

**PUBLIC SECTOR REFORMS AND ENHANCED SERVICE DELIVERY:
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE MALAWI PUBLIC SERVICE CHARTER**

PhD. (PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION) THESIS

LUCKIE KANYAMULA SIKWESE

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

DECEMBER, 2021



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PhD. (PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION) THESIS

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Doctor of Philosophy in Public Administration

University of Malawi

December, 2021

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work in partial fulfilment of a Doctoral Degree in Public Administration at the University of Malawi. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution for similar purposes. Where other peoples' work has been cited in some sections of the thesis, acknowledgements have duly been made.

LUCKIE KANYAMULA SIKWESE

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis represents the students own work and effort and has been submitted with our approval in partial fulfilment of a Doctoral Degree in Public Administration at the University of Malawi.

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DEDICATION

To Maggie (wife), Dally (niece), Tusayiwe and Lusako (daughters) and Lwitiko (son)
“we may not have it all together but together we have it all, and individually we have goals for our common good”. To Oswald and Joyce – Dad and Mum (both departed):
for your love of education and always looking forward to their children attaining the highest education qualifications the world could offer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The realization of this doctoral thesis would not have been made without the support of a hoard of many people, both with positive and negative vibes. First I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my principal supervisor Professor R. Tambulasi for patiently guiding and moving me from the wilderness to making me write things that made sense in the academic world long after leaving the corridors of a university. He revised my conceptual write up, reviewed the many drafts in time taking into account his other demanding responsibilities as a Principal of Chancellor College. I am also indebted to Professor Dzimbiri and Professor Kayuni, for their invaluable guidance as secondary supervisors, the Programme Coordinator Dr. Tiyesere Chikapa Jamali, members of the Department of Political and Administrative Studies and other faculty members for their valuable comments during the various stages of my study. Mr. Atusaye Mwabupighu, my Research Assistant also deserves thanks for not only helping in coordinating the data collection but for also taking the time to go through my initial chapter write-ups. Salima and Dedza District Councils and the community in which the research was conducted just know that you are wonderful. To Messrs. Ollen Mwalubunju, the Executive Director of Nice his members of staff in Lilongwe, Salima and Dedza I am very much appreciative of the technical support you provided.

All members of staff in the various central government departments and organizations, thank you too for providing the valuable data that has contributed immensely to this work. In that regard, great appreciation to Mr. Bright Msaka the former Chief Secretary to the Government responsible for service charters. Mr. Bright approved my request to pursue a doctorate degree study when some officials thought it was not worth it. Staff at the Government Print office are my family and I greatly appreciate their assistance in helping me realize my dream against all odds. Gideon Munthali work of proof reading is highly appreciated.

Lastly to my wife Margaret Mhango Sikwese, thank for you keeping up with me and encouraging me to go on with my work even when I tried to justify that there was no value addition to my career as a top civil servant. Further appreciation to my wonderful children Dally, Tusayiwe, Lusako and Lwitiko for giving me space to study at home and, also encouraging me to go on when I was packing my laptop to go and sleep. My son Lwitiko, I guess this is an answer to your question when you were eight: “*Who is older between you and mum?*” To which I innocently replied that I was older. Your reply was: so, Dad you are less educated than Mum because you do not have a PhD and she has. Thank you, son!

ABSTRACT

Public Sector reforms have been heralded as a panacea for enhanced service delivery and public sector efficiency and effectiveness. This study's main objective is to analyse whether public sector reforms enhance public service delivery using the Malawi Public Service Charter reform initiative as a case study. The study is premised on the New Public Management, the Institutionalization and Public Value theories in explaining the role of reforms in enhancing public service delivery. The study used the mixed method approach where qualitative and quantitative methods were employed. Two district councils of Salima and Dedza were the prime study areas much as the study also involved selected central government ministries, departments and agencies. The focus was in the districts as it is through district councils that most frontline public services are delivered. The study further zeroed in on the education, agriculture and health sectors as these are the services that are frequently accessed by citizens. Acknowledging that the study was largely dealing with perceptions of citizens on public service delivery and the services they consume and use, the data collected was largely qualitative and thus collected through key informant face to face interviews, focus group discussions and supplemented with review of archive materials and web based literature. Some quantitative data through a questionnaire was also collected in the two study district councils. The hallmark of measuring enhanced public service delivery, the study argues, is attested through citizens' satisfaction of the services they consume, thus the public value. Quality of standards is assessed using the SERVQUAL Model. The study finds that public sector reforms lead to enhanced service delivery only in the case where the reforms have been institutionalized. Institutionalization of reforms is critical if reforms are to achieve the required enhanced service delivery. The study also finds that customer service charter reform was introduced as a policy learning initiative, benefiting from inputs of policy entrepreneurs under the leadership of the Public Sector Reforms Management Unit within the Office of the President and Cabinet. The role interplay of key actors in the introduction process, the study further finds, is critical in facilitating the institutionalization process of reforms. In relation to accountability and

transparency, citizen participation in setting service standards in the selected sectors prevails as a result of institutionalization of the reform through legislated and non-legislated structures at the district and village levels. The study, therefore, concludes that public sector reforms lead to enhanced service delivery as a result of the institutionalization of the reforms.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACVPPSA	African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration
ADC	Area Development Committee
AfDB	African Development Bank
ASCUC	Area Service Charter User Committee
AU	African Union
ATI	Access to Information
CCF	Community Citizen Forum
CSC	Customer Service Charter
CSAP	Civil Service Action Plan
DHRMD	Department of Human Resource Management and Development
DC	District Council
DEC	District Executive Committee
DIHR	Danish Institute for Human Rights
DSCC	District Service Charter Committee
ERP	Economic Recovery Plan
EPD	Economic Planning Department
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GiZ	German Society for International Cooperation
GoM	Government of Malawi
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KI	Key Informant
KII	Key Informant Interviews
MDA	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MEC	Malawi Electoral Commission
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MHRC	Malawi Human Rights Commission
MHRRC	Malawi Human Rights Resource Centre
MoAIWD	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development
MoEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology

MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFIC	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
MoJCA	Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoLGRD	Ministry of Local government and Rural Development
NGO	Non-Government Organizations
NICE	National Initiative for Civic Education
NPM	New Public Management
NPS	New Public Service
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPC	Office of the President and Cabinet
PA	Public Administration
PE	Policy Entrepreneurs
PED	Performance Enhancement Department
PL	Policy Learning
PSD	Public Service Delivery
PSM	Public Service Management
PSRMU	Public Sector Reforms Management Unit
PVT	Public Value Theory
SAMCOM	Social Accountability Monitoring Committee
SERVPERF	Service Performance Model
SEVQUAL	Service Quality Model
STA	Senior Traditional Authority
TA	Traditional Authority
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
VDC	Village Development Committee

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Public sector reforms have been regarded as critical in ensuring enhanced service delivery (Parasuraman, et al., 1985). This position is against the inefficiencies, ineffectiveness and waste prevailing in the public sector service delivery chain. Public service charters are an example of public sector reforms that have been initiated to enhance public service delivery.

In 2008, Malawi for the first time celebrated the Africa Public Service Day (GoM, 2012). During the celebrations, the State President announced the intention of the Government to introduce customer service charters (CSC) reform initiative in the public service as an instrument for raising quality, effectiveness, efficiency and responsiveness in the delivery of public service in all organizations and levels in the Malawi Public Service (GoM, 2008). Since the promulgation and by the 2017/18 financial year 26 public service agencies at local and central government have developed service charters (GoM, 2008). However, there has been no attempt by practioners and cademicians alike to assess the impact of institutionalizing the Service charters on public service delivery. This study was conducted, therefore, to investigate the impact of service charters as a public sector management reform initiative tool for improving the delivery of public services using selected central government agencies and two districts in the Malawi Public Service as a case study. The main objective of the study was to investigate/analyse the extent the public sector reforms have led to enhanced public service delivery using three central government agencies (Health, Agriculture and Education) and two selected district councils (Salima and Dedza) in the Malawi Public Service.

In the districts, the study focused on the health, agriculture and education sectors. In this context enhanced service delivery was measured through parameters of increased accountability and transparency of Duty Bearers; quality of service standard indicators namely reliability, responsiveness, accessibility and credibility; and citizen empowerment in the public service delivery chain as indicators based on the the SERVQUAL Model (Ramseook-Munhurrun, et al., 2010).

In view of the above, the following sections are a presentation of the background of the study, the problem area and the objectives of the study.

1.2 Background to the Study

Parasuraman, et al., (1985) argue that quality of services is a hallmark in the private sector and learning from the private sector, quality has also become critical in public service delivery chain. The call for quality delivery of public services has become more prominent with the advent of the New Public Management (NPM) philosophy (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992), the Governance Models (Moore, 1995) and the New Public Service Movement (Denhardt et al., 2000). The NPM philosophy, which is inherently based on private sector management ethos, is a public service management reform which seeks to reinvent the delivery of government business ethos among which clients must be regarded as customers, with government being adaptable, responsive, efficient and effective (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). On the other hand, the Public Governance Model, particularly the Public Value Theory espouses the notion that as the private sector is guided in their operations by the shareholders' values and customer needs, so too public sector managers should be guided by the citizens' choices who are ideally the shareholders of the public service (Moore, 1995; Seddon, 2008; Batley & Larbi, 2004).

Given that Governments are called upon by their citizens to improve delivery of public services in more efficient and responsive ways to meet the ever increasing and changing needs of these citizens (Chataway & Hewitt, 2000), it is not surprising that many countries across the globe in one way or the other have embraced and attempted to implement public service reforms based on the NPM and Public Value concepts. It is in this regard that these two formed the theoretical framework of the study as will be further discussed in the subsequent chapters. While the study argues that these two theoretical frameworks are central to the study, it also recognizes the emergence of the

New Public Service (NPS) model of public service delivery. The NPS model of public service delivery, as Denhardt et al (2000) argue is built on theories of democratic citizenship; models of community and civil society; and organization humanism and discourse theory. The argument, in that regard, is that public policies and subsequent public service delivery are a result of multiple key stakeholders' interactions, a matter which is precedent in the NPM and the Public Value theory. Essentially NPS is an amalgamation of challenges and shortfalls of the old public administration and NPM and, therefore, expounding and providing alternatives to NPM and reinforcing governance issues as far as inclusivity of citizens in public service delivery is concerned. These multiple interactions and changing citizens' needs drive governments to institute public sector management reforms as discussed in the following section.

1.3 Public Sector Management Reforms

Public sector management reforms are, and in view of the foregoing discussion, an inevitable and a consistent feature in public services across the globe and more notably in developing countries. As Hughes (2003) and Banerjee (2007) argue public service reform initiatives are essential to ensure delivery of public goods and services in more efficient, accountable and responsive ways to citizen needs. To this end, public service management reforms are championed as a panacea for improving and enhancing public service delivery and quality of services (Tambulasi, 2010). While many scholars and public service management practitioners agree on the inevitability of public sector reforms as argued above, all scholars do not agree on the frameworks for institutionalizing these reforms to ensure their efficacy.

Public sector management reforms that have been instituted in many countries including civil service restructuring and downsizing, decentralization, economic and financial management; contracting out services, public private partnerships, performance management reforms and service charters (Chataway & Hewitt, 2000; Mutahaba & Kiragu, 2002; Drew, 2005). Some of these reform initiatives as will be discussed in the later chapters are exemplifications of the NPM philosophy and the Public Value concepts. The earlier reforms initiated in Africa and particularly in East and Southern Africa after independence were aimed at shaping a public administration that could spearhead national development, albeit in the mold of the colonial age (Therkildsen, 2001). Subsequent reforms of the post 1990s focused on addressing ills

of the World Bank's Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) which were introduced to address challenges of economic decline as a result of the oil crisis of the 1970s and the blotting of the civil services (World Bank, 2004). The 1990s reforms were aimed at managing and fulfilling demands that had come with introduction of multiparty democracy. Reforms later on focused on the call for political accountability and improved service delivery (Tambulasi, 2010). Reforms evolved to the demand for horizontal and vertical accountability initiatives and measures, such as performance-based contracts, citizens service charters, community score cards, and public complaint mechanisms social audits which were aimed at improving service delivery (Fox, 2014).

It is in the context of quality of service, promotion of accountability and transparency in public service delivery chain that this study sought to explore the extent to which implementation of service charter system as a public reform initiative leads to enhanced delivery of public services. The focus of the study was on three central government agencies (Health, Education and Agriculture) and two district councils selected from the Malawi Public Service, focusing on the Public Service Charter Reform Initiative. To this end, the study's problem statement is outlined below.

1.4 Public Service Reforms: the context of the Service Charters Reform Initiative

Hughes (2003) argues that the emergence of public service management reforms is a rebellion to the verities of traditional Weberian public administration. In that regard, he argues that these verities could not live up to citizen expectations in effectively and efficiently delivering public services in an ever-changing social economic and political environment because of its apparent qualified rigidity. These traditional public administration verities are a bureaucracy with its principles of only one best way of working; separation of politics from administration, public interest and neutrality; professional bureaucracy, following instructions provided by others without personally being responsible for the results (O'Flynn, 2007; Batley & Larbi, 2004). O'Flynn (2007) further argues that these traditional Weberian principles and service structures have been challenged and adjudged to be rigid and, therefore, inefficient, slow, and unresponsive to service users to help governments deliver public services. This challenge is viewed as a self-imposed destruction of the Weberian model of public service management by some scholars like Chataway and Hewitt (2000). As a result of these challenges there has been a call for and subsequent promotion of new systems

grounded in the private sector management philosophy, in particular NPM Model (Chataway & Hewitt, 2000). In more recent years the Public Value Model (Moore, 1995) that emphasizes good governance as essential in enhancing service delivery, has also guided or influenced public service delivery reform initiatives.

The NPM was introduced since the early 1990s in western democracies and increasingly in developing countries in later years. The tenets of the NPM are the hands-on and entrepreneur management style; contracting out; well defined standards and measures of performance; output control; decentralization of public service delivery; private sector styles of management; increasing customer or citizen choices; and advocacy for discipline and parsimony in resource allocation (Hood, 1989; Frederickson et al., 2012; Tambulasi, 2010). The NPM philosophy, therefore, seeks to reinvent government business on the basis of private sector management ethos among which clients must be regarded as customers, with the government being adaptable, responsive to citizen needs, efficient and effective (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). The question, therefore, has been how best do we extrapolate these virtues? To this end, and in particular to NPM tenets, the extrapolation has in recent past decade included the introduction of service charters with a focus on citizens' needs, quality of service, accountability and efficiency in the delivery of public services (Drew, 2005).

In view of the above, the service charters reform initiative's core objective of improving the quality of public service delivery through accountability, transparency and citizen participation has been popularized since early 1991 (Drew, 2005). Service charters have subsequently become a common feature in the reform's agenda as tools that, purportedly, will enhance responsiveness to citizen needs, accountability, transparency and, therefore, enhance the delivery of public services. The study, therefore, sought to explore whether the implementation of the Service Charter as a public sector reform initiative has led to enhanced services in the public service delivery chain.

Enhanced public service is construed in the quality hallmark revered in the private sector undertakings (Ramseook-Munhurrin, et al., 2010). Ramseook-Munhurrin, et al. (2010), thus, argue that since quality of service is customer determined, where and when public service management reforms initiatives like service charters are introduced, it is important to understand the parameters within which such reforms are

introduced. To that end, Fatile and Adejuwon (2010) argue that in pursuing reform initiatives in developing nations and in particular in African reform endeavors, there is need to put into consideration the behavioral patterns, the social fabric and cultural aspects within which reforms take place. Thus, understanding institutions and the institutionalization processes (North, 1990; Peters, 2000; Dacin et al., 2002) is particularly critical in service charter reforms initiatives as is acknowledging that public service structures are framed around institutions that constitute laws, management systems, processes and procedures that are meant to guide the production and delivery of public goods and services and how people relate to these (Valence, 2004). In the process of production and delivery of public goods and services, the issue of accountability becomes paramount particularly in an environment of democratic political systems. Given this context, the following section is a discussion of the problem being addressed in the study.

1.5 Problem Statement of the Study

Despite diverse public sector management reform initiatives developing countries have been introduced prior to service charters, public services are adjudged to be inefficient and of poor quality, thus not meeting the expectations of citizens (Drew, 2005). Duty bearers are perceived to be less transparent and accountable to the people they serve and no value for tax payers' money is attained in the delivery of public services. Kiggundu (1998) argues that there is hardly any objective evidence that civil service reforms in most developing nations have had a significant impact on service delivery, citizen (customer) satisfaction, enhancement of civil service institutional core competencies and capacities, accountability and transparency. Kiggundu's contestation is based on the premise that most reforms and their subsequent evaluations focus on inputs (funds and equipment), progress (dialogues, consultations and study tours), outputs (revenue generation, staff and cost containment, legislative changes and scope of government). He, thus, further argues that these reforms and evaluations rarely focus on outcomes to address improved service delivery, accountability and transparency, citizen satisfaction; and impact on democratic development, good governance, citizen participation and improved quality of life as a result of the reform initiatives. Many factors are cited as causes of the dissatisfying performance in developing countries, including poor policy transfer mechanisms and institutionalization of public service reforms. This results in public services in these countries being adjudged to be

inefficient and of poor quality. The duty bearers are also assessed as less accountable and transparent to the people they serve (Lane, 1997). According to the World Development Report 2004, failures in service delivery were squarely attributed to failures in accountability relationships between public servants, otherwise described as Duty Bearers and citizens (World Bank, 2004). Public servants are also viewed to be oblivious of the quality of services they offer to their clients compared to managers in the private sector (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). Further, the moniker of poor services as Osborne and Gaebler (1992) argue is a consequence of public servants' preoccupation with rules and regulations; and vertical political accountability other than on citizen needs and preferences; a characteristic of the traditional public administration practices. This apparent poor services delivery by public servants as further claimed by Lufunyo, (2013) is a result of lack of frameworks for citizen engagement that ensures citizen focus in the delivery of services and accountability on the quality of services.

It is in search of tools for enhancing public service delivery in developing countries that service charters as a reform initiative have been advocated. While the introduction of the service charters reform initiative has been embraced across the globe, its implementation faces a number of challenges including lack of knowledge on service charters among Duty Bearers and service users; and limited literature on service charters to guide effective policy formulation on these charters. This is against the background that while there is vast literature on public sector reforms and service delivery in general and some literature on service charters in particular, there is limited focus on service charters as tools for enhancing delivery of public services. For example, some studies on challenges and impact of service charters include those conducted in Kenya by Mang'era et al. (2013) whose objective was assessing the challenges facing the implementation of citizen charters in hospitals. The study concluded that the process of implementation involved a number of players and that the players were aware of the existence and importance of the service charter. The standards and time frames set in the citizen's charter, however, were considered by service users not to be realistic. In Ghana, Baidoo (2014) conducted a study whose objective was to assess the knowledge and awareness of patients and health workers on the Patients Charter as well as document the experiences of the health workers rather than on the actual impact on service. Though the study covered knowledge and awareness among service users it did not include the impact of service charters on

service delivery. In Tanzania, for example, Mahoo (2016) conducted an assessment on the utilization of service charter in Morogoro Municipal Council, examining the awareness level of customers on service charters, assessing customer's satisfaction on the services delivered to them before and after introduction of the service charters. The study also focused on exploring institutional factors put forward to influence utilization of the service charters. In that regard, key among the conclusions of Mahoo's study was that

Despite an increase in satisfaction level of customers after introducing the charter in the Municipality, institutionalization of service charters in the municipality suffers a lot as the Council has not taken considerable measures in promoting the charter, formulating service charters committees, monitoring and evaluating the charter (Mahoo, 2016, p. 63).

The case of the Morogoro Municipal Council service charter, particularly on institutional factors as they relate to introduction and utilization of service, is important to the study though the findings and conclusion do not address how service charters relate to enhanced service delivery.

In Asia, Tamrakar, (2010) conducted a study in Nepal focusing on the impact of citizen charters in service delivery, a case of District Administration Office in Kathmandu which partially tackled the effect of customer charters on service delivery in terms of operations. While Tamrakar concluded that the service seems to be very successful in creating procedural clarity among the service seekers and helping in the improvement of service delivery, he made no explicit conclusion on whether service delivery was enhanced.

In Malawi in particular, while there are many studies on public sector reforms, not many studies on one hand have been done to establish how public sector reforms lead to enhanced service delivery reference. On the other hand, specific studies on how service charters as a reform initiative promote transparency, accountability, and citizen involvement to lead to enhanced public service delivery. Cited scholarly studies on public sector management reforms in Malawi include those that were conducted by Tambulasi, Chiweza, Chinsinga and Kayuni (Tambulasi, 2000). Tambulasi in his study where he examined the extent to which public sector reforms lead to service delivery transformation in terms of systems, however, he did not look at enhanced service

delivery in terms of quality. Chiweza tackled public sector reforms from a local governance point of view, arguing that decentralization as a reforms initiative seeks to achieve greater accountability, efficiency, government responsiveness, participation and sustainable results and democratic ends (Chiweza, 2000, p. 31). Chiweza, however, did not address the issues of service delivery enhancement from a service charter point of view. On the other hand, Chinsinga and Kayuni assessed public sector reforms initiatives from the perspectives of ‘getting developmental politics right’ in order to improve service delivery and the introduction of Public-Private-Partnerships reform initiative in Local Councils as a tool for ensuring better service delivery, cut-service costs and increase public participation in service delivery respectively (Chinsinga & Kayuni, 2000). Both Chinsinga and Kayuni, as well did not deal with the issue of enhanced service delivery. The situation in Malawi is not far from that of other jurisdictions given the examples cited of Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania and Nepal.

In the context of service charter in Malawi, Mwabupighu (2017) writing meaning on the District service charters in Salima and Ntchisi districts does not address the issue of enhanced service delivery but on political economy determinants of the public service delivery. Equally, Chasukwa and Kayuni (2018) have also written on service charters as public sector reforms focusing on the limits of institutional mimicking in the re-designing of “glocal governance” institutions in Malawi. Their line of argument is one of questioning the assumption that NPM reforms will automatically lead to the enhancement of public service delivery. However, Chasukwa and Kayuni are using the service charters to illustrate how the awareness of NPM has led to the re-designing of local institutions to reflect global institutions. While Chasukwa and Kayuni; and Mwabupighu have both raised many a number of key issues regarding service charters, both do not explicitly address the issue of whether service charters as a reform lead to enhanced service delivery.

The study seeks to answer key questions namely: what impact has the service charter reform initiative had on enhancing public service delivery? Further, if the service charter has had impact what are the key factor that have been into play from the point of policy, structure and institutionalisation; and how would one assess the efficacy of the service charters in view of their impact on the quality of services?

Given the above, particularly in the case of the impact of citizen charters on service delivery in Malawi and recognizing the knowledge built in Kenya, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and Nepal, and the studies in Malawi (Tambulasi, 2000; Mang'era, et al., 2013; Baidoo, 2014; Mahoo, 2016; Tamrakar, 2010). It is, thus, argued that there are limited studies conducted on whether citizen charters enhance the delivery of public services by promoting accountability, transparency, responsiveness to citizen needs and quality of services. There was need to close the knowledge gap in the role service charter reform initiatives play to enhance service delivery. To that end, the study seeks to address the knowledge gap, and contribute to the knowledge on service charter reform initiative as tools for enhancing service delivery and contributes to the understanding of impacts of public sector reform in enhancing service delivery.

The following section outlines further the objectives of the study in the context of the problems stated above.

1.6 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are outlined in the following sections.

1.6.1 Main Research Objective

The main objective of the study is to explore the extent public sector reforms lead to enhanced public service delivery using the Malawi Public Service Charter as a case.

1.6.2 Specific Research Objectives

The study pursued the following specific objectives in order to achieve the above stated main objective:

- a. To establish the rationale for introducing the service charters in the Malawi public service delivery chain;
- b. To establish the process used in the introduction of the the service charter reform initiative;
- c. To identify key actors, their roles and influence in the introduction of the service charter;
- d. To determine the extent to which service charters reform initiative was institutionalized within the public service delivery chain; and

- e. To establish whether service charter reform initiative led to enhanced public service delivery.

In order to realize these objectives this research was conducted using methodologies as discussed in Chapter Two. However, it is important first to outline the study area as follows.

1.7 Study Area

The study was conducted in the Malawi Public Service at the central and local government levels with more focus at the local government level. The focus on local government level is because this is where most service delivery occurs as provided for in the Local Government Act (1998) and the Decentralization Policy (1998). The units of the study, thus, were selected Ministries, Departments, and Agencies namely the Office of the President and Cabinet is policy holder of public service management. In addition, the Office of the President and Cabinet was selected because it is the principal agency driving the reforms agenda in public service. The Department of Human Resources Development and Management was also included as it is responsible for individual performance management in the Malawi Public Service.

Local Councils according to the Local Government Act of 1998, are units of democratic decentralization and, therefore, are expected to be platforms of citizen participation and fronts of service delivery. At local government level two councils entailing Salima and Dedza District Councils were selected out of 28. Salima District Council was selected as it was among the first public service organizations to introduce service charters in 2008 (OPC, 2010; MHRRC, 2011) while Dedza implemented the service charters later and, therefore, could provide a different perspective to the impact on service charters on service delivery. This would give a fair picture if time is a factor in the institutionalization and impact of reform initiatives. In Salima and Dedza focus was further on selected sectors of health, agriculture and education. These sectors were selected because they offer some of the frequently consumed services (GoM, 2012) and would, thus, give a fair picture of the effects of the service charter system on services delivered.

This study was largely on perceptions, experiences, and feelings of people on services they consume and not about absolutes, a case study interpretive methodology was used. A case study design was considered more relevant as case studies is a strategy that is used for doing research that involves investigations of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life using multiple sources of evidence. (Robson, 2002; Bryman, 2004)

1.8 Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks of the Study

Colin Robson defines theory as a ‘proposed explanation for some phenomena, or sets of occurrences, of a relationship (2002: p. 552). The purpose of theory is generally to provide a more coherent and integrated understanding of the world than we might otherwise know it or hold of it (Thiel, 2014). Frederickson et al (2012) further contends, therefore, that the usefulness or validity of any theory is a function of its ability or tenacity to explain, describe and predict a real-world phenomenon. Theories of organizations, which is the core business of public management are inherently concerned with how individuals can manage change processes and understand, explain or predict phenomena to their own or corporate advantage (Denhardt, 2011; Frederickson et al., 2012; Udo-Akang, 2012). A phenomenon in public management or administration like service charters is complex, at times, to be explained with one theory (Thiel, 2014). It is not surprising that the concept of public management is associated with many theoretical frameworks. These frameworks include: Theories of Political Control of Bureaucracy; Theories of Bureaucratic Politics; Public Institutional Theory; Theories of Public Management; Postmodern Theory; Decision Theory; Rational Choice Theory and Irrational Behaviour (neoclassical economic theory); and Theories of Governance (Hughes, 2003; Denhardt, 2010; Frederickson et al., 2012). These theories are not entirely divorced from each other but have each made attempts to explain certain phenomena and predictabilities in the production and delivery of public services. Salmon (2000) postulates that public administration theories have viewed government agencies as tightly structured hierarchies insulated from effective citizen pressures and, therefore, free to serve the personal and institutional interests of bureaucracies instead.

Public service management reforms that have been undertaken since the 1980s, it is contended in this study, are housed in the broad family of Theories of Public

Management (Lane, 2001)). In this house we find the Principal Agent Theory and the New Public Management (NPM) Model. The NPM, as discussed, earlier is rooted in the Public Choice Theory and in turn whose core philosophy is rooted in the Neo-Classical-New Institutional Economic theories (Denhardt, 2011). Public service management reforms are further associated with Theories of Governance (Hughes, 2003) and in particular Public Value Theory whose focus is essentially on accountability, transparency, citizen orientation in terms of responsiveness to their needs and quality of services (Moore, 2012).

In the abundance of public service management theories, in this study therefore, three theoretical frameworks, namely the New Public Management (NPM), the Public Value Theory and the Institutionalization Theory (Frederickson et al., 2012; Dacin et al., 2002; Moore, 2012) have been selected as more relevant to the objective of the study. The choice of the NPM and the Public Value theoretical frameworks for the study was made because they are interpretivist or constructivist paradigms. In addition, their core tenets espouse the aspects of citizen centric approaches in the delivery chain of public services. The Institutionalization Theory espouses aspects that are at the centre of change in societies and organizations, in this case public sector reforms (Dacin et al., 2002).

In the light of the objectives of the study, the literature reviewed and the theoretical framework thereof, a conceptual framework was developed. As McGaghie et al. (2001) postulate the purpose of a conceptual framework is to help indicate the most useful areas in which to focus on the study. To that end, a conceptual framework of the study, more specifically, explains how the public sector reform initiatives lead to enhanced service delivery. It further embodies the core specific areas which the study focused on to ensure that the data collected was relevant to the main objectives of the research which is to analyze the extent the public sector reforms lead to enhanced public service delivery using the Malawi Public Service Charter as a case; and to answer the questions regarding improved accountability and transparency, citizen participation in service delivery; and improved quality services. What the conceptual framework portrays is that realization of enhanced service delivery is dependent on institutionalizing public sector reforms.

1.9 Organisation of the Study

Given the above, this study is organized in six chapters. Chapter One introduces the background to the study, brief account of public sector reforms, outlines public service reforms: the context of service charters reform initiative the study's problem statement, the objectives of the study, the study area and brief account of the methodology, the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study, the organization of the study and conclusion. Chapter Two provides broadly provides a review of the relevant literature associated with the problem statement, objectives of the study, the theoretical and conceptual framework of the public sector management reforms and the service charters reform initiative in particular. In that regard, it has an introduction, defines the concepts of public sector, public administration versus public management, public sector reforms; institutionalization in the public sector reforms; the customer service charter reform initiative; the theoretical framework of the study; the conceptual framework for the study. In addition, the chapter discusses the inter linkages of various core concepts in the study and the conceptual framework for the study. Chapter Three discusses the methodology used for data collection and analysis while Chapter Four provides a socio-political and economy context to reforms in Malawi. This chapter also discusses the customer service reform initiative in the context of enhanced service delivery. Chapter Five is a presentation of the findings on the rationale for introducing service charters in the Malawi Public service delivery chain. The rationale rests on the need to empower citizens to demand services from Duty Bearers (Drew, 2005; GoM, 2010), making public servants to be more responsive to citizen needs, promoting accountability and transparency, promoting and improving quality of services (GoM, 2010). The chapter also outlines findings on the key actors and their roles in the introduction of the service reform initiatives. These actors are government agencies, development partners, NGOs and traditional leaders and citizens. Chapter Six presents the findings on the institutionalization of the service charter determined by the level of awareness and knowledge of the service charters among Duty Bearers and service users; presence of organization structures and coordination, management of the institutionalization process of the service charter reform initiative and presence of relevant legislation and policy instruments in support of the service charter reform initiative. Chapter Seven is a presentation of the findings on whether the service charter reform initiative has led to enhancing services using parameters of accountability,

transparency, citizen empowerment, and service standards including reliability, accessibility and responsiveness. Chapter Eight is a conclusion of the study.

1.10 Conclusion

Public sector reforms implemented in developed countries are touted by academicians, development partners, donors and practitioners as a panacea for enhanced public services delivery in developing countries (Kiggundu, 1998). This is, however, taken for granted without recourse to research to and contextualize their effectiveness in developing countries. This study, therefore, seeks to find out the extent to which public sector reforms with a focus on service charters in developing countries lead to enhanced service delivery using the Malawi Public Service as a case study. To this end, this chapter presented the research background to the study, the main and specific objectives of the study, significance of the study, its scope and the contribution expected from this study. The main objective of the research was to analyze the extent the public sector reforms lead to enhanced public service delivery using the Malawi Public Service Charter as a case. A case study design was considered more relevant as case studies is a strategy that is used for doing research that involves investigations of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life using multiple sources of evidence.

The next chapter presents the literature review for this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Service Charters is one of the public sector reform initiatives and hence it is important to understand the broader context of public service reforms in order to situate the expected impact of the service charters reform initiative on service delivery. This chapter, therefore, presents a review of literature in the areas of public service management reforms and the service charters reform initiative in particular, as a mechanism for enhancing service delivery. To this end, the chapter first provides an overview of the context of public service management reforms followed by a discussion on the theories of public management reforms and the concept of service delivery. The chapter further discusses the framework for measuring service delivery, institutionalization of the public service reforms and the concept of public service delivery. Finally, the chapter discusses the framework for the study. The literature is reviewed in the context of the objectives of the study which are: (a) to establish the rationale for introducing the service charters in the Malawi public service delivery chain and how the service charters reform initiative was introduced in terms of key actors roles and interests; (b) to determine the extent to which service charters reform initiative was institutionalized within the public service delivery chain; and (c) to assess whether service charters lead to enhanced public service delivery. The Chapter is structured and discussed along the following sections: a) introduction of the chapter; b) the public sector; c) public administration versus public management; c) public sector management reforms; d)

institutionalization in the public sector reforms; e) the service charter reform initiative; f) the theoretical framework of the study outlining the key theories used in the study; g) the conceptual framework of the study and finally; h) the conclusion of the chapter.

2.2 The Public Sector

Public service management reforms by their name imply they occur in the public sector. The Public Sector, in that regard, is that part of an economy controlled by the state at national and local governments established to produce a range of essential goods and services for common consumption and enjoyment by members of the society (Callender, 2001; Tambulasi & Kayuni, 2013; Dzimbiri, 2016). Denhardt et al. (2009) on the other hand further define the public sector as that part of state or vehicle of the state that deals with the production, delivery and allocation of goods and services by and for the government for its citizens. These public goods generally include health, education, security, law and order, infrastructure, monitoring and maintenance of environment and watching over underprivileged sections of the community (Perrot, 2005; Denhardt et al., 2009).

This vehicle operates in a system based on acceptable structures and institutions traditionally engraved in what is widely known as public administration (Parsons, 2007; Hodgson, 2006). Therefore, the public sector is the primary if not the main vehicle for governance and ground for state politics – responsible for allocation of state resources through goods and services as much as other players like the civil society and the private sector through corporate responsibility to provide service at no cost. Regardless of participation of non-state actors in the delivery of public services and inevitably so, the Public Sector remains the main agent of public service delivery (Fox, 2014). As discussed later, it is not surprising and not by accident, that the public sector has become the subject of the reform agenda itself for the public sector has to always be relevant and efficient to meet the ever changing needs and aspirations of citizen in a particular polity as it is subjected to increasing public scrutiny. It is in this context that the following section defines the operating terms in public services that are central to the reform's agenda. The terms are public administration and public management.

2.3 Public Administration and Public Management: a comparison

It is important that in an effort to fully engage in understanding the rationale for public sector management reforms by first understanding two critical concepts prevalent in the public sector, that is administration and management and their qualified names of public administration and public management.

The terms administration and management have very subtle differences between them, and it is not surprising that they are practically used interchangeably in public services. Profound differences appear, though, when they are applied in the running of the state affairs and when qualified with the word public (Hughes, 2003). Laurence Lynn, Jr (2006) contends that historically the word administration has been associated and used more in the public sector while management has been used more in the private sector. Administration in its own right, according to Hughes (2003) implies superintending the execution of activities. In that vein, therefore, administration carries a connotation of implementing instructions set by someone superior who bears the responsibility of these instructions. On the other hand, management broadly covers the art of putting in place systems or logistics to achieve set objectives (Denhardt et al., 2009). Management, therefore, carries with its task-achieving connection of set targets or results and a defined degree of responsibility of the consequences of the activities so undertaken.

