelling aroma. May his soul rejoice on that great day, at the resurrection of the saints, when the trumpet is sounded and the Lord appears.

Acknowledgements

I am sincerely grateful for all the untiring support and encouragement that my supervisor, Professor Paul A. Kishindo gave me right from the beginning to the end of this work. I enjoyed working with you. I shall always treasure and cherish the contribution you have made to my academic and professional success. Above all, I want you to know that I feel so very honoured to have gone through your mould.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Department for International Development for sponsoring me to study at the University of Malawi, Chancellor College. The scholarship has added a lot of value to my professional and social life.

I would also like to appreciate the various forms of support that the staff in the Faculty of Educational Foundations at Chancellor College gave me during my studies. I learnt a great deal from each one of you, many thanks.

Special thanks to numerous family friends, very dear to me, who tirelessly provided me with the moral support which I so much needed to spur me on.

Finally, heartfelt thanks to my children, Zarrina, Cornelius and Mphatso, for your perseverance, for you had to go without any parental attention for days on end while I studied. To you my precious ones I say: you have made my life worth living and this undertaking worthwhile. I am forever indebted to you.

ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate the role of secondary school inspection reports in the Educational Policy formulation process in Malawi. The inspection report is the single biggest and exhaustive report from the schools and it is meant to be the basis for informed decisions and policy in matters related to the school system.

Primary data for the study was generated through qualitative research methods using key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Inspection reports and relevant policy documents were reviewed. These generated secondary data.

The major finding of the study is that inspection reports are not given the attention that they deserve at the highest levels of decision-making in the education system. Inspection report recommendations do not feed into the education policy making system. Those that are mandated with the responsibility of ensuring quality in the education system have failed to institute mechanisms for monitoring reports and ensure that recommendations are acted upon by the relevant officers. In the final analysis school inspection report recommendations remain routine exercises which do not influence decisions.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANTRIEP-Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Education Planning

CDSS- Community Day Secondary School

CHRMD-Controller of Human Resource Management and Development

DBE-Director of Basic Education

DCE-Domasi College of Education

DEP- Director of Education Planning

DEM-District Education Manager

DMAS-Director of Education Methods and Advisory Services

DSHE-Director of Secondary and Higher Education

EDM-Education Division Manager

FPE- Free Primary Education

GER- Gross Enrolment Rate

HOD-Head of Department

HMI- Her Majesty's Inspectors

HT-Head Teacher

IIEP- Institute for International Educational Planning

IR- Inspection Report

IRR-Inspection Report Recommendation

MANEB-Malawi National Examinations Board

MCP-Malawi Congress Party

MIE-Malawi Institute of Education

MGTSR-Malawi Government Teaching Service Regulation

MoEST-Ministry of Education Science and Technology

OECD- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

OPC - Office Of The President and Cabinet

PTA-Parent Teacher Association

PEMA- Principal Education Methods Advisor

PIF- Policy and Investment Framework

SEMA-Senior Education Methods Advisor

SMC-School Management Committee

SEST- Secretary For Education Science and Technology

TSC-Teaching Service Commission

TRF-Text Book Revolving Fund

UK -United Kingdom

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables

Chapter One

Introduction

The history of formal education in Malawi is closely connected to the story of the missionaries. The Annual Education Report (1927) cited in Nankwenya (1977:1) states that the tale of education development is perforce contained in the story of the arrival of missionaries and their work in the country. Nankwenya (1977) argues that without the missionaries it is doubtful if the country would have been opened to education until recently as evidenced by the fact that the Nyasaland[1] government entered the education scene almost fifty years after the missionaries had established the first school. Ferland (1969) observes that the development of education in Malawi was a long succession of missionary and colonial endeavours divided into five main periods as follows: education by the missions; cooperation between the missions and the government; education for colonial development; education for nation building and education for independence. He further notes that secondary education spanned the last three periods namely: education for colonial development, education for nation building and education for independence. The Scots and the English were among the first missionaries to gain a foothold in the development of missionary and educational work in Nyasaland (Tindall, 1983). This section summarises the major developments in these periods.

[1] Nyasaland was the name missionaries and colonialists used to refer to the territory presently known as Malawi

Education by the missionaries 1875-1926

The first missionary to arrive in the country was Dr David Livingstone in 1859. Various missionaries followed him in response to his 1857 call for the establishment of commerce, civilization and Christianity to combat the slave trade which he had encountered during his journeys of exploration. The Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) of the Church of England arrived in 1861 and two other missions from the Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland arrived in 1875.

The Free Church of Scotland, which later came to be known as Livingstonia Mission opened the first school in Malawi at Cape Maclear in Mangochi in 1875. The Livingstonia Mission set a trend that was followed by later arrivals. The aim of the missionaries was to educate African children for future vocation and to convert people to Christianity ((Nankwenya, 1977; Banda, 1982; Tindall, 1983). The missionaries began to teach African boys and girls the alphabet and elementary subjects. They built schools, recruited teachers and appointed head teachers from among their converts. Evangelism was the missionary's overriding priority and it is evident from the onset that the missionaries used formal education as a tool for evangelism. The missionaries (Livingstonia Mission, Blantyre Mission and the Catholic Mission at Zomba) owned many of the schools such that by 1910, they had 1,051 elementary schools. By 1927 they owned and supervised 2,927 schools with 4,481 teachers. However most of the teachers were unqualified (Ferland, 1969; Nankwenya, 1977; Banda, 1982; Tindall, 1983; Hauya, 1993; Chimombo, 1999).

The Missionaries slowly started to realise and appreciate the important role a trained teacher plays in formal education such that the teacher factor started taking centre stage at conferences. For instance, at a conference held by the federated missions of Nyasaland, in Blantyre in 1925, teacher training was discussed. Furthermore, missionaries realised that they could not handle educational work in Nyasaland single-handed; they therefore utilized the same conference held by the federated missions of Nyasaland in Blantyre to discuss and seek cooperation between government and Christian missionaries. This conference seems to have marked the beginning of a more organized approach to education provision by the missionaries and government. Another conference followed in 1927 known as a "Native Conference'' attended by missionaries, farmers, traders in order to consider the education rules to be established under the education ordinance then in preparation. It can be argued that this is the first time that education in the protectorate had its first policies documented in a legal framework in the name of an Education Ordinance. This notwithstanding, churches had their own education policies that guided the running of their schools.

To deal with the problem of untrained teachers, and to raise the standards in the village schools, government introduced a teacher-training programme at Jeanes Training Centre in 1929 with the help of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. This marked the beginning of government involvement in formal education in the country.

The creation of a government department of education

Since the advent of the missionaries in Nyasaland, there was no government department to take charge of education affairs, as such; education was under missionary control for a long time. Nankwenya (1977: 39) asserts that the type of education given by the missionaries depended very much on the missionaries concerned and in the absence of any central government authority to direct, administer and control the type of education offered, there was no coordination of effort in the field. Competition, rivalry and sometimes hostility were common. Because of public recognition of the size and urgency of the education problems and the need for a more active co-operation between Government and missions, the Phelps-Stokes Commission of Inquiry was appointed to carry out a formal study on education in East and Central Africa in 1924. The commission specifically focused its inquiry on the curriculum, evangelism and literacy, community development, girls' education, agriculture and industrial training (Wills, 1983: 287). It noted that education in Africa was unregulated and consequently missionaries offered varied curricular in the protectorate, as there was no government body to prescribe what was to be taught and presumably no inspectorate to regulate education provision (Banda, 1982). In its report the Commission recommended that there was need for the establishment of a Department of Education to be headed by a Director.

Government in 1926 established the Department of Education even though government did not own, let alone, control any educational institution. It was established to coordinate and supervise the work of the missions, to direct and supervise educational policy and to promote cooperation not only between government and other voluntary education

agencies but also among agencies themselves (Nankwenya, 1977; Banda, 1982). The Department of Education also laid down minimum standards for aided schools.[2]

A great majority of schools though remained unaided "bush schools"[3] where education standards were low. According to Tindall (1983: 256) such schools did, however, satisfy the needs of the local community for literacy. Additionally, the Commission recommended that there should be an Advisory Board of Native Education to work in conjunction with the Department to consist of representatives of the Government, the settlers, and the missionaries. African representation was provided for (Banda, 1982). The Commission further recommended that Government officers should pay friendly visits to mission schools. This suggests the beginning of some form of formal School Inspection.

The education ordinance

The first education ordinance was enacted in 1927. It provided for the creation of a Board of Education whose duty was to act as the advisory body on all educational matters. It also provided for the creation of District School Committees. In 1930 another Education Ordinance was enacted and this was confined to the control of expenditure. In 1945 there was another Ordinance, which defined the relative position of voluntary agencies and of the Education Department. It was also concerned with rules affecting the schools. In 1962, yet another Education Ordinance was enacted with the aim of establishing a national system with full public control (Ferland, 1969; Nankwenya, 1977). This

[2] Aided schools are those schools that received grants from government
[3] A "bush school" was a mud-walled building with a mud floor and benches

ordinance is still in force at the time of writing. Much has happened since 1962 and it is in need of review.

Cooperation between the missions and the government 1926-1949.

In 1901 government began to play an active role in the country's education pursuits. Government started disbursing annual grants of £1,000 to help the Christian missionaries in their educational work. Slowly these annual grants to mission schools increased such that by 1937 government's annual grants disbursement was at £18,000 (Tindall, 1983). This gesture by government shows that it slowly acknowledged and accepted its responsibility towards education in the country. It decided to become an active actor in educational matters instead of operating from the periphery. Subsequently, government got directly involved in education through the Jeanes Training Centre at Domasi which opened in 1929. It was meant to be a teacher training college to train Primary School Teachers up to T3 level.[4] The graduates from this college served as supervisors for their various mission village primary schools. This was deemed important because most of the teachers that were recruited by the missionaries were untrained. The policy of the missionaries was to use the school as an auxiliary to the church. Thus the teachers were primarily evangelists.

Ferland (1969), Nankwenya (1977), and Banda (1982), assert that people soon realized that formal education was a means of entering a cash economy and also of obtaining prestige. As a consequence, enrolments in the schools increased and more schools were

[4] T3 is a classification of teachers in Malawi depending on their academic and professional qualification. Teachers can be at T1, T2 T3 or T4 The classification then was into three as follows: vernacular grade, English grade and higher grade and Jeanes teacher training centre taught higher grade teachers.

set up. Government introduced a standard 6 leaving examination in 1941 because of the increasing demand for more educational facilities at upper primary levels and above. By 1946, some 200 pupils had passed Standard 6. However, because of limited access, not many of these graduates could proceed to the two secondary schools that opened in the early 1940's- at Blantyre Mission and at Zomba Catholic Mission. As such, the growth of secondary work was hampered (Tindall, 1983).

Education for colonial development 1949-1963

Education for colonial development was largely about secondary education. The trends in the development of primary education under the Christian missionaries as discussed above were also similar to secondary education. Ferland (1969) states that, there was no recognized secondary school course or education in Nyasaland before 1940. Before then government and some missionaries were unwilling to provide secondary school education for Africans because they were sceptical about whether it was appropriate to give advanced learning to selected few Africans (Nankwenya, 1977; Banda, 1982). Missionaries in particular did not see it as their duty to give Africans advanced education and as such, they continued concentrating their efforts at primary level. However, on the part of government failure to provide secondary education was due to the policies that were in force then. Kishindo (1997:13) asserts that 'the fundamental feature of British policy was rooted in the premise that public expenditure on human welfare would drain, rather than contribute to the economic development of the country. He further notes that, 'the tardy provision of secondary education left Malawi without sufficient, adequately trained people to assume responsible positions in the civil service when independence

was declared in 1964. This state of affairs forced some individuals to exert pressure on the county's administration demanding for secondary education.

Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda,[5] then in England, was the most influential man in the development of secondary education in Nyasaland. Banda (1982) asserts that Dr Hastings Banda influenced some prominent African representatives in the Advisory Committee to demand for mass education from the government then. Simultaneously, he demanded mass education from political leaders back in England. Notable individuals included: Mr. Levi Z. Mumba appointed to the Advisory Committee in 1933 and Mr. Charles Matinga appointed in 1937. These two representatives continuously fought hard for the establishment of a government-managed secondary school for the Africans. The demand for secondary education became so great that the governor of the Nyasaland Protectorate, opening the ninth session of the Advisory Committee in 1938 surprised the meeting by declaring:

> 'I regard it as of highest importance that some opportunity for secondary education should be provided for Africans in the protectorate without any further delay and the government must find necessary funds from some source'{Smith, Pachai and Tangri (1971) quoted in Banda, (1982:84)}

After this announcement, Banda (1982) asserts that missions, groups of Africans and in government circles secondary education was discussed frequently. The deliberations on secondary schooling started to bear fruits when in 1940 the Blantyre secondary school was opened under the auspices of the Board of the Federal Missions with financial aid of

[5] Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda was the first president of the republic of Malawi.

$8,620 from government. Zomba Catholic was opened two years later as a fully granted school under a Board of Governors. More junior secondary schools were opened at Khondowe, Kongwe, Blantyre Mission (HHI) Mtendere and St. Patricks or Mzedi. Dedza government secondary school opened in 1951 to provide both academic and technical course. Mzuzu government secondary school opened in 1959 offering full Cambridge. The Catholic Church Missions opened St. Mary's in 1960. Likuni Boys and Likuni Girls were opened in 1961. Lilongwe Girls opened in 1963 as an additional government secondary school deliberately designed to increase chances for women participation in education at secondary level. Around this same period when the country witnessed a proliferation of secondary education, the administration then encouraged Africans to enter the teaching profession and salaries were revised to the level of other comparably qualified African civil servants. Some Africans were given opportunities to fill more responsible positions and by 1953 there were eight African Assistant Inspectors of Schools (Tindall, 1983: 257).

Education for independence

Education for independence was tailor made for purposes of nation building. Under the leadership of Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda, the Malawi Congress Party Manifesto (1961) cited in Banda (1982: 106) spelt out the expansion of secondary education as one of its priority policy area in order to enhance development. Additionally, the Phillips and Johnson Commissions also recommended on the expansion of secondary education. Further, in 1965, the Malawi Correspondence College was opened as an alternative secondary schooling system introduced under the general rubric of "Distance Education."

This was done with the view to increase secondary school Gross Enrolment Rate[6] (GER) for Malawi, (Robinson, Davison & Williams, 1994). These developments led to a proliferation of secondary schools in Malawi, such that by 1968 each of the 24 administrative districts then had its own secondary school. This was adopted with the aim of creating a pool of educated Malawians to become a labour force for the civil service required by the new government (Ferland, 1969). It can be argued that such a proliferation of schools called for inspection services to direct policy and to regulate educational standards.

Furthermore, the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) policy in 1994 and the resultant increase in primary school enrolment created pressure for secondary school places. In response, government established secondary schools in each zone[7] known as Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS) (Kadzamira & Rose, 2001). By 2006 the country had a total of 1000 secondary schools (EMIS, 2006). In this situation of rapid expansion, school inspection services became imperative to control and assure quality of teaching and learning.

Education policy

During the pre-independence period education policy emanated from the specially instituted commissions, ordinances and through political pressure exerted by organized interest groups and from political party manifestos. After independence there was a tendency to resort to consultancy reports as a basis for formulating education policies.

[6] Gross Enrolment rate (GER) is the total number of school children enrolled both of school going age and the overaged.