The association of the words ‘Administration’ and ‘Management’ with state functions has been one of evolution to the extent that their application and meaning are defined and rendered in the concepts of ‘Public Administration or Public Service Administration’ and Public management, and lately ‘Public Governance’ (Hughes, 2003; Lynn, 2006; Denhardt et al., 2009). Interestingly when these words are used in the context of the state functions in particular, to produce a range of essential goods and services for common consumption and enjoyment by members of the society as discussed above, both words encompass methodical efforts that are set in motion to achieve the goals of a sovereign authority (Hughes, 2003; Lynn, 2006). It is in this context that their difference is conclusively subtle and as Laurence Lynn, Jr. further argues (2006), it is generally impossible to establish, either historically or conceptually, a very clear and precise difference between administration and management. One is also tempted to conclude that the history of public administration is a history of public

management and the terms are invariably reflective of the definitions of structures and institutions. What is clear though is that the application of the word management in the public sector gained more currency and application when the traditional public administration principles and philosophy were challenged as not being suited and responsible to emerging governance culture in many jurisdictions (Hughes, 2003). In the framework of public sector reforms, therefore, administration and management imply different things to the effort of enhanced public service delivery. In the following sections the two terms are further discussed in more detail as two concepts with the qualifying suffix of Public.

Public Administration has many definitions suffice it to say that its main concern is the execution of government policies and programmes as well regulating the behavior of public servants (Hughes, 2003). To that end Marshall (1998), defines public administration as bureaucratic structures and their procedures which serve governments to implement their policies. Robinson (2015), speaks to the same line of thought as Marshall by referring to public administration as either mechanisms or institutions through which public policy can be implemented and public service can be delivered. Marshall's definition is, however, contentious in that by including procedures he contradicts By et al. 's (2009) argument that public service structures are framed around institutions that constitute laws, management systems, processes and procedures that are meant to guide the efficient production and delivery of intended development outputs and outcomes and, therefore, leaning more to public management. The issues of structures and institutions is discussed and elaborated further below in the section dealing with public sector reforms. Marshall's position notwithstanding, the role of these bureaucratic systems is to ensure that effective policies are developed and that public resources are used efficiently and effectively to produce public services in line with government priorities and ideally based on citizen preferences. Public administration as a bureaucratic system operates in structures and institutions which are concerned with regulating individual or group behavior in delivering services in the public interest (Denhardt et al., 2009) using structures and rules and regulations. Hughes (2003) subsequently argues that public administration is narrower in scope and more limited in function than public management.

Given the above definition of public administration, public management can, therefore, be ascribed to the operations of public organizations as opposed to the private sector and with a core focus of attainment of results in a manner and character of private sector. To that end, the inception of public management forms the basis of reforms in the running of public sectors (Hughes, 2003). Public management, thus, is also known by various new names, New Public Management (NPM), managerialism, market-based management, and entrepreneur government (Atreya, 2002). The verities of public management can be defined as the anti-thesis of public administration and broadly constitute setting of objectives; devising operational plans; setting structures and procedures for coordinating activities, directing the human resources and the human resource management systems; and controlling performance that includes management information systems, operation and capital budgets (Atreya, 2002; Denhardt et al., 2009). On the other hand, conservatively public administration practice involves activities at a strategic level that include provision of high quality official support and advice to a country's leadership including ministers on all aspects of a ministry's portfolio; formulation and implementation of policies; interpretation and application of data relating to policies and procedures. It further entails provision of research-based evidence to Ministers and senior official colleagues to inform future policy work; consideration of wider political and economic issues; preparation of drafting instructions for new or revised legislation and oversight of the passage of legislation through Parliament. Additionally, it covers management and efficient use of resources – financial, physical and staff-related; interpretation and communication, both oral and written, of often complex legal provisions and rules to colleagues and members of the public; achievement and delivery of results within deadlines; and production of high-quality reports and other documentation. Research and analysis relating to particular areas of political or economic interest; monitoring and evaluation – both the monitoring of results and of the effective implementation of policy are also central (Hughes, 2003; Batley & Larbi, 2004).

Agreeing with Hughes that public administration is narrower in scope and more limited in function than public management, Ruccucci (2010) argues that public administration lacks a paradigmatic framework. Ruccucci's argument is based on the very nature of public administration's characteristic as espoused by Weber in the Traditional Public Administration verities (Polidano, 2001, Hughes; 2003; Batley & Larbi, 2004; O'Flynn,

2007; Denhardt et al, 2009). Traditionally public administration is associated with bureaucracy and is characterized by seven fundamental principles/verities namely a bureaucracy, only one best way of working; separation of politics from administration, public interest; neutrality; professional bureaucracy; following instructions provided by others without personally being responsible for the results (O'Flynn, 2007; Batley & Larbi, 2004; Hughes, 2003). These traditional Weberian principles and service structures have been challenged and adjudged to be rigid and, therefore, inefficient to help governments deliver public services efficiently (Hood, 1991, Hughes, 2003, O'Flynn, 2007). This challenge is seen as a self-imposed destruction of the Weberian model of public administration that is deemed to be slow, inefficient and unresponsive to service users' needs. As a result of these challenges there has been a call for and subsequent promotion of new systems grounded in the widely known New Public Management Model (Hood, 1991, Batley & Larbi, 2004). This presupposes a different form of running affairs of government that is grounded in the broader term of public management as defined below; that has been adapted from the private sector and gained more currency as a new approach to the running of state affairs and delivery of public services in the 1980s and 1990s.

In view of the above definitions and towing Lynn's (2001) debate on public administration and public management, indeed it is difficult to draw historically or conceptually distinctive lines between these two concepts as when used in the public service both serve to encompass methodical effort to accomplish the goals of sovereign authority. Indeed, in Lane's words 'it is impossible to make a sharp separation between making managerial action, policies and administration in the public sector (Lane, 2001) as public sector management embraces objectives and decision making, it also takes into account how institutions constrain the employment of resources, as in administration'.

Despite the subtle differences, public management has increasingly become a more a common parlance among academics and practitioners in the christened New Public Management (NPM) phenomena and which in turn has variably led to most practitioners substituting the term public administration with public management. The NPM has become the lynch pin of public sector reform initiatives since the early 1990

(Hood, 1991). The NPM is a critical stage in the public sector management reforms agenda and cannot be ignored in the discourse of public sector reforms agenda.

On the basis of the above discussion, the debate going forward, therefore, in understanding public administration is to urge for search for new interdisciplinary horizons. In that regard, and as Dehardt (2011) argues, the public needs a better bureaucracy that is more flexible, working efficiently effectively and responsive to the needs of the people while ensuring social sensitivity, responsibility and morality. This position in itself though does not provide a finite basis for innovations as it calls for continued reforms of the state organs and institutions couched in traditional public administration which has been the main framework for public service for a long time but has since the 1990s been challenged for its inherent inefficiencies. In the context of the study, and as Dehardt (2011) and Hughes (2003) argue, public administration should be concerned with managing change processes in pursuit of publicly defined society values as is the case for the service charters reform initiative under study as tools for enhancing service delivery.

Neumann (1996), therefore, postulates that in view of the core objectives of public administration, an appropriate research question that defines public administration must concern itself with the structure and dynamics of public organization. Neumann Jr's assertion is upheld in van Thiel's (2014) argument that research in public administration is unique in that, among others, its focus is on finding solutions to topical issues in the public sector rather than creating big theories. Van Thiel's argument is particularly relevant to the objective of this study because, the objective of the study, while not dealing with the creation of a theory, relates more to finding a solution to the topical issues of enhanced delivery of public services. Accordingly, the public management calls on Government to focus on achieving results rather than primarily conforming to procedures and rules but to adopt market-like competition ethos, entrepreneurial strategies and be innovative to meet citizen needs in the ever changing socio-political and economic environment (Osborne & Gaebler 1993; Hughes, 2003; Batley & Larbi, 2004). This discourse points to the evolution of public service management technologies and ethos as an alternative to the traditional public administration mode of effective public service delivery. Such mechanisms among others include the service charters (Hyden, 1992; Drew, 2005). The following section is, therefore, a discussion

of the evolving public service management technologies, broadly described as public sector reforms.

2.4 Public Sector Management Reforms

Public administration and development experts view and agree that public management reforms are inevitable and are essential to enhance delivery of defined national outputs (goods and services) for sustained economic development reflective of citizen needs (Banerjee: 2007). Public management reform which is also described as administrative reforms or organizational reforms is seen as a deliberate planned intervention to improve the performance of the public service (Mutahaba, 1989). According to OECD (1999) public management reform has many objectives, and these vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Despite its many objectives, the core objective of the reform initiatives, regardless of which jurisdiction is implementing, is to see remarkable positive change in the public service outputs (Olufemi & David, 2010; Pollitt, 2004). To that end, prevalent among these objectives are the desires to improve organizational performance, improve accountability, transparency; and to make government more responsive to the needs of the public, improve the quality of service of the government, improve job satisfaction, clarify personal and organizational responsibility (Drewry, 2005).

Public sector reforms being state related, Lane (2001) contends that public management reform is a political activity and, therefore, is amenable to the interests of a number of stakeholders. Public sector management reform initiatives subsequently, and particularly in developing countries where democratic ethos are nascent, are subjected not only to a few elite's interests but also to exogenous political philosophies, largely of developed countries and associated organizations. To this end, this raises questions of institutionalization and deinstitutionalization in the delivery of public services (Peters, 2000; Joshi, 2010, Saebo, 2017) or the applicability of the institutional theory as discussed later. Accordingly, Therkildsen (2013) comments that the political contestation of specific reform measures tends to take place during implementation rather than during the policy design phase. Further, therefore, it is important to be knowledgeable of the key players' motives namely politicians and bureaucrats, donors and the general public and interest groups in the politics of reform implementation, as

this is the essence of political institutionalism (Amenta & Ramsey, 2009). External motives and influences, particularly those of donors, become challenging to deal with at implementation. Therkildsen (2013) contends, therefore, that this is even more challenging when states do not use their own resources to finance the reforms agenda through domestic revenue from citizens, but depend on aid instead. Further, in the words of Amenta and Ramsey “the influence and durability of institutions is a function of the extent to which they are inculcated in political actors at the individual or organization level, and the extent to which they thereby tie up material resources and networks” (2005, p. 5). The following is a further discussion of the modern public service management reforms premised on the current definition.

2.4.1 Characterization of Modern Public Service Management Reforms

The modern public management reform agenda is broadly inscribed in the New Public Management (NPM) philosophy that emerged in the 1990s (Hood, 1991; Gruening: 1998) and can further be said to have its origins in economic theories and that it was highly influenced by the Public Choice Theory. To this end, the Chicago School of Economics espoused the NPM through a three-stage process of principles of deregulation, privatization and marketisation of the functionality of the public in delivery of public service. The Public Choice Theory advocates the application of economic models of human action to politics and other social activities, basically pointing to the behavior of individuals that men and women always seek to maximize their benefits and pursue the least costs in their decisions (Seddom, 2008; Lane, 1997, Hughes, 2003). As such, the Public Choice Theory challenges some fundamental principles of Public Administration particularly the call to reduce government and bureaucracy and espousing, instead, government operations through markets and widening individual choices.

While economic theory and its influence on public management reforms through the Public Choice Theory may not be disputed the study contends that such a position limits the evolution and revolutions associated with the public service organizations and their institutions, that go way back to the 1850s. The argument proffered is that the genesis to public sector reform goes beyond the Chicago School of Economics when one considers the theoretical and practical questions raised against the traditional public administration (Hughes: 2003) and failing governments to effectively deliver public

services way before the 1970s and 1980s as discussed in the discussion of public administration and public service management concepts above. The contestation is that the Chicago School of Economics position limits the evolution and revolutions associated with the public service organizations and their institutions that go back in history of human civilization. For example, when the clock is wound to the 1870s when a more semblance of the current public administration mirrors the 28th President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson and others at the turn of the 20th Century who advocated for a number of administrative reforms to counter the ills of corruption and the spoils systems (Mutahaba, 1989, Hughes, 2003, Jreisat, 1997). In addition, Jreisat (1997) argues that the enactment of The Pendleton Act of 1883 in America influenced by the merit system used by the British civil service system, which ‘created the Civil Service Reform Commission to administer a public service system based on the competence and character of employees’ (1997, p. 300). The outcome of these endeavors was reform that led to the professionalization of the management of public functions in America (Lynn, 2006).

Further to the above initiatives, the industrial scientific management, which is a theory of management that analyses and synthesizes workflows, championed by Frederick Taylor in the United States and Henri Fayol in France had an effect on the administrative ethos of the public sector (Riccucci, 2010). Basically the theory, whose main objective is improving economic efficiency, especially labour productivity, triggered some reforms in how the public affairs were to be administered. In Africa too in particular, as countries became independent from colonial bondage, it was inevitable to deconstruct some administrative structures to reflect the new dawn of self-governance, the Africanisation processes (Omoyefa, 2008). This suggests that the colonialists brought in administrative structures that were alien to traditional ways of running affairs of the communities. Reflection on these timelines of public reform initiatives show that they precede the influence of NPM. What may not be in dispute, though, is the reality that reforms couched in NPM have a lot of bearing on the Chicago School of Economics and that public services have to systematically re-invent themselves to be more relevant to the ever changing socio, economic, political, technologies and natural environment, to effectively deliver services preferred by citizens of the society they serve.

It is in the context of the Public Choice Theory and subsequent emergence of the public management that modern public service management reforms are associated with the NPM philosophy. Suffice it to say that this point that the NPM philosophy lies in its advocacy for and emphasis on the use of market ethos among others in the delivery of public services (Osborne & Gaebler, 1993).

To this end, according to Osborne and Gaebler, NPM calls on governments to focus more on achieving results through adoption of market-like competition ethos, entrepreneurial strategies and innovation to meet citizen needs in the ever changing socio-political and economic environment rather than primarily conforming to procedures and rules. Behind the emergence of NPM are the challenges faced by the welfare and development states of the 1970s and 1980s that gave credence to the reforms agenda as we know them today (Chataway & Hewitt, 2000). These challenges included the oil crises of the 1970s, and for developing countries in particular, the inability of their bureaucratic establishments to deal with internal dynamics and respond to citizen needs and subjection to imposed reforms and international pressures including structural adjustment programmes (Hughes, 2003) whose effect led to deteriorating quality of services.

The NPM philosophy as the bedrock of modern public service management reforms and together with other theories for this study will be discussed further in details under theories of public service management reforms. In order to further understand the efficacy of public sector management reform initiatives in developing countries, the following section discusses parameters within which public production of goods and service and delivery are carried out.

2.4.2 The process of Introducing Public Sector Reforms

The introduction of reforms and in particular service charter reforms in developed as well as in developing nations is a question of home grown policy options to address an emerging public service delivery challenge or policy transfer that is guided by policy frameworks and legislation that vary from one jurisdiction to another (Kiggundu, 1998). The introduction of reforms in Africa and in other developing countries, however, has largely been done based on reform policy frameworks of the developed countries (Dzimhiri, 2011). The introduction of such reforms often times has either

been coerced by development partners as part of development aid or as mimetic policy transfer following the apparent benefits that such a reform initiative is considered to have yielded in most developed countries (Fox, 2014). To this end, it is safe to argue that the introduction of service charters has been influenced by global trends particularly the emergence of the NPM philosophy and entrenched by theoretical frameworks like the Public Value, the move towards democratization, citizen empowerment and continental obligations.

Review of literature of some countries where service charters have been introduced, for example, points to the general position that service charters are developed based on policy and legal frameworks including Constitutions obtaining in those jurisdictions (Mang'era & Bichaga, 2013; Principe, 2009). In the Philippines, for example, there is the Republic Act 9485 with provisions, according to Principe (2009), that mandate all government national offices and agencies including local government units and government-owned or controlled corporations providing frontline services to develop their respective service standards to be known as Citizen's Charter. However, even in the case of the Philippines the reform is a policy transfer from other countries. In Nepal too service charters are couched based on the Good Governance Act 36 2008 (Acharya, 2010) and are not a home generated policy option.

In Italy the Carta dei servizi, translated as Services Charter, was introduced under law in 1993 (Schiavo, 2000) based on the developments in the UK, USA, Australia, Africa, South Africa, Botswana. According to Bava (2009) the Right to Information Act of 2005 in India provides for most if not all elements of the service charters but more importantly Brava outlines that the adoption and introduction of reforms in particular the service charter followed a series of policy decisions by the government of India. These policy decisions while based on policy transfer underpinings, included localization of the charter to suit the socio-political and economic environment. It, therefore, is argued that there are recognizable efforts and steps in the introduction of reform initiative in developing countries that negate the coerced or mimetic adoption of reform given the context of policy formulation and policy learning as discussed below.

2.4.2.1 Role of Public Policy Formulation

Public sector reforms are state related political activities (Lane, 2001) that seek to introduce a course of action for purposes of improving efficiency in the delivery of public service (Mutahaba, 1989). Any public sector reform initiative that is introduced, therefore, can be said to be a product of a public policy formulation process. To this end, a public policy formulation is a process that can be defined as a set of steps that involves setting of an agenda or identifying an issue that needs to be addressed; setting or identifying alternatives for addressing the agenda; and choosing what Roberts (1991, 1992) describes as an authoritative option among the alternatives expressed through legislative enactment or executive decisions. Having chosen or made an executive decision what follows is the implementation process (GoM, 2017). Policy formulation involves a number of stakeholders and as Moyson et al in their analysis of policy learning and policy change, theorizing the relationships from different perspectives postulate that “all policy issues involve the accumulation of data about problems and solutions in context of social interactions” (2017:1). Knill et al (2008) further argue that the process of public policy formulation is at the centre of functioning democratic politics in an effort to find solutions to societal problems. The role of government, therefore, is pivotal to provide meaningful directions. Given this undertaking policy formulation is preceded by many activities including situation analysis, policy learning, policy transfer and entrepreneurship.

2.4.2.2 Role of Policy Learning

Given the above argument that public sector reforms are a product of policy formulation processes, policy learning becomes critical in situating what and how best reforms can be adopted and adapted in a particular jurisdiction. Moyson et al. (2017) argue that the complexity of the globalized world and that by nature human beings are subject to error in their endeavours, makes learning inevitable and essential in an attempt to overcome challenges that emerge when dealing with policy and public policy in particular. Therefore, policy learning is a concept that refers to the process where policy stakeholders “acquire, translate and disseminate new information and knowledge towards achieving political endeavours and for revising or strengthening their policy related beliefs overtime” (Moyson et al., 2017, p.1). Policy learning may include study tours of the interested entity to another entity where such a reform has been implemented, literature review and adaptation as well as by policy entrepreneurship.

Policy learning, therefore, is a very critical step in the introduction of public sector reforms especially where these are largely not home grown.

There are also instances where governments introduce reforms based on international obligations. For example, in the health sector no country can set the standards outside the minimum set standards by the World Health Organization. Policy learning, therefore, becomes imperative without compromising on the local socio-political economic situations.

2.4.2.3 Role of Public Policy Entrepreneurship

Roberts (1991, 1992) defines public entrepreneurship as the process of introducing innovations, the generation, translation, and implementation of new ideas into the public sector. In that regard, actors in the public policy formulation process from outside the formal positions of a government are involved in the introduction, translation and assist in implementing new ideas into public practice. The introduction of such innovations is done among others through conference marketing by actors described as policy entrepreneurs. Bocher writing on the role of policy entrepreneurs in regional governance process contends that “policy entrepreneurs are promoters who are able to develop ideas as well as actively influence politics in order to realize these policy ideas during policy formulation process” (2011, p. 2). In addition, policy entrepreneurs invest in mobilizing the public, building up actors-coalitions; as well as money, labour and time in order to achieve their objectives (Bocher, 2011; Nay 2012). To this end, the role of policy entrepreneurs is considered critical in the public sector reform introduction process as through their attempts in bringing new ideas or innovations they help to disrupt entrenched status quo policy arrangements that may not be ideal for enhanced public service delivery and also mobilize the required technical and financial support in promoting a policy reform (Polsby, 1984; Bocher, 2011; Nay, 2012). Given the above, policy entrepreneurs in reforms in developing countries among others include development partners, street-level bureaucrats in local governments and nongovernmental organizations.

2.4.2.4 Role of Street Level Bureaucrats

The term street-level bureaucrats coined by Lipsky in 1980 (Tummers et al, 2014) refers to frontline public employees who interact with citizens in the course of service

delivery. These include teachers, police officers, agriculture extension officers, health workers and social workers. In Malawi, for example, the Decentralization Policy (1998) backed by and Local Government Act (1998) provide for the devolution of powers and authority; and responsibility of policy implementation among others to District Councils and, therefore, provide an enabling operation framework to street-level bureaucrats at various levels in the councils. The street-level bureaucrats have the enormous role of implementing public policies. As Tummers et al (2014) further argue often times these street –level bureaucrats implement these policies with limited information, technical capability, and finances. In addition to these challenges “the rules they have to follow do not correspond to the specific situation of the involved citizen” (Tummers, 2014: 3). To this end, the street-level bureaucrat is confronted with the dilemma of using discretion in interpreting the policy in order to deliver a service to a customer and this, depending on how the discretion is made may affect the efficacy of the policy (Tummers, 2014; Seva, 2015; Setegen, 2018). This notwithstanding, street-level bureaucrats at whatever level in the public service delivery chain play very critical roles in the interpretation, introduction, institutionalization and sustenance of policy reforms (Tummers, 2014; Seva, 2015; Setegen, 2018).

2.5 Institutionalization in Public Sector Reforms

In reflecting on institutionalization in public sector reforms, this will be discussed within the Institutionalization Theory. However, it is not the intention of the study to delve into the debate of meriting or de-meriting the theory but rather focus on explaining the relevance of the theory to entrenching public sector reforms as Dacin et al argue that, institutionalization theory “offers popular and powerful explanations for both individual and organisation actions” (2002, p.45). To this end, the study understands that institutional theory is about the stability and change of institutions (Saebo, 2017) expressed in norms, rules and structures that act as guidelines or frameworks for social behaviour (Scott, 2008). In public sector business, institutional theory can be said to be speaking to policy making that stresses on putting in place formal and legal structures for carrying out efficient services (Kraft & Furlong, 2009). Essentially, the institutional theory explains how structures and institutions are created, implemented, adopted, and adapted in various societies and organizations over time. It further explains how these elements succeed or fall into decline, obsolete or disuse and replacements with new ones (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 2008). This explains

the dynamics of public sector reforms implementation akin to many developing countries and is encapsulated in the concepts of institutionalization and deinstitutionalization. One of the inherent weaknesses of the theory is that it is used to explain both the persistent and homogeneity of phenomenon which practically is not possible since social-political environments play major roles in shaping institutions. Thus, Dacin et al. (2002) argue that while institutions are central as powerful tools to drive change in character and capability, these too are subject to change overtime. It is imperative that institutions and structures are further discussed as integral issues to reforms.

2.5.1 Institutions

There are a number of interesting constructs of institutions including definitions such as formal or informal rules, conventions or practices, that shape social behavior (Parsons, 2007; Hodgson, 2006) and to what North (1990) calls any form of constraints that human beings put in place to shape their interactions. Parsons (2007) further describes the same as any enduring pattern of behavior among a group of people that may manifest itself in buildings, dress and language; and Peters also argues that “these standards of behaviour are acquired through involvement with one or more institutions and these institutions are the major repositories of values” (2002, p. 3). Given that there is no consensus in the definition of institutions and a little surprising that often times there is inadvertent mix-up in use with the term organization, the study is persuaded, thus, to use the definition of institutions as constituting formal and informal laws, rule, systems, processes and procedures that guide and constrain individuals in societies, organizations and polities in their actions, interactions and interpretations that are meant to guide public servants in the efficient production and delivery of public services (North, 1990; Parsons, 2007). To this end, the human interactions and behaviour, defined through institutions occur within defined structures or organizations (North 1990; Hodgson, 2006; Vandenabeele, 2007).

2.5.2 Structures

While institutions are domiciled in social interactions, structures on the other hand, are defined as a construction or frameworks of identifiable elements (components, entities, factors, members, parts, steps, etc.) which gives form and stability, and resists stresses and strains (Parsons: 2007; Hodgson:

2006). Structures have defined boundaries within which each element is physically or functionally connected to the other elements, and the elements themselves and their interrelationships are taken to be either fixed (permanent) or changing only occasionally or slowly (North, 1990). In many public services, pyramidal structures are prevalent, and for a long time until the advent of the New Public Management philosophy were defined as bureaucratic in their operations and delivery of public services (Hood, 1990; Osborne, 2004; Banerjee, 2007) as will be discussed in the later sections of this chapter. For March and Olsen (2010), structures are understood to be both formalized organizational apparatuses and a picture or pattern of values that these structures possess and socialize (inculcate) into new members. In organizations such as the Malawi Public Service, therefore, structures can be construed as a hierarchy of units and offices that are meant to facilitate service delivery as prescribed by laws, rules and regulations imbued with a chain of command.

2.5.3 Institutionalization and Deinstitutionalization

The term institutionalization can be understood from the points of view of outcomes of a process or as a process of introducing values, norms and practices that guide behaviour of societies, organizations and individuals and is influenced by power play of stakeholders (March & Olsen, 2010; Peters, 2000). The act of introducing new institutions and structures is as Scott (2008) puts it, institutional change in simple terms. The success of institutionalization is dependent on, as Di Maggio puts “...the relative power of actors who support, oppose or otherwise strive to influence it.” (1988, p.13). Hardy and Maguire describe endeavours in institutionalization and deinstitutionalization as “activities of actors who have an interest in particular institutional arrangements and who leverage resources to create new institutions or transform existing ones” (2004, p.37); an idea that was introduced by Di Maggio (1988) as ‘institutional entrepreneurship’. It is no wonder that Lane (2001) contends that public management reform is a political activity and, therefore, is amenable to the interests of a number of stakeholders. The process of institutionalization occurs at macro, meso and micro levels of society as well as at individual level (Dacin et al., 2002; Amenta & Ramsey, 2009). Macro level in case of public services could be the national government while meso could be the regional or local government level depending on the system of government while the micro level could be at ward or village level as is the case in Malawi.

It is in the above contexts that as an outcome, on the one hand, institutionalization reinforces organizational structures and institutions from politics and interests of individuals and as a process, on the other hand, the focus is on the political power machinations or interests of actors striving to either change or protect existing structures and institutions. The process of institutionalization is, therefore, inherently and practically an act of introducing new institutions or layering new ones on top of existing ones. The process of replacement or erosion and discontinuous of existing structures and institutions constitutes deinstitutionalization (Saebo, 2017). Debating on the issue of deinstitutionalization, Scott (2000) further argues that it is a process by which institutions weaken and disappear and, thus, allow for introduction of new sets of beliefs and practices necessitated by functional, political or social forces. Functional change drivers, on one the hand, are a result of institutionalized norms, systems practices failing to perform to expected levels while political drivers, on the other hand, arise from underlying power plays and interests of stakeholders (actors) that support or legitimize the existing arrangements push for change to safe guard or promote their interests which become critical in determining whether there will be resistance or legitimation to the functional change drive (Dacin et al., 2002). Social factors influence change through a process of theorization which involves “the specifications of failings of existing norms and practices and the justification of new norms and practices in terms of moral or pragmatic considerations” (Dacin et al., 2002, p.182), which is basically a sociological change.

It is argued that institutionalization or deinstitutionalization becomes effective when the existing institutions are perceived as being less effective or inappropriate and that the alternatives are seen as desirable and more appropriate to foster the needs of a society. Institutional and structural changes in the public services can, thus, be said to become more legitimate and implementable when change is being consistent with providing a high level of service to customers and acceptable to street bureaucrats. In view of the above discussion of institutions and structures and institutionalization, it is argued, that public sector reforms are an act of institutionalization and deinstitutionalization.

2.6 The Customer Service Charter Reform Initiative

A service charter is defined as a social pact written by service providers in consultation with service users generally outlining the nature, and quality of a service that service beneficiaries should expect from a service provider (Mang'era & Bichaga, 2013). Tritter (2004) cited in Mahoo (2016) further defines service charters as public agreements between citizens and service delivery providers that clearly codify expectations and standards in the realm of service delivery. If designed and implemented correctly, service charters have the potential not only to foster greater public satisfaction with a government's service by enhancing responsiveness among others but also increase confidence in the government (Joshi, 2010; Tamrakar, 2010; Fox, 2014). In making the transition from comparatively unresponsive bureaucracies to adopting a clear user focus in the delivery of public services, national administrations have adopted a variety of approaches in the broader terms of public governance, often and in particular involving the adoption of an explicit statement of standards in the form of a charter (Humphreys, 1998). These explicit statements of standards are known by different names in various jurisdictions. Some more common nomenclatures include 'CSCs, Citizen Charters, Performance Pledges and Client Charters (Drew, 2005; Haque, 2005).

The specific elements of service charters vary from place to place. Many charters, however, are largely characterized by defined services and standards that the public entity offers; the procedures to be followed in accessing services; cost and conditions required for the service to be accessed; publicizing of standards of services and location of where services can be accessed; and provision of a complaints and redress mechanisms (Tamrakar, 2010; OPC, 2010). Service charters, thus, outline the mandate of the public institution, the kind and nature of services that a particular public entity offers including time frames for delivery of services. service charters also include any charges if at all that users of the services are expected to pay, the responsibilities of service providers as well as the service users, and finally the means of recourse in circumstances where users experience a poor service.

2.6.1 The Advent of Modern Service Charters in Public Services

The modern service charter as a public management reform initiative relates to the advent of the NPM philosophy that emerged in the early 1990s (Jean-Pierre Thomassen et al., 2014). The case of charters, though, can be traced as far back as the Magna Charta of 1225 as well as the People's Charter of 183 (Tamrakar, 2010). The service charters reform initiative, as we know it today emerged around 1991 in the UK and has since become one of the reform initiatives adopted in many developed countries and in a number of developing countries including those in Africa. The advent of service charters is largely associated with the Conservative Government of the United Kingdom institutionalized by John Major from 1991 (Mang'era & Bichaga, 2013). The core objective at its inception in the UK was to streamline the administration and also, to make it citizen friendly. Indeed, as way back as the early 1980s efforts were being made by the British Government to find ways of improving the quality of services without adding to their cost (Lewis, 1993; Drew, 2005). This search culminated in the Citizens' Charter in 1991 (Lewis, 1993). Implicit in this thinking was a growing recognition of the importance of the individual service recipient in public service and extrapolation of the Public Choice Theory that was being espoused through the NPM- an element that the NPM espoused by increasing customer or citizen choices (Joshi, 2010). What Connolly, et al., (1994) described as a change in emphasis from rules and regulations to practices that would be required to promote the view that services should be consumer-led rather than producer-driven. It is the need to focus on the citizen that in 1998 the Labour Government in the UK renamed it as the Services First Initiative, thus, seeking to promote more citizen participation in service delivery through a bottom-up approach (Drewry, 2005).

In view of the above, a number of charter-like initiatives in European countries have been initiated with varying nomenclature. For example, in Italy they are called, La Carta dei Servizi (The Services Charter); in France, La Charte des Services Publics (Public Service Charter); in Portugal, Carta para a Qualidade nos Servicos Publicos (Quality Charter for Public Services) while in Belgium they are called La Charte des Utilizateurs des Services Publics (Public Service Users Charter); and in Sweden Public Service Guarantees. In the United States of America, they are called Customer's Service Plans, in Australia, Service Charters and in India Citizen's Charter (Haque, 2005). In Africa many countries use more or less similar names as in Europe. For example, in Kenya they

are known as Citizen Charters (Mang'era et al., 2013); in Tanzania they are known as Service Charters while in Ghana they are called Client Service Charters (Baidoo, 2014); in Botswana they are known as Service Charters (Mothusi, 2008) and in South Africa they are called Service Charters or Batho Pele in the local language (Kroukamp, 1999). Regardless of the names by which it is referred to, its intent and purposes these explicit statements of standards point to just one aim – enhancing public service delivery. In regard to the variety of names, this study has opted for the Service Charter (SC) as its operative term. The term will be used interchangeably with the term customer service charters. In the following section the rationale for introducing service charters is discussed in detail.

2.6.2 Rationale for Introducing Service Charters in Public Services

Service charters have become a common feature in the reform's agenda as tools that, purportedly will enhance responsiveness to citizen needs, promote accountability and transparency and, therefore, enhance the delivery of public services. Whether indeed CSCs are able to influence the quality of services is the subject of exploration under this study. Service charters, it is argued, can help central governments impose discipline on public services (Drewry, 2005) by transforming the service standards in the charter into performance indicators and making public servants more responsive in the discharge of their duties. According to Drewry (2005) client charters are powerful tools which when effectively institutionalized can enhance public service delivery standards. The underlying argument is the charters are instruments that are meant to achieve greater accountability and transparency in the delivery of public services as well as a means for reinforcing democratic principles by empowering citizens to demand quality of services. The service charters' philosophy ideally speaks to and is to be implemented within the central assumptions of the Public Choice Theory (Balogun, 2009). Service charters can, therefore, be classified as social accountability mechanisms or tools for check and balances of Duty Bearers. Friis-Hansen and Ravnkilde (2013), define social accountability as the responsibility and responsiveness exercised by state authorities during the period in between political elections, as well as the ability of citizens to make claims and hold those who exercise power to account for their actions. A definition that according to Hyden is about "the effectiveness with which the governed can exercise influence over the governors" (1992, p. 14). Other social accountability tools include

Community Score Cards and Citizen Monitoring, used in Brazil for example (Fox, 2014).

Saliently and in accordance with the Public Value Theory, service charters can be characterized as instruments that could be used to craft healthy relationships between Duty Bearers and users of the services and more importantly as tools that flesh out the moral dimension of public servants' accountability and commitment to provision of quality of services (Grant & Fisher, 2010; Fox, 2014). Duty bearers are actors in the public service who have an obligation to render public services within defined policies and legislation in a particular jurisdiction (Besson, 2010).

Service charters, however, have been criticized for their lack of legal binding sanctions in case of failure to meet the agreed and expected performance standards unless as Joshi (2010) puts it, if they can trigger traditional accountability mechanisms such as investigations, inspections and audits and relevant sanctions ascribed in the laws applicable. Despite their enforcement limitations, SCs, as a reforms initiative, have in recent years enjoyed increasing attention as a model for enhancing transparency, quality and accountability in public services delivery and have been implemented most coherently in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and India (Drewry, 2005). However, there is no consensus on the impact that service charters have had on the quality of public services with their track record in Western Europe being controversial. Myers and Lacey (1996, p.337) cited in Therkildsen (2013) and Rhodes (1997) comment that in the United Kingdom, for example, charters have been successful in encouraging transparency, openness and accountability. From an institutional point of view, service charters can be said to have gained social legitimacy and had deinstitutionalized old behaviors in the relationship between Duty Bearers and citizens. However, service charters while useful, service charters confuse consumer satisfaction with political accountability because, as being mere social tools, that do not give consumers powers to hold a government agency liable for poor services. It is further argued that even in cases where citizens have the right to protest against poor service delivery and misconduct, there needs to be pressure for public authorities to respond and sanction those responsible (Acharya, 2010). The effectiveness of the service charters is dependent on a number of factors including supportive public service delivery legal and policy frameworks that offer organizational accountability (Joshi,

2010) as discussed later in the chapter; and strong institutionalization arrangements and capacity of implementing agencies including knowledge to see value in service charters from a broader point of view than individual perspective (Peters, 2000), and more importantly the presence and institutionalization of the policy and legal frameworks. In the next section the study discusses the policy and legal framework for CSCs.