[7] A zone is a group of 10-15 schools under the supervision of an education inspector

These were incorporated into development plans. There have been three Education Development Plans: the first one from 1973- 1980, the second from 1985- 1995 and the third from 1995- 2012. According to Price Waterhouse (1988) these 'ten year plans" contained significant policy statements on education. It is worth noting however, that an external consultant developed the first two educational plans. Such consultancy services are most often hired on behalf of government by development partners (donors) consequently; education policies get strongly influenced by external interests. Kadzamira and Rose (2001) observed that because of dependence on donor funding, education policies have tended to reflect donor priorities and interests, sometimes to the detriment of the needs of the country. The observation made by Kadzamira and Rose (2001) raises questions about the role of the Inspectorate Division of the Ministry as a link between policy makers and schools on the ground.

Statement of the problem

Inspection as a tool for assessing the quality and performance of schools by external agents is common in most countries that inherited the British education system. Lawton and Gordon (1987:9) in Wilcox and Gray (1996:24) suggest that the creation of inspectors for schools was based on the precedent set by inspecting factories following the Factory Act in the early years of the 19th century. According to Lawton and Gordon, inspection was started in public elementary schools by voluntary religious societies, the National Society and the British and Foreign School's Society at a time when churches had full responsibility for schools. The mandate of the inspectors was to learn what was taking place and in the course give advice. The ultimate aim was to ensure that set

standards were adhered to. The Privy Council on education[8] formally established government inspection in schools in 1839 to which later in that year the first two of Her Majesty's (HM) Inspectors were appointed to visit schools (Wilcox & Gray, 1996). Malawi, having inherited the British system of education included inspection in the 1962 education ordinance. Section 48: 1 of the Education Act (1962) provides that:

> 'The minister and any ministry officer (including the executive officer of any Local Education Authority or Local Education Board) may from time to time, with or without notice, enter and inspect any school or any place at which it is reasonably suspected that a school is being conducted and may inspect and take copies of and extracts from any records or accounts kept or maintained in relation to any such school or suspected school'.

The Education Act therefore makes school inspection a statutory requirement. The Inspectorate Directorate in Malawi was, among other reasons, established in order to fulfil the following objectives: a) provide a basis for concrete and constructive advice designed to improve the quality of education; b) ensure effective management of education; c) provide in-service education and training courses; d) undertake curriculum development and reviews by carrying out continuous reappraisal, adaptation and modification of the curriculum and, e) provide valuable records on various aspects of education institutions that may be consulted from time to time in the process of administration of education and to provide a basis for action that follows inspection reports. The report, which is the outcome of inspection visits gives feedback in either direction: from schools to top management and from top management to schools. As it

[8] This committee was the first body to oversee the emerging system of public education in England. It was succeeded over the years by the Education Department, the Board of Education, Ministry of education etc.

highlights conditions on the ground, it forms a useful basis for interventions to improve school management, quality of teaching and learning, allocation and use of resources, and it would ultimately inform subsequent policy changes (MoE, 1982). Given the importance that is attached to the role of inspection, it is assumed that the resultant reports form the basis of informed decision-making including policy changes. The persistence of problems in the schools raises the question of whether those in decision-making positions pay attention to the contents of those reports. Problems like shortage and inequitable deployment of qualified teachers, lack of in-service teacher training, shortage of teaching and learning materials, inadequate and dilapidated school infrastructure, low rates of learner achievements, need for improved teacher training modes, inadequate sanitation facilities and unresolved teacher disciplinary issues, among others, keep appearing in inspection reports.

Broad objective

The overall aim of this study is to establish the role of inspection reports in education policy formulation in Malawi.

Specific objectives

In order to realise this broad objective, this study has the following specific objectives:

- To identify policy and decision-making levels in the education system and their levels of competence.
- To establish the nature of the recommendations made in the inspection reports
- To determine whether there is a mechanism within the Directorate of Inspection for monitoring the implementation of the inspection reports and

- To establish the extent to which the inspection report feeds into the policy formulation and decision-making processes.

Significance of the study

Very little research has been done on Inspection Reports (IRs) in relation to education policy formulation. This present study will go a long way towards filling the knowledge gap, as it extends our understanding a step forward in the field of inspection and education policy formulation in Malawi. In the context of continued decline in standards and performance in the Malawi education system, the study will provide answers as to whether inspection as a tool for quality assurance is taken seriously or not by top management and heads of schools. Lastly, this study should also serve as a springboard for future studies on the role of the inspection service in relation to education policy formulation in Malawi and other countries.

Conceptual framework

Policy formulation is a complex matter (Dye, 2002; Sapru, 2004; Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry, 1997). Many models have been propounded as a basis for the process. In education policy formulation these include: the rational model, the contingency approach, the incremental model and the interactive model.

In the Rational Model, technical procedures are the norm and decisions are made by experts. The principle in this approach is that governments should choose policies resulting into gains to society that exceed costs by the greatest amount and to refrain from policies if costs are not exceeded by gains (Dye, 2003; Hartwell, 1994). The setback with this model is that it leaves out views of many including of citizens who get affected by it.

In the Contingency Approach, the theory recognises that planners cannot design innovative projects comprehensive at the outset. The approach therefore emphasises on continuous needs assessment in the course of project implementation so that policies can be adjusted according to some environmental changes. The planning in this model is iterative and the process fluid (Verspoor, 1994). One advantage of this model is that it allows for in-course correction of what is going wrong in programme implementation. However, the disadvantage is that a thorough and holistic monitoring and evaluation process does not take place. Incrementalism views public policy as a continuation of past government activities with only incremental modifications. It considers the existing government programmes, policies and expenditure as its basis and assumes that rational-comprehensive model of policy -making is impractical (Dye, 2003). The application of such a model in the field of education where changes take place rapidly poses a big challenge.

This study is leaning on the Interactive Model because it is consultative in nature. The Interactive Model is a blend of technical and political inputs. In the Interactive Model rational techniques are embedded within an interactive, politically sensitive dialogue concerning educational goals and priorities (Hartwell, 1994).

The Interactive Model, among other things, promotes the process of participation, continuous dialogue and negotiations among stakeholders (Hartwell, 1994; Reimers & McGinn, 1997). Stakeholders in this case refer to those who influence or get influenced by the policy or its process. In education these would be teachers, head teachers, parents and pupils. The processes of participation, dialogue and negotiation amongst policy

stakeholders lead to properly supported political decisions about education (Hartwell, 1994). This study argues that formulation of policies needs many stakeholders and that in education, teachers and head teachers need to have an input in the policies that are developed in order for them to be properly supported. One of the best modes of incorporating cross-sectional views including those of the teachers and head teachers is to embed inspection report recommendations (IRRs) into the policies that are developed. This is because inspection reports are produced following the process of participation, dialogue and negotiation with the grassroots i.e. the people that are inspected. When the views of important stakeholders are not taken into account the resultant policy is likely to reflect the interests and aspirations of a powerful or dominant group.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Definition and purpose of school inspection

According to Wilcox (2000:15) inspection in its most general sense may be defined as:

> 'The process of assessing the quality and/ or performance of institutions, services, programmes or projects by Inspectors who are not directly involved in them and who are specifically appointed to fulfil these responsibilities. The result of all these is oriented towards the qualitative improvement of school education.'

The UK Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) (http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) defined school inspection as "a process of evidence gathering in order to provide an assessment of how a school is performing". This is achieved using analysis of data, observation of lessons, interviews with teachers, analysis of pupils' work and meeting with parents, pupils and governors, which should among other things result in a written report. OFSTED further states that school inspections are required in law and they also provide external and independent view of what is good and not so good about the school compared with other schools. These would improve the policies for governing education. While West, Mongon and Sewter (2000: 99) defined inspection as: "A formal review of the school and its work that is pre-arranged, carried out by a formally constituted

inspection team using agreed formats and instruments and leading to the production of an inspection report"

Furthermore, Tait (1993) cited in Commonwealth Secretariat (1998: 5) defined inspection as: '…the process through which central authority, represented by inspectors, monitors and evaluates the teaching and administration in the schools.' An Inspection Report on the other hand, has been defined *as:* 'a summary of the findings and recommendations arising from the inspection.*'* And Supervision is defined as**:** **'**the process of overseeing the planning, implementation and monitoring of actions within the school necessary to address the recommendations arising from an inspection report' (West, Mongon,& Sewter 2000: 99).

Additionally, the Handbook for Inspectors in Malawi (1982:1) defined inspection as:
"that specific occasion when an education institution is examined and evaluated as a place of learning in such a way that advice is given for its improvement and the advice is given in an evaluation report."

The definitions suggest that school inspection is a recognized tool for assessing the quality of education services and that it is a formal way of judging the performance of Schools. School inspection is portrayed as a systematic process, which has a report as its major resultant output. The report provides a position upon which stakeholders initiate quality improvements through evidence based judgements and recommendations.

Common to all these definitions is the notion that inspection must lead to improved performance at the school level.

The purpose of inspection

Traditionally, inspections were carried out for administrative oversight while examinations were used to evaluate student's performance. Fidler and Davies quoted by Earley (1998:157) however, observe that inspection has evolved, and that a further aim of contributing to the improvement of schools has received greater emphasis. OFSTED (1993) contends that the main purpose of inspection is to "promote school improvement by identifying priorities for action, and to inform parents and the local community about the school's strengths and weaknesses". OFSTED has argued that the purpose of regular, systematic inspections is to appraise and evaluate the quality and standards of education in the schools in an objective manner making use of the inspection framework. Most importantly, it is about school development and the raising of standards.

Most inspection theorists adhere to the thesis that inspections are for school improvement. The fundamental principle for Inspection is accountability (reporting to those whom a school is accountable) and the improvement of schools (Wilcox & Gray, 1996; West-Burnham, 1997; Earley, 1998; Wilcox, 2000; Harrison, 2002). It is also assumed by its advocates to lead to desirable change (MoE, 1982; Earley, 1998).

Inspection is also regarded as a form of evaluation and audit. As a form of evaluation, it involves an assessment that covers all aspects of a school and their impact upon student learning. It involves reviewing and analysing a range of inputs, processes and outcomes.

The reviews and analyses take into account variables such as staffing, physical resources, curriculum resources, the quality of leadership and management, learning and teaching activities and the standards achieved by the students ANTRIEP (2000). In agreement with this view, Gray and Gardner (1999: 455) state that general inspections are designed to provide an evaluation of a school across the broad spectrum of its activities and inspectors consider the extent to which the aims, policies and targets of a school are reflected in practice. And as a form of audit, the purpose is to bring about accountability and to raise standards of service. It has also been argued that where inspections are conducted as educational audits, their intention becomes to bring about compliance, patterning and surveillance {Earley (1998) quoting Harland (1996) and Ouston et al. (1998)}

These views about the purpose of inspection are also shared by Wilcox, (2000) who points out that most accounts of inspection suggests that it serves two main functions in an educational system. The first set of claims relates to accountability and providing a picture of what is going on for decision makers. According to him inspection reports can be aggregated to provide both a national and a local picture about the 'state of the system', identifying aspects of quality and standards as well as some of the gaps. The second set of claims concerns the influence of school inspection upon school improvement. Inspectorates serve as external agents and instruments of accountability and improvement especially at a time when society increasingly demands "value for money" (ANTRIEP, 2000).

System evaluation

Carron and De Grauwe (1998: 63-64) have reported that in several countries, supervisors and advisors (inspectors) have been invited by policy makers to add a new function of system evaluation to their traditional role of controlling and assisting teachers or schools. Carron and De Grauwe further point out that in some countries, at the request of education authorities, supervisors (inspectors) are invited to produce consolidated reports which assess particular aspects of the functioning of the school system, such as the availability and use of teaching materials, the relative difficulties and successes of introducing new pedagogical methods, the management of primary school teachers, or any other topic that may be of interest to the decision maker. In France, in 1989, this change in functions of the general inspectorate was introduced on the grounds that, because of their intimate contacts with school realities, inspectors were the best placed to assess the overall situation in a qualitative way. In France, these reports have become an extremely important input for decision making at ministerial level. Yearly resumes are published for the public at large, which are commented upon widely in the press and are a basis for much political debate. This evolution gives increased value to the work of the supervisors and support staff, who start acting as policy advisers rather than as mere quality controllers.

Policy advice and development

Scholars have advanced different justifications for school inspections. Some of these hold to the view that inspections can help enrich the quality of policies in education systems. Inspectors are regarded as experts in different domains of education including the education policy formulation sphere. Lee and Fitz (1997) have contended that the

information gathering capacity of OFSTED enables it to formulate specific and authoritative advice on good curriculum and pedagogic practice and thus to influence the direction of education policy and steer the system generally. In support, Gray and Gardner (1999: 455-468) assert that much of the information collected by HMI was used to inform public policy and practice. Professor Eric Bolton, who was once senior chief inspector in the UK, confirms this role of inspection in education systems when he explained that:

> 'government had a right to expect that national inspectorate would be able to provide it with the professional information, advice and judgement necessary for developing, pursuing and evaluating its policies for education'. {Thomas, 1998 quoting Lawton and Gordon, (1987:51-52)}

Recognising the role of inspection in education policy formulation, Kenneth Clarke, the then Secretary of State in the UK stated that "the more directly involved government became (in education policy making) the more it needed… objective informed evidence from HM inspectors about what is going on" (Thomas,1998). Inspite of the important role played by inspection in education policy formulation, scholars that inspection informed policy formulation has attracted little academic attention. Gray, and Gardner (1999) corroborate the observation and they state that, relatively, little academic research has focused on the policy role of HIM and its influence on the education system more generally. This notwithstanding, it can be argued that education Policy formulation ought to rely heavily on feedback from the ground. This feedback should come from inspection reports.

Some governments have embraced this emerging inspection function (inspection informed policy formulation) such that they are getting their inspectors more involved in policy advice and development. For example, in Namibia, the core duties of inspectors include: policy advice, the formulation and development of management policies, and setting national standards for better teaching in schools. In Zimbabwe, inspectors are charged with the duty to review policy circulars and procedures, so as to improve the ministry's professional administrative services. In Malawi, an inspector is expected to give feedback to the ministry that includes an appraisal of the extent to which the policies, laws and regulations of the education system operate. In this context school inspection is perceived to play a positive role in education development (MoE, 1982: Carron & De Grauwe, 1998; ANTRIEP, 2000).

There is a flipside of school inspections. Earley (1998) contends that school inspection sometimes causes a lack of trust in the professionals, which leads to declining standards of performance. He further contends that sometimes inspections are used to force schools to comply and be under the control of central authority and where this happen, teachers and schools are robbed of their autonomy. School Inspection is sometimes considered as a waste of public resources as outcomes do not always translate into any significant improvements at all at school level (West, Mongon & Sewter, 2000;Harrison, 2002). This is because sometimes inspection reports are not acted upon. The study that was conducted by Wilcox and Gray (1996) revealed that the extent to which schools were able to respond effectively to an inspection report was uncertain, where recommendations were acted upon, the implementation was patchy. Other theorists have argued that school

inspection puts pressure on those that get inspected. It has been observed however, that pressure alone does not lead to improvements. They contend that the equation is incomplete without support from those who put pressure to see things improve in education systems because inspection wears the face of 'pressure-support' notion (Earley 1998: 169). Earley points out that the current debates on educational evaluation have often been associated with pressure for those who get inspected. While those who inspect have always expected change and improvements in the running of school activities. In agreement, Fullan (1997) in Earley (1998) argues that there must be pressure and support, for both are required for change to take place but, he points out that "support without pressure is likely to lead to waste and pressure without support to stress."