While service charters are just social pacts, their implementation is ideally guided by each member state's legal instruments including Constitutions and other laws and policies related to specific sectors. In addition, and noting that countries are members of various international organizations, these countries are, therefore, obliged to set the standards in line with international service standards.

2.6.3 The African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration

Following the 2001 resolution adopted by the Third Pan African Conference of Ministers responsible for the Civil Service, the African Union adopted a policy the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and the Administration - The ACVPPSA (AU 2009) that serves as a prototype-policy that all members will use to develop and domesticate the concept of CSCs (AU, 2009; Balogun, 2009; Baiddo, 2014). Although the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and the Administration (AU 2009) was adopted after some countries had already introduced their own service charters, it can be said to be the prime policy framework for service charters in most African States, particularly AU member states (Balogun, 2009). The Africa Public Service Charter is mirrored in the UN General Assembly Resolution 57/277(A/RES/57/277) that designates 23 June as The UN Public Service Day and intends to celebrate the value and virtue of public service to the community, highlight the contribution of public service in the development process, and recognize the work of public servants (GoM, 2010). The ACVPPSA is a policy document that defines a framework to guide the Public Service in Africa in delivery of services. It provides for a Code of Conduct for Public Service employees, regulations to guide the relationship between the Public Service and its employees and, finally, principles and standards to guide relations between the Public Service and its clients. This policy document includes such principles as equality, neutrality, legality and

continuity as well as standards on accessibility, participation, quality, transparency and responsiveness. It has a set of objectives among which are:

“to foster adherence to a body of fundamental principles and values agreed upon in a bid to provide efficient, effective and innovative public services that are satisfactory to the community and users; encourage the efforts made by State Parties to modernize the administration and build capacities in order to improve the quality of public services rendered (African Union: 2010).

In that regard, the ACVPPSA further encourages citizens and users to participate in the process of providing public service, particularly through communication, consultation and active contribution to the formulation of administrative procedures. It also promotes the moral values inherent in the duties of public service employees in order to ensure transparency in the provision of public services.

The adoption of the service charter by the African Union was in itself a response to the global trend in development of public management philosophies including the emergence of the NPM. The core elements in the African Union Service Charter are fundamentally the same issues that the NPM and the PVT. In view of the perceived benefits of the charter system including promotion of accountability, all countries in the African Union are called upon to implement and adopt service charters (AU, 2009). However, each member state had to domesticate the Charter cognizance of the member state's prevailing legal and policy instruments governing the delivery of public services.

2.6.4 Status of the Service Charters Reform Initiative in Africa

Many African countries have introduced the service charters reform initiative based on various reasons (Drew, 2005; Baidoo, 2014). Spurred by the adoption of the ACVPPSA and the provision of the same in the African Peer Review Mechanism (AU, 2009) and also under the influence of the NPM philosophy, countries such as Ghana, Namibia, Uganda, Kenya, Malawi and South Africa have introduced Service Charter Systems with various levels of success. In Namibia and Uganda, the charters were introduced in 2002 and 2004 respectively. South Africa launched its version of service charters known as the Batho Pele, literally meaning People First initiative, in late 1997 (Kroukamp, 1999) whose formulation was based on a set of national principles for

public service including the drive that citizens should be consulted about the level and quality of public services and, wherever possible, be given a choice of services. In addition, citizens should also be informed about the level and quality of services they will receive, and they should have equal access to the services they are entitled to. Other key elements related to the NPM and Public value models are that citizens should be informed about how national departments and provincial administrations are run, how much they cost and who is in charge (Singh et al., 1998; Kroukamp, 1999).

The level of success of the charters has depended on how their core elements are embedded in the local structures and institutions (Dzimbiri, 2012). Review of the various initiatives in most jurisdictions points to one important aspect that service charters have to be in resonance with legal, policy frameworks and relevant to cultural aspects on one hand and be in line with international protocols on service delivery (Acharya, 2010) on the other hand.

The implementation of service charters in each member state of AU is, however, guided by the legal and policy framework of each individual country and also by the United Nations Charter of Public Services and other international instruments and protocols on service delivery and from a theoretical point of view, it is argued largely by the NPM (Chataway & Hewitt, 2000; 1999; Drew, 2005). The following section is, therefore, an introduction to and discussion of the theoretical framework for the study.

2.7 The Theoretical Framework of the Study

As discussed elsewhere in the introduction, in this study two theoretical frameworks namely the New Public Management and the Public Value Theory have been isolated for their relevance to the objective of the study due to the interpretivist or constructivist nature of their paradigms and their tenets' espousal of citizen-centric approaches in the delivery chain of public services. These tenets are also at the center of service charters (Drew, 2005).

The above notwithstanding, the study refers to other public management theoretical frameworks and public service management models in explaining some fundamental aspects of the study including the Institutional Theory, the Principal–Agent Theory and the New Public Service. In the following sections, the NPM and Public Value

theoretical are discussed in detail as the primary theoretical framework for explaining the service charters.

2.7.1 The New Public Management

The NPM has since its conceptualization, the NPM has remained remained a major influence in public sector reform initiatives in many developed countries and developing countries alike.

The tenets of the NPM, as the hands-on and entrepreneur management style, contracting out, standards and measures of performance, output control, decentralization of public service delivery, private sector styles of management, increasing customer or citizen choices and advocacy for discipline and parsimony in resource allocation (Hood, 1989, Frederickson et al., 2012; Tambulasi, 2010; Geleta, 2014). On his part, Denhardt contends that the term NPM

“has its roots in practical development in the public administration world, in the set of ideas generally referred to as reinventing government and in a conceptual link to the public policy and especially the public choice perspective in public administration theory” (2011, p. 141).

NPM also has its foundation in the Public Choice Theory as discussed above. Given its tenets, NPM appears to proffer a public entrepreneurship philosophy where process-focused administration gives way to one which is output-based, with emphasis on performance indicators and quality improvement mirrored on market principles. In that vein, the rationale according to Tambulasi (2010), is that the private sector is more efficient than the public sector due to its management practices. This position suggests that public service operations based on the traditional public administration are less effective than modern public management practices in delivering public services due to their bureaucratic rigidity. The NPM philosophy seeks to reinvent government business by being adaptable, accountable and responsive to citizen needs (Osborne & Gaebler: 1992). In the context of the study, for government to be seen to be responsive, citizens must be regarded as customers, and as such the customer has to be at the center of government activities as is the case with private sector management ethos.

Therkildsen (2013), argues that although NPM thinking inspires many reform initiatives, it is important to recognize that their actual successful implementation (institutionalization) is strongly influenced by local agendas and local cultures (Cooper and Denner 1998; Dzimbiri, 2012). Reform agendas as espoused in the NPM if not well synchronized with local institutions and agendas, may result in differences in the outcomes across countries though the intentions of the NPM are the same (Perrot, 2009; Fatile & Adejuwon, 2010; Dzimbiri, 2012). Further, NPM doctrines do not stipulate how the public sector can be made more efficient and accountable and enhance service delivery. Thus, the introduction of reform initiatives such as service charters are seen as an attempt to extrapolate the NPM doctrines on how to bring about the prescribed changes including accountability and quality standards, particularly customer focused public service delivery (Fox, 2014). Critical in this debate though is the fact that NPM as a public reform model, applied within the Public Choice Theory adequately provides for the introduction of service charters as a public management phenomenon that can promote enhanced public service delivery. Given that, when implemented service charters promote accountability, transparency, citizen empowerment and engagement in running state affairs and ultimately quality of services beyond elements of decentralization (Therkildsen 2013; Lane 2001).

2.7.2 Institutionalization of Public Sector Reforms

The term institutionalization is understood from the point of view of outcomes of a process or as a process of introducing values, norms and practices that guide behaviour of societies, organizations and individuals and is influenced by power play of stakeholders (March & Olsen, 2010; Peters, 2000). In this study, institutionalization is applied in the context that the service charter brings in new value, norms and practices that will influence and enhance delivery of public services. Given the understanding that public sector reform entails institutional and structural change to promote efficiencies in the delivery of public services, its efficacy is judged through the enhanced services. To that end, it is argued, that enhanced services are realizable when the reforms so undertaken become more legitimate and therefore implementable and are consistent in providing high levels of quality of service to citizens (Dacin et al., 2002). Legitimacy in public sector reform initiatives consist of the acceptance by actors of changes and their willingness to influence and implement the reforms. Where reforms threaten cultural values, they are resisted. It is in this context that Dzimbiri

(2012) in looking at cultural change, and public sector reforms in Africa, particularly the case of anti-corruption drives in Malawi, concludes that while many developing countries have been very successful in importing management structures, rules and regulations as part of reforms and in an attempt to enhance service delivery, they have registered limited success in transforming the cultural aspects that have been instrumental in making these reforms a success in the Western countries. Simply put the reforms so attempted have been out of mix with local institutions. To this end, the reforms can be said to have faced legitimacy challenges. The following section discusses further institutionalization of public sector reforms and service delivery.

The implementation of public management reforms in developing countries beyond the theoretical underpins has been driven by bilateral and multilateral development partners including the World Bank. However, the United Nations and its specialized agencies have in the recent past become the main driving force in the public service reforms agenda largely buoyed by the call for good governance, democratic development and the emphasis on economic management and responsiveness to citizen choices (Kiggundu, 2008).

The reinvention of the public service is manifest in both structures and institutions. Doolin (2003) in his discussion on Narratives of (Organizational) Change, argues that such change takes three approaches namely, managerialist, processual and discursive. Change approached from a managerialist point of view entails a functional approach and offers prescriptive solutions and techniques. This is what Morgan and Study (2000) cited in Doolin (2003) refer to as reorganization, restructuring organizational processes. Unlike in the processual approach to organizational change, organizational change pursued through the managerial approach is deterministic. As Ciborra and Lanzara (1994) argue there is an assumption of straightforward results. To that end, processual change approaches view change as, according to Clark et al. (2007), actions with ‘indeterminate outcomes. In contrast to managerial and processual, discursive as per its name individuals explain themselves on issues, their actions and organizations in a bid to build or maintain order in the change (Doolin, 2003). The main objective of such discourse and ensuing public sector management reforms is to create efficiency, equity and savings targeting either public resource allocation or public sector resource redistribution. These approaches are particularly relevant to institutionalization of the

public service reforms because whatever choice one makes will affect the level of success.

Given the above, a number of questions arise in pursuit of a reform objective: questions that largely seek to answer or determine the goals of the intended public sector reforms. For example, can the management of reform choices be successful and have meaningful impact on the welfare of citizens if implemented either by managerialist, processual and discursive approaches; and do the specific strategies result in determinate outcomes such as accountability, transparency and citizen participation? (Lane, 2001).

A further critical question that arises, in attempting to implement public management reforms in developing countries and specifically like the service charter initiative, is whether there is or there are basic factors that are applicable across all jurisdictions and if they are, to what extent would the reform initiatives succeed in enhancing public service delivery particularly in developing countries (Drewry, 2005). The question is very critical when one considers that geo-social political and economic environments in which the reform initiatives were first introduced are very different from those of developing countries.

As Perrot (2009) observes in By and Macleod (2009), the challenge with the public management reform agenda in most cases is that it has been characterized and inhibited by lack of self-inventing mechanisms that are processual, that suggestively have the ability to transform public systems and structures to create dramatic increase in their effectiveness, efficiency, adaptability and accountability to the citizens based on local environments. In concurrence with Perrot's postulation, Fatile and Adejuwon (2010) argue that one of the factors behind this lack of ability, and particularly in most developing countries, is that public sector reforms management has been inundated with models and theories alien to the socio-geopolitical setups of these countries with limited adaptation and often the results are more "business as usual" when the reforms in their nature should lead to "business unusual". A further challenge is that the exogenous drivers and objectives may be contrary to the developing countries' national development objectives and socio-economic contexts (Dzimbiri, 2012). Therefore, there is need for public service in developing countries to make deliberate efforts to create to consolidate management practices that are responsive to local socio-economic

environments if the reforms agenda is to be relevant and meet the intended objectives. Cooper and Denner (1998). Commenting on theories linking culture and psychology, argue that variations across cultural communities are rooted in complex histories and interpretations of intergroup relations. These unique histories, in each community, challenge fundamental goals of science to build theories that describe and predict human development as well as explain and enhance life conditions across a range of communities. Basically Cooper and Denner negate the assertion that public service reforms models do produce similar results across all communities. Dzimbiri (2012) in looking at cultural change, and public sector reforms in Africa, particularly in Malawi also concludes that while many developing countries have been very successful in importing management structures, rules and regulations through reforms, they have registered limited success in transforming the cultural values that have been instrumental in making these reforms a success in the western countries. This scenario could be true of intra African Policy transfers if cultural elements have not been taken into account. Given such a scenario, public management reform is a challenging endeavour that is dependent on how effective institutionalization as a process is undertaken. The quest to fully understand the institutionalization process of any reform agenda is vital and, in that regard, detailed discussion on the concept of institutionalization as it relates to institutionalizing public service management sector reforms will follow.

2.7.2.1 Institutionalization and Deinstitutionalization of Public Sector Management Reforms

The relevance and importance of institutions in public sector management reforms should be understood in the context of institutionalization and deinstitutionalization as discussed above: reforms construed as an act of replacement or erosion and discontinuation of existing structures and institutions for purposes enhancing public sector efficiencies and enhanced service delivery. In the process of institutionalization and deinstitutionalization what comes to the fore is when attempts are made to implement reform initiatives that have been applied in developed countries as tools for effective public management wholesomely without recourse to adaptation to local institutions (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2010; Dzimbiri, 2012). In reflecting this, we consider the fundamental issues behind institutional change that are societal based. Dzimbiri (2012), thus, argues that while many developing countries have been very successful in

importing management structures, rules and regulations in attempts to enhance service delivery, they have registered limited success in transforming or aligning the cultural aspects that are instrumental in making these reforms a success in the Western countries. A point, Dacin et al reiterate on the issues of institutionalization, creation, transformation and diffusion of institutions as critical to create legitimacy and public value in service delivery (Moore, 1995; Joshi, 2010). Simply put, the reforms so attempted in the developing countries can be said to have been in sync with local social contexts and, thus, have faced legitimacy challenges, from an institutional point of view, to be effectively adopted. As a result, political coercive approaches to implementation of reforms, with formal and informal pressures being exerted on these developing nations by powerful and more resourced development partners including multilateral organisation like the World Bank (Saebo, 2017). It, therefore, is important that in reform policy transfer efforts, those that are policy transferring should reflect on the local institutions if meaningful success of the imported reform initiative is to be registered (Tambulasi, 2016). Indeed, in Pollitt's words

when a transfer of a particular management system or technique is contemplated, one needs to consider how far each of these major factors- culture, the political system, the pattern of institutions, the management strategy, the nature of the primary task- matches between the 'exporting' and importing jurisdictions. The more the mismatches the more probable it is that the transfer will fail or produce unexpected results (2004, p 5).

This postulation is key in the context of institutionalization of any public service reform initiatives and the service charters reform initiative as a tool for enhancing service delivery. It, therefore, is, important to emphasize that any arising differences in institutions and structures are understood and are managed effectively in the adaptation of the transferred reforms technologies in the context of the local structures and prevailing institutions; hence a re-engineering process has to be properly thought through without imposition.

2.7.3 Public Value

The concept of Public Value was initially developed by Mark Moore in 1995 (Moore, 1995) and espouses principles of good governance. At the center of the concept is the argument that, as the private sector is guided in their operations by the shareholders'

values, so too public sector managers should be guided by the citizens' choices as citizens are ideally the shareholders of the public service (Seddon, 2008, p. 164; Batley & Larbi, 2004). The citizen guidance rests in what William and Shearer (2011) refer to as the trust between citizens and government in the delivery of public services. Mark Moore's central proposition in advocating the concept of public value in public management was that public resources should be used to increase value in a way which is analogous to how the private sector creates, increases or maximizes value on inputs to the satisfaction of its customers (Blaug, et al., 2006).

Governance in itself has been defined variously but at the center of governance is the matter of mechanisms for interactions or relationships between the governing and the governed (Bovaird, et al., 2009). Governance, therefore, is the public organizations institutional capability to provide public goods and services as demanded by a country's citizens in an effective, transparent, impartial, and accountable manner (Bovaird, et al., 2009; Grant & Fisher, 2010; Fox, 2014). Accordingly, two factors have to be in place for public value to prevail, that is, legitimacy and operational capacity to increase authority to determine value in service delivery. The issue of legitimacy is also central in the institutionalism or institutionalization of reforms as discussed earlier. Operational capacity is understood in the context of Duty Bearers being not only knowledgeable but also having the will to drive the process of change beyond their personal interests. The aspects of legitimacy and operational capacity in the quest to realize public value in service delivery are summarized in the Figure 2.1 below.

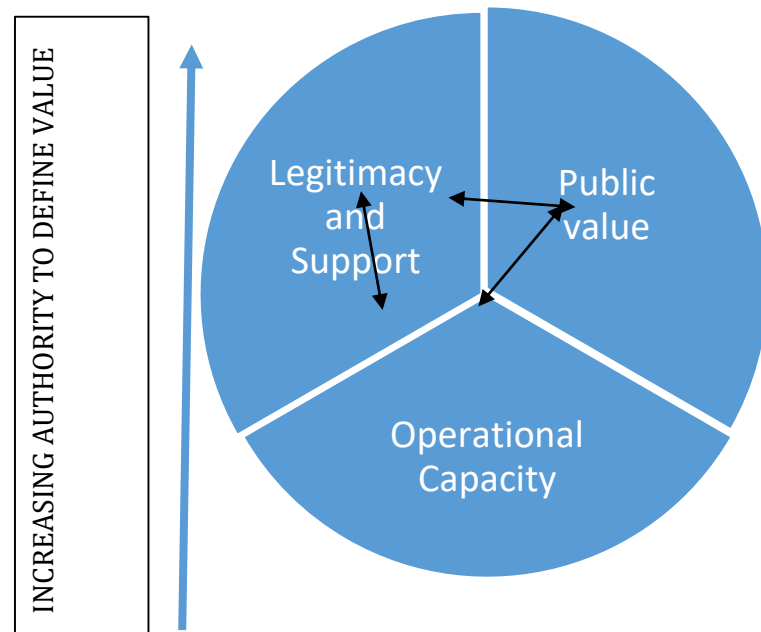


Figure 2. 1 Elements of Public Value in Service Delivery

Source: Mark Moore (2012). "Recognising Public Value. Developing a Public Value Account and a Public Value Scorecard"

In view of the above Constable et al. (2008) cited in Williams and Shearer, thus, describe public value as ‘... a comprehensive approach to thinking about public management and about continuous improvement in public services’ and gaining trust from the citizens (2011, p. 5). To that end, while defining public value appears complex, ideally public value refers to whatever action is actually undertaken and produced by agencies utilizing public resources (that is, their inputs, outputs and outcomes), in aiming to achieve collectively desired social outcomes (Williams & Shearer, 2011). Creating trust is a product of good governance that further calls for, among others, transparency by state agencies in their relationships with clients, employees, volunteers, and legislators; involvement of citizenry in service planning, delivery, and evaluation; relationships with government regulators, and credibility with civil society (Joshi, 2010; Williams & Shearer, 2011; Fox, 2014).

The question that arises is, ‘how does the state effectively harness public value’? For public managers to be guided by the citizens there is need to have a mechanism for engaging these citizens in service planning, delivery, and evaluation. It is within the

same framework of public value that this study argues that service charters have been introduced to enhance citizens' horizons in questioning the quality of services delivered by public sector managers, – holding public agents accountable for the quality delivery of services they are responsible for and to evaluate public value in the delivery chain. The Public Value speaks to elements of citizen user preferences and building of trust between state and citizens. In addition, the concept legitimizes social accountability as it espouses the need for multiple accountability systems including citizens as overseers in the use of public resources (Grant & Fisher, 2010; Fox, 2014). Thus, the service charters are one of the social accountability mechanisms set to reinforce the philosophy of Public Value including trust in the public service through ensuring that there is quality of services. The challenge, however, is to establish the extent to which service charters can effectively facilitate the enforcement of accountability against agents and the realization of value for money in the delivery of service despite charters being social pacts.

2.7.4 Public Value and Public Service Delivery

Public Service Delivery is defined as institutional and structural arrangements or systems put in place by governments to provide goods and services to its citizens (Humphreys, 1998). Delivery of public goods and services is done by a nexus of relationships involving policy makers, service beneficiaries and service providers.

The institutional and structural arrangements are manifest in civil services, parastatals or quasi-organizations and governance structures; laws, rules and regulations, processes and management systems (North, 1990; Humphreys, 1998; Denhardt et al., 2009). As explained earlier, the civil service, in most jurisdictions, is the dominant vehicle for the delivery of public goods and services (Lane, 2001). This notwithstanding, delivery of the public services is increasingly done through non-profit and private organizations on contractual basis in addition to the traditional state structures namely civil services, parastatals or quasi-organizations and governance organizations. Public service delivery in this context can be carried out in three models namely the Weberian Model, where government is the sole provider; the New Public Management Model that advocates for increased commercialized delivery mode and public private partnerships; and the Good Governance Model that involves a nexus of government, the private sector, the civil society and the citizens themselves in the delivery of public services (Tambulasi, 2010; Mwabupighu, 2017). There is a strong link between the quality of

public administration and public service delivery in that the better the capacity of the public administration in a particular jurisdiction the better the quality of public services delivered, example of eastern European Countries and countries in transition from war (OECD, 1999).

Despite the knowledge and understanding of what constitutes a public service and the models governments can use to deliver these services, the citizens voice in most developing countries including in Malawi is that the quality of services delivered is still wanting (Bartley, 1999; Schedler, 1999; World Bank, 2004; Josh, 2010;). It, therefore, is not surprising that governments from time to time undertake public sector management reforms to improve the capability to deliver quality public services to meet the expectations of citizens (Osborn et al., 1992; Fatile, 2005), to attain enhanced service delivery. For purposes of this study, therefore, the following section discusses the concept of enhanced public service delivery as an object of public service management reforms.

Having discussed and reviewed the literature on Public Service Management Reforms, the concept of institutionalization in public sector reforms, service charter reform initiative as tool for enhancing service delivery, and theoretical framework for the study, in the following section the conceptual framework for the study is presented and discussed.

2.7.5 The Conceptual Framework of the Study

As McGaghie et al (2001) postulate, the purpose of a conceptual framework is to help to indicate the most useful areas in which to focus on a study. The conceptual framework of this study, therefore, is a synthesis of the various aspects related to public service delivery discussed in the literature review and more specifically on the objectives of the study in explaining how the public sector reform initiatives lead to enhanced service delivery. The conceptual framework further embodies the core specific areas which the study focuses on to ensure that the data collected was relevant to the objectives of the research.

2.7.6 *Enhanced Public Service Delivery*

Enhanced public service delivery can best be defined in the context of the NPM and public governance theory within the overall public sector management reform initiatives. Katsamunska (2016) and Joshi, (2010) define public governance in the context of institutional capacity of public organizations to provide public services and other goods demanded by a country's citizens or the representatives thereof in an effective, transparent, impartial, and accountable manner, subject to resource constraints. The ultimate goal is for the citizens to enjoy and fulfil their democratic rights through quality of services rendered by the state. For this enjoyment to be attained, Katsamunska further argues, accountability, transparency and citizen participation, are critical aspects of this process. When these prevail, enhanced public service delivery is likely to be attained. Understood from that context, therefore, enhanced service delivery constitutes the extent to which services delivered by public service agents match the preferences of the citizens (Patterson, 1998), and that accountability and transparency prevail.

Enhanced service delivery is assessed by the extent to which citizens' needs expressed through their participation and done through the established structures are reflected in the decisions and final services provided (Crous, 2002). It is, thus, expected that through citizen participation in matters that affect them, service providers and other duty bearers such as local governments, will have better knowledge of the preferences of the citizens and hence can vary services to suit demands and subsequently enhance service delivery. To this end, it is argued that when accountability, transparency, citizen participation and quality of service are institutionalized in the public services delivery chain, enhanced public service delivery is likely to be attained. Accountability, transparency, citizen participation and quality, thus, are yardsticks for measuring enhanced service delivery (Schedeler, 1999; Joshi 2010). Indeed, the World Bank Development Report (2004) explicitly outlines the impact of accountability and transparency that these have been the underpinning motif on poor service delivery experiences in most developing countries. The question that arises then is this: how do we measure or ascertain that through reforms enhanced service delivery has been attained? The following section, therefore, discusses accountability, transparency, citizen participation and quality as yardsticks for measuring enhanced public service delivery.

2.7.7 Framework for Assessing Enhanced Service Delivery

The links between accountability and transparency citizen participation and enhanced service delivery are often largely assumed in the literature rather than explicitly articulated. Joshi (2010) argues that in some public services, poor service is a result of lack of uptake of services and interest resulting in worsening accountability and quality. As a corollary, it is equally argued that when quality increases uptake of services increases and accountability demands are also likely to increase; and when accountability exists, uptake will also increase, leading to a virtuous cycle (Fox, 2007). Many initiatives aimed at understanding the links primarily between accountability and transparency are focused at increasing transparency and amplifying voice, without examining their link with accountability and ultimately responsiveness of service providers (Fox, 2014). To that end, it is imperative that these terms are defined and their linkages explained in the context of SCs reform initiative and enhanced service delivery as subsequently discussed below. In the next section, the term accountability in relation to SC and enhanced service delivery defined and contextualized.

2.7.7.1 Accountability and Transparency

Accountability

Within the broader governance framework, polities and their public services are expected to be answerable to the society and individuals that they serve in the delivery of goods and services. The process of answerability constitutes the term accountability. Poor public service delivery in many polities, including in democratic developed ones, has been attributed to failures in establishing sound accountability mechanisms between service providers and users of public services (World Bank, 2004; Joshi, 2010) and as such Josh argues accountability is key to service delivery improvement. Cavil and Sohail (2004) define accountability as being about power and people not just having a say in official decisions but also to hold those given the mandate to govern to account for their actions. Schedler (1999) provides one of the clearest and most basic exposition of the concept of accountability in the context of public service delivery in which he defines public accountability as comprising a relationship between the power holder (account-provider) and the delegator (account-demander). On the other hand, Day and Klein (1987) argue that accountability involves both the justification of political decisions and actions and inactions as well as managerial answerability for

implementation of agreed tasks according to agreed criteria of performance. Inherently, therefore, accountability revolves around the question of interactive relationship between the principals and agents and evaluation of performance of those entrusted with delivery of services. As such accountability is characterized by scrutiny by others, regular reporting on one's actions, and the repercussions of any negativity if the performance is adjudged to be unsatisfactory (Azfar, et al., 1999). It is in this vein that reflection on the NPM verities seems to offer just a part of the puzzle in answering the accountability-enhanced service delivery relationship: which emphasizes on market mechanisms or interactions of Duty Bearers within the public service to become more responsive to citizen needs. As a result, you see the introduction of performance assessment and pay services reforms (Tambulasi & Hood, 1990; Batley, 1999). The mechanisms so introduced are vertical and individual citizen focused and assume that the Duty Bearers are immune to bringing in their personal interests above those of the organisation and the citizens in their conduct.

This study, while concurring with Cavil and Sohair's definition, looks at accountability as a state and society institutional relationship where state Duty Bearers periodically are expected to inform citizens on how public resources are being used and how services are provided (Friis-Hansen & Ravnkilde, 2013). From the above set of definitions four elements emerge in the call for accountability: setting standards, getting information about actions, making judgements about appropriateness and sanctioning unsatisfactory performance. In addition, the definitions reveal that there are basically two types of accountability, namely vertical and horizontal (Fox, 2014).

The above definitions, however, do not outline mechanisms or initiatives for realizing either form of accountability. What may be concluded though, is that in any case accountability initiatives are one part of a package of strategies that citizens use to gain better services which include mobilization, political advocacy, intermediation, self-provisioning and participation (Joshi, 2010).

a. Types of Accountability

1. Horizontal Accountability

The state-society/citizen accountability is typically referred to as traditional political and bureaucratic accountability where citizens and their associations play a direct role

in holding those in power and public service authorities to account for their actions or inactions. (Joshi & Houtzager, 2012, p.146 cited in Friis-Hansen & Ravnkilde 2013). The relationship between state and society is normally horizontal and, therefore, the type of accountability so expected is also known as horizontal accountability (Joshi, 2014).

Recent literature on service delivery has highlighted the failures of traditional accountability mechanisms and placed greater faith in citizen demand-led accountability initiatives from below, couched in social accountability mechanisms (Fox 2014). Social accountability is broadly defined in this study, as citizen-led action that demands accountability from public service providers (Joshi, 2010; Fox 2014). The range of such social accountability initiatives is also relatively new and has not been examined closely for evidence of impact. It is argued that institutional horizontal accountability has been too much organization inward looking rather than being citizen focused. It is, therefore, not surprising that it has not produced the expected outcomes of quality of services (World Bank, 2004, Fox 2014) hence the call for social accountability mechanisms by citizens through none state actor organisations. The service charters fit the bill of social accountability mechanisms.

2 Vertical Accountability

In theory, social accountability is not a type of accountability but offers mechanisms to monitor state performance by, for instance, disseminating information about entitlements or soliciting citizen feedback about public-sector performance. The concept of social accountability underlines the right of citizens to expect and ensure that the government acts in the best interests of the people. To that end, reform initiatives and social accountability measures such as service charter, community score cards, complaint mechanisms and social audits are introduced (Therkildsen, 2013) as part of vertical accountability. These social accountability initiatives, therefore, ought to combine attempts to agree on standards, gain information, elicit justification, render judgement and impose sanctions on those who breach them. However, imposition of sanctions is difficult, for instance in service charters as these are just social pacts without any legal backing. Therefore, there is need to combine institutional accountability mechanisms and social ones if tangible accountability results are to be realized. In the context of public sector reform, and within the proponents of the NPM

and the Public value theory, efforts to make public service agencies more accountable to the public should include the adoption of Citizens Charters, the creation or strengthening of public complaints commissions and the conduct of user surveys (Myers & Lacey, 1996; Olowu, 1998). Social accountability is a manifest of ‘Vertical Accountability’ (Joshi, 2010). Vertical accountability entails direct engagement by individuals and groups with government, public services and other Duty Bearers (Stapenhurst & O’Brien, 2005).

3. Diagonal Accountability

The third form of accountability is ‘diagonal accountability’ which, unlike the other two types of accountability, is the engagement of citizens directly in the institutions responsible for horizontal accountability in an effort to augment the limited effectiveness of civil society’s watchdog function by breaking the state’s monopoly over responsibility for official executive oversight (Stapenhurst & O’Brien, 2005)

The question that arises in applying accountability as a governance factor in influencing enhanced service delivery is what yardsticks to use. The study argues that the key yardsticks, therefore, include (a) Performance Reports (Annual, Biannual etc. as may be agreed); and (b) Financial disclosures by public servants. It, thus, is argued that these work better where there are laws governing access to information and decentralized structures for information dissemination to support the institutionalization of transparency which is an integral part of accountability. The following section discusses the concept of transparency as it relates to enhancing public services.

Transparency

Transparency has no single conception as it is a value much affected by culture and politics as each society attributes a different value and meaning to transparency because of tradition and history (UNDESA, 2007). Further, as a political practice, transparency has multiple meanings as well as multiple rationales, purposes and applications, all of which are dependent on availability of and access to information by citizens (Kosack & Fung, 2014). Although transparency is cultural dependent in its application, in most jurisdictions definition and application share commonalities that are broadly couched in freedom and access to information or right to information parlances and laws (Fox, 2014). For example, in Malawi access to information is provided for as a human right

in section 37 of the Constitution and the Access to Information (2016); and in the USA, the US Freedom of Information Act in 1966. It is in the context of availability of and access to information that in this study transparency is defined as openness to public scrutiny characterized by availability and clear information that is available to the general public about activities of government and its agencies involved in the delivery of public goods and services (UNDESA, 2007).

Transparency is a precursor to accountability and as such it is further considered to be one of the key governance principles and very necessary as it seeks to ensure that citizens are provided with the right information on goods and services that the various public service entities are mandated to provide or deliver. Information is essential to enable the citizens to effectively scrutinize how public service entities are managed and how they perform and variably whether there is value for money. Kosack and Fung (2014) further contest, therefore, that transparency should be expressive in all democratic societies as any sound participation of citizens in governing themselves and holding Duty Bearers accountable is dependent on the availability of information. As such, any transparency initiatives in service delivery should clearly define obligations and expectations by states or citizens; and place information or processes that were previously opaque in the public domain, accessible for use by citizen groups, providers or policy makers (Joshi, 2010). In that regard, transparency, in view of the service charters core elements, will include (a) corporate transparency: public service providers should have and display information of their name, legal status, mandate, mission, goals, contact information, physical address, Organization Structure, and Staff compliment (list – who occupies what position); (b) Financial Disclosures: Public service providers by virtue of their being largely financed by taxpayers' money should disclose their annual budget details (amount received and sources; expenditure reports, tariffs of services if any', Audit Reports; and (c) Social Transparency: Public service providers should ensure that they display or publicize the list of services they offer as per their mandate, description of places where the services are offered, and the level of service quality standards (timeliness, equity and fairness disclosures). These elements are at the core of service charters (Drew, 2005). For transparency to prevail citizen participation has to be guaranteed. To this end, the following section discusses citizen participation.

2.7.7.2 Citizen Participation

Citizen participation in matters of state and public service delivery is at the core of good governance. Citizen participation is ideally expected to be realized through two broadways of indirect participation exercised through voting (elections); and through direct participation by expressing their voice on matters that affect them (Kauzya, 2007; Madumo, 2014).

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Muriu (2014) citing Devas and Grant (2003, p.309), therefore, defines citizen participation as the way in which citizens exercise influence and control over the decisions that affect them. This definition is largely premised within the decentralization reforms agenda as a tool for citizen empowerment. Decentralisation as a public service reforms agenda itself entails the transfer of authority and responsibility for public functions (political and technical) from the central government to subordinate structures in this case local governments (Sikwese, 2003; Chiweza, 2010). These local governments are expected to provide space and platforms for citizen participation. Such spaces and platforms include the election of local government representatives and establishment of subnational level structures. Establishing institutional frameworks at the sub-national level allow citizens to organize themselves to participate in political

and economic decisions that affect them (Cheema, 2007; Chiweza, 2010; Madumo, 2014). Social accountability platforms and mechanisms such as the service charters, community monitoring, community scorecards, and Public Expenditure Tracking service have also become platforms for promoting citizen participation and invariably promoting good governance and quality public services.

It is in the above context that Malawi in 1998 adopted a National Decentralisation Policy backed by a legal framework enacted in the same year, the Local Government Act 1998 (Chiweza, 2010). To promote citizen participation in the development agenda and service delivery. The emphasis on decentralization is the consequence of debates suggesting that ineffective public service delivery in many developing countries is largely attributable to governance failures arising from a lack of effective citizen participation in the public service delivery chain as defined in the traditional local government structures (World Bank, 2004; Friis-Hansen & Ravnkilde, 2013). The effort to enhance citizen participation through formal local government structures is that efforts hitherto have inherently focused on promoting vertical accountability of local governments to central governments. Such approaches have been criticized for their failure to fully and directly engage citizens as anticipated in their design (Shah, 2006). As a result of this failure, the case for more citizen engagement through social accountability mechanisms like service charters are being promoted to increase citizen participation in public service delivery (Fox, 2014; Madumo, 2014).