Nonetheless, since numerous benefits attributed to inspection accrue to education systems, inspections have attracted considerable interest from around the world. The understanding that school inspection brings about control, quality improvement, improved decision-making and a strong demand for accountability in the public service among others, has led many countries to reform and revive their inspection services. The United States of America, for example, has embraced inspection as a possible alternative to school evaluations. The Republic of Korea is using external inspection and supervision services to evaluate schools. Malaysia has re-organized its inspection system to allow supervisors to undertake institutional school reviews. The Philippines had their system of school evaluation dismantled but now they have re-established it, China embarked on establishing a formal system of school evaluation and India is pursuing what they term

‘accountability for school effectiveness. While as for Hong Kong inspection is the mechanism for school evaluation (ANTRIEP, 2000).

Further, reports from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) researchers indicate that considerable investments in systems of inspection have been made in other countries as well as Britain with a view to ensuring higher standards of education. Additionally, studies carried out by IIEP (2001) in four countries in the Eastern-and Southern –African region: Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe have shown that these countries are making efforts to invest in inspections to enable them evaluate schools for improvement, quality control and for quality assurance. In almost all these cases the assumption underlying the strategy for the changes have been similar. First, to make schools more accountable to the communities supporting them; and second, to put pressure on schools to improve.

Formulation of education policy

Reimers and McGinn (1997) regard policy as a statement of action to be preferred in the pursuit of one or more objectives of an organization. Reimers and McGinn (1997) extend the concept of policy to education and defined education policy as “the goals for the education system and the actions that should be taken to achieve them.”

Some writers have argued that there are two important stages in policy making. These are: agenda setting and policy formulation. Agenda setting is capturing the attention of policy makers. Peters (1999) contends that, agenda setting is crucial, for if an issue cannot be placed on the agenda, it cannot be considered and nothing will happen.

Similarly policy formulation involves preparing a plan of action intended to rectify the problem identified. He states that policy making is about identifying problems or issues that are objects of great public concern and require government response. He regards policy making as a process of problem identification and generation of solutions to address the identified problems. Policy Making involves government making choices on problems identified in a society. Peters further contends that the identified problem must be conspicuous enough to attract the attention of actors in the policy making process so that it is placed on the agenda. Besides, there has to be relevant political actors who are convinced that what has been identified is indeed a problem and that government can have a role in solving the problem.

Policy studies generally consider a series of activities or processes that occur within the political system Dye (2003). Evance, Sack and Shaw (1996) present two distinct views: the first characterize the process as a set of stages or steps, which follow a logical order. Haddad (1995) identified seven stages in the policy making process namely: problem recognition and issue identification, agenda setting, policy formulation, policy adoption, policy implementation and policy evaluation. The second view suggests that policymaking is a loose, messy, fluid process, which cannot be reduced to a simple linear model. Recent field –based research and case studies show that in reality policy making is a more complex, less clearly ordered, and seldom reflects a simple application of technical rationality in decision making (Evans, Sack & Shaw, 1996; Evans, 1996; Haddad, 1995).

The policy making process involves many participants. Sapru (2004) notes that in policymaking, different individuals and groups exercise power. These can be influential individuals, organized interest groups, academics, policy planning organizations, public opinion, political candidates and office holders and the mass media. Actors in the policy process can be categorised into two, thus, actors inside of government and those outside of government (Kingdon, 1995; BrinkerHolf & Crosby, 2002; Dye, 2003; Sapru, 2004). Actors inside government include the administration, the civil servants and the legislature. Sapru (2004) has called these official policy makers. Actors outside government include interest groups, academics, the media and public opinion. Another category of participants includes the international donors that provide funding and technical assistance.

The various stakeholders named above have power to promote or hinder policy formulation. In education, stakeholders include those who are affected by or have influence on the day-to-day education practice, such as parents, teachers, communities, private enterprises, and government (Mac Jessie, 2004; Ndalama, 2002; Phiri, 2002). To this list one could also add inspectors as policy stakeholders in education. These groups and organizations bring influences to bear on those who are vested with the power of taking and enforcing decisions. According to Sapru (2004: 94) some of these actors take specialized roles and influence behaviour in the policy process. They can take the roles of initiating, vetoing, planning, adjudicating, controlling, moralizing, theorizing, cooperating and agitating in the policy process.

The major issue in policymaking is that it is a political activity in which social problems are converted into an issue for formal consideration. Social problems that need to be addressed are placed on government agenda. Actors have to mobilize to push the agenda to a prominent position to attract government action. Additionally, sufficient political mobilization is essential to set a problem as an issue on the policy agenda.

In Anglo – phone countries education policy formulation has been carried out using different mechanisms mostly influenced by international agencies. Using donor assistance, there are three modes in which policy is formulated. These include: the project approach, the education sector assessment approach and the education policy commission approach. Some such external agencies include: the World Bank (WB) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as well as the Department for International Development (DFID). These have a powerful influence on sector policies. Their preconditions for the education sector assistance are on a coherent and economically sound education policy. Their role in policy formulation is critical because they have the resources, which cause them to initiate changes in Education in Africa. The international agencies have become key actors to the extent that they can define and direct policy changes in most developing countries (Hartwell, 1994).

Hartwell argues that the greatest danger with this role is that external agencies not only stimulate but also sometimes essentially determine policy choice without the necessary political and bureaucratic review and consensus building process.

These agencies have tried to define the procedures for education policy analysis and planning by highlighting the technical aspects of the process. They use tools of economic analysis to define education policies. The dominant tools of economic analysis that inform education policy and planning are manpower analysis and rate of return analysis. The donors are mostly applying the rational model and they are the ones initiating the policies while governments simply rubber stamps (Hartwell, 1994). From this approach to policy formulation, it becomes apparent that the inspection report that gets generated after inspectors interact with the grassroots are never consulted and the teachers and parents do not seem to come anywhere closer to active participants in policy formulation given such a set up.

Apart from international agencies, the state plays a central role in defining education policies. Besides the state, some education policies on the continent have been formulated through the international workshops. A good example of such policies is the Education For All by 2015 policy (EFA). The Pan – African movement has also initiated other education policies in Africa. In some cases policies are made in a crisis mode. In yet other instances, patterns in the education sector become policies (Nyerere, 1968; Hartwell, 1994 and Orivel & Shaw, 1996).

The other category of policies are those made as decrees by the presidents. A good example is the policy on education for self – reliance by Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, the former president of Tanzania. In Tanzania the ideologies of the then president became policy of education. Policies that are developed in such a manner are usually met with

resistance. For example in Tanzania, even though the motive behind the president prescribed policies were good- i.e. to see to it that there was equality for the underprivileged–the fact that it was a top down approach, implementation was faced with huddles {Ishumi and Maliyamkono (1995) in Legum and Mmari (1995:53)}.

Currently countries are using what is called sector wide Approaches (SWAPS). These are Education Development Plans. Education Development plans both in Anglophone and Franco- phone countries became de facto education policies. These development plans are products of technical and economic analysis (Orivel and Shaw, 1996). Examples of Anglophone and Francophone countries that have adopted this approach include Kenya, Zambia, Uganda and also Benin, Chadi, Mali and Guinea. At the time of writing, Malawi was in the final stages of preparing documentation to qualify for the Sector Wide Approach. The ten- year National Education Sector Plan 2008- 2017 was operational and donors were due to pool funds together in support of this national plan.

Education policy formulation in Malawi

From the colonial era education policies were formulated using the work of commissions. In 1926 the Department of Education was created to direct and supervise education policy (Nankwenya, 1977; Banda, 1982). After independence education policies were laid down in the MCP manifesto (Banda, 1982). Dr Banda, the first president of the Republic of Malawi had a very strong influence on educational policy (Banda, 1982). Dr Banda's view was education for social engineering. He wanted education to spearhead economic progress, meet the country's manpower requirements and to reflect the people's cultural heritage (Banda, 1982). He did not believe in mass education. His

approach was elitist and emphasized on classical education as was evidenced by his dream of building the classic Kamuzu Academy in Kasungu. Just like in Tanzania where Mwalimu Julius Nyerere's ideology of combining education with production (Ishumi & Maliyamkono, 1995) in Malawi too the idiosyncrasies of a political leader shaped the education policies of the country. Maliyamkono argues that Nyerere's Education for Self-reliance (ESR) was a macro idea introduced with the intention of making the county's education system part of the larger socio-economic machinery aimed at benefiting everyone. Cooksey (1995) in Legum and Mmari (1995: 53) points to the serious socio-economic costs of the policy arising from, among other things, public rejection (open or tacit) the idea of terminality of primary education. According to Maliyamkono, there were some successes and failures with the presidential policy and that it mostly failed at implementation level.

After Malawi embraced multi-party democracy, education policies continued to be products of political pronouncements. The Free Primary Education policy and the conversion of MCDEs to CDSS in the Secondary School Unification Policy (1998) serve as examples of products of political influence. (Kadzamira & Rose 2001).

Education policies were also put in development plans. These were usually ten – year plans and were usually developed by consultants (PriceWaterhouse, 1988). Through these plans, government articulated an economistic approach to development. As Kishindo (1997) asserts that the ultimate objective of development policy for this period was to achieve financial independence from the former colonial master. He further argues that

the achievement of such an objective would inevitably limit resources available for social services. The trend to have educational plans developed by consultants hired by donors has been common since 1988 up to 2002 (Price Waterhouse, 1988; Harrison 2002).Currently, the Ministry of Education is using the Policy and Investment Framework (PIF), which is an education development plan influenced by donors who worked with experts in the Ministry.

The reviewed literature has shown that there is consensus among proponents of inspection in terms of definitions and purpose. Most subscribe to the school improvement, accountability and transparency claims of inspection. They also acknowledge the role of improved policy and decision-making that inspection facilitates on the part of those entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring quality and control in education systems. While talking about the potential of an inspection report to fulfil these supposed roles, the literature however, does not seem to explicitly address the question how and at what level inspection could effectively and meaningfully influence the policy-making as well as review processes. Instead, what has transpired is that policies tend to get dictated by donors and other powerful players. Additionally, the literature has failed to suggest viable inspection report dissemination modes and possible fora. It has further not indicated the expected frequency policy makers could resort to inspection reports as a policy resource. Most of all, it has not shown which report should be considered by any officially established and recognised policy making forum.

Conclusion

The literature review reveals that education policy formulation is generally a reflection of the interests of the powerful, which includes politicians and international agencies.Evans (1996) observed that “one analytical point in common to most treatments of policy making is the distinction and interplay between information and technical analysis, on the one hand, and politics and power, on the other hand.” This study had been designed with the intention to generate data to test the discussed theories and offer an explanation towards identified gaps.

Chapter Three

Research Design and Methodology

This study is essentially qualitative. I employed a qualitative research methodology because I wanted to explore and gain insight into what went on in inspection vis-à-vis education policy formulation, and to present a detailed, illuminative view of the issue. Furthermore I wanted to be flexible with the design so as to leave room for emerging issues that develop in a field study and intended to analyse study data inductively (Miles & Huberman, 1994;Creswell, 1997; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000; Bell, Bush, Fox, Goodey & Goulding, 1984).

Location

The focus of this study was the South East Education Division because of proximity considerations. It was important to be realistic when selecting participating schools. They had to be schools that could easily be reached so as to make the study practicable. The division[9] covers four districts namely: Zomba (both rural and urban) Machinga, Balaka and Mangochi and all of them were included in the sample. However given the nature of the subject under investigation, it was necessary to go outside the boundaries of the division. Some respondents were therefore drawn from Ministry of Education Headquarters, state agencies involved in education and other education divisions. This

[9] The government of Malawi divided the ministry of education into six divisions for administrative purposes and as the first step towards implementing the decentralization policy.

decision was made taking into account inspection reports pathways. When officers at the Division office have generated inspection reports after an inspection visits, they send them to schools that were inspected, the ministry headquarters and copies are also sent to other divisions.

Selection of study schools within the districts

The criteria for selection of study schools was mainly based on three factors:

- **Accessibility and budget constraints** - Due to these constraints, only two schools from each district could be feasibly done.
- **The number of inspection visits a school had**. Selected schools were those that had been visited more than once over a period of five years. This was designed to check on changes made, following previous inspection reports' recommendations.
- **The need to take into account the variation in the categories of secondary schools that make up Malawi's secondary school system.** The intention was to accommodate the different types of government run secondary schools i.e. Conventional Boarding Secondary school, Conventional Day Secondary School and Community Day secondary schools, as well as their creation, whether urban or rural. It was assumed that these differences had implications on the resource endowment of the school and ultimately their capacity to implement inspection recommendations. Thus using these criteria, two schools were selected from each district making a total of ten secondary schools as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1: Showing selected study schools

District	Type of School		
	Conventional Boarding	Conventional Day	Community Day
Zomba Urban	-	Likangala	Zomba CCAP
Zomba Rural	-	-	Pirimiti Songani
Machinga	-	-	Puteya Likwenu
Balaka	Balaka	-	Mmanga
Mangochi	Mangochi	-	Nansenga

Zomba Urban has eight secondary schools, four of these are Conventional Secondary Schools (CSS) and four are Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS). Out of these, two secondary schools; Zomba CCAP and Likangala were selected. These are a CDSS and CSS respectively. They were selected because of their proximity to the Division office where inspectors come from. It was also because of the availability of resources at these schools. Zomba Rural has twenty-four secondary schools; five CSSs and nineteen CDSSs. Out of these, Songani CDSS and Pirimiti CDSS were selected. They were selected because of the number of inspections carried out at the school in the said period. They registered 4 and 3 times of inspections respectively. Machinga has nineteen secondary schools out of which four are CSSs and fifteen are CDSS from which Puteya and Likwenu both CDSSs were selected because of their easy accessibility. Balaka has fourteen secondary schools with one CSS, out of which M'manga CDSS and Balaka secondary schools were selected because of the number of inspections carried out at the schools and their accessibility. Mangochi has thirty-one secondary schools, five CSSs

and twenty-six CDSS out of which Nansenga CDSS and Mangochi secondary schools were selected.

Out of this selection of secondary schools in this study, three schools are CSSs. They have two to three class streams, high staffing levels with good qualifications. Furthermore, such schools would have adequate stocks of textbooks, a well-stocked library, a laboratory, adequate recreational facilities, and generally it is where infrastructure is in good state of repair. All the three are co-educational schools and are situated in urban areas. Six of the participating schools are poorly resourced, single stream CDSSs. The teachers in such schools are usually under qualified for that level. They normally hold a primary school teacher professional certificate. Most do not have recreational facilities and infrastructure is generally in very bad state of repair. All of them are in rural areas. One of the participating school has a unique situation in that it is operating from borrowed premises- at a primary school, as such school activities start after the owners of the premises knock off. It is situated in an urban area, has a surplus of under qualified teaching staff but with inadequate teaching and learning materials.

Selection of study participants

The selection of study respondents was mainly guided by the need to have individuals who would provide most meaningful information about the inspection experiences (Creswell, 1998; Robson, 1993). In purposive sampling researchers do not simply study whoever is available, but use their judgement to select a sample that they believe, based on prior information, will provide the data they need (Fraenkel & Wallen 2000, see also Creswell 1998). The group of respondents included teachers, head teachers, division managers, inspectors, school committees, parent teacher associations, and directors of

different sections in the ministry of education. Purposive sampling was employed to identify the relevant individuals. In the paragraphs that follow I provide an account of justifications for the various groups of respondents that were selected for the study.

School teachers

Teachers in this study are regarded as key policy actors placed at the lowest level in the education system and expected to take advantage of the inspection process to bring their issues high on government agenda. As Peters (1999) argues, that it takes concerned political actors to mobilize and bring a problem on the active policy agenda. These teachers are also implementers of the policy decisions that the education system makes. Thus, they are a useful source of first hand information on the inspection service and its value in education policy formulation process. As such, I sought to find out from them the issues that they would normally raise during an inspection visit and what the inspectors bring to their attention. In particular, those that need to be brought to the attention of policy makers. I also sought to understand the teachers' perceptions and expectations of the inspection service and establish whether they actually utilise the interaction this service creates for them to influence education policy formulation. A total of twenty teachers from the ten study schools were interviewed.