Generally, direct citizen participation is considered the more relevant and applicable mode in public service delivery chain than the political participation through representatives. Effective citizen participation in service delivery, therefore, entails that citizens are not only included in public service development and delivery processes but also in giving feedback on the quality assessment of services. Citizen participation influences service delivery outcomes through impacting its determinants or characteristics that include efficient allocation of resources, equity in service delivery, and accountability and reduction of corruption (Azfar et al., 1999; Von Braun & Grote, 2002). Murui (2014) commenting on Bay's (2011) postulation argues that effective participation is more likely to work where politicians, government officials and citizens strike a common ground and share information; that is when quality information, accessibility and accuracy is availed. Effective participation is again characterized by a

number of factors in democratic governance (Azfar et al., 1999). One can deduce that citizen participation is intractably connected to social accountability and critical in effective policymaking, policy advocacy and deliberation (Malena et al., 2004; Arroyo et al., 2005). The question, therefore, is how we measure effective citizen participation in the context that service charters are said to lead to more citizen participation. Using Nabatchi's (2012) framework, yardsticks used to measure or assess citizen participation, thus, include (a) Democratic Decentralization where legislated and non-legislated governance structures to enable people engage in state matters are established at local level; (b) Access to information, freedom and pluralism of the media are prevalent supported by laws including state constitutions and access to information laws; and (c) institutionalized mechanisms for regular consultations between local governments and civil society organizations. Such consultations between service providers and citizens are accountability mechanisms that can ensure that services are delivered according to set standards and, thus, ensure quality. The question of quality in service delivery is, thus, discussed in the following section.

2.7.7.3 Quality of Services

Research endeavours on quality of service in public services have been made by several researchers including Wisniewski and Donnelly (1996), Rowley (1998), Wisniewski (2001) and Brysland and Curry (2001). Quality of services in this study is understood to constitute the state of how well the tangible and intangible public services match the citizen expectations on a consistent basis over and above what has been prescribed, that is confirmation or disconfirmation of expectations (Parasuraman et al., 1988). In other words, quality is what Zeithaml et al. (1990) describe as the difference between customer expectations of service and perceived service. Quality of service is embedded in the concept of customer satisfaction against perception, that is to say quality of service can be defined as an overall judgment similar to attitude towards the service and generally accepted as an antecedent of overall customer satisfaction (Olsen, 2002).

Customer satisfaction refers to 'the utility value derived by the customer upon consumption of a product or service as attested by the independent opinion of the consumer of the product or service' (GoM, 2016). The core indicators of such customer satisfaction are speed of delivery of service /product; quality of service/product; ease of accessibility of product/service; and affordability (GoM, 2016). High quality of

service is experienced if expectations are more than performance. In other words, quality is less than satisfactory when a customer experiences dissatisfaction measured against perception (Parasuraman et al., 1988). These indicators notwithstanding, it is challenging to achieve a high level of citizen satisfaction with public services because of different expectations for the same services by the citizens. In light of this, and as discussed earlier public services in most developing nations have been adjudged not to deliver quality services to their citizens due to a number of factors including lack of accountability and responsiveness mechanisms to citizen needs, hence, the introduction of reforms as defined in the NPM. The challenge, however, is on how to measure quality in public services which are collectively and monopolistically delivered, satisfaction being subjective to individuals. To this end, models have been developed that assist in measuring quality in delivery of public services.

The model that has been most used to measure quality is the SERVQUAL instrument, developed by Parasuraman which uses 22 statements for assessing consumer perceptions and expectations regarding the quality of a service (Ramseook-Munhurrin et al, 2010). The model, however, and ideally rests on five distinct dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles that customers use to evaluate the quality of a service. This model has been criticized by scholars including Cronin and Taylor (1992) for its emphasis on expectations and instead proposed the SERVPERF Model which coincidentally consists of 22 perception items, but which excludes any consideration of expectations. As Ramseook-Munhurrin, et al argue, citing Cronin and Taylor, the ‘unweighted SERVPERF measure (performance-only) performs better than any other measure of service quality, and that it has the ability to provide more accurate service quality score than SERVQUAL’ (Ramseook-Munhurrin, 2010, p.4). Their argument is that performance best reflects a customer’s perception of service quality, and that expectations are not part of this concept. However, SERVQUAL is much more versatile in its application and has been widely used in the assessment of quality in a number of services including health, police services and public utilities.

Parasuraman et al. (1988) noted that even if it may be necessary to reword or modify some of the items, the SERVQUAL scale remains applicable in a wide range of business services. Indeed, the study opted to use the SERVQUAL Model as it relates

more to the element of the service charters in public service delivery, in addition to its wide range applicability. The basic idea being that service charters sets quality standards against which performance can be measured, and standards will rise as a result of the pressure that users can put on the service providers. To this end, the study elected to use the following variables to constitute some of the key determinants of quality service (a) Reliability: which is manifest through consistent performance and dependability of provision of a service; (b) Responsiveness: which relates to how timely service providers react to citizen needs and demands as well their willingness or readiness to provide a service; (c) Competence: possession of required skills and knowledge for one to execute or provide a service; (d) Access: which involves approachability to the service providers by service users as well convenience of location of a service. Depending on the services sought this may also include waiting time spent to receive a service and hours of service operation; (e) Courtesy: involves politeness, respect, consideration and friendliness of contact persons in the public service chain; (f) Communication: this constitutes mechanisms through which service providers are informed in a medium that they will clearly understand. This, therefore, involves explaining the kind of services, the cost if any; (g) Credibility: included in this are elements of trustworthiness, believability, honesty; and (h) Tangibles: in this determinant included are physical evidence of the facilities, the appearance of the human resource, tools and equipment. Some of the determinants herein applied are beyond the SERVQUAL but critical to the study (Ramseook-Munhurrin et al., 2010). Evaluation of quality is mainly based on responsiveness to customers' needs instead of conformance to specifications, procedures and standard (Tuomi, 2012). A point that Ramseook-Munhurrin et al. (2010) summarize that 'service quality in all service encounters is, thus, intrinsically affected by the perspectives of both the service provider and the service receiver'. Critical in public service chain delivery quality assessment is the citizens' ability to know what they can expect from the service providers for them to qualify the level of satisfaction. In turn, this, requires access to information on service standards. This is what the service charters reform initiative seeks to achieve among other objectives.

2.8 The Diagrammatic Conceptual Framework for the Study

In the light of the above discussion, complete with the objectives of the study, the literature reviewed and the theoretical framework thereof, the conceptual framework for this study (McGaghie et al., 2001; Ramseook-Munhurrin et al., 2010; Olsen, 2002) is, thus, summarized in the in Figure 2.2 below.

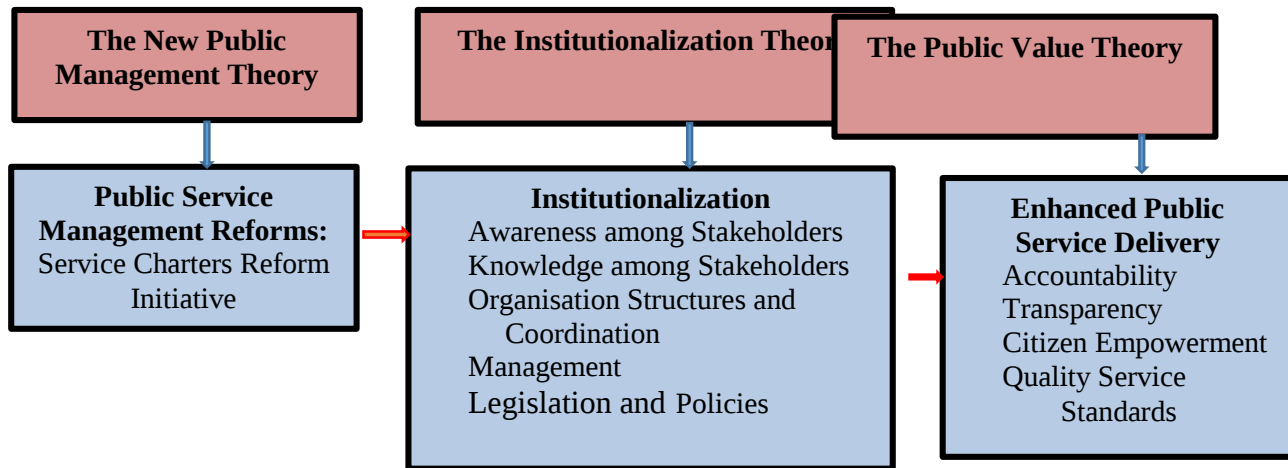


Figure 2. 2 Conceptual Framework for the Study

What the conceptual framework entails is that public sector reforms' propensity to achieve the realization of enhanced service delivery, which is the operationalization of public value manifested in higher levels of accountability, transparency, citizen empowerment and quality is dependent on the effective institutionalization of the reforms.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the literature relevant to the area of study. The review centered on creating an understanding of what constitutes public sector reforms and the rationale of reforms in general. To this end, it also looked at factors that have driven reforms in developing countries with an emphasis on challenges African countries have faced in implementing reforms. Having discussed and reviewed the literature on Public Service Management Reforms, the chapter reviewed the concept of institutionalization in public sector reforms, service charters reform initiative as a tool for enhancing service delivery, and the theoretical framework for the study. The focus of the study being on understanding public sector reforms as tools for improved service delivery and specifically assess service charters initiative as tools for enhancing public service

delivery, the New Public Management (NPM) and the Public Value theoretical frameworks were employed because of their core tenets that espouse the aspects of citizen centric approaches in the delivery chain of public services.

The chapter also reviewed public service delivery and enhanced public service delivery and how to measure enhanced service delivery. In addition, the chapter discussed institutionalization as a concept and how it is related to the public sector reforms and service delivery; and finally, the conceptual framework for the study was presented.

In view of the above discussion, the chapter concludes that public management reforms are unavoidable and are key to generate defined national outputs (goods and services) for sustained economic development and poverty reduction in more efficient, accountable and responsive ways, reflective of citizen needs. Service charters reform initiative is an important reform that seeks to enhance quality public services through promotion of citizen participation, accountability and transparency. The impact of public reforms on service delivery is subject to the effective institutionalization, and to that end it must be emphasized that when introducing a particular management system or technique by way of policy transfer one needs to take into account how culture, the local political system, and the pattern of institutions, match with the institutions of exporting jurisdiction. Suffice it to say, that when there is a mismatch between the institutions and structures the more probable it is that the transfer will fail or produce expected results.

In view of the objective of the study, which is to investigate/explore and analyze the extent public sector reforms lead to enhanced public service delivery using the Malawi Public Service Charter reform initiative, a conceptual framework that entails that public sector reforms' propensity to achieve the realization of enhanced service delivery which is the operationalization of public value manifested in higher levels of accountability, transparency, citizen empowerment and quality is dependent on the effective institutionalization of the reforms. The conceptual framework will guide in the collection of relevant data for the study.

The next chapter is, thus, a presentation and discussion of the methodology used for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion structured on main areas of 3.0) Introduction; 3.1) the Research Methodology that was used for the study; 3.2) the Research Design that was adopted; 3.4) the Study Population (universe) from which the units of study were drawn for purposes of collecting data; 3.5) the Sample and Sampling Methods that were used in the study; 3.6) the Data Collection Methods of the Study; 3.7) Data Techniques used to analyse the collected data. Finally, like any other study of this nature the chapter in section 3.8 outlines how ethical issues in the study were managed as well as the limitations the study experienced; and in Section 3.8 is the Conclusion of the chapter.

In order to effectively reach conclusions on the problem and validate the objectives of the study, the research was conducted based on standard research methods in social sciences and in particular in public administration. To this end, as Van Thiel (2014) contends, that “research in Public Administration aims to study and find solutions to topical issues and problems in the public sector. Such issues and problems can concern a broad range of issues such as success or failure of social integration, improving government efficiency, and predicting the consequences of population ageing” (2014, p. 5). The subject under study, service charters as a reform initiative is, therefore, within the realm of public administration and subject to public administration epistemological concerns (Bryman, 2004; Van Thiel, 2014).

The concerns that whether public administration as a social science and dealing with humans or organizations and society should not be subjected to research principles and procedures as those used in natural sciences since human behaviour and ethos are contextual (Robson, 2002; Van Thiel, 2014).

The study agrees with positions of Van Thiel and thus, contends that public administration subscribes to the fact that the real world (reality) is subjective or a matter of perspective by individuals or society. Therefore, as Ruccucci (2008) also contends, any research attempt in public administration should be subjected to interpretive epistemology. Given that the main objective of the study was to analyse whether public service reform initiatives lead to enhanced public service delivery using the Malawi Public Service Charter as a case study? with specific objectives being; a) to establish the rationale for introducing the service charters in the Malawi public service delivery chain and how the service charters reform initiative was introduced in terms of key actors their roles and interests; b) to determine the extent, the service charters reform initiative was institutionalized within the public service delivery chain; and c) to assess whether service charters lead to enhanced public service delivery. The methodology chosen, therefore, is interpretive; and reflective of the relevant literature to the study, as discussed in the previous chapter. In the following section the research methodology and attendant aspects are discussed first.

3.2 Research Methodology

Kothari (2010) defines research as a systematic method of defining and redefining a problem, formulating a hypothesis or suggesting a problem, collecting data or facts, organizing and analyzing the facts and reaching certain conclusions either in the form of solutions towards the problem or developing certain generalizations for some theoretical formulation. Thus, there is always contention as to what is the best way to conduct research in public administration. However, as Riccucci (2008) argues, the logic of inquiry in the field of public administration is multifaceted and values and beliefs will always be there. The choice of methodology employed in a research depends on the subject under study. Van Thiel (2004) accordingly argues that research can be formative or exploratory in which case the objective of research seeks to gain familiarity with a phenomenon. Where research seeks to accurately depict characteristics of a particular group of people and situations, such a research is known as descriptive (Robson, 2004; Justice, 2008). Where research aims at determining frequency with which something occurs or the frequency of association, such research is known as diagnostic. While hypothesis testing research happens when the objective is to test a causal relationship between variables, that is a phenomenon exists because of the influence of another phenomenon (Justice, 2008; Riccucci, 2008).

In the case of this study, the objective was to investigate if public service reforms using the Malawi Public Service Charter reform initiative lead to enhanced service delivery, thus, testing a causal relationship between variables. In this regard, an interpretive methodology, as discussed in the next section, was deemed appropriate.

3.2.1 Interpretive Methodology

Justice (2008) as well as Silverman (2017) argue that Public Administration as both a field of scholarly inquiry and a field of professional practice dictates the use of diversity of paradigms, designs, and methods of research according to the specific purposes and audiences. Therefore, concluding that this study was largely on perceptions, experience, and feelings of people on services they consume and not about absolutes, makes the choice of interpretive methodology appropriate. In addition, qualitative methods such as case studies, ethnography, action research are usually associated with interpretivist or constructivist paradigms (Bryman, 2004). To this end, it should be pointed out further that the study elected to use interpretive methodology as opposed to an empirical research methodology because the ontological orientation in empirical research is that there is objective reality which can be measured, human behaviour is predictable and deterministic and, therefore, research attempts in public administration have to be objectively done as is the case with studies in the natural sciences yet the reality is that human behaviour while guided by prevailing norms and practices is not predictable. Therefore, and importantly, as pinpointed by Silverman (2005), to strive to apply ontologies, epistemologies, and use methodologies of natural sciences in this kind of study, as would be with similar studies, would not be relevant for production of intended results. Given the choice of methodology adopted, what follows is a discussion of research methods that were used to collect data.

3.3 Study Design

In view of the objectives of the study, the resultant research methodology case study design was adopted. A case study is usually associated with interpretivist or constructivist paradigms (Silverman, 2005; Robson, 2002; Van Thiel, 2014). A case study design was considered more relevant to the question under study because a case study is a strategy for doing research that involves investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life contexts using multiple sources of

evidence (Robson 2002, Bryman 2004). In addition, case studies help to create knowledge that can be used to develop appropriate interventions in a phenomenon. This is notwithstanding that other methodologies, like participant observation could be used. In this study, the case study design helped in responding to the core sub-objectives of the study namely assessing whether the introduction of service charters has led to enhanced quality of public services delivery. Analyzing contextual issues for effective institutionalization of the service charters was rooted in the overall main objective of the study which was to analyze whether the public service management reforms lead to enhanced public service delivery using the Malawi Public Service Charter reform initiative as a case. To this end, the case study design, its relevance and applicability of the theoretical framework of the study are discussed as follows.

In addressing the issues of relevance and applicability of the theories used in the study, a case study was considered more suited in understanding factors that are critical in the effective of introduction and institutionalization of public sector reforms, in this case the service charter reform initiative. This is in acknowledgement of the fact that there are many realities and what works in one jurisdiction may not wholly apply in another due to cultural differences (Johnson, 2005). Therefore, the need to use case studies and qualitative methods in this research. Bowman (2008), however, cautions that qualitative methods, particularly case studies, pose a challenge of generalizing the results to larger environments. In that regard, it is important to be reflective about other settings where these findings could be relevant. In the case the use of two district councils of Salima and Dedza and three sectors, health, education and agriculture, which are guided by uniform national policies and, the findings can be reflected in other districts and sectors in the Malawi Public Service.

In terms of planning and reporting and in an effort to understand broader issues of the reform initiatives, the study was limited to the reforms undertaken post multiparty era with historical reference to those reforms undertaken since Malawi got independent in 1964 (Tambulasi, 2009; Dzimbiri, 2011). Specifically, for the service charters reform initiative in Malawi, the timeline was from 2008 when the concept was first mooted and piloted (GoM, 2010). What follows, therefore, is a discussion on the sources and tools for data collection.

3.4 Study Population

Bryman (2004) defines population as the universe from which the units of the study are drawn for purposes of collecting data. Data, therefore, can be collected from individuals, groups or artifacts. Northrop (2008), for example, argues that the population in research could be cities, government departments or regions. The units of study have to be relevant and justifying to the issues under study. To this end, the units of study were selected from within the public service at central and local government levels involved in the delivery of public services as discussed in the next section. The following section contextualizes the selection of the units of study.

3.4.1 Context of the Units of Study: The Malawi Public Service

Malawi is a democratic unitary state with a central and local government system of government that transcend to the village levels (GoM, 1994). The state has three arms of government: The Executive, The Judiciary and The National Assembly (GoM, 1994). The Malawi Public Service's structure is reflective of the political system and structure, that is, it comprises the Executive, which is broadly categorized into the Civil Service including the Statutory Agencies; the Police Service, the Malawi Defense Forces and the Local Government Service (Dulani, 2013).

The Civil Service as provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi (1994) and Malawi Public Service Act (1994) on one hand comprises Ministries and Departments that have structures and presence at the centre as well at the district council level. The Civil Service is the main vehicle that the Executive uses to formulate and implement policies; and development programmes (GoM, 1994). Policies so formulated, it being a unitary state apply across the country. The Local Government Service on the other hand comprises all District, City, Municipal and Town Councils, currently 28 and are further subdivided into Parliamentary Constituencies and Wards (GoM-MoLGRD, 1998). Local councils are mandated to formulate by-laws/policies relevant to their local situations but which should be within the tenets of national policies and laws. Constitutional or Governance bodies such as the Ombudsman and the Anti-Corruptions Bureau are organizations also used to implement government policies particularly those aiming at enhancing good governance (GoM-MoJCA, 1994).

The Malawi Public Service is a hierarchical administrative-management and professional structure with defined grades, with the Secretary to the President and Cabinet as the head of the Public Service (GoM, 1994, GoM, 2018). Section 93 of the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi (1994) provides that there shall be Ministers and Deputy Ministers who shall exercise such powers and functions including the running of Government Departments and that each Government Department shall be under the supervision of a Principal Secretary and who shall be under the direction of a Minister or Deputy Minister. Further in the hierarchy a Principal Secretary is supported by Directors of Departments (Directorates). District Councils on the other hand have elected Councils as political heads and the District Commissioner as the head of the administrative- management staff. District Commissioners are supported by Directors of Sectors (Local Government Act, 1998) as presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Position and Grading Structures in the Civil Service

Secretary to the President and Cabinet	A
Secretary to the President and Cabinet	B
Principal Secretary and Chief Director	C
Director	D
Deputy Director	E
Assistant Deputy Director/ Under Secretary	F
Principal Administrative/ Principal Professional Officers (various professions)	G
Senior Administrative/ Professional Officers (various professions)	H
Administrative/ Professional Officers	I
Executive Officer/ Assistants (various professions)	K

Source: Department of Human Resource Management and Development, 2018

The Grades in the District Council vary from one district to another depending on the size and magnitude of work (GoM, 2018). That being the case, District Commissioners are either Graded D or E. Such a structure has a bearing on decision making processes and may affect the pace of institutionalization of reform initiatives.

It is in the above context that the units of the study were selected at the central and local government levels to give a better picture of the impact of the service charter on the service delivery. Specifically, the units selected for this study were the Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC) targeting the Cabinet Office, the Directorate of

Administration, the Directorate of Human Resource Management, Performance Enhancement Department (PED); and the Public Sector Reforms Management Unit (PSRMU); the Department of Human Resource Management and Development (DHRMD). The ministries responsible for Health, Education Science and Technology, Local Governments and Agriculture were also targeted. At local government level Salima and Dedza District Councils were selected. The focus in Salima and Dedza was on selected sectors of health, education and agriculture which offer some of the frequently consumed services and would, therefore, give a fair picture of the effects of the service charter system on services delivered (NSO, 2018). In addition, focusing on these three sectors would help to interrogate the policy efficacy and interpretation noting that Malawi is a unitary state and, therefore, policy formulation is the domain of the central government while implementation is left to local governments as defined in the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi, Local Government Act 1998 and the Decentralization Policy (GoM, 1994, 1998)

3.4.2 Justification for Selecting the Units

The Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC) was selected because it is both a central agency and a principal agency, through the Secretary to the President and Cabinet, driving the reforms agenda in public service. The OPC has, according to the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi 1994 and the Public Service Act 1994, the obligation to formulate national policies and provide strategic leadership to the public service. In that regard, OPC's Strategic Plan of 2010-2016 placed the obligations on OPC's management to undertake active promotion of sector policies including health and education policies; as well as introduce lawful and procedurally fair administrative systems for efficient delivery of public services (OPC, 2010). The obligations are consistent with the Public Service Act 1994 (GoM, 1994), Section 16 which provides that the Secretary to President and Cabinet shall be the Head of the Public Service. Further in section 17, that the SPC as head of the public service will be responsible for the management and administration of the public service. The Malawi Public Service Management Policy of 2017 further provides that the management of the public service shall be based on modern and appropriate management concepts for purposes of efficient and effective delivery of services to the public. In that regard, OPC is also the holder of the public service management policy. To that end, OPC has been in the forefront in championing and driving the introduction and implementation of the

Malawi Public Service Charter System (GoM, 2010). In the context of the study, therefore, it was imperative to select OPC within the universe. To this end, the Clerk to Cabinet, the Secretary for Human Resource Management and Development, the Directors of Human Resource Management and Development at DHRMD and in OPC, the Chief Director responsible for Performance Enhancement, the Director responsible for Public Sector Reforms Management and the Under Secretary in OPC were interviewed, as key informants.

The Malawi Public Service being a unitary structured service, central line ministries are responsible for policy formulation. Therefore, sector service charters have to be in line with sectoral policies. In this regard, while the research case study was centered on two local governments, the central line head offices of health, education and agriculture were targeted because they are responsible for quality assurance and policy direction in these sectors in Local Governments.

The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development was elected because it is responsible for ensuring that there are sound local governance management systems in district councils and that these councils are delivering quality service to the citizens. Therefore, and in the context of the study it was imperative to select the Ministry of Local Government and Rural development to provide their insights on local governance in general and specifically on the service charter reform initiative as tools for enhancing public service delivery.

District Councils are units of democratic decentralization and, therefore, by provisions of the Local Government Act (1998) and the National Decentralisation Policy (GoM, 1998) district councils are fronts of public service delivery and central platforms for citizen participation and empowerment. Targeting the local councils as units of study and in particular as case studies was considered more appropriate if the objectives of the study would be realized. In view of this, Salima and Dedza District Councils were selected. Salima was selected because it was among the first public service organizations and councils in particular to pilot the CSCs; the other councils being Ntchisi, Dedza and Blantyre (MHRRC, 2012); and, therefore, it was considered as a suitable unit that could provide a good case for the study as it was only the first but literature reveals that it had sustained implementation and had a number of development

partners supporting the reform initiative (GoM, 2014). On the other hand, Dedza District Council, much as it was among the first pilot districts, practically introduced the service charters reform initiative after the Government of Malawi had officially adopted and launched the Malawi Public Service Charter in 2012 and, therefore, the circumstances and framework for implementation were different from that of Salima and such the study could benefit from these in understanding the factors that may affect effective implementation.

3.4.3 Sample and Sampling Methods

Van Thiel argues that ‘it is hardly ever possible to include all potential units of study in the research, which means a certain selection has to be made’ (2014, p. 45) using sampling techniques. The study used a non-probability and a purposive sampling because the selected units would logically represent the impact of the public service reform initiative in Malawi. In addition, the selected units of study were of particular interest to the study based on, for example in the case of Dedza, that it was among the first districts where the service charter reform initiative was introduced. The study also applied snowballing in cases where the targeted units had identified alternative individuals who would provide the relevant data especially where the incumbents were new in positions (Northrop, 2008). For example, an informant at PSRMU directed the researcher to go to PED for information on the number of MDAs that had produced service charters. In addition, a Key Informant (KI) at Salima District Health Office requested that the researcher should contact an officer who had just been transferred to Machinga District Council for further information on the issue of withdrawal of an ambulance from Chipoka.

At central government level the key relevant Departments in OPC in this study were the Department of Human Resource Management and Development; the Directorate of Administration; the Performance Enhancement Department (PED); the Department of Statutory Corporations; and the Public Sector Reforms Management Unit (OPC, 2018). In view of these Departments, grades and structure, the study therefore, targeted administrative and professional officers of Grades I up to Grade A. The study purposely targeted officers in these grades in order to get relevant data on reforms in the Malawi Public Service as this group constitutes both policy makers (Grade D-A) and implementers (Grades I-E).

In the Ministries of Health, Education, Agriculture, and Local Government and Rural Development senior and professional officers of Grades H up to Grade C were purposely selected as these are responsible for sector policy formulation and quality assurance in District Councils. Annex I provide the details of the targeted KIs at Central Agency and NGO national Level. In this regard, in the Ministry of Health two seniors at the Head Office namely the Director of Clinical Services and the Director of Quality Assurances were interviewed. In the Ministry of Agriculture, the study interviewed the Deputy Director responsible for Planning and the Director for Administration while in the Ministry of Education Science and Technology the Directors of Planning and of Administration were interviewed respectively. As well, the Directors for Local Government and of Rural Development were respectively interviewed as was the Deputy Director responsible for planning.

At local government level in Salima and Dedza District Councils, the study purposely targeted the Chairpersons of the District Councils and Councilors in Salima, the District Commissioners and District Executive Committee Members, all heads of the selected sectors (health, education and agriculture), four senior staff in these sectors, five frontline line staff in each of the selected sectors and two NGO representatives. In Salima, the study also interviewed two TAs, two youth and two women representatives respectively. In Dedza, in addition to the District Council staff, one TA and one NGO representative were separately interviewed.

In addition to the Public Service, the study also purposefully sampled the Malawi Human Rights Resource Centre (MHRRC) staff as well as the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC), and management and field staff of the NICE Trust. The MHRRC was at the center of piloting of the concept of the CSC in Malawi at its inception and continued to support its implementation (MHRRC, 2012). The NICE Trust was purposefully selected based on its mandate which is to civic educate the public on a number socio-economic and political issues (NICE Trust, 2018). NICE Trust, therefore, has been responsible for dissemination of the benefits of the service charters and supporting the implementation of the same in some selected District Councils. Annex II provides the details of the sampled organizations at District Level, Key Informants and Focus Group Discussions.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

Robson contends that in research “the selection of a method or methods of *data collection* is based on what kind of information is sought, from whom and under what circumstances” (2002, p. 223). Furthermore, Robson recommends, as a simple rule of thumb for selecting a method, the use of interviews, questionnaires to find out what your research targets thinks, feels, and believes on the subject under study. To this end, this study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative to collect data. The use of multiple research methods significantly helps to gain a more complete understanding of the impact of the service charter reform initiative on service delivery as quantitative data is meant to buttress findings of qualitative data and qualitative data gives meaning to quantitative data. After all, and as Yang et al. (2008) argue, the use of mixed methodology is not new in public administration. The combined methods notwithstanding, the study mostly used qualitative data collection methods because it sought to gain knowledge of the impact of public service management reform initiative on enhancing public service delivery it being interpretive, the nature of the questions under study were focusing on perceptions, experience, and feelings of people on services they consume. It being interpretive, the nature of the questions under study were focusing on perceptions, experience, and feelings of people on services they consume. While the study did not focus on absolutes, some elements called for collecting quantitative data, like establishing the number of citizens that were aware of the existence of the service charters, that would in turn help determine the extent of institutionalization of the reform. These two methods complimented each other by augmenting the credibility of data and, thus, enhancing the credibility of the research results based on the study design. Therefore, in the following section the chapter presents in detail the study’s sources and tools for data collection.

3.5.1 Sources and Tools for Data Collection

The subject of the study was exploratory in nature and, therefore, called for use of a variety of primary and secondary data sources (Van Thiel, 2014). The study used a combination of both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools. The main tools for collecting qualitative data were the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KII) at both Central and Local Government structures. A questionnaire was used for collecting quantitative data and qualitative information on some key issues in the study areas of Salima and Dedza District Councils as at Annex

3. This augmented the credibility of data and, thus, enhancing the credibility of the research results.

3.5.2 Qualitative Methods

Since the research was dealing with issues of perceptions, personal satisfactions and experiences on the quality of public services, the study used Key Informant Interviews (KII), and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) as follows.

3.5.2.1 Key Informant Interviews (KII)

The interviews were conducted using semi-structured questions (open-ended questions) in order to get in-depth data from a wide range of people who knowledge may have on what is going on in a community on the issues understudy. The interviews were targeted at purposefully selected KI at the Central Government and District Council as at Annex I noting that these as Duty Bearers and users were directly in the introduction of the service charter and Duty Bearers were by their positions expected to use the service charters.

The entry point was the booking of and scheduling of the time of the interview with the KI based on the letter from the OPC authorizing the data collection activity. The researcher and his assistant introduced the subject matter and the objective of the research. To this end, issues of confidentiality and consent to use a recorder were outlined and sought respectively. At the Central Government Level, a total of 16 purposely selected KIs were interviewed from OPC, Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Education, Local Government and Rural Development and from the DHRMD and PED.

At the District Council Level, a total of 15 purposely selected KIs from Salima and Dedza District Councils were interviewed. At Salima District Council, KI interviews targeted three key sectors six that had service charters for service delivery namely, health, education and agriculture. However, some KIs were drawn from the various committees involved in the district assembly's Service Charter system and staff from the District Council Secretariat. A total number of 9 KIs were engaged in Salima. Like at Salima District Council, at Dedza District Council too three key sectors of service

delivery namely, health, education and agriculture were targeted and 6 KI were interviewed including one STA.

3.5.2.2 Focus Group Discussions

FGD is a group interview that in essence involves six to twelve individuals who have some knowledge or experience on a subject matter and whose thinking in responding is motivated and enhanced by group dynamics and interactions (Gabrielian, 2008). To this end, FGDs were used at district council level, particularly to collect data from frontline staff involved in the delivery of services and from the users of services at Village Level as in Annex II. The members of the FGD were purposefully selected using the Service Charter Structures at the District and Village Level namely District Service Charter Committee, Area Service Charter Use Committee; the Complaints Handling Committee and the Community Citizen Forum, averaging 12 members per committee. In the context of Gabrielian (2008) the selected individual's responses would be motivated and enhanced by group dynamics and interactions. Thus, the method was used to get a detailed perspective on service charters. Given that argument, six FGDs were held, four in Salima and two in Dedza. In Salima, two FGDs were held at the district level. They involved the District Executive Committees with participants from the Service Charter Committee divided into the education and agriculture services groups. The other three FGDs in Salima were held in TA Mwanza and TA Ndindi. In TA Mwanza two FGDs were held one drawing sixteen participants from the Service Charter Committee and Complaints Committee and the other involved the TA, six Group Village Heads and one Village Head. In TA Ndindi thirteen members of the Service Charter Committee and Complaints Committee participated. In Dedza only one FGD was held in STA Kaphuka which involved twelve participants drawn from members of the Community Citizen Forum (CCF), ADC and NICE.

3.5.2.3 Secondary Data Sources

Secondary data was collected through review of literature from government publications on public service reforms broadly and on the service charters reform initiative specifically, books, journals, reports, academic and internet publications. The review also included non-confidential government policies comprising the Malawi National Public Sector Reforms Policy 2018-2022, the Decentralisation Policy (1998) and the Malawi Public Service Management Policy 2018-2022; while pieces of

legislation included the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi 1994, the Public Service Management Act 1998 and the Local Government Act 1998. Sector policies and legislation in health, education and agriculture were also reviewed.

3.5.3 Quantitative Data

Quantitative data was collected from 304 citizens' resident in Salima and Dedza District Councils at district headquarters and in selected villages in Traditional Authorities of Mwanza, Ndindi in Salima and Kaphuka in Dedza using a questionnaire as discussed below.

3.5.3.1 Questionnaires

A random sample of 304 of citizens within Salima and Dedza was targeted focusing on the key sectors of health, education, and agriculture and were administered at District and Village Development Committee levels. The study used a semi-structured questionnaire to collect data on background information on the service charters reform initiative implemented in the districts, level of knowledge of the service charter by citizens, assess if the introduction of service charters had improved quality of services, approach used for introducing the charters, structures for managing the reform initiative, citizen participation, challenges and suggestions to improve future management of reform initiatives. This was guided by the NPM and the Public Value Theories.

The questionnaires also targeted both genders and disaggregated them by age in order to establish the levels of knowledge within the two sets of gender as presented in the Table 3.2 below. The respondents in the questionnaire were selected by random sampling so as to give each member of the population a chance.

Table 3.2: Distribution of Questionnaires District, Gender and Age

Gender		Age group		Total
		18-35	36-60	
	Female	106	70	
	Male	68	60	128
		174	130	304

In Salima 176 respondents were interviewed around Salima District Headquarters and in TAs Mwanza and Ndindi, giving a percentage of 57.9% of the total sampled in the two districts. In Dedza 100 questionnaires were administered around the Boma and STA Kaphuka, giving us 42.1% of the total of 304 as presented in Figure 3.1 below which graphically shows distribution of questionnaires per district.

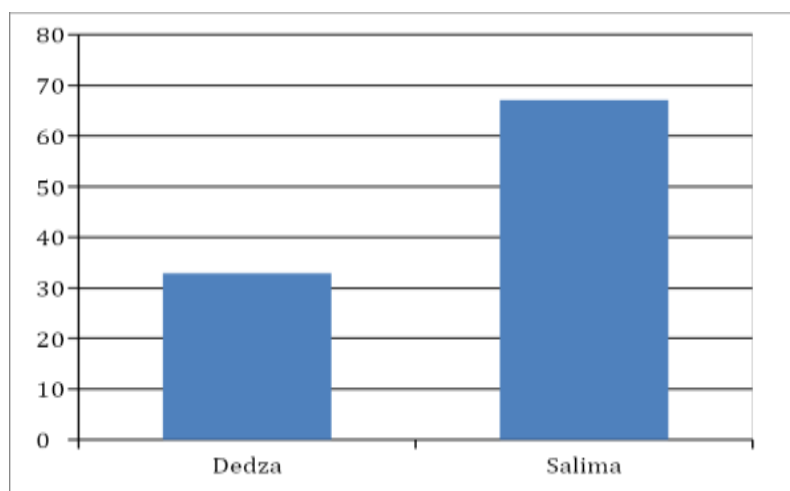


Figure 3.1 Distribution of Respondents per District as a Percentage of the Total of the Sampled.

Data administration and Management

In order to efficiently collect the data at the district level, a research assistant was engaged to help in the KII. In order to efficiently collect the data at the district level, a research assistant was engaged to help in the KII. In addition, 8 data collection assistants were recruited, five in Salima and three in Dedza to help administer the semi-structured questionnaire and facilitate FGDs at the area levels. All research assistants were duly oriented to the research objectives and issues of confidentiality. The data collection assistants had to also sign a letter of engagement under the terms of the research.

Prior to administering the questionnaires, the research assistants were duly oriented on the objectives of the research and a pilot run was conducted on the questionnaire and a few changes were made to the questionnaire following challenges on three questions that were deemed to be more qualitative than quantitative.

The choice of administering both at the headquarters of district and in rural areas was on the basis that key Duty Bearers were based at the district level and that chances of

citizens being more exposed to the service charters due to proximity were high and, therefore, increasing the level of knowledge and use of the service charters reform initiative. On the other hand, the two rural areas that were selected were pilot areas and, therefore, chances of the service charters reform initiative being more institutionalized would be high.

As indicated above a random sample of 304 was made. Of this sample, purposefully 174 were youths (aged 18-35) including 106 and 68 female and male respectively; 120 adults (aged above 35 – 60) covering 70 and 60 female and male respectively around Salima and Dedza headquarters. The targeting took into account of the population demographic characteristics in the district, i.e. Salima has more females than males (NSO, 2008; Salima District Assembly, 2013); and the use and access of the targeted services (health, education and agriculture) by different genders. In addition, the age groups' have different perceptions of service delivery quality and levels of usage and, therefore, it was felt that purposeful targeting would help to understand knowledge of different service users. A further disaggregation of the target groups within the districts is presented in the Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3: Distribution of the Questionnaire in each Target District

1. Target for Salima: 176

Sr.	Study Area	Age Range	Male	Female
1	Salima Boma	18-35	20	30
		35-60	20	30
2	Traditional Authority Mwanza	18-35	19	25
		35-60	10	15
	Total		76	100

2. Target for Dedza: 128

Sr.	Study Area	Age Range	Male	Female
1	Dedza Boma	18-35	10	26
		35-60	18	24
2	Traditional Authorities	18-35	10	15
		35-60	10	15
	Total		48	80

The variations in number were due to the number of TAs covered in the study, three in Salima and two in Dedza.

3.6 Data Analysis

There are many techniques for analyzing data including computer based programmes such as text retrievers and computer-based applications like KoBo, Excel and SPSS (Gabrielian, 2008). The study having collected both qualitative and quantitative data, applicable qualitative and quantitative data analysis tools were used respectively as outlined below.

3.6.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

The study understands data analysis in qualitative studies as the process of creating a story out of data by way of organization, summarization and categorization and pattern and theme identification in line with the subject under study (Bryman, 2004). Ultimately data analysis is done to make meaning to and reality to a study (Johnson, 2005). As Bryman (2004), Gabrielian (2008) and Van Thiel (2014) have argued on the subject of qualitative data analysis, the process of data analysis and techniques that were used in this study begun from the point the conceptual framework for the study was chosen, through the time when the research questions were set, administered to data coding, summarizing, clustering and writing up. To this end, the study having had KI Interviews and the FGDs recorded with their permission, the researcher had to first transcribe all audio recordings by listening and typing verbatim. In addition to the audio recordings, an electronic daily journal was produced every day in which summarized activities and issues related to the research were recorded. Johnson (2005) postulates that this makes meaning and reality to a study of the data collected.

3.6.1.1 Coding of Responses

Having transcribed the audios, the researcher established themes and patterns of the responses based on the objectives of the study and coded these as follows. The colour blue was assigned to responses related to rationale and introduction of the service charters reform initiative theme; purple was assigned to the knowledge related theme; yellow to the impact of the service charters reform initiative on service delivery responses; while orange was assigned to contextual issues for effective institutionalization of the service charters. Thereafter, we searched for relationships among variables emerging based on the conceptual framework and the specific objectives of the study, summarized and did the write – up.

3.6.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

The study used computer-based applications namely KoBo and Excel software in the entry of data and coding. KoBo software was used to create forms for data entry, cleaning and creating tables. In addition, KoBo was used to disaggregate data by gender, and governance and enhanced service indicators. KoBo was chosen because it gives a quick overview of answers to questions particularly those requiring descriptions. However, KoBo had limitations in that it could not analyse quantitative data. To this end, the files were exported to Excel. Therefore, Excel was used to analyse data and to create tables and charts. The tables and charts that were created were further exported to word and aligned to the relevant qualitative findings and themes.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

This study fell within the broader area of social research and public administration and management in particular which are human being focused (dealing with perceptions), ethical issues were bound to arise at various stages of the study as discussed elsewhere above. Ethical principles provide directions to the researcher so that no one suffers as a result of the study (Majumdar, 2008). To this end, and as Van Thiel (2014) suggests in order to manage ethical issues in a public administration research study like this one, five ethical rules, were duly taken into account. These ethical rules being a) beneficence- that is the study sought not to harm anybody particularly the Duty Bearers and citizens in case the findings exposed their failure to provide acceptable quality service; b) veracity –where interviewees were reluctant to be interviewed for fear that they would be taken to task by their senior authorities if they gave out their opinion and facts on certain issues and, therefore, assurances were made to guarantee anonymity on the responses and a letter from OPC authorizing the research was shared with the respondents; c) privacy – prior to the interviews the researcher assured the respondents of their right to refuse to answer certain questions where they felt these were infringing on their privacy. There, however, was no question that was not answered due to infringement of privacy; d) confidentiality- the researcher guaranteed that the information collected would be used without disclosing the source and that all KI Interviews and views from FGD would remain anonymous. The researcher further sought consent from the interviewees to record the proceedings electronically and that whatever was said would be treated with confidentiality and would be only be used for purposes of the study.

To ascertain the non de plum rule, interviewees were only identified by positions and not by names. With regard to the question of confidentiality there was an incident when a respondent in the OPC refused to further comment on some issues that emerged in the course of the interview as she felt by further commenting she would be breaching the oath of office; e) informed Consent, the researcher had to explain to the targeted individuals on the purpose of the research in order to gain their consent before the interviews were conducted. In addition, the units of study being under the overall leadership of the OPC, the researcher had to seek authority from the Chief Secretary to the Government as per Annex II. The researcher byway of introduction showed the letter to the Units of study in order to gain their consent before data or information was collected.

3.8 Limitation of the Study

This study was not immune to limitations and challenges which studies of similar nature face. Accordingly, some of the challenges faced included defining the scope of the study and the period that the service charters as a reform initiative has been implemented. In addition, the researcher was confronted with high staff turnover in the Malawi Public Service particularly in the units of study that would affect the institutional memory and, therefore, affect the quality of data to be collected. The staff turnover was high at the district level. A good number of officials at the district councils that were involved at the time the service charters reform initiative was introduced had been transferred to other districts. In a number of cases particularly in Salima these were replaced by officers who had come from district councils that were not implementing the service charters reform initiative.

Further, during the actual data collection it was difficult to meet KI at the agreed times due reasons that included attending to urgent matters in their offices. This meant that the researcher had to travel to Salima and Dedza a couple of times to collect data. Some key informants too at the Central Government changed the appointments at the last minutes. This resulted in extra costs and extended times of the study.

To solve the above problems, firstly, the study used snowballing to mitigate against high staff turnover. For example, in the health sector at Salima District Hospital the respondent had to refer the researcher to an officer who had been posted to Machinga

District Hospital for further information. This ensured that the quality and relevance of data collected was not compromised so that information collected reflected the reality on the ground to effectively respond to the study objectives. The fact that the study focused on two districts, Salima and Dedza both in the central region leaves a legitimate possibility of different experiences in the northern and southern regions, with possible different conclusions.

3.9 Conclusion

This Chapter discussed the research methodology that was used in the study. The area of the study being a phenomenon focusing largely on perceptions, experience, and feelings of people on services they consume and not about absolutes and meant to contribute to policy development in public sector reform management, largely used an interpretive qualitative methodology. The methods used to collect data were semi-structured interviews for KIs and Focus Group Discussions. An open ended questionnaire was also administered for purposes of collecting quantitative data for establishing the number of citizens in the selected cases that were aware of the existence of the service charters in Salima and also assess the level of service delivery satisfaction by service users as a result of introducing service charters.

In the subsequent chapters the study presents findings of the study based on the methodology above. However, before the findings are presented and analyzed, Chapter Four, will immediately discuss the socio-political and economic context in which the public service reforms in Malawi are implemented.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL, POLITICAL –ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF PUBLIC SERVICE MANAGEMENT REFORMS IN MALAWI

4.1 Introduction

The Public Service in Malawi as is the case with most developing countries, has from time to time come under pressure and scrutiny for not being responsive enough to deliver quality services as required by its citizens (GoM- OPC, 2010). To this end, during the pre- and post-colonial periods, the state machinery has made attempts to implement public service management reforms to improve service delivery. Oftentimes as is the case with many African countries, these reforms have been dictated by both internal and external socio-political and economic factors (Booth, et al., 2006; Omoyefa, 2008; Tambulasi 2010; Dzimbiri, 2012). As will be discussed later, the reasons for the introduction of public sector management reforms in Malawi are not very far from those that have prevailed in other jurisdictions in Africa as well as in other developing countries. This Chapter, therefore, presents and discusses the socio-political and economic contexts that have determined and guided the nature and implementation of public sector management reforms in Malawi.

The discussion is premised on and can be said to be a continuation of the broader literature reviewed in Chapter Two. Noting that public sector management reforms occur within a geo social-economic and political space, it is argued that country specific politics, economics and culture, policy and legal frameworks have a great bearing on how well public sector reforms are institutionalized in different jurisdictions (McLoughlin & Batley, 2012) in Mwabupighu (2017). Dzimbiri (2012) ably puts it, it is important that in reform policy implementation efforts, one reflects on the local institutions if meaningful success is to be registered.

Lane (2001) also contends that public management reform is a political activity dependent on social and economic factors and, therefore, being amenable to the interests of a number of stakeholders and its success of implementation depends on how these diverse interests are managed. To this end, the argument in the discussion is premised on what Wilde et al. (2013) and Mcloughlin and Batley (2012) in Mwabupighu (2017) have identified as political economy determinants and added on social factors whose presence or absence have a great bearing on the dynamics or outcomes of reforms in the public service delivery chain.

These political socio-economic determinants in effective public sector reforms are expressed through a) moral hazard which manifests in behaviour where Duty Bearers are protected in various ways from risks associated with their actions or inactions and become less accountable to the citizens. Moral hazard is said to happen when public accessibility to service information and systems of accountability are limited or absent and Duty Bearers descend into a mode of inaction and political patronage, particularly when there is presence of parallel external financing and service delivery system to that of the public service; b) collective action problems which arise when there is no longer cohesion and coordination in the delivery of public services by the many actors and also lack of convergence between citizen interests and service providers leading to failure to act in a collective-self at the expense of benefits to individuals if they were to act collectively. Mwabupighu (2017), thus, argues that such behaviour undermines the inherent philosophy that, as argued elsewhere, public service delivery is a nexus of many actors that requires well-coordinated structures and commitment of those involved in service delivery.

Regarding the above, and citing the example in the implementation of a community scorecard in Kasungu and Mulanje Districts, Mwabupighu (2017) further argues that collective action played a crucial role at community level in solving service delivery problems in the construction of school blocks; incentive structures equally play a vital role in shaping the behaviour of Duty Bearers or actors in the delivery of public services. As Francios (2000 cited in Mwabupighu, p.2-17) contends that public services are more likely to be driven to deliver services if they are populated by well incentivized bureaucracy to serve in the public interest. Conversely, if Duty Bearers are not motivated appropriately, they are more likely to act in their own interests or in the

interest of the political masters and not in the interest of the public (Collier, 2007). Institutionalization of reforms becomes a daunting task if Duty Bearers and this can be argued for citizens too do not see any benefits in the reforms; levels of performance monitoring and oversight, the success of effective public service delivery is also dependent on the level of monitoring and oversight mechanisms put in place (Joshi, 2010; Fox, 2014). The argument being that presence or absence of performance monitoring within the public service delivery chain can serve to promote or constrain effective service delivery in terms of access and quality (Mwabupighu, 2017). In view of this, the absence may lead to moonlighting by Duty Bearers. The consequences may include corruption and service users opting out of the mainstream delivery chain and opting for unmonitored below standard services like traditional birth attendants and traditional healers (GoM, 2010).

In addition to the above, structural factors and systemic features which are largely expressed in history including colonialism, culture, geography and economic characteristics, Byiers et al., (2015) argue have shaped political, economic and cultural institutions that in turn have created the post-independence public services delivery incentive structures for various public services in terms of national income levels, size of and sophistication of the economy as well as economic activities and sources of employment that are inherently influential in shaping public service reforms.

Given the above context, the chapter proceeds to discuss how the socio-political economy has influenced public service management reforms endeavours in Malawi, in particular the service charter reform initiative. These are presented and discussed six sections namely a) Introduction, b) the Political Socio-economy of Public Service Management Reforms in Malawi; c) Trajectory of Public Sector Reforms in Malawi; d) the Malawi Public Service Charter; e) the Institutional Framework for Managing the Malawi Public Service Charter and; f) Conclusion.

4.2 The Political Socio-Economy of Public Service Management Reforms in Malawi

Public sector reform initiatives in Malawi invariably relate to the prevailing socio-economic, political and legal underpinnings within the country and on the global scene at the material time. Marx (1959) cited in Mcloughlin and Batley (2012) and in Booth (2012) commenting on the relationships of politics and the economy, said as all administrative structure is linked to political structure, and as a door is to a wall so is politics to the economy and by extension so is politics to the social structures and institutions of a particular jurisdiction and inevitably on service delivery. Furthermore, politics is about power and relationships in terms of who gets what, when, and how, hinging on resource utilization and allocation, which is an economic fundamental (Magolowondo, 2013). Public Sector Reforms being a political activity as Lane (2001) argues, the type, therefore, of public sector reforms undertaken at any given time in Malawi has reflected the prevailing political system and the status of the economy. Of concern in this study is how the architecture of the relationship between political and economic subsystems influence and trigger the type of reforms in the delivery of public services in Malawi much as Tambulasi and Kayuni (2013) argue that as public sector is supposedly to be politically neutral, by implication public sector reforms too should be. The study, however, contests that by creating macro, micro political and economic subsystems that seek to align the Public Sector structures and its inherent institutions and the public- political expectations, enhanced public service can be realized.

4.2.1 Political Governance System of Malawi

The Constitution of the Republic of Malawi (1994) provides a number of governance obligations especially under the Bill of Rights where among others there a call for the public to demand high quality public goods (GoM-MoJCA, 1994; Kanyongolo, 2013). In regard to the Constitution, Malawi is a unitary state with a multi- party-political dispensation that was adopted in 1993 and enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi (1994). The new dispensation followed thirty years of a single party and dictatorial system of government under the Malawi Congress Party. It adopted a Presidential System of government where the President and Members of Parliament are directly elected by the people and Malawi is characterized as a liberal economy (Magolowondo, 2013; Tambulasi & Kayuni, 2013). It has to be noted though that at independence in July 1964 Malawi had a multi-party democratic system of government

but events leading to the 1964 Cabinet Crisis (Baker, 200) and the aftermath led to a single party system of Government in 1966. These and other factors as discussed elsewhere have shaped the type and functionality of the public sector. The Malawi public sector, thus, includes all organizations that fall within the Executive, Legislature and the Judiciary (Tambulasi & Kayuni, 2013, Kanyongolo, 2013).

In Africa as Omoyefa (2008) contends, as countries became independent from colonial bondage, it was inevitable to deinstitutionalize, institutionalize and layer some administrative rules, process and regulation and structures to reflect the new dawn of self-governance, the Africanisation processes so to say. In Malawi too, the dawn of independence in 1964 inevitably had raised expectations among the indigenous Malawians and the government had political obligations to introduce political and economic reforms to respond to citizens' post-independence expectations, a political experience influenced by the type of colonialism Malawi had experienced. The expectations include jobs and economic empowerment. Although the by nature of the diverse citizens' interests, these needs, as Tambulasi (2010); Tambulasi and Kayuni (2013) argue may breed conflicts but they are also quick to clarify that what is common is that each one of citizens and collectively have justifiable political interest in how the polity is run and invariably how the public sector is run too. These interest, it is argued, call for public reforms that are on balance for the common good, like the call to have a multiparty democracy that occurred in 1993 which necessitated how the public service would deliver services (Tambulasi & Kayuni, 2013). To this end, while there have been a number of political events necessitating reforms, the public service in Malawi has in the last decade increasingly come under pressure especially for not being politically aligned to the needs of people forcing public sector reforms as will be discussed in the subsequent sections of this chapter (GoM, 2010). Now a reflection on economic governance and public sector reforms follows.

4.2.2 The Economic Governance

The national development policy frameworks determine and provide direction on the need and nature of public service management reforms to be instituted to propel the economic development agenda of Malawi (GoM- OPC, 2017). The national development agenda since independence has been expressed in various policy instruments namely the Statement of Development Policy, the Vision 2020, the Poverty

Reduction Strategy, and the current Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III (GoM, 2018).

According to Chirwa (2005) Malawi is one of the countries in the world with the highest incidences of poverty. It is estimated that over 65.3 % people live below the poverty line (GoM-NSO, 2018). In that regard, from way back in 1981 Malawi instituted various macroeconomic policies with the objective of reducing poverty by liberalizing the economy, that is freeing it from predominantly state controlled to private sector led (Cammack, 2004). To this end, Malawi economy practices a liberalized economic management system punctuated by various reforms largely led by the IMF and the World Bank which are as argued under the political economy determinants are a product of structural factors namely national income levels, size of and sophistication of the economy as well as economic activities and sources of employment but more so linked to historical political factors.

Official ideological statements about the economic systems of Malawi appear to have little correspondence with various measurements of the degree of social (ism) issues practiced in the country as discussed in the following section.

4.2.3 The Social – Cultural Characteristics of Malawi

The social- cultural characteristics of any nation have a huge impact on the institutionalisation of public service management reform initiatives (Dzimbiri, 2017). To this end, David et al. (2006) commenting on the drivers of change and development in Malawi describe and argue that Malawi has a “hybrid, ‘neo-patrimonial’ state, where there is a framework of formal law and administration but the state is informally captured by patronage networks. The distribution of the spoils of office takes precedence over the formal functions of the state, severely limiting the ability of public officials to make policies in the general interest of the public (David et al., 2006). This in the political economy determinants is symptomatic of a moral hazard (Mwabupighu, 2017), that in political terms Malawi’s patronage-oriented political system has deep historical social roots to the extent that colonialism

“superimposed elements of a modern state on hierarchical but communal societies, generating powerful legacies including an ambiguous moral

attitude towards laws and administrative rules requiring honesty and professionalism in public (formal state) service” (David et al., 2006).

To this end, the nature of traditional society helps to explain why abuses by ‘big men’ are tolerated even when very few of the benefits filter down to ordinary people, creating a moral hazard detrimental to effective service delivery, David et al. argue further; and a position they build on what Cammack (2004) describes as a situation influenced by neopatrimonial socio-political system.

In view of the above and as Byiers et al. (2015) as cited in Mwabupighu (2007), argue these social features have shaped political, economic and cultural institutions that in turn have created barriers to progressive change in their own right, because of the way they affect incentive to individual improvement in urban organizations as well as rural communities. The challenge is not the social or cultural elements but as argued elsewhere it is the inability for the introduction of the public service management reforms without recourse or consideration of local institutions that is the challenge (Dzimhiri, 2011). Having discussed the broader political, economic and social drives of reforms, the following section discusses in detail the trajectory of public sector reforms undertaken since independence in context of these.

4.3 Trajectory of Public Sector Reforms in Malawi

Successive Governments, since Malawi got independent in 1964, have periodically introduced public service management reform initiatives aimed at addressing prevailing political and socio-economic challenges including initiatives aimed at enhancing and fostering new governance arrangements to raise standards of performance and behaviors of public servants through new value systems for purposes of enhancing delivery and quality of public services (Sikwese, 2009). Tambulasi and Kayuni (2013) analyzing public sector reforms in Malawi have also argued that generally public sector reforms in Malawi have been undertaken on the assumption that public services were not being delivered adequately. Thus, these reforms have been implemented “to ensure increased effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and affordability...to raise the quality of public services delivered to citizens” (p. 253). The reform initiatives undertaken have been influenced by various extrinsic and intrinsic political and economic phenomenon and factors.

Given the above situation, this study has used 1964, being the year Malawi got her independence, as the base year for public sector reforms initiatives categorizes public sector reforms in Malawi into five generations: those that were implemented between 1964 and 1980; those implemented from late 1980 to 1993; the reforms implemented after the advent of multiparty political democracy from 1993 till April 2012, and those implemented from April 2012 to May 2014. The fifth category constitutes reforms instituted post May 2014 Presidential and Parliamentary General Elections through the study period.

The scope, nature and focus of the reforms within the fore stated timelines, have varied from unimodal to multimodal and comprehensive reforms (GoM, 2008). It, therefore, is not surprising that their nomenclature has been changing from Civil Service Reforms to Public Service Reforms depending on political and economic factors and who is influencing and providing finances to implement the reforms (Kamanga, 2008). Whatever characteristics, these reforms have had, as it has been in other parts of the Africa, they all have been predicated on

It is also important to note that in Malawi the advent of a multi-party political system in 1994 did accelerate the reforms agenda, in addition to other reforms drivers like globalization, and the 21st century financial global melt down of 2008. The death of a sitting State President in April 2012, the subsequent change of leadership and government and the prevailing hard economic situation the country was undergoing pre April 2012, necessitated a new wave of Economic Reforms Agenda and the call for more citizen focused public service delivery mechanism that would promote accountability in Duty Bearers (GoM, 2013). What is revealing is that in all the generations in the trajectory politics and economics have a bearing on the reform initiative so undertaken. In the following sections a detailed account of the reform generations is discussed as follows.

4.3.1 The First Generations of Reforms 1964-1980

The first-generation of public service reforms in Malawi were implemented between 1964 and 1980. The reforms undertaken during this period followed the attainment of independence by most African countries including Malawi (Tambulasi & Kayuni, 2013; Dzimbiri, 2017). This is a post-independence period during which most African

countries were focused on re-inventing the public to meet the demands and needs of the liberated citizens, and is described as the period of development in many of these African countries aimed at quenching the independence thirst. This is a period of Africanisation of the public services that reforms were inevitable to deconstruct some administrative structures that were alien to traditional ways of running affairs of the communities to reflect a new dawn of self-governance (Omoyefa, 2008); structures that the colonialists set to meet their needs.

At independence in 1964, the new government inherited the Nyasaland Civil Service that was structured to control and execute the colonial orders, rather than stimulate and manage the social and economic aspirations of the people of Malawi (GoM, 1983). As such, there was an urgent need to put in place a public civil service that would help facilitate rapid economic development of the new state and improve the lot of the indigenous people; in the words of Tambulasi et al “the quest to abandon the British oriented civil service and create one that would be used to obtain and achieve local aspirations (2013, p. 3030). The main focus of these reforms particularly after the first five years of independence, as spelt out in the Statement of Development Policies (1971-1980), was to establish a Civil Service that would serve the needs of the new state as the inherited administrative structures were structures were considered to be unsuited to spur development in the context of the agenda for independence.

In the vein of ‘Malawianising’ the Civil Service the then Government in readiness for an independent Malawi in 1963 instituted the Nyasaland Local Civil Service Commission of Enquiry headed by T.M Skinner, and has come to be called the Skinner Commission of Enquiry (Samute & Sikwese, 2010; GoM, 2017).

4.3.1.1 The Skinner Commission of Enquiry

The Skinner Commission of Enquiry was the country’s first major attempt at administrative reforms and comprehensive review of the Nyasaland Civil Service (NCS) structure, salaries and other conditions of service. The pre-independence Civil Service was filled with expatriates who were enjoying generous United Kingdom Civil Service standards of pay and conditions of service (Skinner Report, 1963; Tambulasi & Kayuni, 2013), that the independent Malawi could not afford to sustain the same. Therefore, the need to develop more appropriate pay, conditions of service, and simpler

and more logical grading structure was even more compelling and very urgent. The specific objectives of the Skinner report exemplified the broad objectives of reforms, i.e. to improve organizational performance, and make government more responsive to the needs of the public, improving the quality of service of the government, improve job satisfaction, clarify personal and organizational responsibility (Olufemi & David, 2010). The report also recommended the introduction of fees in public hospitals (Skinner Report, 1963) as a tool for enhancing revenue base. The introduction of fees in public hospitals was resented and led to the famous 1964 Cabinet Crisis (Baker, 2001; Tambulasi & Kayuni, 2013).

The Government adopted the Skinner Report and recommended a grading structure that applied only to the administrative common service. As Kamphambe-Nkhoma et al., (2001) observed, the challenge was that the public service was not redesigned to effectively respond to development demands of the liberated people but only ushered in a new class of local elites. Consequently, a further review was commissioned in 1966 by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA, 1966; Tambulasi & Kayuni, 2013).

4.3.1.2 The 1966 Public Service Review

The 1966 Public Service Review recommended refocusing the Public Service reforms towards the needs of administering the country in terms of leadership, new institutional structure and management arrangements. Government only fully implemented the institutional restructuring of ministries but did not address the leadership needs. The failure by government to enhance effective leadership reforms are, to some extent, attributed to the pre-occupation by state leadership to consolidate their position by centralizing political and administrative structures in line with the one party system that was being effected (Msosa, 1998). This in terms of public service delivery meant that responsiveness to citizens' needs was diluted. A more centralized public service delivery chain was pursued reminiscent of one state rule and the state president began to enjoy unlimited powers as the Colonial Governors did (Msosa, 1998). The early gains of a blossoming decentralized system were practically dealt a blow (Samute, 1996).

It is important to note that the public service was the main employing agency during this period as the private sector was limited in growth due to the predominant public

service in most sectors of the economy at that time. One result of this was that in a bid to Africanize the public service and respond to the expectations of an independent Malawi, more people were employed in the Civil Service and the civil service in turn became very bloated and costly.

On the economic front, developing countries were not immune to the global oil price shocks of the late 1970s to early 1980s (Chirwa, 2005). Developing nations were also over-borrowing to finance rapid service development (World Bank, 2002). The oil crisis, coupled with the rising cost of debt servicing and the cost of a bloated public service were now beginning to negatively impact the Malawian economy of Malawi, as was the case with other newly independent countries, especially from the 1980s (World Bank, 2002). Under immense pressure to democratize and liberalize the economy the country initiated the second generations of public sector management reforms (Cammack, 2004; Chirwa, 2005), These will be discussed in the next section.

4.3.2 The Second-Generation Public Service Reforms: 1980-1993

The second-generation reforms, implemented from 1980 to 1993 were implemented under the single party rule of Dr. Kamuzu Banda and were designed to address the economic challenges of the 1970s and the shortcomings of the first generation public service reforms. The reforms during this period came in the wake of a period of high economic growth which saw the public sector being bloated at one point, and then later the nation started facing declining economic growth. Internationally, there was the global energy crisis and economies were generally facing turbulent times. In response to these conditions, the Bretton Woods Institutions were making blanket reform recommendations to nations to restructure the public services. These recommendations included promoting lean government and reducing the role of the public service in delivery of services; a product of the prevailing political economy determinants namely structural factors of national income levels, size of and sophistication of the economy and resultant economic activities. As argued earlier, the first generation of reform initiatives suffered from lack of comprehensiveness and synergies as they tackled public management issues as a linear, activity-based solution, without addressing underlying causes (Kamphambe-Nkhoma et al., 2001). This created an absence of one political economy determinant, the collective action. The absence of this determinant arises when there is no longer cohesion and coordination in the delivery of public

services by the many actors and also lack of convergence between citizen interests and service providers (Wilde et al., 2013).

In view of the above, a number of major administrative and economic reforms were undertaken which largely guided or influenced by multilateral and bilateral institutions through a number of reviews key among these being the Hebercq Civil Service Review Commission (1983), The World Bank Malawi Public Sector Review (World Bank, 1991), and the Chatsika Commission of Enquiry (GoM,1995).

4.3.2.1 The Hebercq Civil Service Review Commission

The Hebercq Civil Service Review Commission focused on the human resource management issues such as staff structure, career development and grading (GoM-1983). The report recommended against using the Civil Service as a means of creating employment without sound human resource forecasting to avert the negative impact of a bloated wage bill that practically was diverting the limited resources from other productive activities. It must be pointed out that the Hebercq Civil Service Review Commission was conducted at a time when the country and the public service in particular required to put in place systems that would help the country withstand the global oil shocks, high costs of debt servicing and the large wage bill.

4.3.2.2 The World Bank Malawi Public Sector Review of 1991

While the Hebercq Civil Service Review Commission focused on the human resource management issues, on the other hand, the World Bank Malawi Public Sector Review focused on institutional and management capacity issues (WB, 1991; Tambulasi and Kayuni, 2013). Key among others, the review recommended strengthening management of financial resources through improved budgeting including the introduction of the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). Thus, it is argued, the aim of the recommended reforms was to ensure levels of performance monitoring and oversight and incentive structures as political economy determinants for public service delivery were available.

4.3.2.3 The Chatsika Commission of Enquiry

Meanwhile the Chatsika Commission of Enquiry (1995)'s focus was on improving the Civil Service performance through restructuring and enhancing incentives through

salary structure and benefits. The recommendations therein were in resonance with the Hebercq Civil Service Review Commission particularly on the need to rationalize the staff, particularly that the staffing level should be determined by sectoral priorities and affordability. The reviews and resultant reform recommendations were necessitated by the political and economic factors as discussed in the later sections.

The above three frameworks for reforms can be seen through the lens of administrative and structural reforms. Also noted it that during this generation of reforms Malawi was not spared from a global wave of political economic reforms as discussed respectively in subsequent two sections.

4.3.2.4 Political Pressure and Reforms

On the political stage this was a period when globally there was a call for improving human rights and promoting the rule of law through democratic governments in many countries (Mhone, 2003; Dulani, 2016). Malawi was not spared and was subjected to economic sanctions due to its poor record of human rights facilitated by her one-party dictatorial system of government (Tambulasi, 2010; GoM, 2010). Reeling under economic sanctions because of an authoritarian regime, political reforms were inevitable (Chininga, 2016). Political pressure groups were established calling for change of the one-party political governance system (Dulani, 2016). The religious establishment joined the call epitomized by the Pastoral Letter issued by the Roman Catholic Church in 1991 (Tambulasi & Kayuni, 2013). A national referendum was subsequently held in 1993 when citizens voted to adopt of a multiparty system of government in 1993 (Tambulasi & Kayuni, 2013). The adoption of a multiparty system of government also meant the need for a number of legal reforms including a new Constitution of the Republic of Malawi (Kanyongolo, 2013). Inevitably a number reforms would have to be implemented in the public service. As Mhone (2003) argued, matters of public service reform needed to be located in a broader framework that addresses the nexus of the problems related to governance and democratization. These reforms are what constitute the 3rd Generation of Public Service Reforms as discussed later.

4.3.2.5 Economic Pressures and Reforms

Globally, the oil price shocks of the late 1970s to early 1980s, coupled with the rising cost of debt servicing incurred due to over-borrowing to finance rapid service development and a bloated public service cost were now beginning to negatively impact the country's economy and other developing countries. Governments, guided and/or influenced by the World Bank had to reinvent new ways of doing business in order to arrest the situation (World Bank, 2002b, 2004; Cammack, 2004; Chirwa, 2005; David et al., 2006). Chataway and Hewitt (2000) argue that the challenges faced by the welfare and development states of the 1970s and 1980s gave credence to the reforms agenda couched in the NPM Model as we know it today. Indeed, the crises of the 1970s, including the oil crises for developing countries in particular and their inability of the bureaucratic establishments as Hughes (2003) puts it, to deal with internal dynamics and respond to citizen needs meant subjection to imposed reforms and international pressures. The resultant reforms were the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) facilitated by the IMF and the World Bank (Cammack, 2004; Chirwa, 2005; David et al., 2006; Tambulasi, 2010). The SAP were implemented in order to adjust the economy in response to the Oil Crisis and also to right size the bloated civil service (Tambulasi, 2010) and therefore, Malawi saw the reduction of government services and retrenchment in the public service in order to meet the goals set by the International Financial Institutions namely IMF and the World Bank (Mkandawire et al., 1999).

The above political, economic and administrative challenges prevailed under the one party and dictatorial governance system and when globally new public service management technologies were emerging. Thus, these second generation of public service management reforms in Malawi coincided with the advent of the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm for public management that emerged in the early 1990s (Tambulasi, 2010). The NPM was seen as a solution to the many challenges that public services in developing countries including Malawi were facing. The inability of public services to efficiently deliver services was blamed on the traditional bureaucratic culture of running state affairs (Hughes, 2003; Hood, 1991) and in case of Malawi without reflection on the effect of the political system on the citizen choices of services (Kiggundu, 2008; Cai & Davis, 2017).

The second generation of reforms, therefore, focused on changing the role, size, structure and operational behaviour of the “public service” (GOM, 1987-1996), essentially it was an act of deinstitutionalization of old practices and institutionalizing new management technologies. Among the key objectives of applying the NPM in Malawi were the need to foster accountability, transparency, responsiveness to citizen needs and good local governance - democratic decentralization (Tambulasi, 2009). The major NPM-related reform elements implemented in Malawi during this period include privatization of non-performing parastatals, decentralization of sector implementation functions to local governments and introduction of individual performance management systems. Whether these new operational behaviours would be fully accepted and institutionalized was a matter of power play between various actors on the political grounds given that Malawi was still under the one party system of government with an increasing violation of human rights.

The country’s leadership did not implement wholesale the recommendations for structural adjustment and liberalization. Although there was partial implementation of the reforms, the impact of the reforms on the population were deemed to be highly negative. While the proponents of the reforms were of the view that partial reforms had resulted in the negative impacts, the opposing parties to the reforms were also of the view that the little reforms that had been implemented were harming the population (Cammack, 2004; Chirwa, 2005; Tambulasi, 2010). Whatever the case, the assessment was clear, the poverty in Malawi had deepened and was severe to such an extent that even the proponents of the reforms could not ignore the negative impacts and suggested ways of saving and serving the poor and ultra-poor with safety nets and other programmes to ease the pain of poverty (Cammack, 2004; Chirwa, 2005). The failure to resolve wholly the many challenges including governance and human rights issues ushered in the next generation of reforms, which focused on poverty alleviation, democratization and liberalization.