Head teachers and heads of departments

Head teachers and Heads of Departments, just like teachers, are at the lowest decision making level in the system of Secondary School Administration (Handbook for Secondary School Administration MoE, 1982; SEP, 2000). School heads are sources of authority (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1993) and are the final decision makers at school

level. Bakhda (2004) points out that a head teacher is a pivot around which many aspects of the school revolve. He/she is the person in charge of every detail of the running of the school; be it academic or administrative. They are closest to teachers and are responsible for spearheading the development of the vision and mission of the school, drawing up a school development plan, staff motivation and staff appraisal. Head teachers are also responsible for resourcing the curriculum and managing change, conflict, quality, resources, the learning environments, as well as taking and implementing decisions (Everard & Morris, 2002; Commonwealth Secretariat, 1993) hence their input into this research. All the ten head teachers from the ten study schools were interviewed. However, only three heads of department[10] for humanities from three schools were interviewed. This was because most of the schools were CDSSs where teachers are under qualified. Heads of humanities department were selected in order to get a representative picture of how heads of academic departments in secondary schools dealt with the inspection report when it got to them.

Inspectors

The inspector plays the role of providing feedback in either direction (MoE, 1982). Two inspectors (humanities) from South Eastern Education Division were interviewed. These inspectors were purposively chosen on the basis of the number of target schools inspected. To triangulate and check the validity of information sourced from these inspectors from the South Education Division, one more inspector from the South West Education Division was also interviewed.

[10] The post of a head of department is a substantive post in the education system in Malawi and ideally it is held by teachers qualified to teach at secondary level

Division managers

Division Managers link schools and the ministry headquarters in all aspects of education administration. Despite the defined geographical domain, this study also interviewed two Division managers from South West and Shire Highlands Education Divisions. This was because at the time of the research, I was the Division Manager of South East Education Division. These managers were interviewed on how inspection reports are used, for policy decisions at school and division levels.

Directors

The Directors are custodians of the most valuable information in the education system. Six Directors from the ministry were interviewed. These included the directors of: Planning, who is responsible for overall policy development and planning; Inspection and Advisory Services, responsible for quality control and quality assurance; Secondary Administration responsible for secondary school management; Department of Teacher Education (DTED) responsible for teacher pre- service and In –service Training;

Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) which deals with curriculum and materials development as well as In-service Training and the Malawi National Examinations Board, which handles national assessment. This study regard directors as officers placed at the highest level in the education system who are supposed to act on the inspection report recommendations leading to formulation of policies that are informed. It is expected that from the inspection reports, directors evaluate, review and update the policies in the system in order to align them with the changes and the realities on the ground.

Teaching service commission and human resources department

Teaching Service Commission (TSC) and Human Resources (HR) section in the ministry deal with personnel issues. These issues range from hiring, deployment, promotion and career pathing to discipline. Hence the input of the Chairman of Teaching Service Commission and the Controller of Human Resource Management in the ministry was of great importance in this research.

Data collection methods

Most of the data was collected through various forms of interviews involving a wide range of respondents and documentary reviews. To carry out these wide ranging interviews I needed the help of research assistants.

The selection of research assistants and training

Two Research Assistants, both of them ladies were selected based on experience in teaching, data collection and a good grasp of the English language. This was because they were going to interact with head teachers and teachers with some good academic background. One of the research assistants was a holder of a Bachelor of Education Degree from the University of Malawi and a classroom teacher for twelve years. She had also been inspected on two occasions by the time she was asked to help with the collection of data for this study. The other Research Assistant had a Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) and had worked as a data collector and enumerator for 10 years for a number of academic studies. She had also worked as a data collector on large-scale surveys by the National Statistical Office and the Centre for Social Research.

I took the responsibility of training the Research Assistants because I was the one who conceptualised the study and as such had an in-depth understanding of the instruments they were going to use. The training took three days spending a maximum of two hours each day and it was structured as follows: Day 1) familiarisation with objectives of the study and data collection instruments, the geographical domain to be covered and how to use the tape recorders. Day 2) pilot testing activity in two secondary schools in Zomba urban education district. Day 3) refining of the instruments and going through a checklist of what they were supposed to carry and what they were out to do.

Piloting of instruments

To ascertain the worthiness and reliability of the interview protocols that were developed, they were subjected to an expert's analysis and advice. Hence my course supervisor was consulted. Bell,at al (1984) persuade researchers to pass on their interview schedules to experienced people for comment. In addition, because the possibility of misinterpreting questions was of concern, instruments were field –tested at two secondary schools in Zomba: Zomba Urban and Mulunguzi. This enabled me to engage with the real situation and to assess the feasibility of what was proposed in terms of time, effort and resources (Robson, 1993; Blaxter et al, 2001; Gay, 1987). Following the field-testing of the instruments, problems with terminology and interpretation were identified and the instruments were refined.

Semi-structured questionnaire interviews

A semi-structured questionnaire was administered to 20 teachers, 10 head teachers and 3 heads of departments (humanities). I originally planned to interview a head of department for humanities in each of the 10 schools in order to get a representative picture of how academic departments dealt with inspection reports when they got them. However, during the study research assistants only managed to get heads of departments in only 3 schools out of the 10. The other 7 schools said they did not have people in those positions. Semi-structured interviews are carefully worded interview schedules which permit respondents to express themselves at some length, but offer enough shape to prevent aimless rambling (Bell et al, 1984). They require of the interviewer to have clearly defined purposes and seek to achieve them through some flexibility in wording and in the order of presentation (Robson, 1993). Through semi-structured interviews the respondents were given more opportunity to contribute towards the subject than would have been possible if the interviews were strictly structured. Two research assistants[11] who worked in partnership conducted the interviews. One of the assistants asked the questions while the other made notes. The interviews were also tape-recorded. Division Inspectors, Head teachers, and Heads of Departments and teachers were subjected to this type of interview.

Key informant interviews

Key Informants are very important sources of information. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2000), key informants often provide detailed information about a group's past and about contemporary happenings and relationships that others might miss. In this

[11] Research Assistants are the people who helped me go into schools to collect data on my behalf. I could not personally go to schools to collect data because of ethical considerations. At the time I was conducting this study I was the Education Division Manager for the division under investigation, as such, I avoided contaminating data as I anticipated that respondents would be giving answers just to please me.

study identified key informants were the Directors at Ministry headquarters, Division Managers, and Directors of Malawi National Examinations Board (MANEB), Malawi Institute of Education (MIE); Chairman of the Teaching Service Commission and the Controller of Human Resources. These were subjected to in-depth interviewing regarding what action is taken on inspection reports when they are received by their respective offices, and the extent to which the inspection recommendations are taken into account in the formulation of policy.

Focus group interviews

Focus groups are groups of individuals selected for their particular characteristics specifically convened for interview purposes. Merton et al. (1956) quoted in Robson (1993) suggest that focused interviews can be used where one wants to investigate a particular situation, phenomenon or event. Individuals are sought who have been involved in that situation. The interviews concentrate on the subjective experiences of those involved. The aim is to stimulate people's thinking and elicit ideas about a specific topic. The phenomenon that was being investigated in this study was school inspection and its relationship to education policy formulation. Two groups were organised and subjected to this methodology. One focus group discussion was conducted with eight (8) Head teachers and another was held with ten (10) teachers. This was because it was assumed that both groups know about inspection and education policymaking. Additionally, it was also envisaged that they would be among the ultimate users of this study results hence their subjective experiences could reveal quite a lot about these processes. Among the issues discussed were inspection report and reporting procedures,

feedback processes and policy formulation. The proceedings of the focus group discussions were recorded.

Initially both teachers and head teachers demanded that they be paid an allowance and were also hesitant to be tape recorded as they feared that their identities would not be protected. They also demanded to know specifically the name of the student carrying out the study. It took a while before they became agreeable to participate in the discussions. To persuade them the two research assistants reassured them of highest confidentiality in that no names were going to be mentioned as they responded to questions. They also convinced them that as teachers they were themselves prospective researchers, as such they would require other people to respond to their questions. The researchers showed them that the success of the study depended on their cooperation through their participation. These arguments apparently persuaded them to participate. It seems that the head teachers and the teachers viewed issues of inspection as very sensitive and not to be discussed publicly.

Document analysis

Since the focus of the study was on the role of inspection reports in the process of education policy formulation I embarked on a search of relevant documents at school, division, and headquarters level. The following documents were reviewed: Inspectors Handbook; Inspection Review Studies; the Policy and Investment Framework; Joint Sector Review reports; Secondary Education Project (SEP) reports; School Time Structures (e.g. timetables and school calendars), Rules and Regulations of the study schools; Ministerial circulars; Divisional circulars; Teaching Service Regulations; The

Ten-Year Education Development Plans; The Vision 2020 Report, The Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (MPRSP) and the Malawi Government Development Strategy(MGDS) Inspection reports at division and summary inspection reports at Ministry headquarters; and minutes of management meetings at headquarters. These policy documents were reviewed to investigate how much they mirror inspection report recommendations and to investigate how much of the inspection report goes into the defining policy documents in Malawi.

Teachers, heads of departments and head teachers were interviewed to source evidence of school records such as: the inspection reports, the school development plans, action plans, school rules and the time tables among others. These, it was expected would give me the required information and the recommendations that have been made over the years. Timetables and school rules were accessed in all the ten schools. However, inspection reports were found only in three schools and School development plans were non-existent.

Data analysis

In this study, data collection and analysis were interwoven from the start. Immediately from the field, I started listening to the tapes and compared what I heard from the tapes with the summaries made in research pads. This helped me to quickly notice and fill the existing information gaps. For example, I used to listen to the recorded interviews with an instrument in my hand. I used this instrument as a checklist. I followed up on every question that was asked. This method helped me to track questions that were missed out. Where a number of issues were missed out I asked the research assistants to get back to

the respondent. Afterwards I made transcriptions from what I listened to and made summaries in the margins. These were then sorted out into appropriate categories in order to bring order, structure and meaning to the data. I familiarised myself with the data by reading the transcripts over and over in the process writing down analytical ideas.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994) early analysis helps the field- worker, cycle back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating strategies for collecting new, often better, data. Miles and Huberman contend that this can be a healthy corrective for built-in blind spots and that it makes analysis an ongoing, lively enterprise that contributes to the energizing process of fieldwork. Additionally, I started early analysis of data to try to avoid piling up of data, which would be difficult to manage in the end. As Robson (1993: 385) rightly puts it that qualitative data rapidly cumulate, and even with regular processing and summarizing, it is easy to get overwhelmed. Furthermore, in my early analysis of data, I was making a contact summary sheet where I was recording the main concepts, themes, and issues for every contact made. The transcribed tape recordings and field notes of interviews were converted into write-ups in order to make them intelligible. Eventually, the data gathered from the interviews, document reviews, focus group discussions were analysed through first level coding, second level coding or pattern codes to themes or memoing which was later interpreted into a full story. (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Creswell 1998; Robson 1993)

Limitations of the study

Accessing documents from Ministry Headquarters was quite problematic especially minutes of management meetings where policies were made. This being an academic study it had limitations on time as such time constraints affected the study in that data collection, analysis including report writing had to be hastened in order to meet dead lines.

Ethical issues

The Ministry, Divisions and the schools were written seeking their permission to conduct the study. During data collection, the purpose of the study was explained. Above all, the shared benefits of the study (between the researcher and the schools) were explained (Robson, 1993; Sallant & Dillman, 1994; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). Head teachers and teachers were thanked for permitting the researchers to conduct the study in their schools and for sparing their time to answer questions. Similarly, directors were thanked for giving me some time to interview them.

Chapter four

Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings of this study and they are organized along the specific objectives outlined in chapter one. To this end, I begin by presenting the generation of an inspection report including the reporting process as well as the policy and decision-making levels in the education system and their levels of competencies. Next, I examine the nature of recommendations and show the extent to which they are implemented at different levels of decision making in the education system in Malawi. Further, I analyse evidence relating to the existence of monitoring mechanisms within the Inspection Directorate while paying attention to the mandate of the office and show the implications this has on the overall implementation of the inspection report. I conclude by showing the extent to which the inspection report is accommodated in education policy and decision-making processes in the education system in Malawi.

Generation of the report

The Ministry of Education requires that inspection visits be made to schools for the purposes of evaluating teaching and learning alongside other matters that affect pupil

performance. This is done to promote school improvement and to provide a source of expert comment as a basis for national education policy (MoE, 2003). Inspectors either from headquarters or education divisions conduct such visits. Secondary school inspectors collect data pertaining to inter alia enrolments; staffing levels of a school; teacher qualifications; the curriculum; student achievements, attainments and competencies; curriculum content and its appropriateness to each level; assessment procedures; availability or non availability of teaching and learning materials; teaching approaches; student behaviour and attitudes; staff development; staff/student welfare and discipline; teacher competencies; school environment; community participation; and school management (MoE, 1982; MoE, 2003; Harrison, 2000).

Secondary school inspection visits can either be full or follow up inspections. In either case, the inspectors visit in teams comprising subject specialists led by a Lead Inspector who guides and coordinates the production of a report. After the visits, discussions are immediately held with each teacher inspected; thereafter with the school head teacher and the entire staff. Strengths and weaknesses of school management and lessons observed are pointed out and the group of inspectors comes up with a record of judgments (ROJ) from which recommendations are made. It is through this process that the Inspection Report (IR) is generated. The inspection process is designed in such a way that the resultant report is as encompassing as possible in order to facilitate decision and policy

making at different levels in the system. The report is then dispatched to various stakeholders within the education system (MoE, 1982; Harrison, 2000; MoE, 2003).

The official reporting process

Inspectors placed in education divisions originate the Inspection Report. On a few occasions, inspectors from the ministry also visit schools and produce reports[12]. Ideally, the division through the Principal Inspector sends this report to the inspected schools and to the ministry of education 3-6 weeks after the inspection for action and policy reviews. In the ministry, the report is received by the Directorate of Inspection, which in turn is expected to distribute to all directors. These include; the Director of Educational Planning (DEP); Director of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE); Director of Basic Education (DBE); Director of the Department of Teacher Education and Development (DTED); the Controller of Human Resource Management (CHRM) within the ministry and Chairman for the Teaching Service Commission (TSC).

The Directorate of Inspection is required to produce quarterly and annual reports[13] after which it takes the initiative to call for a special management meeting (Ndalama, 2002; MoE, 2003). The purpose of such a meeting is to catalyze dissemination of the IR to senior management in the ministry and to provide the minister and top management an

[12] Inspection of schools is still a function of the central office in Malawi despite the fact that the education sector has its functions devolved. Besides, it has to be born in mind that secondary school management is not fully devolved.

[13] A quarterly inspection report is a consolidated summary report written from the reports received from the six education divisions submitted to the inspectorate directorate four times per year.

opportunity to have an understanding of inspection related issues. The minister is enabled to disseminate the same at cabinet level (Pricewaterhouse, 1988; Harrison, 2000; MoE, 2003). It is presumed that during these management meetings directors pick up issues touching on their mandates for appropriate action.