4.3.3 The Third Generation of Public Sector Reforms: 1993-2012

The 1980s have been described as the lost decade of development in many developing countries and mostly in Sub-Saharan Africa including Malawi despite the reform initiatives undertaken to improve economic development (Singer & Sharma, 1989). The number of economic austerity measures that were undertaken in Sub-Saharan African

brought in a lot of dissatisfaction among citizens on how the public services were being delivered (Mutahaba & Kiragu, 2002). In Malawi the austerity measures came with the second wave of reforms accompanied by authoritarian state rule caused a lot dissatisfaction and frustration among the public in terms of governance and delivery of public services (Dzimhiri, 2011). This not surprisingly came with drastic political implications that led to political unrest and a national referendum in 1993 where Malawi had to choose between a single party dictator system of government or a multi-party democratic (Bodo, 2003). The 1993 political referendum ushered in a period of multiparty democracy. The change of political system of government invariably called for major public service management reforms under the umbrella of what are described as the Third Generation Reforms (Dzimhiri, 2011).

The Third Generation of Public Service Reforms were implemented under two different political parties elected through the five-year cycle of democratic elections. These were the United Democratic Front (UDF) under Bakili Muluzi from 1993-2004 and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) under Bingu wa Mutharika from 2004 – 2012. Bingu did not complete the second term as he suddenly died in office before his second term was completed. It must be pointed out that Bingu wa Mutharika was initially elected into office in 2004 under the auspices of the UDF party, from which he subsequently resigned before forming his own party, the DPP in February 2005 (Chinsinga, 2016).

The Third Generation Reforms were implemented during a period when the Malawian economy was reeling from the negative impacts of (partial) implementation of structural adjustment programmes (AfDB, 2012). These were aimed at repairing the economy by fully liberalizing the economy as per donors' advice, and on the political front – a democratic and multiparty dispensation. Poverty alleviation programmes were, therefore, implemented to cushion the population from the harsh economic conditions. The public service reforms during this period focused on restructuring the public service by rationalizing it through reduction of the civil service organizations to achieve lean government (Tambulasi, 2010). In addition, decentralization as part of operationalizing the provision of the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi was also supposed to be implemented (Chiweza, 2010). It is against this background that these processes are viewed as simply empowerment of the citizens in the absence of or due

to reduced public service muscle as resources were inadequate for the public service to deliver the services which it was expected to deliver.

The economy during this period went through cycles of growth and contraction including the overvaluation of the Malawi Kwacha (RMB, 2012), but the general trend was towards a decline in performance such that by the year 2012, Malawi was facing an imminent economic meltdown, with the country's leadership once again refusing to devalue the Kwacha and fully liberalizing the economy (IMF, 2013). The poor economic situation seriously affected delivery of public services that was much felt in the health, education and agriculture sectors (AFDB- CSP, 2012). Poor economic performance led to poor tax collections and therefore reduced funding to public services and inevitably poor service delivery.

In view of the many political and governance challenges and subsequent poor service delivery experienced during second wave of reforms, the primary objective of the third generation reforms was to improve macro indicators and strengthen and improve efficiency in local resource mobilization to buoy local resource mobilizations to ensure public service was not severely disrupted as development partners had closed aid taps as a result of poor governance indicators (GoM, 2012). Further was on to enhance effectiveness of performance of all branches of Government, namely; the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary in the delivery of services to the general public with focus on enhancing accountability and transparency; and the active engagement and participation of the civil society and the private sector in the national development agenda as well positioning Malawi to manage her global socio-economic and political challenges (GoM, 2012). The major reforms that were undertaken as a result are as follows.

4.3.3.1 Legal Reforms

The major legal reform during this period was the adoption of democratic constitution, the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi, 1994 (GoM, 1994). The adoption of the new Constitution unraveled some challenges in the management of the Malawi Public Service in a democratic dispensation including that there was no enabling public service management legislation consistent with the new Constitution of the Republic of Malawi (Kanyongolo, 2013). This called for enactment of relevant enabling laws and

regulations. Subsequently, the Public Service Act (PSMA) was promulgated in 1994 (GoM, 1994). The PSA 1994 among other key issues provides for the core functions of the Public Service; the responsibilities and duties of the offices of the Secretary to the President and Cabinet and the Secretary for Human Resource Management and Development; the need for predictability, accountability and transparency of the operations of the public service (GoM, 1994). A new set of the Malawi Public Service Regulations was adopted (GoM, 1994). The 1994 Constitution also provides for a decentralized local governance system and hence the need to create enabling policies and legislation. The decentralized government reforms got more impetus from Chapter XIV which provides for the creation of Local Governments that would entrench the democratization process and increase participation of citizens in development and governance issues. This triggered a wave of Local Government reforms whose primary goal was to create an enabling environment for local governance and social economic development through a participatory and bottom up approach that would allow citizens to have more voice and power to hold service providers accountable on the services they delivered (GoM, 1998; Chiweza, 2010).

In view of the weakened local government system as a result of the one party rule operationalized through a centralized system of government as discussed elsewhere, the first set of efforts was a capacity assessment and resource needs study of local authorities with a view to identifying functions and services which should be devolved to local authorities, and to work out an institutional arrangement for local government at district council level (GoM, 1995) including development of an enabling legislation and a policy. The result was the adoption of a National Decentralization Policy in 1998 and the enactment of the Local Government Act in 1998. These two instruments enabled Malawi to create a formal second tier of government with political and administrative powers over issues that are local in nature (Chiweza, 2010). These two signified a major reform in the management of development programmes and projects and delivery of public service that were to be entrusted to the second tier of the government. The policy also provides some taxation powers to local authorities and establishes a decentralization fiscal framework (GoM, 2002). A closer examination at these instruments, however, reveals that usually beyond facilitating the right to participate in elections of representatives, there is usually failure as Fox (2010)

contents of the democratic institutions so created to raise the voice of the poor and therefore lack of collective demand on quality of services by citizens.

To further the process of democratization and align the public service operations in line with multiparty dispensation, other legal reforms aimed at enhancing accountability and transparency in the Public Service were initiated and these include the promulgation of the Public Finance Management Act 2003 (GoM,2003), the Public Audit Act (GoM, 2003), repealed in 2017; and the Public Procurement Act 2003 (GoM, 2003) which has since 2017 been repealed and a new Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets has been enacted (GoM, 2017).

In the later years the Employment and Labour Relations Act 2012 (GoM, 2012) was also enacted to deal with incentive structures political economy determinant. as Francios (2000) contends that public services are more likely to be driven to deliver services if they are populated by well incentivized bureaucrats to serve in the public interest. In addition to these new pieces of legislation new regulations and procedures on the management of the public service and invariably the delivery of public services has been put in place including the Malawi Public Service Management Policy of 2018. The key aspects of these of the Malawi Public Service Management Policy of 2018 is to guide and spur efficient, responsive and accountable public service in the delivery of its services. In that vein civil services procedures were to be reviewed and reformed.

Given the above context the challenge is to establish the extent of the applicability and impact of the legislation on the quality of service delivery against a background where, as Davis et al (2005) argue there is a framework of formal law and administration but the state is informally captured by patronage networks entrenched in traditions and culture that may stifle anticipated democratic benefits.

4.3.3.2 Political Reforms

The 1993 National Referendum ushered in a multi-party democratic system of government that saw the end of a thirty-year era of one party rule (Tambulasi and Kayuni, 2013). A number of political parties were formed with the major ones being the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD). An independent Electoral Commission was established as provided for in the new

Constitution of the Republic of Malawi (1994) and a multiparty election was held in 1994.

The UDF defeated the Malawi Congress Party and AFORD and formed the first democratic government. The holding of the elections signified another step in the democratization process and the quest for an expansion of a set of political ideals towards accountability and transparency of Duty Bearers in the public service and service delivery chain.

In view of the above legal and broader political reforms, a number of national and sector specific policy reforms were initiated as discussed below.

4.3.3.3 National and Sector Policy Reforms

Public Service Delivery being institutional and structural arrangements or systems put in place by governments to provide goods and services to its citizens (Humpreys, 1998), therefore the systems and structures have to reflect the prevailing socio-political and economic environment. To this end, the change of the political system and the resultant legislation need arose for the public service to reposition itself in order to be responsive to the demands of the people in the new political dispensation. In that vein, public service management reforms were duly undertaken entailing national policy formulation and reformulation reforms and institutional and structures re-engineering.

4.3.3.4 National Development Planning Policy Reforms

The major policy reforms during this period include the conceptualization of a National Vision, the Vision 2020. From 1994 through 2000, Malawi like most developing countries embarked on a “national visioning” exercise which led to the formulation of Malawi Vision 2020 (GoM, 2000). The development and adoption of the Malawi Vision 2020 further led to other national planning reforms that resulted in the country preparing five-year medium-term development plans or strategies as tools for realizing the Vision 2020. The first medium term plan was the Poverty Reduction Strategy (1996-2004) and this was followed by the Malawi Growth and Development Strategies I-2007-2011; II- 2012-2015, and currently III 2017-2022 (GoM, 2017). In all these development instruments, an efficient, effective and transparent Public Service is the key factor to the successful realization of democratic, highly developed, socially,

economically and politically just Malawi (GoM, 2017). In that context, therefore, Governments have during every cycle of the democratic elections put in place policies and programmes that would capacitate the Malawi Public Service to deliver public services in a responsive, an efficient, effective and transparent way. For example, the Public Service Management Programme Support Document: 2012 -2016's overall objective of the Programme is to “enhance the leadership and management competencies in the public service, and institutional capacity for effective management of the Public service” (GoM, 2012)

Further to the national policy broad frameworks, the reforms initiatives also focused on creating policy formulation and analysis capacities and civil service management procedures.

Civil Service Procedures Reforms

In 1996 the Office of the President and Cabinet developed the Civil Service Action Plan (CSAP) which was the first attempt to have a comprehensive framework to guide government and development partners in the resourcing and implementation of reforms (GoM, 1996; Tambulasi & Kayuni, 2013). The strategic objectives of the CSPA were on (a) institutional development and management: that is developing strategic planning capacities, restructuring of ministries, and downsizing of staff in the civils service; (b) Economic, Financial Management, Auditing Reforms: introduce the key financial reforms namely the Cash Budget System in 1996; the establishment of a Central Internal Audit Unit and the Debt Management System; develop the Decentralization Fiscal Formula; and create the Malawi Revenue Authority (IDP II World Bank, 2003a, GoM, 2003a).

The review of the CSPA revealed a number of challenges and more importantly key lessons that would form the basis for successful implementation of reforms in Malawi. The key lessons were that : (a) a clear vision and strategy are crucial in the reform agenda in Malawi, (b) leadership is crucial and political will and commitment cannot be assumed, (c) weak coordination complicates implementation of reforms (d) wrong methodology limits ownership and commitment (e) appropriate design of reforms needs appropriate technical effort, (f) reforms are more effective where an appropriate management structure and capacity are defined and available and responsibilities and

line of accountabilities are clarified from the outset, (g) public participation in the reforms agenda is very important including that of the Civil Society and the Private Sector (h) monitoring and Evaluation, Accountability mechanism should be in place, and (i) that it is important to have reliable sources of funding and a consistent flow of those funds.

The Public Policy Formulation and Analysis Reform Initiative

The Public Policy Formulation and Analysis Initiative was intended to build capacity for policy and formulation in the public sector (GoM, 2006). A Change Management Advisory Unit was created in the Vice President's Office to facilitate the implementation of reform initiatives. The result of this is that a unit responsible for public sector reforms management, the PRSMU was established in 2006 within OPC and a Policy and Research Directorate was also established in OPC (GoM, 2006). The policy formulation process has since been reviewed in order to promote evidence-based policy formulation as outlined in the Guide to Executive Decision Making Process of 2017 (GoM, 2017). The policy structure also seeks to ensure that MDAs have functional policy units that would coordinate all reform initiatives in these ministries. However, policy research units are yet to be established in Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (Rugumyamheto & Kamanga, 2008).

Sectoral Reforms

Reforms in the sectors focused on improving policy formulation, service delivery systems and technical capacities and human resource skills and competencies. While all sectors have embarked on reform initiatives, the health, education, agriculture, water, and roads sectors implemented the reforms most robustly (GoM, 2012). The discussion focusses on education, health and agriculture, as these were the study areas, and the key management reforms during this period were the Health Sector Wide Approach (HSwap) and the Agriculture Sector Wide Approach (ASWAP). The Health Swap included an incentive pay structure to curb brain drain with the aim of increasing and retaining the number of trained doctors and nurses with better pay; improved supply of central health planners, district health managers and field operatives and medical supplies (GoM, 2012).

During this generation President wa Mutharika presided over a number of key reforms including economic structural reforms for example the introduction of the fertilizer subsidy programme in 2005 which increased food production between 2006 and 2011 and the growth of economy averaging 7% (Chinsinga, 2013). This was a daring reform that had symbolism of political will and desire for economic structural when globally such reforms were disdained by both multilateral and bilateral organizations. It is under the same leadership that in 2008 service charter reform initiative was adopted and piloted. This is further discussed in detail in the later sections (MHRRC, 2010).

Parliamentary Reforms

Malawi's Constitution of 1994 in Chapter VI, Section 48 subsection 1 provides that all legislative powers of the Republic shall be vested in Parliament which shall have the powers and responsibilities set in the Constitution. In line with democratic expectations, Parliamentary Reforms have been initiated from time with the aim of improving the management of the National Assembly, management of the interface between the Legislature and the Executive, between the Legislature and the Judiciary, between the Legislature and the Civil Society; and enhancing the capacity of Parliamentary Committees and of Members of Parliament to provide oversight functions on the executive particular ministries, departments and agencies that provide services to the citizens, in order to promote accountability and transparency as provided in the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi (Rugumyamheto & Kamanga, 2008).

The Quick Impact Results Project (QUIRP)

In 2008, the PSRMU adopted a Quick Impact Results Project (QUIRP) implementation Strategy (GoM, 2008). The main objective of QUIRP was to undertake quick win reforms to improve delivery of essential public goods and services that will have a quick impact on the lives of people. The essential services, whose delivery would be fast tracked would be chosen on the basis of current delivery perceived efficiency rate and quality compared to demand and expected quality. The process involved conducting performance analysis/capacity scan focusing on policy and legal mandates, institutional and human resources development, financial management systems, procurement systems and practices, IT systems and general governance issues. The services that benefited from this were the Immigration Services, the Electricity Supply Commission of Malawi and the deceased estate management (GoM, 2010).

Given the above reform endeavours and as revealed by the CSAP that one of the challenges in institutionalizing reforms in Malawi is strategic national leadership and lack of political will and commitment; as well unforeseen occurrences that may have disruptive effects on the process of implementing reforms. Indeed, as Amenta and Ramsey argue (2014), in political institutionalism the main theoretical framework is that macro-level political institutions play a great role in shaping politics and political actors' behaviour that in turn may influence policies, refashioning political institutions in the process. To this end, while during the first term of his presidency from 2004 – 2009, President wa Mutharika presided over a number of key reforms including economic structural reforms among them the introduction of the fertilizer subsidy programme which increased food production (Chinsinga, 2013) and the growth of economy averaging 7% (Chirwa, 2005); and also the introduction of CSC in 2008 and the celebration of the African Public Service Day in line with the Africa Charter of Public Service and Administration GoM-(OPC, 2010); the second term saw Malawi experience deterioration in human rights (MHRC, 2012) coupled with exchange control problems that led to fuel challenges in and around 2010 (GoM-MoF, 2012). The poor governance and economic challenges resulted in the 20 July 2011 nationwide demonstrations that saw 20 people killed by the police (The Nation, 21st July 2011).

In response to the various governance failures, international development partners (bilateral and multilateral) suspended budgetary support to the government (GoM-MoF, 2012). While efforts were being made to initiate national dialogue to resolve the political and economic crisis, President Mutharika died in office in April 2012 ushering in then Vice President Joyce Banda, in line with the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi 1994 (GoM, 2012). The challenge and or paradox of the change of leadership interestingly is that Joyce Banda was a Vice President of the Republic of Malawi under wa Mutharika from 2009 but due to a strained relationship with the President she was expelled from the DPP and formed her own party, the People' s Party (PP). And since, the DPP was no longer the governing party its agenda and manifesto were abruptly curtailed.

The new governing party, PP ushered in new set of political direction and new philosophy on public service delivery and reforms was construed (GoM, 2012). To this

end, a fourth generation of reforms rolled in motion as will be discussed in the subsequent section.

4.3.4 The Fourth Generation of Public Sector Reforms: 2012-2014

The Fourth Generation of reforms were implemented under the leadership of Joyce Banda from April 2012 -2014. It is imperative to outline the economic and political environment that triggered the fourth generation of reforms before the actual reforms are discussed. This generation of reforms were implemented during the second year of implementation of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy - MGDS II whose life span was the period from 2011 to 2016. Precedent to the MGDS II was MGDS I implemented from 2006 to 2011 and whose main objective was to reduce poverty through economic growth and infrastructure development by improving macro-economic fundamentals.

4.3.4.1 Macroeconomic Environment

During the first year of the MGDS II implementation, Malawi started experiencing a number of macroeconomic challenges that negatively impacted on the delivery of public services despite the economic growth achieved during the MGDS I. These challenges included reduced disposable incomes due to poor tobacco revenues, power disruptions, and scarcity of foreign exchange with the resultant intermittent fuel supplies. Consequently, economic performance slowed down, and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by only 4.3 per cent compared to 6.9 percent projected in the MGDS II (GoM, 2012). The severe shortage of foreign exchange had a negative impact on imports of strategic commodities including industrial fuel and raw materials. This situation was exacerbated by an overvalued official exchange rate and tight administrative regulations (IMF, 2012). In addition, and although average inflation rate in 2011 remained at a single digit (7.6) the country started experiencing a steady rise in general price levels from early 2011, reflecting a pass-through effect from increased petroleum pump prices and continued fuel supply disruptions. Consequently, the average annual inflation rate for 2012 had accelerated to 18.4 per cent. Furthermore, the base lending/bank rate of the central bank had been on the rise leading to the cost of borrowing to go up in the country (GoM, 2012). The impact of these economic challenges was dwindling efficiency in the delivery of public services that was triggered

by budget allocation cuts across all sectors but whose impact was more felt in the health sector.

The above challenges, have in turn been attributed to poor political leadership that ignored the rule of law and abused human rights (MHRC,2012), characterized by subversion of freedom of the press and of 20 citizens during demonstration in July 2011. This led to donor budgetary withdrawals (MHRC,2012). Consequently, the political economy determinants for effective public service delivery were not available (Dulani, 2016). In order to avert further deterioration in the quality of public services, the new government instituted economic and political reforms, developed (GoM, 2012).

4.3.4.2 Economic Reforms – Economic Recovery Plan

It is against the aforementioned that Cabinet directed, upon the assumption office by Joyce Banda, that economic and financial reforms should be undertaken under the banner of Economic Recovery Plan - ERP (GoM, 2012). The main thrust of the reforms was economic recovery, enhanced service delivery and rule of law which aimed at restoring public trust in government and improving service delivery (OPC, 2012). At the core of the ERP were reforms in the areas of,

“Economic Governance, in particular, the restoration of multilateral and bilateral donor relations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2012) and the British Government to create space for full donor participation to the country’s development agenda; and in the area of Economic Policy whereby Monetary, Fiscal and Real Sector Policy Reforms are being implemented to improve the country’s macroeconomic environment for doing business with a view to increase private sector participation to the development of the country” (GoM- ERP, 2012).

In addition, the reforms focused on scaling up social economic policy reforms to mitigate against the impact which some of the economic reforms particularly the exchange rate policy would bring on the vulnerable groups of the society. This being the case, the successful implementation of the ERP entirely depended on the full participation of all stakeholders in the country including the private sector organizations, bilateral and multilateral partners and others while ensuring that Government spearheaded the process and created an enabling environment for the other stakeholders to participate in the development of the country. The approach taken is

consistent with the argument of Kopor (1995) that while the public sector is the primary, if not the main vehicle for governance and ground for state politics – responsible for allocation of state resources through goods and services other players like the civil society and the private sector are as important in the delivery of public services through corporate responsibility and therefore ought to be involved by government in fulfilment of constitutional obligations.

Given the economic challenges outlined earlier, the ERP embraced other equally important set of immediate policy reforms aimed at increasing resource allocation to areas that would address constraints to economic growth such as energy and to those aimed at boosting production for the export market. To this end, the Exchange Rate Adjustment reform was implemented by removing restrictions on the foreign exchange bureau market as was the case before the devaluation in August 2011 (RBM, 2012). In May 2012 the Malawi Kwacha was devalued against the country's major trading currencies; and a flexible exchange rate regime was adopted among other measures (RBM, 2012). In addition, there was a need to improve the Foreign Exchange Reserve in order for the exchange rate reforms not to be economically and socially disruptive. In turn the control of fuel pricing by the government was removed and an Automatic Pricing Mechanism (APM) was adopted around the same period. This resulted in steady supply of fuel and latently a positive impact on delivery of services across the public service (GoM, 2012). In addition to the economic reforms, political measures particularly restoration of diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom were put into effect in order to have essential support from the UK and other development partners. The other reforms introduced are as outlined in the following sections.

4.3.4.3 Organisation Performance Assessment

The Organization Performance Assessment (OPA) was officially launched in February 2013 (GoM, 2013) and the implementation framework was that Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs) would identify key deliverables in a particular financial year that would be agreed and signed between the Chief Secretary to Government and the Controlling Officers and witnessed by the responsible Minister. The launch of the OPA can be said to be the continued application of some of the tenets of the NPM by the Government of Malawi, especially the standards and measures of performance, output control tents (Hood, 1990, Frederickson et al., 2012; Tambulasi, 2010; Geleta, 2014).

The objective of OPAs was to hold Controlling Officers accountable for the delivery of agreed targets and advocate for discipline and parsimony in resource allocation and the reinvention of government business by espousing hands-on and entrepreneur management (Denhardt, 2011). According to the DHRMD (2012), these OPAs were an aggregation of the Individual Performance Assessment (IPA) that the government introduced in 2008 as part of the reforms to enhance service delivery in MDAs by focusing on the citizen.

To further realize this objective and in line with the ACVPPSA, the government launched the Malawi Public Service Charter in June 2012 (GoM, 2012) which is discussed in detail in the later part of the chapter. Suffice it to say at this stage that the charter “is a statement of intent of the Public Service’s commitment to provide the best possible service standards to the people of Malawi” (GoM, 2010:4); subscribing to fundamental principles of equality of treatment, neutrality, legality, and continuity; and the core values being accountability, transparency and impartiality. Loyalty, integrity, justice, objectivity, selflessness, transparency and excellence (Tambulasi and Kayuni, 2013).

Given the above context, it is argued that much as many key political and economic reforms were introduced during the Fourth generation of reforms including the launch of the service charters, contradictory episodes emerged that would affect the delivery of public services. One of the contradictory events was the financial scandal which hit the Public Service that involved the loss of over MK24 billion. The scandal widely known as the Cashgate came to the fore in September 2013 (Banik et al., 2016) and triggered the call for a number of reforms in the Integrated Financial Information Management System and other related government management systems.

The question that arises is whether there would be a continuation of the reforms introduced under the previous government? Lack of continuity is a challenge that was considered a big bottleneck to sustained institutionalization of reforms in Malawi (GoM, 2014). In answer to the question, the challenges constitute the Fifth Generation of Reforms.

4.3.4.4 The Fifth Generation of Public Sector Reforms 2014- 2018

The effect of the Cashgate scandal eroded all the gains the PP government had made including the return of development partners budgetary support and more importantly the public's confidence in the Government. This affected the delivery of public service during the 2013/14 Financial Year, and probably contributed to the PP Government's electoral loss in the 2014 presidential elections and the low number of seats it won in the parliamentary and local government elections held in the same year (MEC, 2014). The presidential elections were won by the DPP candidate who proceeded to form the next government (MEC, 2014). To this end, the DPP won the Presidential elections and formed the next government (MEC, 2014) on account of promising, among other things, introduction of public service management reforms that would improve service delivery and safeguard government resources (Patel et al., 2015). This signaled a different political direction and a fresh set of public sector management reforms. Indeed, as from May 2014 a new wave of public sector reforms 'to spur the economy and improve public service delivery' was announced (GoM, 2014) and these constitute what this study describes as the Fifth Generation of Public Sector Management Reforms. What follows, therefore is a discussion on this Fifth Generation of Public Sector Management Reforms.

In 2014 Malawi held the 5th cycle of democratic Presidential and Parliamentary General Elections (MEC, 2014). These were held alongside Local Government Elections in order to further strengthen democratic decentralization and citizen voice in matters that affect them. It was the first time that Malawi held a tripartite election and more importantly it was the second Local Government elections after the first post 1994 multipartt democracy that was last held in 2002 (. This meant that the democratic decentralization would once again kick in and likely to improve local governance and service delivery as stipulated in both the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi (1994) and the Local Government Act (1998).

In line with the DDP's manifesto, on the assumption of office the President of Malawi established a seven-member Public Service Reforms Commission (PSRC) in June 2014 chaired by the Vice President of the Republic (GoM, 2014). The Commission was established against a background of general public outcry that public service delivery was poor, and Duty Bearers were not responsive to the citizen needs. The main function

of the Commission was “to chart the national direction and establish national priorities in PSRs that would ensure successful change towards a modern, efficient and effective public service (GoM, February 2015). It was supported by the PSRMU as its secretariat, a case of institutional layering as argued by Mahoney and Thelen (2010).

The establishment of the PSRC did not come out of the blues. Review of the reforms initiatives in Malawi, for example as argued by Wamalwa (1996) in the Public Sector Reform Report of May 1996 and also in the Public Sector Reform Management Programme (2002-2006) as well as by Rugumyamheto and Kamanga (2008) reveal that the major challenge to successful implementation of reforms in Malawi was the absence of a lead organisation to champion and coordinate it at the highest political level. The Wamalwa Report further recommended the establishment of a Public Sector Reform Commission. Therefore, the appointment of the PSRC and placing it under the State Vice President under the sponsorship of the State President was unique in the history of reform management in Malawi, but not surprising. The PSRC was a temporary establishment with an initial term of six months which was extended by a few additional months to December 2016 (GoM, 2016). However, it practically answered one of recommendations in the Wamalwa Reports.

The philosophy of the Fifth Generation of reforms was to find local solutions to local challenges in the delivery of public services and management of public service reforms while learning from other jurisdictions (OPC, 2015). The philosophy was situated in the process of institutionalization and deinstitutionalization, recognizing that public sector reforms management in developing countries, as Adejuwon (2010) argues, has been inundated with models and theories alien to the socio-geopolitical setups of these countries with limited adaptation. It is in this context that extensive consultations were undertaken with a cross section of stakeholders in the country (OPC, 2015) and outside the country and included policy learning.

The Government continued to implement a number of political and economic reforms that had been introduced under the Fourth Generation of Reforms in addition to new ones. Key among the reforms that were sustained under the 5th Generation Reforms were the automatic fuel pricing system as well as the floating forex exchange systems, the service charters and the Organisation Performance Assessment. Learning tours were

undertaken to Kenya, Rwanda, Singapore and the United Kingdom. While the study learning tours were considered necessary, caution was exercised in the application of the reform technologies. Dzimbiri (2012) cautions on the wholesale transfer of reforms without recourse to local cultural aspects in his reflection at cultural change and public sector reforms in Africa. Dzimbiri's reflections are consistent with what Pollitt's argument that, "when a transfer of a particular management system or technique is contemplated, one needs to consider how far each of these major factors-culture, the political system, the pattern of institutions, the management strategy, the nature of the primary task- matches between the 'exporting' and importing jurisdictions. The more mismatches the more probable it is that the transfer will fail or produce unexpected results" (2004, p. 5).

Indeed, the philosophy of localization of solutions was considered important on two bases: embracing views of the many stakeholders that were consulted in order to gain confidence of the new reform agenda and implementing quick-win reforms that had quick impact on the citizen service demands (OPC, 2010) as presented in the following paragraph.

4.3.4.5 Quick-Win Service Delivery Reforms

While the establishment of the PSRC was in response to structural and institutional challenges of public sector reforms management in Malawi, the PSRC was also mandated to provide strategic leadership in identifying key reforms areas in the implementation of quick-win public sector reforms that would result in the delivery of quality public services (GoM, 2015). Thus, some of the reforms were basic re-alignment of structures for efficient decision-making given the general feeling that the public service is neither efficient nor effective in fulfilling its mandate and responsibility to the Malawian citizens. In addition, there was a general lack of integrity, drive and diligence. As articulated in the Public Service Management Reforms and Capacity Development Programme Document 2012-2016 in most cases, public servants have lacked accountability and transparency with some concerns being raised regarding, among others, non-compliance with regulations, poor work ethics and fraudulent behavior and inefficiencies of the delivery of public services. All these did not reflect well on the image of the public service hence the Fifth Generation of the Public Service Reform Agenda recognizes the need for a business unusual approach in the delivery of

Public Services and, thus, a call for quick wins' reforms. The quick win reforms implemented were restructuring the OPC to remove none core business like the coordination of safe motherhood programs and relocate these to the ministry responsible for health matters; decentralizing the printing of passports to regional offices and stopping principal secretaries from attending presidential functions that were not related to their portfolios. It has to be pointed out that this was not the first-time quick win reforms were introduced, as under the third generation a Quick Impact Results Project was implemented with the same philosophy. The major Fifth Generation of the Public Service Reform Agenda though is reflected in the Making Malawi Work Again Final Report of the PSRC of February, 2015.

4.3.4.6 Making Malawi Work Again

The Commission's work culminated in a Report published in February 2015 with the key message of 'Making Malawi Work Again (GoM, 2015)'. The report raised a number of key issues that needed to be put through the public service reforms mill. Key among these were institutional issues, for example that the public service was very politicized leading to loss of professionalism, work ethics, discipline and accountability, limited engagement of citizens in service delivery beyond participation in election of office bearers. There was also increased corruption and fraud in key services like health, education, road traffic services and passport services. These issues as discussed earlier sit at the centre of the public service management reform agenda in most developing countries, and reflect the NPM Model and the Public Value Theory, as discussed above. The report further makes a number of recommendations and key among these and that are related to the objective of the study are the need for Government to implement a robust public service delivery accountability system between the President and Minister, and between Minister and Principal Secretary (PS) and the PS and Directors and cascades to the lower ranks and then outward accountability to the citizens; Establish a clear agenda for the reform process (a balance between the political and technical agenda); the need to come up with reforms that focus on benefits for citizens; Utilize civil society organizations to implement other non-core business while Government should take up the oversight role; Aligning the Public Sector Reforms to the Public Financial and Economic Management (PFEM); Promote accountability, integrity and cultural transformation; The Executive should submit Annual Reports on reform to Parliament as required by the Law so that Government is

accountable to Parliament; Reforms need to ensure that work ethics are enforced for improved productivity; Promote Performance Audit in Government; Establish areas where the private sector and other agencies can implement activities to support government efforts. This aspect fits well with the philosophy of the Public Value Theory and also the New Public Service tenets where the government's role is to steer and promote networks in service delivery; and Implement service charters (GoM, February, 2015). The recommendation to implement the Service Charter has to be looked at as a call to implement the service charters in the entire public service structure and service delivery chain. The case of the service charters is further analyzed in the next but one section. In the following paragraph is a discussion of the implementation status of some of the reforms under 5th Generation Reforms.

4.3.4.7 Malawi National Public Sector Reforms Policy 2018-2022

Government then developed and launched the Malawi National Public Sector Reforms Policy -2018-2022 in November 2018 (GoM, 2018). The policy's overall purpose is "to provide strategic direction for the effective design, implementation and management of the public sector reforms that will create a capable, efficient and effective public sector and stimulate and promote sustainable socio-economic development as encapsulated in the national development agenda" (GoM, 2018)

The policy accordingly signifies the formal institutionalization of the reforms in the government machinery by identifying structures that will be central to the implementation of the reforms. Critical among these being the Cabinet Committee on Public Sector Reforms that would be responsible for giving political direction on all public sector reforms in the Malawi Public Service. It must be pointed out that the Cabinet Committee on Reforms has been a regular feature in government reforms agenda since 1994 (OPC, Cabinet Office). The policy further identifies a number of priority areas including decentralization reforms, institutional restructuring, legislature and judiciary reforms. The service charters while mentioned in PSRC Report, Final Report Making Malawi Work Again' February 2015, are not featured either as a priority area or as a deliverable in the Malawi National Public Sector Reforms Policy 2018-2022. This is a contradiction to the cause of having a service that is citizen centered and it is therefore argued that this may pose a big challenge to the full institutionalization processes of the Malawi

Public Service Charters. As Acharya (2010) concludes review of the various initiatives in most jurisdictions points to one important aspect that service charters have to be in resonance with legal, policy frameworks and relevant to cultural aspects on one hand and be in line with international protocols on service delivery on the other hand if they are to be effectively implemented.

4.3.4.8 Parliamentary Oversight on the Public Service Delivery

In order to enhance accountability of the Executive to Parliament to ensure that government departments and agencies are accountable to the citizens through Parliament's various oversight committees, a new committee, the Governance Assurances and Public Service Committee was established to ensure that reforms that were identified as critical to improve service delivery were being implemented (Malawi National Assembly, 2016). The Committee, thus, has the powers to summon any department to appear before it to explain the status of service delivery. It is a very important structural reform as it enhances the horizontal accountability of MDAs to citizens through elected representatives of the citizens.

4.3.4.9 One Stop Service Centre

Efficient service delivery is characterized by how quickly and timely the citizens access services (Bryslund & Curry, 2001). In that context, the government during the Fifth Generation of Reforms introduced the concept of One Stop Service Centres, these being primary contact points where citizens access multiple public services and information (Commonwealth, 2004, UNDP Global Learning Centre, 2017). To this end, in Malawi too this reform aimed at taking multiple public services closer to people by using existing infrastructure like Post Offices (GoM, 2015). In that regard, selected Post Offices were used for piloting namely in Mangochi and Lilongwe. Some of the services at these One Stop Service Centres include passport applications, renewal of driver licenses and payment of taxes. People are now able to apply for passport and access other services without traveling for long. This has reduced the cost of travel and accommodation citizens used to incur and increased their convenience of accessing public services, timely.

4.3.4.10 National Identity Cards

For the first time Malawi introduced a national identification system for its citizens. It is argued that the national identity cards would improve service delivery by among other things providing health services to bona fide Malawians especially in districts bordering Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania where foreigners get services free as in their home countries most health services are free. It would also reduce fraud in the financial sector as well improve general national security (GoM, 2015).

4.4 The Malawi Public Service Charter

In Malawi the service charters reform initiative was introduced in 2008 (GoM, 2008) as the Malawi Public Service Charter (MPSC) and in terms of the trajectory of reforms the initiative, fell within the third generation of reforms, which were implemented between 1993-2012. The rationale for the introduction was not very far from the one that prevails in other jurisdictions including those in Africa, which conceptually is to improve public service delivery (Drew, 2005; Mang'era & Bichaga, 2013). Compared to other countries like Uganda, Namibia, Ghana and South Africa that introduced the concept in early 2000s, Malawi was a relatively a new entrant by the time she introduced the concept of service charter reform initiative.

The introduction of service charters and its emphasis on the attainment of excellence in the delivery of public services under the motto “Raising the Bar of Excellence” was in line with the resolutions on the motto that was discussed and endorsed at the Principal Secretaries’ Annual Conference held in Mangochi in 2008 (GoM, 2010). The Principal Secretaries Resolution was not explicit on service charters as tools that would be used to raise the bar of excellence in public service delivery, probably for lack information on the concept at that time. The service charter concept though was logged in the broader Public Service Reforms Programme 2008-2012 (GoM, 2008).