At school level, the head teacher receives and shares the contents of the report with teachers and the School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs). Within the originating division, the inspectorate section shares the report with the manager and other sectional heads. The Commonwealth Secretariat (1998:9) has pointed out that the final intention of an inspection report is to inform the different stakeholders of the quality of education being provided. Its purpose is to provide all stakeholders with key issues and findings identified during the inspection and to highlight key areas, which require immediate attention and provide advice on possible actions to be taken. Table 2 shows the official channels for of the report:

Table 2: Showing official inspection report channels

Report	Period	Written by	Distribution to	Action to be taken
Full Inspection Report	Within six weeks of inspection visit	Lead Inspector	Division School District	Record of visit, Follow-up purposes Use to compile Action Plan For information
School Inspection Report (executive summary only)	Within 6 weeks	Lead Inspector	The inspection Directorate HQ	To verify that Inspectors carried out an inspection
Lesson observation	On leaving	Inspectors	Teacher Observed Head teacher	For information For transparency For promotion purposes
Divisional Review And action plan	Termly	Divisional Inspectors	HQ Other divisions Districts	Information, monitoring & To compile annual report For information
National inspection Report & Action Plans	Annually	Director/Chief Inspector assisted By Subject Inspectors	Minister Divisions Districts	Information & policy purposes Information & division Comparison Information
District Review and Action plans	Termly	District managers assisted by district Inspectors	Div. Managers Local Education Authority District education advisors	Used to compile termly review To compile action plans in line with govt policies For information & for Inter-zonal comparisons

Source: Harrison,, 2000:17

Table 2 shows that the proposed official channels for the report would serve important purposes at various levels in the system. For example, at school level the report is a basis for action planning. Similarly at levels higher than the school, purposes for disseminating the report range from transparency, development of Action Plans, teacher appraisal, monitoring and policy formulation. This study reveals that the official communication channels set out for the report are either unknown or not adhered to as evidenced by the absence of inspection reports both in the inspectorate and in management.

Dissemination at school level

The study found that the reporting and dissemination of inspection findings is quite limited at all levels in the education system except for the inspected secondary school. At school level, the scenario was different in that head teachers of 9 out of the 10 schools that were sampled said they received and disseminated the reports. The study has revealed that staff meetings are an established avenue for the dissemination of inspection reports. Seven head teachers out of the 10 said they called for a staff meeting to disseminate the inspection report. The head teachers said they use the staff meeting to discuss strengths and weaknesses highlighted and recommendations made in the reports. They engage with their staff in joint planning and come up with solutions to the problems raised in the reports. Together they come up with 'school specific policies' to deal with problems identified. At one secondary school in Mangochi for example, when divisional inspectors noted that the discipline of the students was bad and that teaching and learning

was unsatisfactory, the school responded to the report by forming small committees to work on action plans for different areas of concern. In other words 'school specific policies' were formulated to deal with the problems identified by inspectors. The head teacher called them 'measures'.

The setback at school level was that reports are generally received late. In some cases reports were received after three month, in others after six months. This supposes inefficiency at the division as regards processing of reports. It also to suggests that management at the division does not follow up on the outputs and outcomes of an activity into which resources were invested.

Reporting and dissemination at division and ministry headquarters levels

Unclear inspection pathway

This study revealed that it is not clear to some officers how the inspection report should be channelled from one level of decision making to another after the report has been originated. Dispatch of reports from the Division was suspect. It was problematic in this study to trace the inspection report pathway from the division to the inspection directorate and to other directorates in the ministry. Although the registry for reports in the inspectorate section of the division showed that reports were dispatched to the Ministry of Education and to the inspected schools, interviews with several directors

showed that the report does not seem to circulate as is expected. As a result, not all directors who are potential users of the inspection report receive it. Interviews with directors reveal that the report is hardly circulated to the other directorates for action and for policy reviews. For example, out of the 8 directors that were interviewed, only one acknowledged having received an inspection report once from the Directorate of Inspection during the five years he has served in that position. One director claimed to have received a report from the zone.

The director had worked at that post for seven years at the time of interview. The respondent above, being a director, was not supposed to receive a report from a single zone in that form. Inspection reports going to that level are supposed to be in the form of a consolidated quarterly, half-year or annual report from the Directorate of Inspection. Such reports are meant to give directors a picture of what the education situation is like countrywide. This is done in order to enable directors take appropriate action and to assist them plan strategic policies. Given the fact that there are 350 zones[14] and close to 100 secondary school clusters,[15] it would be chaotic for directors to receive individual inspection reports from the so many zones and clusters countrywide.

[14] A zone is a cluster of 10 to 15 primary schools headed by a primary school education methods advisor (inspector)

[15] A cluster is a grouping of 10 to 15 secondary schools from within one catchment area. The grouping is made in such a way as to facilitate sharing of resources and teacher professional development activities.

The Teaching Service Commission indicated they did not receive reports yet these would help them promote teachers. Similarly, the Directorate of Teacher Education indicated they too did not receive reports, yet as a department responsible for Pre-Service and In-Service Teacher Training they need feedback of the quality of teacher training in the country. The director had been at that post for four years at the time of interviews and yet had had no access to an inspection report over the whole of that period. This trend indicates that there is inefficiency within the ministry's bureaucracy. As the report is hardly circulated among directors their action on the report is not evident. One of the effects of such a trend is that it excludes some of the potential users leading to delayed implementation of inspection report recommendations or to no implementation at all as responsible officers do not know what the report asked of them.

Intra-sectional reporting irregularities

Interviews with the Directorate of Inspection revealed that when reports are received they are passed on to one officer whose specific role was not defined and no one seemed to follow up on what happened to the report. The directorate stated that:

'I remember one time before we had these assistant directors[16], we had a certain officer, normally I would give the report to her but then what I learnt over time is that she did not

[16] Assistant director is a position in EMAS below the director and deputy director. They work like heads of academic departments in inspection. There are four posts: Assistant director science, humanities, languages and technical education. Currently (2006) the office of the assistant director technical is still vacant as there was no candidate to be interviewed when interviews were conducted.

know what to do with the report.'(Interview with the Directorate of inspection, 2nd June 2006).

It also revealed that no feedback is given to schools:

> *'We do not do that because the only big problem is I am sure I remember one time I was telling my colleagues that when we receive these inspection reports we need to respond back saying we have received but I think we have not done that but I think now with the assistance of the assistant directors we will be able to.'* (Interview with the Directorate of inspection, 2nd June 2006)

The study established that the positions of assistant directors got filled in 2006, after being vacant for 7 years. What the comment suggests is that in the absence of the assistant directors the past 7 years, inspection reports were just been filed away. This state of affairs in the directorate seems to suggest apathy and an absence of monitoring mechanisms in the system.

The office of the Assistant Director is critical in relation to inspection services. The office is expected to take charge of matters raised by the reports. They are expected to initiate the feedback process, conduct follow-ups, and conceptualize interventions to remedy the declining standards in the system. Teachers and inspectors look up to them as think tanks to provide direction and steer the system towards making qualitative improvements. Additionally, they are advisors to the Director and her Deputy on matters of curriculum

implementation. They are responsible for subject inspectors below them in the inspectorate from headquarters, divisions, and districts all the way to the zone, and by extension, for subject teachers of the academic departments they are heading.

Uncoordinated reporting process

The study revealed that inspection reporting is not a coordinated process. This lack of coordination is apparent both at lower and higher levels of decision-making, i.e. the school, the division and ministry headquarters. During the interviews, one director said that she got the report from a division; another said she got the report from a zone. Yet another got it from the Inspection Directorate. The Principal Secretary got the report from the division. The rest of the directors did not get the report. All these directors however, should ideally receive the report from the Inspection Directorate. During interviews the Inspection Directorate claimed they rarely received reports from the divisions. The most recent one the director could recall having received was from a district, which was sent to her in 2004. Such a claim raises a lot of questions as regards what happens to the report when it gets to the ministry. It suggests that the report is either ignored or is mislaid by those who receive it and are responsible for its dissemination within and outside of the ministry. In this connection, two inspectors interviewed in this study had this to say**:**

'Unfortunately there is no feedback on most of the reports sent to headquarters and sometimes when you try to make a follow up you are told that the report was not received or it is lost' (Inspector interview, 8th August, 2006).

Another said that: *'no concrete response comes from the ministry on issues directed to them, which are most often beyond the capacity of the divisions. Sometimes you do not even know who will act on what, so it becomes hard to follow up the IR.'*(Inspector interview, 17th September 2006)

A search for quarterly inspection reports for the period 2000 to 2005 yielded only one copy, consolidated for 2003. The absence of quarterly inspection reports in the ministry suggests that either the divisions do not indeed send the IRs for the Directorate of Inspection to refer to when consolidating reports or that the directorate is not devoted to the cause of the reports that are received from the divisions to use them to develop a version that could command the attention of all the stakeholders. It also serves as evidence for lack of follow-ups. This trend appears to have a negative effect on what could be possible action on the IR. As such, action on the report is unlikely, as responsible officers do not seem to know what the report asked of them. This is manifested through a number of recurrent, unresolved problems in the education system, which could have been solved if the inspection report received attention. Issues regarding teacher shortfalls in the system, inadequate teaching and learning materials, and the absence of institutionalized teacher professional development programmes are among other problems and concerns inspection reports always highlight begging for immediate redress and high-level attention by decision and policy makers. For Example: The 2002 Inspection Report for Songani CDSS recommended that qualified teachers

should be sent to the school for at the time of inspection the school was operating with inadequate under qualified teachers. This same recommendation was repeated in the 2004 and 2005 inspection reports of the same school. In the same vein, a report for Likwenu CDSS recommended that in-service teacher training be conducted because lesson observation at the time of inspection revealed weaknesses in the teaching and learning at the school. This recommendation was repeated in two more consecutive reports. (See appendices number 5 and 6, excerpts of quarterly inspection report and school inspection report).

Overall, the study has revealed that the reporting and dissemination of the IR is grossly flawed, poorly coordinated and hardly disseminated in the education system as evidenced by the unavailability of the report in the ministry's directorates that are critical decision and policy-making levels. This poorly coordinated inspection reporting system presents many problems. For example, it creates information gaps in the system. Useful information is hardly conveyed to various decisions and policy making levels in the system and consequently, there is no feedback both to the originators of the report and to the inspected schools.

Policy making levels

Policy and decision making levels and their levels of competence

The study sought to identify policy and decision-making levels in the system. In addition, the study also set out to establish levels of competence for each policy and decision-

making level. The criterion for identifying a policy and decision making level in the system was through finding out whether or not inspection report recommendations (IRRs) were directed to that level and also establish whether the level was able to make a decision and implement it after an inspection report was received.

As regards competence of identified policy levels, the type of decision implemented by them pointed to their level of competence and mandate in the system. Using these criteria, the study established policy and decision making levels in the education system as follows: the classroom teacher, the Heads of academic departments in secondary schools, the Head Teacher, the Division Manager, Directors and the Principal Secretary.

The school

The study found that at school, decisions are made at three levels namely: the classroom teacher, the head of department and the head teacher. The classroom teacher takes such decisions as methodologies to use in teaching a particular subject, frequency of student assessment, use of teaching and learning aids, classroom records to open and to keep updating, e.g. the class register; checking on student attendance; period register (this gives evidence of whether a teacher entered a classroom and has taught); maintaining the student progress book to keep track of student performance; deciding on how many periods to teach and the duration of a class period although most of these are government prescribed. The head of academic department takes such decisions as which prescribed

books to buy and use, allocation of subject teachers; and judging the appropriateness and relevance of teachers' schemes and records of work; and which subject areas deserve a school-based in-service training for teachers. While the head teacher as overall responsible officer takes decisions regarding general management such as: teacher/student discipline; teacher/student supervision; teacher/student punctuality; timetabling; ensuring that there is good sanitation at the school; developing school calendar of events; initiating staff development activities and procurement of teaching and learning materials among others.

The head teacher at school was identified as a decision level where implementation of IRRs was done most. For example, all the ten head teachers in the study were able to: initiate general cleaning programmes within the school, improved teacher and student punctuality, made teachers come up with schemes and records of work for checking and endorsement. Seven head teachers out of the ten developed action plans. Three out of the ten head teachers opened time books and also asked teachers to open a number of teaching and administrative records.

Education division

Decisions acted upon by this level include: teacher deployment, distribution of teaching and learning materials when available, sending inspectors to schools, running In-Service teacher training when money is available, transfer of students in schools, conducting

management meetings with head teachers and dealing with minor discipline issues to do with students and teachers. The division ranked second as a power base and as a level where some implementation of IRRs was done. The division implemented some of the IRRs like posting of teachers, conducting teacher in-service training, organizing management meetings with head teachers and carrying out teacher supervision.

Ministry headquarters

This level deals with policy planning and has oversight of the implementation of education policy and programmes. It also initiates policy reviews and changes towards effective decisions of teaching and learning. Various departments deal with specific aspects of education. The directorate of inspection acts as a link between the schools and headquarters. However, this study has established that the Directorate of Inspections fails to effectively disseminate information from the field to the relevant departments. This study found that recommendations went unattended to if distributed. For example recommendation on the need to supply adequate teaching and learning materials had not been acted upon. This suggests that there is little or no action at directors' level on the inspection report. The study revealed that the incumbent secretary for education received only one report from one division. This situation raises the question of the basis upon which the ministry of education plans and makes its strategic decisions.

Nature of recommendations

The study sought to find out what sort of recommendations inspection reports make to various levels of policy and decision making to determine the extent to which they are implemented. A careful review of inspection reports from the Division to schools and to the ministry has revealed that in general, inspection reports carry some kind of standard recommendations. This study has placed these standard recommendations that appear in inspection reports into categories as follows: academic, management, teacher/pupil discipline, and teacher welfare and sanitation or school environment. Below are tables showing some of the inspections.

Table 2: Showing categories of standard recommendations to schools

Academic	**Management**	**T/S[17] Discipline**	**T/welfare[18]**	**Sanitation**
1.Produce schemes of work	-Carry out regular teacher supervision -Open a time book	Refrain from dating	Build teachers houses	Keep school premises clean
2. Regular student assessment	Conduct School based -inset	Refrain from truancy		
3. Use T/L materials	Buy adequate T/L materials.	Discipline bullies		
4. Finish the syllabi before exams	Check on T/S punctuality and absenteeism	Refrain from absenteeism		
5. Keep updated classroom records	Proper timetabling	Refrain from beer drinking		
6 Use participatory methods	Keep updated records			
7. Improve delivery Of lesson	Develop an action plan			
	Construct of toilets, Classrooms & labs			
	Check schemes of work			
	Reduce drop out			

[17] T/S discipline stands for teacher and student discipline

[18] T/welfare- stands for teacher welfare

Table 3: Showing categories of standard recommendations to the division

Academic	Management	T/S Discipline	T/welfare
1.Conduct In-Service for teachers	Improve funding to schools	To Process student Discipline fast	Pay teachers salaries on time
2. Carry out regular inspections	Control student transfers	To Process teacher discipline issues fast	Build teachers houses
3. Orient teachers on TALULAR[19]	Buy adequate T/L materials.		
4. Organize orientations on the new curriculum	Identify qualified teachers and send them to CDSSs		
	Organize management Meetings for H/T		
	Deploy teachers equitably between Urban and Rural		

Standard recommendations to the ministry

The report requires that the ministry should address the problem of shortage of teachers in the system, speed up supply of teaching and learning resources, consider giving incentives to teachers who are hard working, give incentives to teachers working in difficult environments, train the unqualified and the under qualified teachers who are already in secondary schools in the system and control admissions and transfers of students to secondary schools to lessen congestion and overcrowding.

Critical issues

An analysis of the reports revealed that the IR also catalogues a number of aspects, which are referred to as **"critical issues."** Normally these are not directed to the attention of any designated officer or office. Issues in this category range from: lack of text books in the schools, teachers inadequate knowledge of subject matter, shortage of teachers,

[19] TALULAR- stands for teaching and learning using locally available resources

high drop out rate, high absenteeism, under qualified teachers, inadequate lesson preparation, non-examinable subjects not being taught, practical aspects of subjects like agriculture, sciences and home economics not being done, head teachers not managing effectively, head teachers not supervising teachers, frequent teacher transfers, in some cases teachers overstaying in one place, to lack of community involvement.

Trends and factors influencing implementation of inspection recommendations at different levels.

The study has established that not all the recommendations that the report carries get implemented at various levels of policy and decision making in the system. For the purposes of discussion in this study, the Inspection Report Recommendation (IRRs) have been classified into three categories: the 'easy' to implement, the 'not so easy' to implement, and those beyond head teachers' ability to implement. This study shows that implementation of inspection report recommendations varies with level and with nature of recommendation given. For example**,** at school level, some recommendations were deemed feasible and affordable hence easy to implement while other recommendations were deemed as not so easy to implement at that level, and yet still others were 'difficult and beyond the head teacher's capacity' to implement. A similar pattern takes place at the division. The study therefore argues that nature of a given recommendation determines its implementation.

The ‘easy’ to implement category

The study shows that head teachers found implementation of the following recommendations easy: organizing school management records, improving on school sanitation, asking teachers and students to be punctual for classes, checking on teacher’s schemes and records of work, opening of time books, improving pupil discipline, producing a school calendar of events, using the syllabus when scheming work, improvising some teaching and learning aids, delegating some responsibilities and writing mission statements among others. In all the schools sampled, head teachers said they started implementing these easy recommendations immediately they received the reports. These recommendations were deemed easy to implement by head teachers because according to them (head teachers) they demanded less in terms of resources hence their feasibility and affordability.

The ‘not so easy’ to implement category

The study established that there are recommendations that are ‘not so easy’ to be implemented at school level. These include: regular teacher supervision by the head teacher, school based in-service training, improved delivery of lessons, use of participatory methodologies, discipline of teachers, completion of the syllabus before students sit for their national examinations, and construction of either classrooms or teachers houses. For example much as inspectors persistently make in-service training as one of the recommendations to schools, the study has revealed that, such a

recommendation is not usually feasible and affordable because most schools do not have qualified and experienced teachers. The case in point is community day secondary schools where the study discovered that teachers rarely hold a diploma as a minimum teaching certificate. A head teacher had this to say about In-Service Teacher Training:

> *'some of the subjects that we offer, especially teachers in this CDSS we have some teachers who are not qualified in their subjects so we suggested to have orientation for some subjects which have just come such as social studies because these teachers are just teaching with experience from primary school so it becomes difficult'.* (Head teacher interview, Thursday, 4th May, 2006).

The head teacher reported that the division officials advised that he should conduct a school-based in-service training to deal with the problem.

> *'its where the problem is, that they just talked of finances and they just suggested of school based seminars where we just get some SEMAs[20] from the division and some other teachers who are well versed based in our cluster even some teachers in our schools who are experienced in that area so that we can sit down may be one week end to discuss some of the problems and how we can deal with them.'* (Head teacher interview, Thursday, 4th May 2006).

The head teacher is raising a very crucial issue that merits serious reflection by policy makers in the system. The system apparently tries to resolve the problem of Teacher Pre-

[20] SEMA is an acronym for senior education methods advisor (secondary school inspector) based at the division office.

Service Training with In-Service Teacher Training using incompetent staff at school level. The cluster system is not the best alternative to resort to because some of the clusters do not have qualified teachers in most subject areas.

Further, the study discovered that the system does not make efforts to assist schools to implement the recommendations that they receive. In the cited case the recommendation demanded an in-service teacher training but the school was not provided with resources. Out of the 10 schools to which such an IRR was made only 2 head teachers of a school in Mangochi and another in Zomba confidently implemented the trainings while two head teachers from CDSSs in Machinga indicated this was not an easy recommendation to implement. Not easy because their teachers had no adequate competencies to undertake such an assignment. The two that implemented the recomendation are CSSs which are relatively well resourced than the other two who. are under resourced. It was unfair to place same demands schools with different resource endowment.

Evidence from inspection report indicates that teachers from CDSSs mostly struggle teaching some subjects like sciences. This is evidenced by the low ratings[21] schools in this category get under quality of teaching and learning (Puteya CDSS Inspection Reort, 2003; Songani Inspection Report 2004; Mmanga CDSS Inspection Report, 2003; Quarterly Inspection Report, 2003). Additionally, the study discovered that the demand

[21] low ratings-the inspection report instrument that is used to collect classroom data rates the quality of learning ranging from very good, good, satisfactory, barely satisfactory and unsatisfactory.

for in-service teacher training is high in Community Day Secondary Schools. This high demand for in-service is a symptom of deficiencies teachers have in various subject areas they are entrusted with. Hence asking such teachers to mount school based in-service compromises quality improvement in a very big way.

Other recommendations in the 'not so easy' to implement category were about using participatory methodologies, one teacher commented as follows:

> *' as for the issue of participatory approaches as I said we look at workloads, if you see that time and workload are not or ,you do not have time , you have much work to do, you have no choice but to use the lecture method. And we also consider the availability of material resources to facilitate us'* (Teacher interview, 8th May, 2006)

The evidence suggests that sometimes, inspectors make recommendations to schools without regard to resource constraints and other considerations like policy requirements. For example, for schools to adopt participatory approaches they require adequate Teaching and Learning materials and relevant training for the same. For a school to concentrate on participatory methodologies the curriculum orientation has to shift from being exam oriented to an outcomes-based orientation. And for a head teacher to conduct teacher supervision, he requires adequate staff such that he is left with ample time to concentrate on management issues. This study has however shown that the system has an

acute shortage of teachers so much so that even when such recommendations are made those to implement are unable to.

Beyond head teachers capacity category

The study also reveals that the inspection report carries recommendations that are 'beyond the head teacher's capacity' to implement. For example: asking schools to build laboratories and libraries, to reorganizing timetables so as to improve on contact time, to reduce drop out cases, buy adequate teaching and learning materials including to improve stock of science equipment and rehabilitating school infrastructure (Likwenu CDSS Inspection Report, 2003; Songani CDSS Inspection Report, 2005; quarterly Inspection Report, 2003).

These recommendations require high-level policy attention as such they ought to be directed at policy makers at national level who are mandated to deal with such policy related areas. Some such IRRs require an upward revision in the amount of fees to be paid by students; an example is where an IRR asks a school head to buy adequate teaching and learning materials. A decision to raise fees can never be made at the grassroots. Similarly, recommendations like need for staff development activities in the school and that head teachers should take immediate action on offending teachers are beyond the head teachers mandate.

The study revealed that such recommendations made at this level did not attract any action from the head teachers. One head teacher said that:

> '*when I got difficult recommendations I just referred them back to the inspection team, as I did not know what to do with them."* (Head teacher interview, Thursday, 4th May 2006) Another said that: *"I did not do anything about them as I noted that to implement such type of recommendations required a lot of money and in some cases expertise.*' (Head teacher interview, Monday, 8th May 2006).

The inaction by most school heads to such difficult recommendations suggests that the inspection team misdirected some of their recommendations. It connotes that sometimes inspectors peg recommendations to a level that either does not have the mandate or the capacity to implement. This also raises the question of the training or induction that inspectors in the system undergo.

The study established that some recommendations made at school level seem more appropriate for the division or ministry levels than the school. The case of teacher in-service training and buying of adequate teaching and learning materials serves to demonstrate this point. Similarly, building of complex school infrastructures such as laboratories or science rooms is the mandate of physical facilities unit[22], just as buying

[22] Physical facilities Unit is a building and works department of the ministry of education.

and distribution of teaching and learning materials is the mandate of supplies unit[23] in the ministry. And yet the reports show that such recommendations are made anyhow regardless of the levels' mandate. This study observes that, where recommendations are misdirected to a level without the mandate to act, the IRRs are not acted upon. The study further observed that most of the recommendations that go without implementation are the very determining factors of quality improvement in the system.

Implementation of the inspection report

The study has revealed that the inspection report does not seem to command respect among policy and decision makers in the education system. This is because different levels insufficiently act upon it in the system except at school where some implementation of small aspects of the report is done.

The school

The study has revealed that at school level, there is some response to the IR as some head teachers tried to work on a number of the recommendations. For example, in some three schools out of the ten head teachers carried out small maintenance work; like fixing of locks for security and bulbs in the classroom so that students could study at night. Head teachers of seven schools reported on improved sanitation, and one school introduced study circles.[24] In others, schools in corroboration with communities were able to build school toilets or get parents involved in disciplining students (Mangochi,

[23] Supplies Unit is a department that procures and distributes teaching and learning materials in the ministry.
[24] Study cycles is a group methodology that enhances learner participation

Nansenga, Likangala and Puteya). All Schools adopted community participation into school policies from the inspection report while the other responses were just temporally and short lived.

Evidence from focus group discussions that were conducted suggest that some teachers think that inspections are just something that is routine and not to be taken seriously. They observe that follow-ups to inspection recommendations are not done and feedback does not usually go back to schools. When Teachers in the focus group discussion were asked to give their views on the inspections that have taken place in their schools so far, one teacher commented as follows: 'I do not see much happening; I do not even think the reports go to the ministry as there is no feedback. The inspectors do not come back to assess what they advised we should do, so it ends there, with a visit that is all' (focus group interviews, 12th May 2006). This comment suggests that schools look at the report without really attaching a sense of obligation to its implementation as they notice a lack of commitment to it from other levels of decision -making above them. Such being the case, it would seem they are reluctant to adopt and implement school specific policies from such a document.

The division

The study reveals that management in South East Education Division entrusts Sectional heads with most of the responsibility to act on the reports. The two inspectors who were interviewed said that after they produce the report the manager tells them to share the report with the other sections and to alert sectional heads to act on areas that affect them. The study further reveals that these sectional heads rarely act on the report due to resource and mandate constraints. For example, the Quarterly Inspection Report for 2003 called upon the South East Education Division to improve funding to secondary schools. Another recommendation was that the division should identify qualified teachers to be deployed in community day secondary schools. The division was also tasked with a recommendation to take immediate action on head teachers and teachers who are not performing and to carry out major maintenance work on some dilapidated secondary school infrastructures.

All the four major issues raised in the report were not fully addressed for a number of reasons ranging from mandate of the division, an acute shortage of teachers in the system at the time. Entrusting such recommendations with sectional heads in the division was tantamount to not implementing them at all. This suggests that not much action takes place to respond to inspection recommendation at divisional level. Consequently, it could be argued that inspection reports do not influence informed policy and decision making at divisional level.

The Ministry headquarters

The study discovered that, in the ministry head quarters, most directors do not receive the inspection report as a result they do not always act on them. For example, inspection reports repeatedly highlighted recommendations for the ministry to consider the issue of teacher shortages and to improve the modes of teacher training in the system; yet, the study has discovered that the ministry has not been responsive to these recommendations as training of teachers using proper modes in primary teacher education sub-sector, where the secondary sub-sector draws most of its teachers to teach in CDSSs has not been improved. The study revealed that the system has not trained its teachers using proper modes for 10 successive years. The directorate of teacher education revealed that the department does not receive the IR:

> *' I learn about the system offering poor standards of education from the media, and I hear complaints about inappropriate teacher training modes and the need to change them to better ones from the media and never from an inspection report because I do not receive them, the inspection directorate should have been the first to alert the nation about these issues.'* (Interview with the Directorate of Teacher Education, 8th August 2006)

Likewise, recommendations on the supply of teaching and learning materials to schools by the ministry do not seem to yield any positive results as ministry has not been buying and supplying these materials for three consecutive years (by 2006) despite having

budgeted for their procurement. A local news paper columnist commenting on the issue of resources stated that:

> *'despite a budget of K732 million for teaching and learning materials in the country's schools this year, the ministry of education has not delivered a single pencil, ruler and notebook to schools. The allocation has been used to pay off a debt of KI.86 billion the ministry accumulated over the past few years…There is high drop out rate and absenteeism by both pupils and teachers. There are poor incentives for teachers…pupil teacher ratio is at 1:84…'* {Nhlane, S.,'*Hail Asernal, statistics on primary education'* In Weekend Nation December 16th-17th., 2006, p11.}

The study revealed that the lack of implementation and action on the inspection report in the education system as a whole is due to the fact that the bulk of the substantive issues highlighted in the report have to be dealt with by the ministry headquarters. The study has established that ministry headquarters is a level that least acts on reports. This is either due to the fact that they indeed do not receive the report or because of sheer negligence. The findings agree with what was reported by Commonwealth Secretariat, 1998:iii) that inspection is often limited to monitoring implementation of the school curriculum and education policies, and rarely are inspection findings used to inform the preparation of staff development strategies and school improvement programmes.

What is emerging from the study is that there seem to be inertia at different levels of decision and policy making as regards the implementation of the report although some of the levels are capable of implementing the areas brought to their attention. When reports are received, it appears each decision level uses its judgment to implement or not to implement areas that concern them. For example, some classroom teachers said they use lecture methods as opposed to the participatory methodologies much advertised by the inspection report. The division also uses its discretion to post or not to post teachers where they are required. Similarly, the ministry chooses where and when to deliver teaching and learning materials. A teacher observed that when the ministry gives out teaching and learning materials, priority is given to schools that already have enough and well resourced, leaving those more deserving to suffer. She notes: *'whenever things come or help comes, they will not come to this school or other CDSSs they will go to schools where there are already existing laboratories or even where there are textbooks.'* (Teacher interview, 5th May, 2006). This suggests that the ministry misallocates the resources that are sourced and that materials distribution is not guided by informed data. It presumes that inspection reports which clearly articulate where shortfalls exist in the system are never consulted for such data intensive activity. It can therefore be concluded that crucial decisions are made without regard to the inspection report.

The inertia on the report by different levels of policy and decision-making could mean that there is no accountability in the system. It indicates that when the system fails, no

one queries. It appears there are no checks and balances in the system, as no one seems responsible and answerable for the failure of the system.

The study also revealed that implementation of report recommendations is adversely affected by lack of feedback in the system. This lack of feedback is between the school and the division, the school and the ministry, and the division and the ministry. Lack of feedback in the system demonstrates that the report is indeed not conveyed throughout the decision-making hierarchy. Consequently problems that call for policy redress become recurrent in the system. Such recurrent problems include: teacher pre-service training for those who are already in service with inadequate qualifications to teach at secondary school level, in-service teacher training, teacher welfare, teacher deployment, and distribution of teaching and learning materials, dilapidated school infrastructure and the general poor quality of education delivery among others. The inertia, lack of feedback and the general disregard of the IR by different decision and policy makers in the system have grossly compromised the effectiveness and value of education in the country which raises a lot of questions as regards the existence and functionality of the monitoring mechanisms that the system has in place.