The Public Service Management Reforms and Capacity Development Programme Document 2012-2016, whose overall objective was to enhance public service capacity to deliver timely, cost-effective, and quality service to all sections of society by 2016, is another of the tools that OPC used to realize the service charters Reform initiative. Specifically, the program sought to enhance the ability of public service leadership and institutions to effectively deliver on the national development agenda; strengthen

human resource management systems, procedures and competencies; improve accountability and integrity of public servants in the delivery of public services; and enhance capacity of leaders and managers to effectively manage HIV/AIDS, Gender and environment issues. In that context, therefore, it is argued that the service charters were implemented within the philosophy of NPM and the Public Value Models with focus on the objective of improving transparency, accountability and integrity of public servants in the delivery of public services with more emphasis on institutional performance to realize value for money.

In view of the above, the service charters Reform Initiative is explicitly articulated in the Public Service Management Reforms Support Document 2008 -2012 (GoM, 2008); the Malawi Public Service Charter Program Document 2010 -2015; the Strategic Plan for OPC, 2012- 2016; and the Public Service Management Reforms and Capacity Development Programme Document 2012-2016 (GoM, 2012). Further, in the Strategic Plan for OPC, 2012- 2016, the issue of service charters was outlined under Strategic Outcome number 5 whose objective was to promote a democratic, customer service oriented and open communication culture within the Public Service for improved quality of service delivery in the public service. To this end, it was argued that the outcome would be realized by institutionalizing service charters in all MDAs by 2016. In that vein, the expected outputs were the popularized Service Charter Management Framework and Operational MDA Service Charter System. The Strategic Plan would, thus, by end of 2016 ensure that 85% of MDAs were providing services according to agreed service standards. This would be determined through Citizen Score Card Reports and Customer satisfaction surveys on the equality of service delivery and Annual Public Grievances Management Reports (OPC, SP 2012-2016). To that end, it was expected that 90% of the populace would be satisfied with the delivery of public services by 2016.

4.5 Institutional Framework for Managing the Malawi Public Service Charter

The implementation of the MPSC was set as part of the broader public service reforms initiatives that the Government planned to implement from 2008 to 2012 and under a successor programme the Public Sector Capacity Development Programme 2010 to 2015 (PSRMU - OPC, 2012). In line with the broader objectives of the public service reforms, the MPSC seeks to institutionalize an accountable system of service delivery

that promotes value for money and empowers service users to demand for quality standard of services (PSRMU, 2010) at the point of delivery. The MPSC, therefore, when and where fully implemented is expected to help raise the level of awareness and subsequently promote accountability, transparency and quality in the delivery of goods and services (PSRMU, 2010). While the pilot phase of service charters was largely funded by the Government of Malawi, the DIHR and UNDP jointly financed the activities of the expanded service charter. In order to realize the objectives of the service charters reform Initiative the introduction, management and institutionalization of the reform was done at the central and decentralized government levels (OPC, 2012). In the following sections, the organizational structure and institutions for managing the service charter are discussed.

4.5.1 Structures for Developing the Design and Implementing the Service Charters

One of the challenges faced in the implementation of public sector reforms in developing nations, and particularly in Malawi, is to have well-defined organization structures and leadership (Wamalwa, 1996; Rugumyamheto & Kamanga, 2008; GoM, 2015). In an attempt to avert any future challenges to the introduction and management of public sector reform initiatives in the Malawi Public Service delivery chain, the Government in 2006 established the PSRMU, in the OPC under the direct guidance of the Chief Secretary to the Government (GoM, 2010). The PSRMU is responsible for identifying reform areas, coordinating the implementation and monitoring of various public service reforms in public service. To this end, customer service reform initiative being a new concept in Malawi, the government elected to promote the initiative through the PSRMU and bring under one roof activities that were being proposed to be financed by the DIHR under the pilot phase as discussed above (GoM, 2009). Within the PSRMU, there was a Service Charter Team whose core business on a daily business was to manage the service charters reform initiative activities defined in the Malawi Public Service Charter Program Document 2010 to 2015 (GoM, 2010). Since the service charters Reform is multisectoral in nature and therefore implementation involved a range of stakeholders, the government established vertical and horizontal structures for effective implementation of the reform. Delivery of public goods and services is done by a nexus of relationships involving policy makers, service beneficiaries and service providers (Humphreys, 1998; Denhardt et al., 2009;

aNorth,1990). Therefore, the call for institutional and structural arrangements that reflect such a nexus of relationship in the public services is inevitable. Government set up structures for developing the design and also formulating the service charters at the national and local levels as follows.

4.5.1.1 Central Government

Besides the PSRMU as the coordinating structure, a Steering Committee was established, with the Chief Secretary to the Government, being the head of the Public Service, as its chairperson. The Steering committee also comprised some key Principal Secretaries namely for the DHRMD, Finance, and Local Government; and other heads of organizations including representation of the Civil Society Organizations and development partners on invitation (OPC, 2010). Then there was a National Technical Committee (NTC) comprising Sector Directors within the Public Service and below the NTC there were Working Groups focusing on the various components defined in the Malawi Public Service Charter Program Document 2010 -2015. The implementing structures are presented in Figure 3.

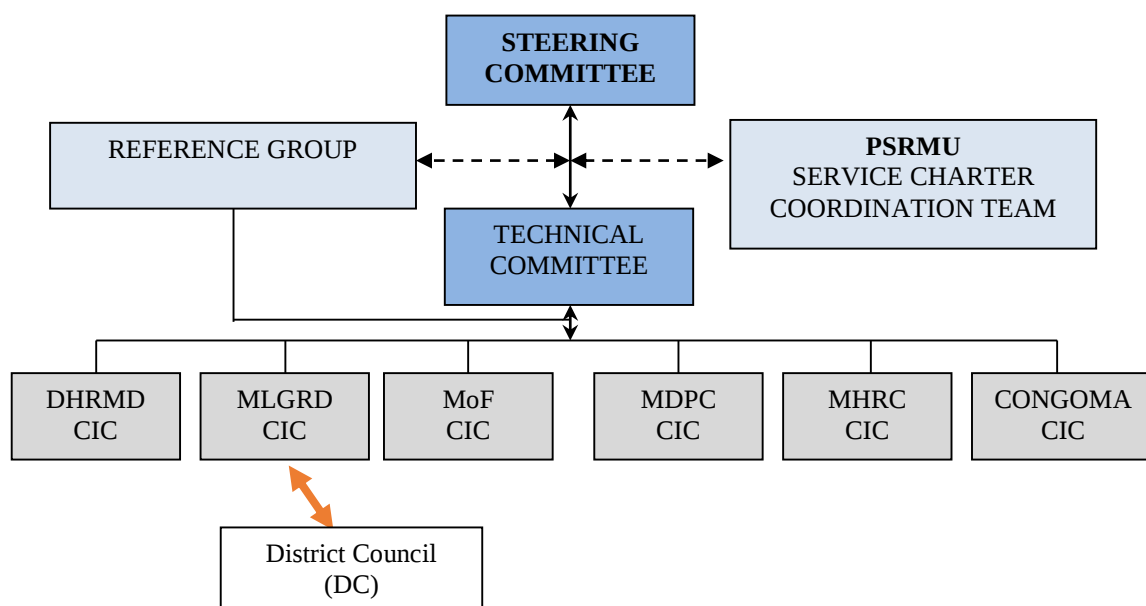


Figure 4.1 Service Charter Implementing Structure at the Centre

Source: Public Service Charter Development Programme Document 2010-2015

Each one key stakeholders or members of the Steering Committee was responsible for one of the following components: resource mobilization and budgeting, monitoring, local government level service charters reform initiatives, accountability involving complaint handling by institutions of accountability like the Malawi Human Right Commission, the Anti-Corruption Bureau and the office of the Ombudsman, and public participation and awareness whose objective was to promote awareness but also empowerment of the people so that they could take part in the process of organizing service delivery but also the actual delivery as well as in the provisioning of services. The institutionalization of the above was facilitated through guidelines that were developed by the PSRMU management and a team of experts. The guidelines were developed to provide a generic understanding of the service charter concept and also address multiple issues including challenges in the formulation and promotion of service charters at the central and local government levels.

4.5.1.2 Local Government Level Structures

According to the Local Government Act (1998), the Ministry of Local Government is responsible for policy formulation of all management and governance related matters in local governments, while empowering each local government to be responsible for planning, implementation and delivery of services. Notwithstanding the provisions in the Decentralization Policy of 1998 and in the Local Government Act of 1998 that seeks to devolve service delivery to local government level, most decisions are still undertaken and most of the budget are spent at central government level in some ministries. Another key challenge is that mechanisms of downwards accountability relationship between local structures at community level and the district centre are weak. It was in this context that the Ministry of Local Government was tasked to set up an Implementation Committee for formulating and coordinating local government level service charters. Given this, a key element was the establishment of related structures to coordinate the formulation and implementation of activities related to service charters.

In view of the above the implementation of the service charters would be done through the mandatory and existing local government structures namely the District Council which comprises all Ward Councilors, Members of Parliament, Traditional Leaders, representatives of interests groups like youths, NGOs and women; the District

Executive Committee (DEC) that draws its membership from all heads of departments and selected NGOs operating in the district; Area Development Committee (ADC), Area Executive Committee (AEC) and the Village Development Committee (VDC). Taking into account that the service charters was a new concept, new structures were established namely the District Service Charter Committee (DSCC) that would comprise of heads of departments responsible for service delivery drawn from the DEC, the Service Charter Service Users Committee, the Complaints Handling Committee, the Media Committee, and the Monitoring Committee; Area Service Charter User Committee (ASCUC).

In terms of leadership and functionality the DSCC was to be chaired by a member of the district council, with a member of DSCU functioning as secretary and drawing its members from elected councilors from the District Assembly. The ASUC would be established as a sub-committee under the ADC and it would comprise members from elected members of the ADC and user representatives from existing local user committees organized around specific sectors. In districts where there was insufficient capacity to establish a DSCC, the Development Committee under the District Council was deemed a possible alternative structure. All structures would receive initial training as well as ongoing support from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development.

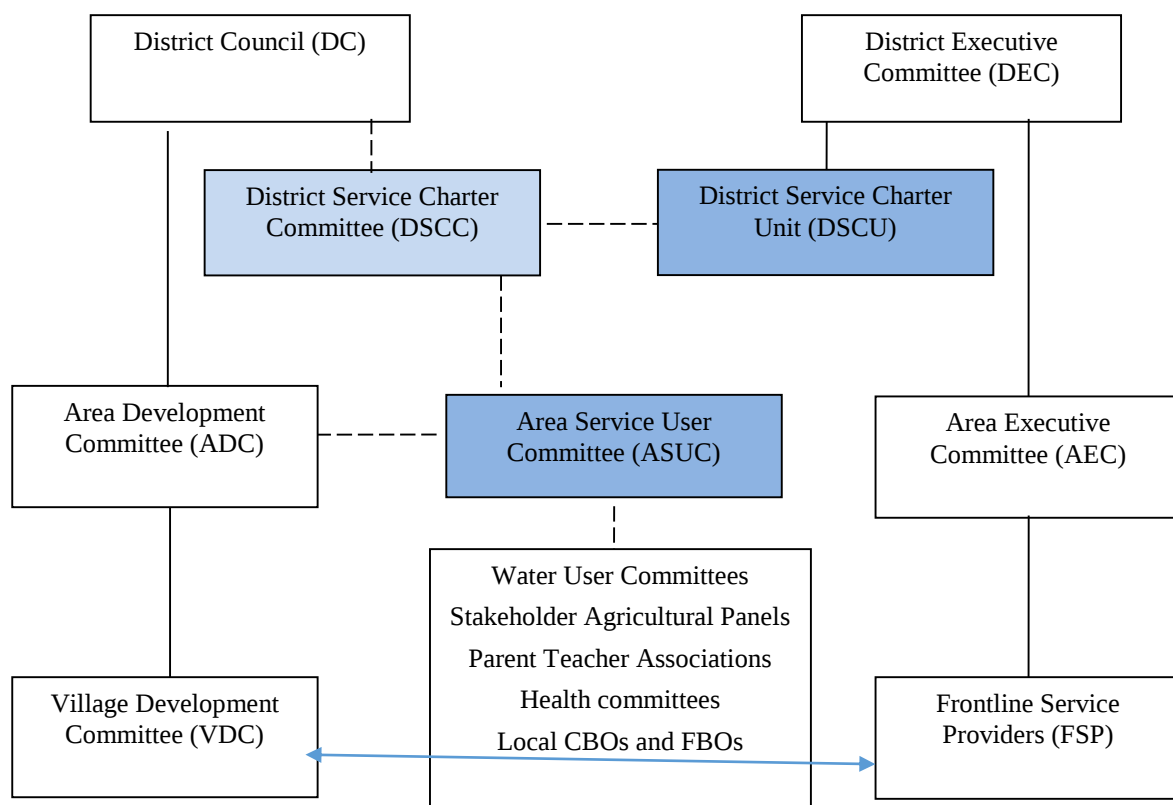


Figure 4.2 Institutional Structure for District Service Charter Implementation

Source: Public Service Charter Development Programme Document 2010-2015

The Figure 4.2 above outlines the structures established for purposes of preparing Service Charters at the Local Government Level and their relationships. It was further proposed that a full-time officer working in DU champion the implementation of all activities within the district. This involved organizing an information campaign, mentoring and providing support to all district actors (DC, DEC and user groups); organising intra-district exchange visits for DSCC and others; and organising field days about social accountability for ASUC and User groups.

The GoM with the support from a number of development partners financed the implementation of the service charters in the districts. To this end, the key partners were the Danish Institute for Human Rights, UNDP and the GIZ. A number of district-based NGOs also supported the effort (GoM, 2014).

4.6 Conclusion

This Chapter presented and discussed the socio-political and economic contexts that have determined the nature and implementation of public sector reforms in Malawi. Key, among the major issues outlined, was that public sector management reforms occur within a geo, social-economic and political space and as such politics, economics and culture, policy and legal frameworks have a great bearing on how public sector reforms are introduced and implemented in different jurisdictions. The discussion on public sector reforms was truncated into five generations of reforms since 1964, with each generation contextualized in the prevailing socio-political economy.

Inferences from the five trajectories of reforms in Malawi is that, the nexus of the socio-economic, political and environmental problems as well as aspirations for good governance provided the burning platform (desire) for reforms defined in the National Development Frameworks: chronologically the Statement of Development Policies (1987-1996; Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 1996-2004; Vision 2020, Malawi Growth Development Strategy I (2007-2011) and the Malawi Growth Development Strategy II (2012-2015). The trajectory of reforms discussed above point to the fact that until 1994 and more so after 2004, most reforms were reactive and not processual as Doolin (2003) contends in his discussion on organizational change. Further Tambulasi and Kayuni (2013) argue that, in Malawi, there have been conflicting political and economic pressures in the area of public sector reforms to a large extent and in a number of cases have delayed the implementation of reforms. In addition, the reforms have largely been influenced by development partners who were designing and financing these reforms, and indeed transplanting reforms implemented elsewhere for adoption in Malawi without recourse to prevailing local situations. This notwithstanding, the development partners have been instrumental in supplementing finances to spur the implementation of reforms but predicated by conditionalities that are out of sync with reality on the ground, and therefore negatively affecting a “ broad political commitment to their full implementation” (Tambulasi & Kayuni, 2013, p.310) The fluidity and abandonment of the reforms from one generation to another, occasioned at times by unstable economy and challenge of a growing democratic system is more troubling in a developing country like Malawi. In view of the economic fluidity, there is limited self-financing of desired and home-grown reforms and as such most reforms are subjected to external funding, and which when withdrawn adversely affects the

outcomes of the reforms. External motives and influences, particularly those of donors become challenging to deal with at implementation and as Therkildsen (2013) contends, this is more challenging when states do not use their own resources to finance the reforms agenda through domestic revenue from citizens, which would increase the voice of citizens and promote accountability and more importantly institutionalization of the reforms and enhance service delivery.

The public sector in Malawi has to systematically re-invent (reform) itself for it to be relevant to the society it serves. The challenge with the public sector reform agenda in most cases and specifically in Malawi, is that it has been characterized and inhibited by lack of self –inventing mechanisms, that is the ability to transform public systems and structures to create dramatic increase in their effectiveness, efficiency, adaptability based on local institutions and cultural practices. Mhone made a similar argument that “issues of public sector and civil service reform should be located in a broader framework that addresses the nexus of the problems related to governance and democratization and sustainable development” (Mhone, 2003a, p.19).

While the 5th Generation Reforms seemed to create a proactive processual approach as Doolin (2003) would argue in managing change, some of the post April 2012 reforms were reactive and of course imperative for the economic platform which was overly burning (shortage of fuel and foreign exchange and the associated effects on commodities), and the political environment was heating up negatively. Given the trajectory of these reforms, it is arguable that effective public sector reforms need to be responsive to needs and should be based on a shared vision, supported by a realistic reforms institutionalization framework. It, therefore, is important that the conceptualization and design of reforms be as consultative as possible in order to create a common understanding and a shared vision. Key factors in successful reforms include the need for change of organizational culture; capacity development; leadership and management competencies; governance, decentralization and local governance; effective communication strategy, and information communication technology but more importantly well-defined accountability systems and tools embedded in the legal and policy frameworks that enhance citizen participation and voice in the service delivery chain. Such tools as Drew (2005), Joshi (2010) and Fox (2014) contend would

include service charters and other social accountability mechanisms that are deemed critical in enhancing public service delivery.

The Chapter further looked at the Malawi Public Service Charter reform initiative in context of the rationale for its introduction, the legal and policy frameworks supporting its introduction, and finally the management structures that were put in place. The service charter was introduced as a policy transfer but was adopted based on outcomes of the policy learning endeavours. To this end, it can be concluded that available literature reveals that the implementation of the Malawi Public Service Charter was consistent with the Constitution of the Republic Malawi 1994 and other legislations and policies. There were also structures put in place to support the introduction of the reform initiative. Given this background, in the following chapters we will present and discuss the findings of the study beginning with findings on the study's objective to establish the rationale for introducing the service charters in the Malawi public service delivery chain and how the service charters reform initiative was introduced.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE RATIONALE AND THE INTRODUCTION OF CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTERS IN THE MALAWI PUBLIC SERVICE

5.1 Introduction

This Chapter presents findings on the rationale and process of introducing the service charter in the Malawi Public Service. The Chapter under five is presented under four main sections namely the Introduction; the Process of Introducing the Malawi Public Service Charter; the Rationale for introducing the Service Charter and; Conclusion.

Given that the main objective of the study was to analyse the extent public sector reforms lead to enhanced public service delivery using the Malawi Public Service Charter as a case, it is the contention of the study that if such an objective is to be realized, then one has to first establish the rationale for introducing the service charters in the Malawi public service. Establishing the rationale is important in view of what Drewry (2005) postulates that service charters are powerful tools developed to improve public service delivery standards. Further, the contention is premised in Hyden (1992) and Baiddo (2014)'s argument that the core rationale for introducing service charters is that service charters promote accountability, responsiveness to citizen needs, quality, efficiency and effective service delivery by Duty Bearers (public servants) by putting the users at the center of public service delivery and therefore it is important that such reforms are introduced in public services. In addition to establishing the rationale, it is also considered important to establish how the process of introducing the service charters reform initiative is done in terms of roles of main actors and interests of those actors in as far as these play a critical in the implementation which includes dissemination of the reform to increase understanding of such a reform among citizens and the institutionalization of a reform as discussed elsewhere in the subsequent chapters.

This Chapter, therefore, presents the findings of the study focusing on the rationale and process for the introduction of the service charters in the Malawi Public Service.

Pursuant to the main objective, the findings in this chapter were, thus, guided by one specific objective namely to establish the rationale for introducing the service charters in the Malawi public service delivery chain and how the service charters reform initiative was introduced in terms of key actors their roles and interests. To that end, three key questions were asked to KI namely: (a) why do you think the government introduced service charters; (b) when were service charters introduced in Malawi? and (c) who and what were the main drivers behind the service charter reform initiative? The underlying thinking was that tracing of the processes of the introduction, by who and the rationale of the service charters it would help to relate the core elements of the service charters and those of the study's operating theoretical frameworks namely the NPM and the Public Value Theory, and more also that establishing the rationale and the key players is more likely to impact positively on the institutionalization of reforms and subsequently the quality of services. As Grant and Fisher (2010) and Fox (2014) have articulated service charters are characterized as instruments that could be used to craft healthy relationships between Duty Bearers and users of the services and more importantly as tools that fresh out the moral dimension of public servants' accountability and commitment to provision of quality services.

The findings as discussed below are a combination of the analysis of responses from KIs at the central, district and local levels, based on the FGD and KII and desk review of the relevant literature on service charters in Malawi. The findings also reflect the analysis from the semi-structured interviews that were administered at the Local Government, Traditional Authority and Village Levels in the two study district councils of Salima and Dedza. To this end, the findings from both the qualitative and quantitative data are buttressed in the global major reasons that proponents of the service charters have advanced since the inception of the service charter concept as discussed elsewhere in the literature review.

5.2 The Process of Introducing the Malawi Public Service Charter

The majority of KIs from the central government agencies and some from the Local Government were very conversant with the origins of the service charters in the Malawi Public Service delivery chain and how it was introduced as evidenced from the data analysed from the FGD, semistructured interviews and quantitative data. In general terms, there was consistency among the respondents at the central government level on their understanding as to when the service charters were introduced in the Malawi Public Service as will be presented in the latter sections of the chapter. To this end, the base year for the introduction indicated by the KIs was the year 2008 which was consistent with the official documented year for the introduction of the service charter in the Malawi Public Service (MHRRC, 2008; OPC, 2010).

Results for the question on the knowledge of the service charter from the questionnaire in the two district councils indicated that the majority, 69.5% of the respondents were aware of the service charter reform initiative as shown in the graph below, Figure 5.1.

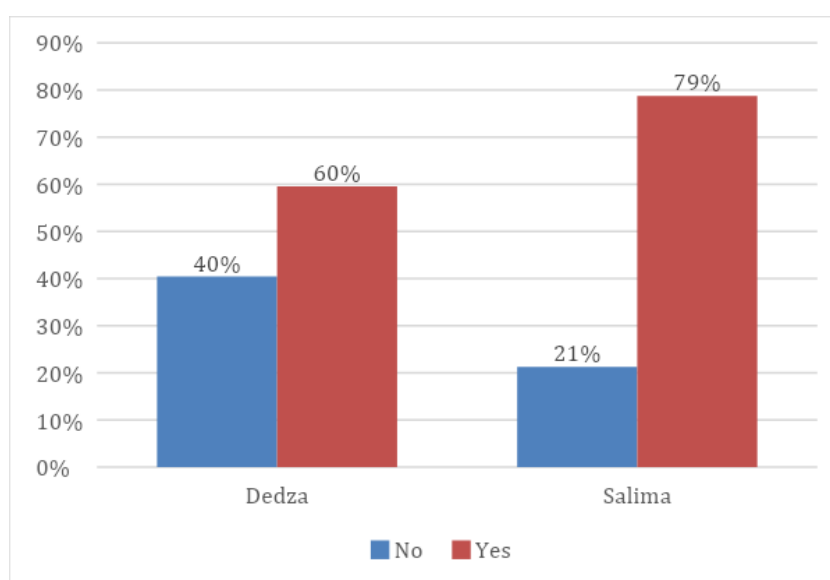


Figure 5.1 Knowledge of the Existence of the Service Charter

From Figure 5.1 above, more Citizens in Salima from those interviewed randomly, at 79%, were aware of the existence of the service charter compared to Dedza at 60%. This could be because the service charter reform initiative was first introduced in

Salima as a pilot in 2008 and as such the service charter has become more institutionalized than in Dedza as will be explained further in the subsequent sections.

There were multiple sources of information regarding how citizens learnt about the existence of charters. For example, in Salima the KI and FGD participants said that the main source of knowledge were general meetings including meetings specifically organized to disseminate information on the service charter as presented in Figure 5.2.

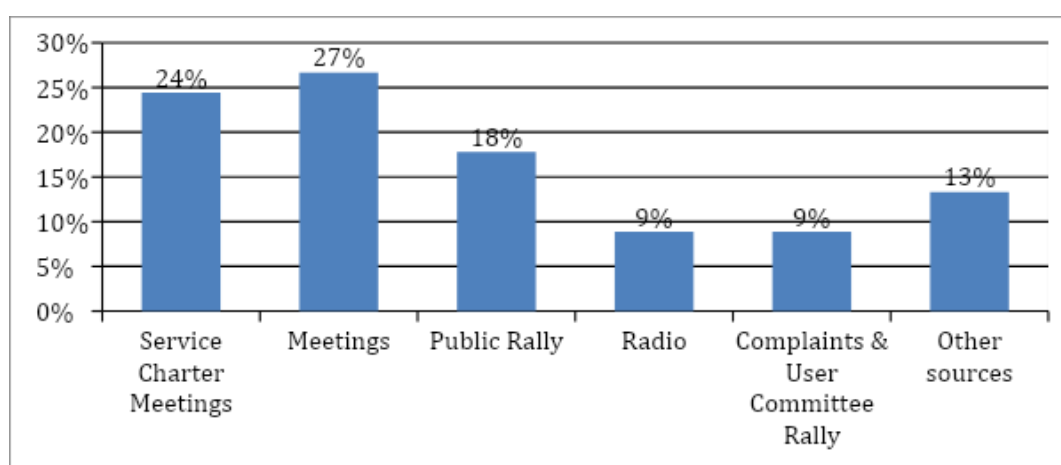


Figure 5.2 Sources of Information about Existence of Service Charter in Salima

The study also found out through semi-structured questionnaires that the introduction of the service charters reform initiative involved a number of stakeholders who played various but complementary roles. The following section discusses the roles played by these major actors in the introduction of the service charters.

5.2.1 Major actors in the introduction of Service Charters in the Malawi Public Service

Delivery of public goods and services is done by a nexus of relationships involving policy makers, service beneficiaries and service providers (Humphreys, 1998). The study, thus, found out that there were a number of stakeholders, principally six that were involved in the introduction of the service charter reform. The study has categorized these stakeholders into government departments at central and local levels as discussed in the sections that follow; development partners; nongovernment organizations and traditional leaders. The study further identified the Government of Malawi through the

OPC- PSRMU as the main policy driver in the introduction of service charters and development partners being more influential from an implementation point of view because of their technical and financial capability based on the primary literature review and data from the KI. We now discuss the findings of the roles of various actors in more details as follows.

5.2.1.1 Government of Malawi

As a driver, the GoM placed its emphasis on the attainment of excellence in the delivery of public services under the motto “Raising the Bar of Excellence”. This introduction was in line with the resolutions on the motto that was discussed and endorsed at the Principal Secretaries’ Annual Conference held in Mangochi in 2008 (GoM, 2010).

According to a KI through an interview, the GoM was the primary key player in the introduction of the service charters in the public service in that, as a government, it has an obligation under the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi 1994, to introduce reforms aimed at eradicating social injustices and inequalities and promoting good governance. In this regard, my review of the Constitution revealed that Chapter III (Section 13; 11 Subsection O) provides for promotion of good governance whereby the State shall actively promote the welfare and development of Malawi by progressively adopting and implementing policies and legislation aimed at achieving trust and good governance. The State will therefore ‘introduce measures which will guarantee accountability, personal integrity and financial probity and which by virtue of their effectiveness and visibility will strengthen confidence in public institutions’ (GoM, 2010).

In view of the above obligation the role of GOM was according to some informants, in two areas of ensuring that there was an organisation framework for introducing and managing the service charters reform initiative and ensuring that there was an appropriate legal and policy framework and adequate funding for implementing the reform. To this end, and as discussed elsewhere in Chapter V, and also noting that the government was already implementing other public sector management reforms through the PSRMU, the government made a decision that the PSRMU would be responsible for coordinating the service charters reform initiative and brought under one roof a service charter programme that the Danish Institute of Human Rights (DIHR)

was ready to finance (GoM, 2009). After all the PSRMU had the mandate as per its establishment warrant the responsibility of identifying reform areas coordinating the implementation and monitoring of various public service reforms in public service. Therefore, much as the DIHR was acting as a policy entrepreneur in championing the service charter through supporting the MHRRC to pilot the concept, the GOM took leadership. One KI elaborated the role of OPC and the origin of the service charters as being part of the broader public service reforms programme that was defined in the Malawi Public Service Reforms Programme 2008-2012 a programme spearheaded by the PSRMU in the OPC, (GoM, 2008).

The study found out from key informants' interviews from the central government level that in terms of policy decisions, the introduction of the service charters was premised on the Principal Secretaries Resolution made at their Annual Conference held in Mangochi in 2008 which among others led to the formulation of the Malawi Public Service Reforms Programme 2008-2012 (OPC, 2008) that included the concept of the service charter, said a KI. When asked through an interview if he knew how the service charters reform initiative was introduced by who and why it was introduced, another KI said that,

“To start with I will make mention that around 2007 - 2008 government was already championing the reform initiatives in the delivery of public services through the Public Service Reforms Programme. So, a reform framework was already developed by government championed by the Public Service Reform Management Unit in the OPC. Now, within that framework there was an emphasis on attaining excellence in the delivery of public services. The motto being “Raising the Bar of Excellence which was arrived at the Principal Secretaries Annual Conference of 2008” (KI, Lilongwe, December 2018).

Further the study findings showed that within the PSRMU there was a Service Charter Team whose core business on a daily business was to manage the Service charters reform initiative activities defined in the Malawi Public Service Charter Program Document 2010 -2015 (GoM, 2010). In that vein a KI from the Department of Human Resources and Management and Development corroborated with this and said that

“.... I recall the service charters came to Malawi sometime when we were implementing some reforms and we had a meeting at Kumbali Lodge in Lilongwe organized by the PSRMU where I think we had to discuss what

the citizenry can demand from us so we can produce those service charters and make ourselves accountable to them hence service charters’’ (Lilongwe, May 2018)

Service Charters as a Policy Reform

The complexity of the globalized world and the nature of human beings to err in their endeavours makes learning inevitable and essential (Moyson et al, 2017). In an attempt to overcome challenges that emerge when dealing with policy and public policy, the study found that the Government of Malawi undertook some learning before it introduced the service charter reform in the Malawi public service delivery chain. Thus, in addition to the policy decision, government played a major role in ensuring that the service charters reform initiative was introduced within an appropriate policy framework. To this end, the government commissioned a study which sought to find out if there were supportive legal instruments, said one KI from the MHRC (Lilongwe, December 2018). It was established through the study that the government also conducted learning tours to selected countries within Africa namely Ghana, Namibia and Uganda. These countries were chosen because they had relatively institutionalized public service charters.

Key lessons learnt by the Government of Malawi from the study tours in the three countries were that there was a coordination organization structure placed under the charge of the office of the President or Prime Minister that was responsible for coordinating the introduction and management of reforms including the service charters. In Uganda, for example, the Ministry of Public Service was in charge and developed a comprehensive format for Charters which all institutions would follow. In Namibia there was a Service Charter Unit in the Office of the Prime Minister that was responsible for coordinating all service charter related activities. In Namibia and Uganda, programmes have been put in place for ensuring that staff undertaking service delivery are trained and sensitized on the service charter initiative. In addition, Uganda pursues a robust decentralization programme and this has deepened the capacity of district structures to implement reforms in service delivery. The Uganda Management Institute (UMI) set up to provide training for civil servants has now taken on the role of training for the service/client charters (GoM, 2010, Conference Proceedings). The UMI has further established a School of Public Service, among other schools, which

champions Client Charters. The lessons from these tours were a key input into the policy discourse on how service charters were to be implemented in the Malawi Public Service.

The government through the PSRMU in 2008 also hosted an international conference as part of a learning curve in ensuring the right policy mix was there, so said a KI from the OPC (GoM, 2010). The study tours and the conference and the studies form part of the policy learning the government undertook to contextualize or localize the service reforms initiative, a factor which in the contentions of Dzimbiri (2010) is important to avert any misfits of a policy transfer that does not take into account local political, social and economic factors.

To this end, the study found out that service charters reform was designed and introduced based on a number of legislation and policy frameworks at the international, national and sectoral levels. The supreme legislation being the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi-1994 (GoM, 1994) in Chapter III (Section 13; 11 Subsection O) provides for promotion of good governance whereby the State shall actively promote the welfare and development of Malawi by progressively adopting and implementing policies and legislation aimed at achieving trust and good governance. The other legal instruments with a broader relation to the service charters being the Public Service Act- PSA- (1994) that provides that the Secretary to the President and cabinet shall be responsible for instituting policies that ensure efficient delivery of public services. On the other hand, the Local Government Act of 1998 is a legislation that provides for enhancing local governance and citizen participation in public service through decentralized structures. At the international level the service charter reform was introduced based on the ACVPPSA (AU, 2009) to which the government is a signatory (AU, 2009)

The role of government in policy formulation and or adoption is critical in the process of introducing a reform as it provided directions in pursuit of provisions in the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi 1994, the State is obligated to ‘introduce measures which will guarantee accountability, personal integrity and financial probity and which by virtue of their effectiveness and visibility will strengthen confidence in public institutions’ (GoM, 1994). The study also found out that since the service

charters reform was multi-sectoral in nature, its implementation would involve a range of stakeholders, with the government providing directions through its established vertical and horizontal structures and local non-legislated structures for effective institutionalization of the reform. This finding confirms Humpreys (1998) argument that delivery of public goods and services is done by a nexus of relationships involving policy makers, service beneficiaries and service providers. The role of government, therefore, was to ensure that institutional and structural arrangements that reflect such a nexus of relationships in the public services was prevalent throughout the introduction phase of the customer service charter reform initiative if institutionalization was to be realized. A position postulated by Denhardt et al (2000) in their discussion on ‘the new public service: serving rather than steering’.

The implementing structures besides the PSRMU were the Steering Committee a National Technical Committee (NTC), and Working Groups focusing on the various components defined in the Malawi Public Service Charter Programme Document 2010-2015. The introduction of the service charters was guided by the Malawi Public Service Charter Programme Document 2010-2015 with which had a component on resource mobilization and budgeting; a component on monitoring; component on local government level service charters reform initiatives; a component on accountability. The component on accountability involved accountability organizations like the Malawi Human Right Commission, the Anti-Corruption Bureau, the office of the Ombudsman. Another component was on public participation and awareness, whose objective was to promote awareness and empowerment of the citizens so that they could not only take part in the process of organizing service delivery, but also participate in the provisioning of services. Having said this, one KI said that

“OPC was quite involved in the introduction and in terms of developing the service charters, as well as Ministry of Economic Planning and Development in terms of providing the standards and requirements”
(Lilongwe, May 2018).

Which is to say that the study found out that the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development Planning, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development played the roles of explaining relevant policy instruments to other MDAs and local councils when the service charter reform was being introduced.

In summary, as indicated by ...% of respondents, the role of government in the introduction of the service charters can be described as one of proving policy direction, establishment of appropriate structures for coordinating all activities related to the service charters. Furthermore, the study indicated that the government also provided a platform for resource mobilization from various development partners and provided own funding through the PSRMU. The government was also responsible for ensuring that appropriate legislation and policy mix were in place. While the introduction of the service charters reform was driven by the Government of Malawi through the PSRMU in the OPC, the study found out that there were a number of development partners who played different roles including providing technical and financial support as explained below.