Monitoring mechanisms of the implementation of the inspection report

The study has established that different levels of policy and decision-making do not seem to monitor the implementation of the inspection report in the system. Consequently, schools are not supported and encouraged to implement the IRRs. The study found out that within the Directorate of Inspection the IR is rarely circulated nor is its circulation and implementation within the education system monitored. Commenting on the circulation of the report the directorate had this to say: '*I have just discovered after a very long time that the officer I entrusted reports with after I got them was neither acting nor disseminating the report.*' This has led the system to be poorly managed at different levels. Even where inspection reports are written and sent to the inspection directorate highlighting existing problems no follow ups take place and consequently not much seem to take place in response to the IR from policy and decision makers. The directorate of inspection observed: *'we have not yet experienced a follow up, or getting a feedback from those layers to which the recommendations in the inspection report were made.'* (Interview with the Directorate of inspection, 8th June 2006)

This study discovered that the Directorate of Inspection has for thee years not been compiling Quarterly Inspection Reports[25] which have to be discussed at management meetings. A search for Quarterly Inspection Reports in the ministry only revealed one

[25] A quarterly Inspection Report is a report that amalgamates and summarises reports from all Divisions after every three months. Compiling such a report serves as a mechanism of checking on whether indeed inspections are taking place in the Divisions and it is also meant to be a way of bringing inspection related issues to the attention of management.

copy for 2003. This represents a deficit of 11 quarterly reports not produced and discussed at top management level for the past three years as of 2006. This evidence suggests absence of proper monitoring mechanisms within the ministry.

The study revealed that there is monopoly of information in the system, which affects the successful monitoring of the implementation of the report at various levels. For example, it is an official requirement that after an inspection visit, schools and inspectors should plan and develop an action plan together as a response to the inspection report by a particular school (Harrison: 2000). It is also an official requirement that a schools' action plan which is developed after an inspection visit has to be registered with the division office and with the ministry headquarters so that it is easily monitored (Harrison: 2000). However, the study discovered that the way inspectors compile the IR does not leave an indication that they are part and parcel of the planning process. This raises the question whether the inspectors indeed know that they have to plan together with the inspected school. These come as revelations as there is no proof of the existence of a register or any record pertaining to action plans from the schools in the South East Education Division. The Inspection directorate called these 'contracts': *'schools enter into a contract in which a school commits itself and the inspectors also commit themselves on behalf of the ministry.'* The directorate however said: *'but how effective we are able to work on those action plans and the follow-ups has to be established.'* (Interview with Directorate of Inspection, 2nd June 2006). The foregoing suggests that information on action plans at

secondary level and the process the plan should undergo in order to facilitate monitoring of inspection report recommendations by different policy and decision making levels has not been common knowledge in the system. It seems this information is a preserve of the inspection directorate.

The study revealed that there is lack of follow-ups to reinforce the implementation of the recommendations that the reports make. For example, when an inspection is conducted and reports are generated and sent to policy and decision makers, there does not seem to be any supervision[26] to ensure that action officers indeed receive the IR and execute the report recommendations. A teacher made the following observation: *'most of the times they only come once and they do not follow on whatever they advised us, they just tell us we do this and that and it ends there.'* (Teacher interview, Friday, 5th May 2006).

Another commented that she wonders why inspectors pay a blind eye to recurrent problems in the system. To her inspection just end up with the visit and no tangible results follow. The teachers' remarks suggest that there is no monitoring of the implementation of the inspection the system. This points to laxity at every level and suggests that when the report is generated and dispatched to action officers, it is not fully utilized as to detect areas requiring redress. These are serious pointers to deficits in monitoring mechanisms facing the system.

[26] Supervision is the process of overseeing the planning, implementation and monitoring of inspection report recommendations West, Mongon and Sewter(2000)

The study has revealed that inspections are done differently in different schools. One teacher reacting to the question on the caliber of inspectors that visited his school responded as follows:

> *'I think they come to give us pressure, they accuse you and in addition, this inspection team when it comes into a community day secondary school we face pressure but if it comes to a government school there is no pressure exerted on the teachers there. For example when they go to Malosa secondary school, they will not do the same as they do here at a CDSS, but when assessing a teacher here they will mark him down* '(Teacher interview, 8th May 2006)

The point the teacher is making is pertinent, that when inspectors go to visit fellow graduates, they are less aggressive but are hard and inconsiderate on those who hold a diploma and other lesser certificates when it comes to assessment and making judgments about their class performance. This is a significant finding as it points to the issue of lack of monitoring in the system. This evidence shows that the inspectors are not monitored as such they get away with such discriminatory tendencies. The study revealed that these variations in the conduct of inspections take many forms. For example, the generation of the report varies across divisions and between the primary and secondary level inspectors. The inspection directorate also revealed that the actual conduct of inspection also varies. Some inspectors start their day by 7.00 am and end at 5.00pm in order to get

a full picture of what goes on in the running of a school while others start as late as 9.30am.

What has come out of this section of the study is that there are weak monitoring mechanisms and that the report is not adequately circulated to the entire decision and policy making hierarchy; a situation which leaves out a lot of potential users of the report to access vital information and enable them to effectively monitor the system. This study presumes that, this trend has an effect on the extent to which an IR influences education policy formulation as the education policy process does not seem to learn from the grassroots through consulting the IR.

Extent to which inspection reports feed into education policy formulation

Ideally, the inspection report is supposed to feed into education policy formulation (MoE, 1982; Wilcox & Gary, 1996; West et al, 2000; Harrison 2000, OFSTED, 2005). However, this study reveals that in practice, in Malawi specifically, inspection reports do not go as far as influencing policy formulation more especially at macro level. Their circulation to most of the decision makers within the system is poor and there is lack of a proper arena in the system for the report to be discussed fairy in order to impact on policy changes. Inspite of this, all the eight directors who were interviewed in this study held the view that inspection reports should be consulted as the bases for policy decisions in the ministry. Although directors hold this view on the role of inspection reports in education

policy formulation, this study shows that, that relationship, between the IR and the education policy formulation process does not exist in practice. One example to illustrate this point is the comment from the human resources department in the ministry who said that:

> *'There is a direct relationship between inspection and policy formulation….inspection reports come up with certain vital information about what is happening on the ground. What is happening on the ground shows how schools are evolving and some of the things that are happening on the ground are at variance with certain policies, policies that may be we had for quite some time. You find that policies are heavily outdated for example the Education Act and the Government Teaching Service Regulations. However the reports are not tabled in management meetings and different directors are not approached to be told to work on the issues that touch on the mandate of their directorates*' (Interview with Human Resource Management Department, 5th June 2006).

The interviewee demonstrates that the inspection report creates a window of opportunity for policy reviews in the education system. However the system, more especially at top management level, does not seem to utilize this window of opportunity the IR creates to review policies that are in force.

An investigation into the policy-making exercises in the ministry to determine how much the IR is accommodated revealed that the report is not accorded any significant consideration and position in most of the policy-making arenas in the ministry. For example, in management meetings, the inspection report does not seem to be accommodated as an item on the agenda. Such meetings are expected to raise and decide on some policy issues. A search through some management meetings' agendas[27] for the past 3 years (2004-2006) revealed that discussion of inspection reports never appeared as an item and on a rare occasion was relegated to any other business (AOB). This demonstrates that the report is held in very low esteem by top management and that the Inspection Directorate does not have a proper forum to disseminate the report consequently this study concludes that the report does not influence policy formulation.

An examination of the processes of developing the National Education Sector Plan (NESP),[28] and the Policy and Investment Framework (PIF),[29] to determine what influence the IR had in their formulation revealed that the IR did not feature as an information resource that got consulted at such high profile policy making arenas. An exploration into how Joint Sector Reviews[30] are conducted revealed similar trends. The report does not seem to command influence in such high profile and consultative policy making fora. The

[27] Agendas for management meetings could not be easily located during the search for documents due to poor record keeping in the system

[28] An education Sector plan is the education strategic plan together with its costed components

[29] A Policy and Investment Frame work is an education sector development programme

[30] Joint Sector Reviews are annual meetings held between the ministry of education and its cooperating partners and other stakeholders where assessment, evaluation and reviews of the sectors performance is carried out and way forward is mapped out.

planning directorate which is a linchpin and architect of policies in the ministry expressed concern over the unavailability of information from the inspection directorate to inform major education policy documents so far developed or has taken part in developing, e.g. the Vision 2020, PRSP, PIF, the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) the draft Education Strategic Plan, and the Malawi Government Development Strategy (MGDS). The directorate of education planning asserts that when the ministry was developing its Sector Development Plan and the Strategic Plan (2000-2006), there were no inspection reports to consult. As such the directorate had to resort to other means of collecting data and conducting environmental scanning in order to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as well as to locate the gaps in the system. The Planning Directorate testified that for 7 years it never received an inspection report:

> *Inspectors in this ministry are not engaged as such they do not fulfil their mandate as stipulated in the education development programme like: visiting primary schools 3 times a year, secondary schools once a year and Teacher Training Colleges once a year and produce reports to inform policy planning, further the directorate of inspection does not alert other directorates about what is transpiring in the schools through an Inspection Report.* (Interview, Directorate of Education Planning, 12th September 2006)**.**

Furthermore, all directors revealed that the agendas for their respective departmental meetings do not include inspection reports as they do not get them.

The study also discovered that, although the inspection report highlights policy areas for every level in the form of recommendations; management at different tiers in the education system does not seem to relate inspection recommendations to education policies. At school level, teachers do not appear to relate what has been presented to them as inspection recommendations to education policies. For example, teachers are required to plan their work for the whole term through a scheme of work, the study however reveals that, when an IR makes a recommendation that school management should be checking teachers' schemes and records of work fortnightly, head teachers and teachers alike do not seem to realize that such a recommendation constitutes an educational policy. Correspondingly, when an IR talks about students and teacher discipline, proper time tables and appropriate subject period allocation and duration, school mission statements, punctuality for teachers and students, teacher supervision, keeping of up- to-date school records and many IRRs, teachers and head teachers do not consider them as constituting education policies in system.

When this was brought to the attention of the Inspection Directorate there was surprise, because from their point of view any inspection report carries education policies. This finding is significant. It seems to suggest that there is some information gap in the system as players see things differently. The directorate intimated that the same could be applicable at directors' level and wondered whether fellow directors see policy areas in

an inspection report or whether indeed they link the inspection report recommendations to education policy formulation.

> *'Do people at top management pick up policy areas from an IR? For example, when the IR talks about teacher shortfalls in the system does top management pick it up as a policy issue? Or when the IR talks about unqualified and under qualified teachers in the system do they know the report is flagging a policy area on teacher training that has to be either developed or reviewed? When the IR talks about lessening time on task or inadequate interaction between the students and teachers, low standards of education, absenteeism; do people in top management really see them as being linked to the so many policies like issues of internal efficiency, repetition, drop out and completion rates which the system is struggling with? If so why have we taken so long without reviewing our policies?'* (Interview with Directorate of Inspection, 9th June 2006)
>
> The interviewee followed up all these questions with a statement that directors do not relate the inspection report to the education formulation process and that they do not seem to understanding issues arising from the report as calling for policy reviews.

The issues the directorate is raising through the questions posed are indicative of serious anomalies in the system, that is, failure by top officials in the ministry to interpret an inspection report and the absence of a forum within the ministry where inspection reports

are tabled and discussed with all the prominence they deserve. In the absence of such a forum there seem to be a knowledge gap among top management in terms of how to interpret and utilize an inspection report. The issue the directorate raised suggests that despite the IR's attempt to flag issues and areas calling for policy reviews the system does not respond. Hence the study assumes that the IR does not inform policy formulation in the system.

Although at higher level policy and decision makers do not appear to link inspection reports with policy formulation, the study has established that at the grassroots, those implementing policies see a direct link between inspection and education policy formulation. A teacher commenting on how inspection can improve education policies said:

> *'When policies are being formed, first thing what is needed is going into the grassroots level to see what is happening there and from there its when now they can make a policy They cannot just make policies in the offices without seeing what is happening outside. Therefore now when they have come to do the inspections therefore they will see strengths and weaknesses and from there now they will sit down and say we have now found this in the field in our schools what policy can we forward so that we can improve the education… see now inspectors have come to inspect schools therefore now the personnel in the division, headquarters and even parents through PTA members can be*

invited to come and discuss on the policies that can be formed' (Focus group interview, 12th May, 2006)

What the interviewee seem to contend is that education policy formulation should be informed by inspections. She advocates a consultative process of policy formulation. She suggests that one way of making use of inspection is through accommodating it in the education policy process. She also appears to disapprove of the rational top-down approach to policy formulation when she says that *'they cannot just make policies in the office.'* Teachers in this study maintained the position that education policy change should be driven by inspection findings. To this end one of the teachers had this to say:

*'The inspection team is able to identify the problems that are there and is able to report to the other authorities on measures to be taken whether in form of seminars etc so that the teachers can improve their teaching so that you can see that without inspections we cannot know anything' (*Teacher interview, Machinga, 3rd May, 2006).

Teachers argued that what drive efforts to form policies in education are problems; and those problems in education are identified during inspections as such they strongly pushed for the recognition of an inspection report in the education policy formulation cycle. Teachers argued that information for policy change in education should come from inspections because inspectors go to the classroom and are directly involved with the pupils and teachers. They further argued that inspectors could take this feedback to policy makers. However, teachers pointed out that policy makers seem not to be

responsive to inspection reports as they do not see much happening after an inspection visit. The views teachers are advancing here corroborate with what Carron and De Grauwe (1998) reported about what was happening in France where they said that inspection reports had become an extremely important input for decision making at ministerial level. Additionally, teachers called upon decision makers to use the report as one objective way of deciding on teacher promotions.

Furthermore, teachers expressed the need for their involvement in the education policy process so that the policies that are formulated are well received at the grassroots. As Hartwell (1994:123) notes that "failure of implementation begins with the failure in the process of policy formulation in the first place: the lack of communication, dialogue, consensus and acceptance by the implementers leaves the policy on the shelf." Hartwell (1994). argues that the pattern of participation among the members of a social system in the decision to adopt or develop an innovation is probably the most central issue in the process. Similarly, teachers in this study contend that policies that could be developed with their involvement could be pragmatic and well received on the ground.

Although the body of literature that has been searched, including the Hand Book for Inspectors in Malawi (MoE, 1982) stipulate that inspections should serve as a two-way communication mechanism between the schools and top management in education systems; the study has found out that inspections in Malawi only communicates policies and other information from the top management to the grassroots. A teacher said: *'We get*

communication only from policy makers, but not from us, they can tell us the government wants you to do this and that but if we want to communicate to them we want this, they cannot take our concern. They come and only tell us what should be done.' (Teacher interview, 5th May 2006). This assertion by the teacher strengthens the evidence that inspections do not feed into policy in the education system. The system seem to espouse a rational top-down approach to policy making as opposed to the interactive model of policy formulation as teachers are denied space to participate in policy formulation even through the inspection service. The teacher's testimony indicates that policy makers at top management level never get to hear voices of teachers from the grassroots using the normal channel of inspection as was envisioned in the inspector's Hand Book (1982).

The study has also found out that in some schools, both teachers and head teachers shy away from reporting observations they make with certain policies. As such they lose the window of opportunity for participation in education policy formulation and policy reviews that avails itself for them during an inspection. For example, a head teacher told the team of researchers that '*I was planning to tell those (inspectors) that the removing of English literature to become separate subject I think it is giving students lack of reading skills'.* The study also revealed that head teachers would like to see some policies reviewed e.g. the re-admission policy, modes of teacher training, deployment of under qualified teachers to teach into secondary schools, the Text book Revolving Fund

and the repetition policy. However, head teachers do not raise these issues when inspectors visit. One head teacher commented as follows:

> *'They say a girl who is pregnant should just go and nurse the pregnancy after the delivery the baby is grown they can go automatically back to school as long as they have given an excuse. To schools like mine I think it is encouraging girls because they say if I mess up I will come back again. While in the past they said if you miss this, you have missed your opportunity. This is one policy I feel is not good and to be changed'* (Head teacher interview, 8th May 2006)

However, this information was never given to the visiting team of inspectors. and an opportunity to possibly influence policy was missed. As such it can be argued that critical issues from the grassroots are not raised through established communication structures to be conveyed to higher levels of the decision -making hierarchy in the system. One possible reason for such reluctance has been attributed to the inspectors behaviour and approach which teachers thought was with an attitude which in turn creates a gap in the feedback loop. To illustrate this point, one teacher lamented that when he asked to be clarified on an issue concerning the delay by the ministry in releasing an academic calendar, inspectors told him that they come solely for academic work and not any other 'unrelated issues'. This is corroborated by another teacher said: *the inspectors are able to tell us about what the authorities want, but if you could ask them something concerning the school houses and the like, they said we have not come for that, may be we will come later for that (Teacher interview, 4th May 2006).*

What this suggests is that some inspectors are not conversant with the policies governing the system as such they tend to be dismissive about pertinent policy areas that teachers raise during inspection visits. The apparent lack of adequate knowledge of educational policies by some of the inspectors seem to negatively impact on inspection feedback into policy as teachers are reluctant to relay policy areas which they may want either reviewed, developed or clarified for fear of a bad reaction from the inspectors.

When teachers and head teachers were asked to comment on whether they make an input into the inspection report or not, most said they do not. Some head teachers said they just thanked the inspectors for coming to visit and give the school encouragement. Looking at such answers critically shows that schools do not seem to make any substantive inputs into the IR. One head teacher said he could not raise any issue about policies because he expects to hear policies from the inspectors.

Despite all the shortcomings pointed out in this section this far, the study established that at school level, in some cases, there is some positive response as the inspection report helps school management to develop school specific policies. For example, at Puteya management introduced the best teacher's award known as ***Dyera 1*** to the most punctual, the most smartly dressed, and to the subject most favoured by students during exams. This serves as an example of the kind of responses schools look for, from the top levels of decision making in the system. The aspect of teacher incentives that the ministry tries

to dodge whenever it comes out in inspection reports is what management at school level tries to address. Another school in Mangochi, organised a staff meeting in which the teachers jointly came up with measures to address the problem of student indiscipline. This kind of response is what seems to be lacking at macro level hence the conclusion that the report does not feed into policy formulation at macro level.

Conclusion

An inspection report contains critical information that needs to be accessed by all policy and decision makers as well as all stakeholders in education. The study has established that there is poor circulation of the report, as it never gets conveyed throughout the decision and policy-making hierarchy in the system. Consequently, information gathered from the grassroots hardly converts into policy improvements in the system. Where the report is received by some directors, it is mostly not read, as such it is under utilized largely owing to lack of monitoring mechanisms in the system, The reports themselves have some flaws, for example recommendations tend to be made to a level without the mandate to execute them. Such a trend stalls implementation of the otherwise good recommendations. In the final analysis, recommendations emanating from inspection reports do not get incorporated into the policy making process of the Ministry of Education.

Chapter five

Conclusions and Recommendations

Even though the Ministry of Education requires that inspections be made to schools for purposes of assessing and evaluating the quality and performance of services, promoting school improvement and as a basis for national policy (Education Act, 1962, MoE, 1982, MoE, 2003) the findings in this study have shown that inspections do not play that role. The study found that the Inspection Report does not receive the attention that it deserves at higher levels especially at Ministry headquarters level. This raises questions about the basis of the many policy decisions that have been made in recent years. Given these findings the study concludes that education policy formulation in Malawi is not based on feedback. This is because the reality of the teaching and learning situation in schools can only be made known to the policy maker through an inspection report. In the absence of this feedback inconsistency and discrepancies between policy and practice are likely to occur.

The reality in the education system in Malawi is that the report is not widely circulated, ignored at higher levels but followed to some extent at lower level. As such, problems that are presented through the inspection report calling for serious high level attention

and redress by those responsible for their execution still persist in Malawian schools. The problems keep recurring in most inspection reports. Examples of such chronic problems facing the system include: inadequate teaching and learning materials, acute shortage of teachers, underqualified teachers teaching at secondary school level, lack of staff development activities, poor school management, low student performance, dilapidated school infrastructure and lack of supervision among others. At the school level, however, some effort is made to respond to the inspection report recommendation within their resource and mandate limits.

The gross under utilisation of an inspection report, which is otherwise a very rich data resource in education management leads to a lack of accountability in the system. It also creates a situation where policy changes are made arbitrarily by higher authorities at headquarters or are determined by donors. In the final analysis, such policy changes do not reflect the reality on the ground. The education system ultimately does not benefit from feedback from important stakeholders such as teachers.

The evidence from other parts of the world corroborate the findings of this study. They show that inspection services suffer neglect in that they do not attract the attention of policy and decision makers. The data resource that is collected, the knowledge base that is generated and the lessons that are learnt from such an intense activity is not put to good use by way of improving education standards and management at different levels of

policy and decision-making. De Grauwe and Govinda (1998) for example found in their study of Supervision and Support services (which is similar to inspection) in five countries in Asia, namely Bangladesh, India, the Republic of Korea, Nepal and Sri-Lanka. that such services suffered neglect from policy makers. The study also showed that although the supervision and support service generated useful information that could be used by other agencies involved in pedagogical improvement, they are seldom used by these agencies and no institutional links existed. In effect, the activities of supervision and support services remain routine and of no consequence to policy making.

Given the potential contribution that an inspection report could make to national policy making, it is proposed that the inspection division of the Ministry of Education should endeavour to prepare annual inspection reports for tabling at the most strategic fora, for example, parliament and Joint sector reviews. This action will give the inspection report the visibility it deserves. The relevant authorities would then likely begin to appreciate the value of information contained in the report for matters such as teacher training, curriculum development and educational materials development.

The policy implications of my study findings then are that policy formulation in the Malawi education system will continue being top-down and that the system will continue losing out on useful feedback from the grassroots, which can inform management at highest level as regards what works and what does not work in the education system. As

such inspection services will continue being a waste of public resources, as it will not bring with it any added value to education service delivery. Additionally, the system will continue missing out on possible qualitative improvements which could register if an inspection report was given due attention.

The Interactive Model among other things promotes the process of participation, dialogue, and negotiations, which lead to properly supported political decisions. These elements appear to be lacking in the education policy process in Malawi where policy changes are often made to accommodate donor or political interests without due regard being paid to the reality in the schools and the views of important stakeholders especially at the school level. The way policy is made in the education system is clearly not interactive: it is top-down and largely arbitrary.

References

Antriep Report (2000). *Improving School Efficiency*: *the Asian Experience*.Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning

Banda, K. (1982). *A Brief History of Education in Malawi*. Blantyre: Dzuka Publishing House

Bakhda, S. (2004). *Management and Evaluation of Schools*. London: Oxford University Press

Bell, J. Bush, T., Fox, A., Goodey, J. & Goulding, S (1984). *Conducting small scale Investigations in Educational management*. London: Harper and Row Ltd.

Blaxter, L. Hughes, C. &Tight, M. (2001).. *How to research* (2nd ed.). Buckingham: Open university Press

Brinkerhoff, D.W. & Crosby, B.L. (2002). *Managing Policy reform: Concepts and tools for decision makers in developing and transitioning Countries* Bloomfied: C.T. Kumarian Press

Carron, G., De Grauwe, A. & Govinda, R (1998). *Trends in school supervision: supervision and support services in Asia*: *A comparative Analysis*. Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning

Carron, G. & De Grauwe, A. (1998). *Current issues in supervision*: *A literature review*. Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning

Chimombo, J. (1999). *Implementing Educational Innovation*: *A study of Free Primary Education in Malawi* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Sussex, 1999)

Cohen, L. & Manion, L. (1994) *Research Methods in Education* (4th Ed)

RoutLedge: CroomHelm Ltd

Commonwealth Secretariat (1998, April-June). *Formulating Education Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa*: *Factors affecting policy making* .Proceedings of the ADEA Biennial Meetings, (10) 2.Paris: Association for the Development of African Education

Commonwealth Secretariat (1998: July-September). *Interfacing Educational Research and Policy*. (10), 3. Paris: Association for the Development of African Education

Commonwealth Secretariat (1993) *Better Schools. Resource materials for school heads* (7). London: commonwealth secretariat

Creswel, J.W., (1998). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design – choosing Among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks : Sage Publications

De Grauwe, A. & Govinda, R. (1998). *Supervision and support services in Asia, A comprehensive analysis*. Paris: International Institute for educational Planning

Dye, T.R. (2003). *Understanding Public Policy*. New Jersey: Florida state university: Upper Saddle River

Earley, P. (1998). *School Improvement after Inspection? School and LEA Responses* Great Britain : Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd

Evans, D. R., (1996). *Education policy formulation in Africa: A comparative study of five countries.* Washington DC: USAID; Bureau for African Education

Evans, D. R., Sack, R., & Shaw, C. P. (1996). Overview and analysis of the case studies: Lessons for education policy formulation. In D.R. Evans (Ed.), *Formulating educational policy: experience from Sub-Saharan Africa* (P1-37). Paris: Association for the Development of African Education

Everard, K.B. & Morris, G. (2002).. *Effective School Management (3rd Ed) London:* Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Ferland, J. Y. (1969). *Policies and Progress in Malawi Education: A work underlining the trend of missionary and secular endevours toward the educational goals of an independent nation in Africa 1875-1967.* (Dissertation for Master of Ed): University of New Brunswick

Fraenkel, J. R. & Wallen, N. E. (2000)..*How to design and evaluate research in education* (4th ed). Boston: MacGraw Hill

Gray, C. & Gardner, J. (1999). The impact of School inspection: *oxford review of education,* 25 (4), 455-468

GoM (2002). *Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy paper***.** Lilongwe:GoM

GoM, (1962). *Laws of Malawi: The Education Act*, Zomba: Government Printer

Haddad, W. (1995). *Educational Policy Planning process:* An applied Framework. Paris: UNESCO, International Institute for Educational Planning

Hartwell, A. (1994). *Education Policy in Anglophone Africa: The work of Education commissions*. In Evans D.R. (Ed), Education Policy formation in Africa: A comparative study of five countries. Washington DC, USAID Technical paper # 12, 29 – 57

Harrison, M. (2002). *Inspection Review consultancy.* Lilongwe: MoE

Hauya, R. J. (1993). *Primary School Education in Malaw*i: The Question of the curriculum, Domasi: Malawi Institute of Education

IIEP (2001).*Trends in school supervision*, Research and studies programme. Paris:Unesco; International institute for educational Planning

Ishumi, A. G., & Maliyankono, T. L.(1995). Education for Self- Reliance. In Legum, C and Mmari, G.(Ed), *Mwalimu: The Influence of Nyerere* (pp50- 73). Dar Es Salaam: African World Press

Kadzamira, E., & Rose, P. (2001). *Education Policy Choice and Policy Practice in Malawi: Dilemas and Disjunctures*, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies; Working Paper no. 124

Kadzamira, E. (2003). *Where has all the education gone in Malawi*? Brighton : Institute of Development studies, University of Sussex

Kingdon, J.W. (1995). *Agendas, alternatives and Public Policy* (2nd Ed) New York:Harper Collins college publishers

Kishindo, P. (1997). Malawi's Social Development Policies: A Historical Review. Bwalo 1: *A forum For Social Development*, (1), 10-21

Lee, J & Fitz, J. (1997). HMI and OFSTED: Evolution or Revolution. *British journal* of educational studies,45 (1), 39- 52

MacJessie, S.L. W. (2004) *Analysis of a complex policy domain: access to secondary education in Malawi*. (Doctoral dissertation: University of Massachussetts): Proquest Information and Learning Company

Miles, M. B. & Huberman, M.A. (1994). *Qualitative Data analysis* (2nd ed.) London: Sage publication.

MOE (2006). *Education Management information system. Lilongwe.* MoE

MoE (1982). *Handbook for Inspection in Malawi.* Lilongwe: MoE

MoE (1982) *Handbook for Secondary School Administration*. Lilongwe: MoE

MoE, (2000). *Joint review of the Malawi Education sector:* Review Report. Lilongwe: MoE

MoE (2000). *Secondary Education Project: Review Report*. Lilongwe: MoE

MoE, (2003). *Summary Inspection Report*. Lilongwe: MoE

Nankwenya, I. A. J., (1977) *Christianity Influence on Education in Malawi up to Independence with Special Reference to the Role of Catholic Missionaries*, (Thesis for a Masters degree, 1977), Zomba: University of Malawi.

Ndalama, L. (2002).*Decentralising Primary School Teacher Development in Malawi: Analysis for further policy dialogue* (Dissertation for Masters degree, 2002). Paris: International Institute for EducationPolicy Planning

Nyerere, J. N. (1968). *Freedom and Socialism: Uhuru na Ujama; A selection from writings and speeches 1965-1967*. Dar Es Salaam: Oxford University Press

Nhlane, S. (2006, December 16-17). Hail Asernal, Statistics on Primary Education. The Weekend Nation Newspaper,, p11.

OFSTED (2005). *What is inspection for?*: http://www.Ofted.gov.uk

OFSTED (1994c). *Improving schools*. London: HMSO

OFSTED (1993) *Handbook for the Inspection of schools.* London: HMSO

Orivel, F. & Shaw, C. (1994). *Education Policy Formation in Francophone sub Saharan Africa in Evans*, DR (Ed.), *Education Policy Formation in Africa: A Comperative study of five countries,* Washington DC: USAID Technical Paper # 12,163 – 181

Pal L.A. (1992). *Public Policy Analysis*: An introduction (2nd Ed);Ontario, Canada: Nelson

Peters, B.G. (1999). *American Public Policy: Promise and performance* (5th ed.) New York : Chatham House

Phiri, M. (2002).*Inspection and School improvement:*(Dissertation for Masters degree,2002): University of Manchester

PriceWaterhouse (1988). *Education Service Review*: Lilongwe;GoM

Reimers, F. & McGinn, N. (1997).*Informed Dialogue using Research to shape Education policy around the world.* Wesport: Praeger

Robison, B., Davison, J., & Williams, J. (1994). *Malawi Education Sector Analysis: Secondary Schooling:* Zomba, Unima, Centre for educational research and training

Robson C. (1993). *Real World research:* A resource for social scientific and practitioner – researchers. Oxford: Blackwell.

Sallant, P. & Dillman (1994) *How to conduct your own survey*. New York: John Wiley & sons

Sapru, B.K. (2004).*Public Policy: Formulation, Implementation and Evaluation.* New Dheli: Sterling Publishers.

Tindall, P.E N (1983). *History Of Central Africa*, London: Longman Group Ltd.

Thomas, G. (1998). *British journal of educational studies,* l (46) 415

Tylor, S., Rizvi, F., Lingard, B. & Henry, M. (1997) *Education Policy and Politics of Change.* Londonn : Routledge.

Verspoor, A.M. (1994). *Planning Educational reforms:* Use of contingency Approach In Husen & Postlethwaite (eds). *The international encyclopedia of Education* (2nd Ed). London : Pergamon Press(pp 4514 – 2519)

West, M., Mongon, D., & Sewter, M. (2000) Review of School Inspection Service in Malawi: Report and Recommendations, Lilongwe; Ministry of Education

West – Burnham J. (1997). *Managing quality in schools*. *Effective strategies for Quality-Bassed school improvement* (2nd Ed.) London: Pretince Hall; Pearson Education Ltd

Wilcox, B. & Gray J. (1996). *Inspecting schools – Holding schools to account And Helping schools to improve*, Buckingham: Open University press

Wilcox, B. (2000). *Making School Inspection visits more effective: The English Experience.* Paris: Unesco; International Institute for Educational Studies

Wills, A. J. (1983). *An Introduction to The History Of Central Africa* (3rd Ed)

London: Oxford University Press.

List of appendices