5.2.1.2 Role of Policy Entrepreneurs: Development Partners

The role of development partners was that of policy entrepreneurship, which relates to the introduction of the service charter as an innovation, the generation, translation, and implementation of new ideas into the public sector (Roberts, 1991). The study was informed by a KI (Lilongwe, December 2018) that the service charters Reform Initiative was at the inception an idea proposed and supported by a number of development partners namely the UNDP, the DIHR GiZ, and the Irish Aid. This position was consistent with what was obtained in the literature review. The roles of these development partners varied from idea generation and technical to financial support at the national and local government level as outlined below follows.

The United Nations Development Programme - UNDP

The study found out from key informants that the UNDP had been supporting the PSRMU within OPC, with both technical and financial support since 2006 in building the capacity of the government to effectively manage the public sector reform initiatives. Key among these was technical and financial support that was used to establish the PSRMU in OPC in 2006 and later the establishment of the Performance Enhancement Department (PED) in 2012 in OPC. With the technical support from UNDP a KI said OPC was able to develop a number of public sector reforms support programme documents including the Malawi Public Service Reforms Programme 2008-2012 (GoM, 2008); the Public Service Management Reforms and Capacity Development Programme Document - 2012-2016 (GoM, 2012). The overall objective

of these programmes was to “enhance the leadership and management competencies in the public service, and institutional capacity for effective management of the public service” (GoM-OPC- 2012) by instituting reforms. Both programmes included elements of the service charter concept. In that regard, the study found out that as part of the support the UNDP brought in a number of external experts to help build capacity of public servants. This support is consistent with the role of international entrepreneurship in capacity building whose objective is to leverage internal and external knowledge sources (Fernhaber, 200) in realizing reform endeavours. Indeed, as Zuccella et al (2008) put it “moreover, they distribute their knowledge, capabilities and resources to other networks, members in and outside their firms and, in turn, may increase their partners’ internal competitiveness”. In addition to the technical support UNDP also provided finances to host an international policy learning conference on service charters that was held in Mangochi in 2009 prior to the formal introduction of the service charters in the Malawi public service as will be discussed later.

The Danish Institute for Human Rights - DIHR

The Danish Institute for Human Rights, an organization established by the Danish Parliament for initially promoting accountability in Denmark (DIHR Website, 2018) played a critical role in the introduction of the service charter in the public service delivery chain by first supporting the Malawi Human Rights Resource Centre, a nongovernmental organization, to pilot the concept in Salima and Ntchisi Districts before it started to support the GoM with technical expertise (MHRRC, 2010). A KI said that DIHR made entry into government first when it held a meeting with Chief Secretary to the Government in 2008 expressing interest to support the GoM introduce the service charter in the Malawi Public Service based on the pilot case in Salima and Ntchisi (OPC/CS/PSRMU/DIHR Meeting 2008). The interest of the DIHR was from a human rights point of view as well as accountability of development partners’ resources that were given to the government of Malawi. Government agreed to have the support from the DIHR, on condition that the focus be on “Raising bar of Excellence” in line with the Principal Secretaries Resolution of 2008 and not from a human rights perspective as this was to be a challenging endeavour in a resource starved public service. Further the support so provided would be through the already established government structures in this case the PSRMU for reasons discussed elsewhere. In that regard, the study found out that the DIHR’s role was to provide technical support

through a Service Charter Team with a composition of international (mainly from Denmark) and local expertise on service charters and governance. Given what Robert's (1991, 1992) definition of public entrepreneurship as the process of introducing innovations, the generation, translation, and implementation of new ideas into the public sector, then the DIHR role can be safely be described as that of a policy entrepreneur. In that regard, the DIHR supported the study that was conducted to assess the availability and relevance of existing legislation that supported the service charter concept. The DIHR was instrumental in documenting and disseminating international practices including supporting learning tours to Ghana, Namibia and Uganda as well as in organizing in conjunction with the UNDP an International Conference that was held in Mangochi. The Malawi Public Service Charter Program Document 2010 -2015 (GoM, 2010) was also a result of the DIHR technical support.

The role of policy entrepreneurs is considered critical in the policy formulation process as through their attempts in bringing new ideas or innovations they are able to build actors-coalitions and they also mobilize the required technical and financial support for promoting a policy reform (Bocher, 2011). International policy entrepreneurs, thus, play a vital role in resource mobilization especially where donors have limited or no confidence in the accountability capacity of a recipient developing country. In relation to Malawi, the Service Charter Team under the tutelage of the DIHR played an important role in resource mobilization from development partners particularly from the Irish Aid for the implementation components of the Malawi Public Service Charter Program Document 2010 -2015 (GoM, 2010) in selected local governments. In addition, the Service Charter Team core business on a daily business was to manage the service charters reform initiative activities defined in the Malawi Public Service Charter Program Document 2010 -2015 (OPC, 2010) and was answerable to the PSRMU Management.

The German Society for International Cooperation (GiZ), and the Irish Aid

The study also found that German Cooperation for International Development (GIZ), and the Irish Aid, also financially supported the introduction of the service charters reform initiative in sectors (GoM-PSRMU, 2013). The role of GIZ was in the form of its support to improving service delivery in the health sector at the national and district levels according to one KI. To this end, a KI from the Health Sector confirmed the timelines for the introduction of the service charters and the role of GiZ as follows;

“There was one meeting I attended organized by GIZ some years ago around 2010 where the concept of service charters was introduced. And that time it was a meeting where a number of stakeholders were invited and this concept of service charter was introduced and we were informed that it was started in 2008. And as a reform it would enhance service delivery. And the different sectors were strongly encouraged to come up with their own service charters” (Lilongwe, December 2018).

However, the KI further said speaking from the perspective of the Ministry of Health, from that time there had not been much movement up until some two or three years (2015/2016) ago when the Ministry of Health started coming up with citizen’s service charter and this was at headquarters level.

GIZ also supported in the introduction of the service charters reform initiative at the Zomba Municipal Council (now Zomba City) and also at the Karonga District Council according to an informant from the Ministry of Local Government (KI, Lilongwe, May 2018). The support was both technical and financial aimed at enabling the councils to understand the importance of service charters as a tool for enhancing accountability of Duty Bearers in the delivery of public services as well as in the actual development of the service charters booklets.

Irish Aid

The role of the Irish Aid was in the form of funds that were given to the PSRMU to help selected district councils develop their service charters (GoM, 2012). Dedza District Council was one of the districts that benefitted from the Irish support in addition to Ntcheu and Karonga according to a KI (Lilongwe, May 2018) in the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development.

While helping to inject the much needed technical and financial support in the introduction of the service charter reform initiative, the participation of these development partners had implications on the institutionalization of the reform in cases where they withdrew financial support in course of implementing the service charters reform (KI, Salima, June 2018). A case in point was in TA Ndindi in Salima where when the GIZ technical support was withdrawn, an ambulance and a police vehicle stationed in the area were also withdrawn (FGD, June 2018). This was also confirmed by a KI from the district hospital (Salima, June 2018).

5.2.1.3 Role of Street Level Bureaucrats

Street-level bureaucrats at whatever level in the public service delivery chain play very critical roles in the interpretation, introduction, institutionalization and sustenance of policy reforms (Tummers, 2014; Seva, 2015; Setegen, 2018). To this end, the study found out that the street- level bureaucrats in the two study districts played a very important role in the introduction of the service charter both at the district council, area and village levels. The role of Local Governments as street-level bureaucracies is defined and provided for in the Decentralization of 1998 and backed by the Local Government Act 1998 and policies and legislation for health, education and agriculture sectors ref. In that regard, KIs in Salima (June, 2018) indicated that the main drivers of introducing the initiative in Salima District were the MHRRC and NICE through the District Commissioner, heads of sectors and the TA's whose areas were initially identified for piloting.

Heads of Sectors at the District Council

In the context of the public value theory, leadership is critical to ensure trust and legitimacy prevail (Moore, 1995). Di Maggio (1988) argues that the success of introduction of reforms is dependent on power relativity of actors who support, oppose or otherwise strive to influence a reform initiative. One of the KI (Salima, 2018) pointed out that all actors in the council secretariat corroborated to spearhead the introduction, formulation and implementation of the service charter initiative at the District Council initially in the sectors of health, education, police, social welfare and agriculture (KI Salima, 2018). Specifically, at the time of introducing the service charter reform initiative the District Commissioner, who was regarded as result oriented, was highlighted for single handedly pulling together all stakeholders to ensure that service

charters were initiated in Salima. Among other things, he did this by organizing meetings where the benefits of the service charter were explained and he impressed upon the heads of the department to embrace the concept. In saying this, the KI (Salima, June 2018) was emphasizing the importance of leadership in the implementation of reform initiatives. Another KI also recalled that the head of sectors proved influential during the initial stages of introducing service charters at the council by providing their technical expertise and also disseminating the service charter initiative among the citizens in the pilot areas, resulting into communities not taking time to embrace and get energized by the initiative.

Role of Traditional Authorities - TA (Leaders)

The findings from Salima District Council KIs were corroborated by the informants at local levels that Traditional Authorities played an important role of mobilizing their subjects to sensitization meetings facilitated by the district council secretariat. In TA Mwanza, for example, Traditional Chiefs stated that the service charters started in three TAs namely Mwanza, Kuluunda and Ndindi. On introduction, the Traditional Chiefs stated, the initiative was a strange phenomenon but was welcomed because of the intended benefits, specifically that it would enable them to know the minimum standards of service delivery by various sectors of Salima District.

5.2.1.4 None State Actors

Key Informants said that none state actors namely the MHRRC and Concern Universal, now United Purpose, played pivotal roles in introducing the service charters reform initiative in local governments and further played key roles in the institutionalization of the reform in the districts they were operating in particularly at the village level structures. Their roles further included establishing relevant structures, raising awareness and capacity building of members of SCCs. Tantivess and Walt (2015) commenting on the role of non-state actors argue that non-state actors in the policy process in HIV/AIDS, is not only in agenda setting stages but also in the actual development and implementation of health policy. It is in this regard that the roles of the MHRRC, United Purpose in the introduction of the service charters reform initiative are discussed in detail as follows.

The MHRRC

The MHRRC was the first non-governmental organisation, with the technical and financial and technical support from the DIHR to pilot the concept of service charters in Malawi and in Salima, according to official records at the PSRMU and as explained by an Informant from Salima. Their role was that of a policy entrepreneur in as far as they were involved in sensitizing of the district council secretariat, orientating of heads of sectors and the TA's whose areas were initially identified for piloting. They also supported the councils to develop a service charter in the form of a booklet. The booklet would be useful for up-scaling the service charter reform initiative in other parts of the districts as Tantivess and Walt (2015) postulate.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) participants in TA Mwanza indicated that communities came to know about service charters through the Malawi Human Rights Resource Centre (MHRRC) Project which was introduced to Salima District Council in 2008. Participants at the FGD held in TA Mwanza said the area (TA Mwanza) was in the first phase of the pilot project by the MHRRC which was implemented between 2008-2010. Similarly, in TA Ndindi where the FGD participants indicated that they knew about the operations of Government Offices, including when offices open, after the MHRRC introduced the service charters around 2008. The study also found out from the KI interviews and literature review that GIZ joined hands in supporting the implementation of the service charters in TA Ndindi up until 2017 when they pulled out. According to the members, the pulling out of GIZ negatively affected the delivery of some services in TA Ndindi, among them, the withdrawal of an ambulance and the police vehicle.

As discussed elsewhere in Chapter 4, the issue of sustained funding in the institutionalization of reforms is very important. While development partners play a major role by providing the much needed finances, government own resources are more likely to guarantee sustainability of reforms

United Purpose and the NICE

The study found out that United Purpose played a different role in Dedza from the one the MHRRC played in Salima. United Purpose did not participate in the introduction of the service charter reform initiative said a KI (Dedza, June 2018). United Purpose's role was promoting the service charter as the government had through OPC already

introduced the reform. The role therefore was to extend the concept beyond the initial targeted pilot TAs in Dedza according to a KI. To this end, the Informant said the role of United Purpose was one of upscaling the reform initiative and also of establishing Community Citizen Forum for purposes of promoting social accountability.

Besides establishing the understanding on who, how and when the service charter reform was introduced, the study also found out that the implementation of the service charters did not cover the entire study districts of Dedza and Salima entirely but confined to selected Traditional Authorities of Mwanza and Ndindi in Salima; and Kaphuka initially in Dedza. The piloting of the service charter was further confined to sectors of health, education, agriculture, social welfare and police services as defined in the literature on service charters reform initiative in the Malawi Public Service (FGD, KI Salima May 2018; and Dedza June 2018). This approach while providing for learning before upscaling, poses challenges in that when bureaucrats are transferred from non-participating areas they may run into conflict with knowledgeable and enlightened communities.

The above finding was consistent with the literature review on the introduction of the service charters in the Malawi Public Service. According to OPC Documents (2010) the Public Service Charter System was introduced by way of a pilot phase in selected districts of Salima, Karonga, Ntchisi, Blantyre and Zomba and central government agencies namely in the Office of the President and Cabinet, Department of Immigration, the Electricity Supply Commission of Malawi, Lilongwe and Blantyre Water boards (GoM, 2010). A summary of the roles of the various actors is presented in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Summary of Roles of Actors in the introduction of the ServiceCharters Reform Initiative

Actor	Roles	Influence	Implication on Reform Process
Government of Malawi – Central Agencies	1. Policy making Decision making to adopt the service charter reform and provided implementation directions 2. Manage the CSC reform initiative activities defined in the Malawi Public Service Charter Program Document 2010 - 2015 3. Financing activities.	1. Ensured effective institutionalization of the reform initiative in the context of the local social-economic and political environment 2. Ensuring that the C SC reform initiative was introduced within an appropriate policy framework.	Public sector reform initiative are more likely to be implemented when governments take a leading role and implement them within established structures.
Role of Local Government Secretariat (District Commissioners)	1. Organizing citizen sensitization meetings on the service charter reform initiative and pulling together all stakeholders to ensure that CSC were initiated and institutionalized in the district councils.	1. Leadership drive in introduction of reforms	Networking and complementarities of relevant stakeholders is critical in the introduction of reform initiatives.
Heads of Sectors at the District Council	Provided their technical expertise and disseminated the service charter initiative among the citizens in the pilot areas.	1. Communities did not take time to embrace and get energized by the initiative as communities look up to these as policy implementors.	Well defined and relevant reform initiatives to the local people are easier to be implemented.
Role of Traditional Authorities (Leaders)	1. Mobilized their subjects to sensitization meetings facilitated by the district council secretariat.	1. Communities readily welcomed the initiatives because of the intended benefits.	By-in of reforms by opinion leaders at the local level are critical in ensuring that reform initiatives are accepted and implemented by citizens.

Actor	Roles	Influence	Implication on Reform Process
Development Partners	1. Supported the OPC with both technical and financial support to effectively introduce and manage the service charter reform initiative 2. Acted as policy entrepreneurs.	1. Helped in shaping the policy narratives on the concept of CSC 2. Facilitated quick introduction of the CSC due to steady financial support.	Public sector reforms are effectively introduced when partnerships are well defined and development partners execute their roles accordingly under the leadership of a host country. Steady financial resources are critical at the onset of introducing a reform initiative. Policy entrepreneurship is a vital component in the introduction of reforms.
None State Actors	1. Helped in the introduction and piloting the reform initiative 2. Acted as policy entrepreneurs 3. Central in the institutionalization of the reform initiative.	1. Influenced policy formulation and adoption 2. Made citizens accept the service charter reform initiative	Involvement of NGOs in public sector reforms endeavours helps to promote awareness of reforms and help governments to up-scale policy adoption among citizens.

Source: Literature Review

5.2.2 Process of Introducing the Customer Service Charters

The process of introducing and implementing a reform is precedent to public policy formulation (Knill et al., 2008). This being the case, the undertaking of policy formulation is also preceded by a number of activities including situation analysis, policy learning and policy transfer as the case may be (Moyson et al, 2017). The role of government, therefore, is pivotal to provide meaningful directions (Knill et al, 2008). To this end, the introduction of the service charters reform initiative in the Malawi public service delivery chain involved a number of staged processes including policy learning and policy alignment, prototypes preparation and approvals of the same and the actual launching of the approved service charter as revealed by primary data collected from key informants. The process of introducing the service charter was preceded by the Principal Secretaries' Annual Conference held in Mangochi in 2008 (GoM, 2010) whose resolution to focus on attainment of excellence in the delivery of public services under the motto "Raising the Bar of Excellence" formed the basis for adopting the service charter as a tool for raising the bar of excellence in public service delivery (GoM, 2010). The following sections will present these stages as part of the introduction of the service charters reform initiative in the Malawi Public Service delivery chain.

5.2.2.1 Piloting Phase

The first case of service charters in a public service organization according to an Informant from the MHRRC was by a pilot in Salima and Ntchisi District Councils introduced by the MHRRC. (KI, December, Lilongwe). The KI further disclosed that MHRRC is a non-governmental organization whose focus is enhancing citizen access to public services from a human rights perspective while promoting accountability of Duty Bearers in the discharge of their duties. According to another KI in the PSRMU, the pilot was done under the auspices of the Danish Institute for Human Rights. The study revealed that while the DIHR was initially supporting the MHRRC with technical assistance and funds to pilot the introduction and implementation of the service charter, DIHR later decided to support the Government of Malawi upscale the reform initiative defined in the Malawi Public Service Reforms Programme 2008-2012 (GoM, 2008) funded by UNDP to leverage its technical assistance influence on the service charter reform initiative (KI, Lilongwe, August, 2018) based on the initial positive feedback from the pilot in these district (KI, Salima June 2018) .

Given the desire of the DIHR to extend its technical assistance and that Government had made a policy decision to enhance delivery of service by raising the bar of excellence through service charters, in as far as OPC was concerned it was more prudent to have all reform related initiatives managed under one unit, the PSRMU, to harness synergies (GoM, 2008) according to a KI from the Malawi Human Rights Commission. The issue of the service charter reform initiative as discussed elsewhere, had already been decided by the Principal Secretaries Conference of 2008 (GoM, 2008).

The study also found out that during the pilot phase of the service charter only a few districts were selected to develop the service charters in selected sectors. To this end, a KI (Lilongwe, July 2018), explained that there was a deliberate attempt to introduce service charters by piloting on the key social services such as water, education, agriculture and food security, police, social welfare and health. One KI said that the service charters were piloted as follows,

“in the north it was Karonga District Council and Mzuzu City Council. In the central region it was Ntchisi and Salima District Councils but later also Dedza and Ntcheu as well as Lilongwe City Council. In the south it was piloted in Blantyre City Council and also in Luchenza Municipal Council as well as Zomba City Council” (Lilongwe, December 2018).

Much as the service charters Reform was introduced in 2008 and Dedza was one of the pilot areas, a tangible service charters was felt much later. For example, one informant said that

Actually what I would say about service charters is that these are standards that were introduced within Council setups and basically it is some two to three years ago (2015) when most of the Councils participated in the process of putting in shape or developing their service charters (Salima& May 2018).

One KI in the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development who had the experience of CSR Initiative both at the district and central government levels summed in confirming the introduction of the service charters reform initiative in Dedza said,

“I have known the service charters from the time we were developing our own service charters for sectors of health, education, agriculture, social welfare and police services sometime when I was District Commissioner for Dedza District Council from 2012-2013” (Lilongwe, May 2018).

In that regard, and according to one KI,

“in piloting the model the government also patterned with a local NGO, the Malawi Human Rights Resource Centre but importantly I would say government also set up structures for managing the process of developing the design and also formulating the service charters” (Lilongwe, December, 2018)

5.2.2.2 Policy Learning and Alignment

Policy learning relates to endeavours where policy stakeholders acquire, translate and disseminate new information and knowledge toward achieving a defined goal or for purposes of revising or strengthening their policy related beliefs (Moyson et al., 2017). In that context the study learnt that as part of introducing the service charter reform government embarked on a policy learning and alignment process. Government with the technical and financial support of the DIHR and other development partners mainly UNDP undertook a number of policy learning and alignment activities. The government, thus, held an international conference in Mangochi whose objective was to share experiences from the jurisdictions where the concept was introduced earlier and helped to shape the policy discourse and design of a supporting programme document, said a KI (Lilongwe, August 2018). According to a KI in OPC, the conference was jointly financed by the GOM, the DIHR and the UNDP and it drew experts in the area of service charters who made key presentations. Invited public servants from Ghana, Namibia and Uganda who also shared to the conference their practical experiences in the formulation and institutionalization of the service charters reform.

In regard of the policy learning and alignment, the study also found out that a study was done on Malawi in 2009 with the technical support from the DIHR. According to the KI, the objective of the study was to measure the extent to which service charters enhance public service delivery and the dimension and the relevance of existing laws and policies in support of the introduction of the service charters (GoM, 2009). The findings of the study, the KI further said, were that Malawi had relevant and basic laws including the 1994 Constitution of the Republic of Malawi that supported the introduction of the service charter reform initiative. In addition to the study, a number of study tours were also conducted in Namibia, Uganda, Ghana and South Africa to

benchmark on how the service charters were institutionalized in these countries (GoM, 2009).

The above undertakings helped the government to start implementation of the service charter reform initiative around 2010 by developing a prototype service charter for the whole public. This was implemented on a pilot basis in selected districts and a few central government departments and agencies with a focus on selected public services namely water, education agriculture and food security, police, social welfare and health. In that regard, the learning process was an important step since policy learning helps to increase the understanding of policy makers when they compare one set of policy problems to others within their own or in other jurisdictions. Further policy learning can aid in understanding how and why a policy was implemented, ... understand inherent challenges, unveil the effects of a policy when adopted and help map out how the policy can be implemented in the policy learners' jurisdiction (Moyson et al, 2017). The process of learning helped Malawi in aligning the core elements of service charters to the policy and legal instruments that existed in Malawi and arrive at decisions of introducing the concept without ideally introducing new legislation on the onset (GoM, 2010).

5.2.2.3 Prototypes Preparation and Approvals

KIs elaborated that the service charters initiative was introduced by first developing a Malawi Public Service Charter prototype for the entire public service upon which MDAs would draw their institutional Sector Charters. This was developed by PSRMU based on the lessons learnt during the policy learning and alignment. The lessons from the policy learning phase were factored in the Public Service Charter Program Document 2010-2015. Thus, according to a KI, the Public Service Charter Program Document 2010-2015 helped PSRMU to design the model of the Service Charter concept that was suitable for Malawi addressing challenges highlighted by Dzimbiri (2010). The approach to develop a model for the introduction of the service charters in Malawi is defined in the initial service charter principles and the evolution of the processes on service developed in the United Kingdom and they include the elaboration of the process to their attainment. These principles of Service Delivery (1998) are;

- (a) Setting standards of services;
- (b) Being open and providing full information on services;
- (c) Consulting and involving citizens or customers;
- (d) Encouraging access and the promotion of choice;
- (e) Treating all fairly;
- (f) Putting things right when they go wrong;
- (g) Using resources effectively;
- (h) Innovating and improving; and
- (i) Working with other providers (Centre for Good Governance, 2008).

The emphasis of this model was on the delivery of quality public services by Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government based on acceptable international standards. In order to effectively facilitate the introduction and implementation of the service charters in the public service delivery chain, the GoM also developed guidelines; the service charters Guidelines (GoM, 2010).

According to another KI (Lilongwe, July 2018), for the PSRMU to effectively introduce the service charters reform initiative and as part of the model, it also set up structures in the process of developing the design and formulating and implementing the service charters. This position was consistent with literature reviewed under the Public Service Charter Programme Document 2010 -2015 in Chapter IV. The creation of structures is consistent with what Perrot (2009) observes that most reforms have been characterized and inhibited by lack of ability to transform public systems and structures to create dramatic increase in their effectiveness, efficiency, adaptability and accountability to the citizens based on local environments. The study, thus, established that these structures were introduced by OPC through the PSRMU based on the outcomes of the study tours and the Mangochi Conference. In that regard, the study further found out that at the national level, there was a steering committee chaired by the Chief Secretary, being the head of the public service, comprised some key Principal Secretaries and other heads of organizations including representation of the Civil Society Organizations. Line Directors within the public service constituted a National Technical Committee. Below this committee were Working Groups focusing on the various thematic areas. One KI (Lilongwe, December 2018) thus highlighted as follows;

“And within the designing of the programme, we had a theme on resource generation, allocation and utilization. We had other components on; the first one was called budgeting, the second was the monitoring, third one was on local level initiatives, which was like district focus. Then we had also a component on accountability involving complaint handling institutions of accountability like the Malawi Human Right Commission, the Anti-Corruption Bureau, the office of the Ombudsman.” (Lilongwe, December, 2018).

The Key Informant went further to explain that there was also a component on public participation which aimed to promote awareness but also empowerment of the people so that they could take part in the process of organizing service delivery but also the actual delivery as well as in the provisioning of services.

5.2.2.4 Wave of Implementation: Slows and Pick-ups

The study found out that the official introduction of the service charters was in 2012 when the Malawi Public Service Charter was launched at Civo Stadium in June 2012 during the celebrations of Africa Public Service Day. Notwithstanding this fact, the MHRRC had been piloting the service charter concept in Salima and Ntchisi since 2008 and government too was piloting in selected MDAs, eg in OPC, Department of Immigration Services and the Electricity Supply Commission of Malawi (GoM, 2012); MHRRC, 2013). The initiative by the MHRRC, though useful and the base, is however, not considered a state endeavour as it was not sanctioned by any organ of central government (GoM, 2010) and started before policy adoption.

While the Malawi Public Service Charter was officially launched in June 2012 with a call for MDAs to develop their service charters (GoM, 2012), the study found out that only few MDAs had developed their charters at that time (KI, Lilongwe May 2018) because of lack of enforcing capacity from OPC and less interest in the service charter reform initiative by some MDAs. The MDAs that had prepared their service charters were the Department of Immigration, the Electricity Supply Commission of Malawi and the Public Service Management Reforms Unit. According to some KIs in the PSRMU and PED (Lilongwe, May 2018) these entities were pilot organizations and benefited from a Quick Impact Results Program implemented by the PSRMU under the

Public Service Capacity Development Programme, 2008-2012 (GoM, 2008) and implemented during the Third Generations of Reforms.

It was noted from the KI interviews (Lilongwe, June 2018; November 2018) that the formulation of service charters slowed between 2013 and 2015. The reasons for the slow down have been attributed to change of governments in 2012 after the death of President wa Mutharika that saw the coming in of President Joyce Banda. As a result, there was shift of priorities and focus was on restoration of the ailing economy (GoM, 2013). In addition, with the next presidential, parliamentary and local government elections in 2014, from 2013 to 2014 the campaign period kicked in and focus of government was on electioneering than institutionalizing the service charter reform initiative. Further, the results of the Citizen Perception Survey conducted by the PRSMU in August, 2012 (GoM, 2013) was not well appreciated by those in authority as it painted a poor picture of service delivery. The surveys revealed a number of issues related to the quality of services that led to the government to informally slow down the implementation of the reform initiative according to one informant from OPC. The perception study showed varied perceptions on the services rendered in the four sectors (agriculture, education, Health and Water). Each sector had some areas with high rating (June, 2018) indicating that those areas are generally acceptable though improvements may have been advisable. For example, more women showed dissatisfaction with accessibility of water and citizens were overall not satisfied with the quality of education services as well as with inavailability of essential medicines in health facilities.

The above notwithstanding, the development of the SC picked up in 2015 when the SCs were made to be part of the Performance Contracts that are agreed between the Chief Secretary to the Government and Principal Secretaries and Heads of Constitutional Bodies on one hand and the State President and Ministers on the other hand, according to a KI in the PED (Lilongwe, June 2018). The reasons for introducing performance contracts was to bind Duty Bearers to specific results and hold them accountable for poor results and other factors holding constant.

5.2.2.5 Service Charters, Strategic Planning and Performance Contracts

Development of strategic plans in the public sector is a positive indicator of positive reform in the system and to that end in the early 2000s the government introduced strategic planning as a reforms package (Kayuni, 2016). For strategic planning to yield its expected reform results, it requires focused leadership and high level of managerial and technical expertise (Al-Hammadi et al., 2018). In that regard, the study found out that in 2000, GoM introduced Strategic Plans in the Civil Service that necessitated the introduction of Organizational Performance Assessments (OPA) with the desire to improve performance. However, it was not until 2008 that Government linked SCs to an Open Appraisal Performance System (PMS). According to one KI from the PSRMU, the service charters is part of the Performance Management System (PMS) which has six categories namely: Finance Standards, Non-Finance Category, Service Delivery Category, Dynamic Quality and Corruption, and the Ethics Category (Lilongwe, May 2018). The PMS requires that each Principal Secretary signs a Performance Contract at the beginning of a Financial Year with his or her Minister who in turn signs a Performance Contract with the State President. The Performance Contracts are tools for assessing public service delivery by duty bearers.

Further, the study found out that service charters fall within the Service Delivery Category upon which MDAs' performance is assessed, according to an Informant in PED,

on the basis that they have service charters. Key factors in assessing MDAs' are that the service charters should include timeliness, mechanisms for complaints, display of service charters at the entrance of the Organization's office, no hiding of information to users on the services provided and related costs in accessing the services if any at all, check if users have received feedback on the complaints or compliments raised (if any at all)" ((Lilongwe, December, 2018).

In that context, therefore, those with a service charter and a complaints mechanisms are rated highly in their performance. As a result of the inclusion of the service charters in the Performance Contracts at the start of the 2015/16 Financial Year, the study found out that 25 MDAs had formulated service charters and were duly displaying them. In the 2016/17 Financial Year, 26 MDAs had with service charters and by 2017/18, 37 MDAs had service charters including the sectors under study, namely Education, Health

and Agriculture. In view of this one Informant (Lilongwe, June 2018) had this to say on the Agriculture Sector that “It is an initiative that was introduced to the Ministry may be about two if not three years ago, (2015/16 to enhance service delivery in the public service”.

In the same line of argument as above, another KI stated he knew about the service charters some two years (2016) before the interview when the service charters for OPC was being developed and specifically when he was dealing with the Performance Management Contract. It is when he learnt that one of the deliverables is to have a Service Charter for each and every ministry. Similarly, another KI (Lilongwe, August 2018) hinted that he learnt about the service charters as it appears in the Performance Contract for the OPC and that the service charters was to be launched. In that regard, this meant that there are service charters at OPC, many other ministries and even at local level is that there are service charters (Lilongwe, November 2018).

The findings at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology were also in tandem with the foregoing as demonstrated in what one Informant narrated that

when I was coming here in 2013, I found something already laying somewhere in the Planning Section of the Ministry. It should be about 2 years ago (2016) when OPC, the custodian of the Charter came around to assess the Ministry, and we produced that leaflet, they said no, no, we appreciate the work done in this leaflet. But to us (OPC) a service charters should be simply like a chart sort of, which is strategically placed in your premises so that anybody who comes in, just at a glance will be able to tell what this Ministry is all about (Lilongwe, December, 2018).

In view of the above, the study noted that the PED in OPC champions the Performance Contracts. The study found out that, therefore, there is a significant shift in the initial management framework at the start of service charters and what was obtained at the time of data collection in 2018. What is interesting is that on paper the PSRMU still maintains its mandate as a champion of all reforms and the service charters reform initiative in particular but in practice some elements of reforms are being managed by PED including the championing of service charter reforms. A number of issues can be discerned from this case, one being that despite the creation of the PSRMU in 2006 being hailed as one key step towards one resolving the management of the many

fragmented reform initiatives, the success of all these efforts and initiatives relies on collaboration and support other public institutions towards the functionality of the PSRMU. Of course many MDAs still continue to undertake reforms without involving and coordinating with the PSRMU and success of reforms. This could be that either MDAs are not ready to collaborate due to leadership challenges in the PSRMU or the PSRMU has not engaged MDAs well enough, according to an KI (Lilongwe, August 2018). Further, it may be that public sector reforms management capacity remains a big challenge in the public service or that change management agents and requisite sponsorship within MDAs has not been defined and when identified it lacks support. It could be also that there is also need to define levels of responsibility and accountability to effect management of reform initiatives. The foregoing notwithstanding, the engagement of PED to capture the service charters Reform initiatives seems to have paid dividends as evidenced by the number of MDAs that had developed service charters. The inclusion of the service charter aspect in the performance contracts is arguably to leverage on the institutionalization of the concept which the government considers important in enhancing service delivery. While PSRMU has the mandate to initiate reforms it has no sanctioning powers on the MDAs that fail to develop service charters. On the other hand, by the hand and authority of the President, PED has the leverage of sanctions and rewards on MDAs that fail or produce service charters (GoM, 2010).

In addition, the inclusion of the service charters in the performance assessment mechanisms of MDAs is within the postulations of the study's theoretical frameworks, the NPM and the Public Value Theory. On one hand the NPM philosophy seeks to reinvent government business by being performance or output focused, adaptable, accountable and responsive to citizen needs (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992; Tambulasi, 2009). In the context of the study government by being responsive, citizens must be regarded as customers as such the customer has to be at the center of government activities as is the case with private sector management ethos. On the other hand, Moore (1995) argues Public Value theory emphasizes among others on service outputs, satisfaction, outcomes, trusts and legitimacy, citizen/user preferences, renewing mandate and trust through quality services.

Having discussed the findings on context and the process of introducing the service charters reform in the Malawi Public Service, in the following section we discuss the findings on the rationale for introducing the service charters.

5.3 Rationale for introducing Service Charters

The underlying justification for introducing service charters in the public service is that service charters are instruments that facilitate greater accountability and transparency in the delivery of public services by Duty Bearers, and are also a means for reinforcing democratic principles by empowering citizens to demand quality services (Drew, 2005; Balogun, 2009). Given that context, and though the articulation on why the service charters were introduced varied from one respondent to another, the philosophy behind their introduction was generally convergent, that the government was making an effort to enhance public service delivery and meeting citizen needs. Overall, therefore, KIs, both Duty Bearers and service users at the national, district and village levels indicated that the rationale for the introduction of the service Service charters in the Malawi Public Service was an attempt by the Government of Malawi to enable Duty Bearers to be responsive to citizen needs, empower citizens to demand, improving quality of services and promoting accountability and transparency in the delivery of public services. The broader reasons for the introduction of the service charters as outlined by the KIs are consistent with the global and national literature review on the concept of service charters. The following sections discuss the findings on the rationale for introducing the service charters under the key themes of citizen empowerment, accountability and transparency in the delivery of public services, and improving quality service standards.

5.3.1 Empowering Citizens to Demand Services

At the center of introducing service charters was the contention that the rural masses were not empowered to demand better services and, therefore, the charter was introduced to increase the voice of the rural masses that is– “empower service users”, one KI articulated Dedza, August 2018). In addition, decentralization as a process was an underlying reform but had some gaps that were required to go an extra step deeper to give power to the people as per its mantra. Accordingly, the service charter was viewed to be a tool to bridge the gap in the empowerment process (KI, Salima 2018). In reflecting on some of the challenges decentralization reforms, Fox (2014) and

Madumo (2014), have argued that the effort to enhance citizen participation through formal local government structures hitherto have inherently focused on promoting vertical accountability of local governments to central governments. Such approaches have been criticized for their failure to fully and directly engage citizens as anticipated in their design (Shah, 2006). As a result of this failure, the case for more citizen engagement through social accountability mechanisms like service charters are being promoted to increase citizen participation in public service delivery (Fox, 2010). To this end, a KI from an NGO said that government decided to introduce service charters more especially in the public service so that Duty Bearers should reach out to the communities, engage the customers and empower them through disclosure of service standards that they should expect, so that citizens can demand quality services.

In line with the above, the rationale for introducing service charters in the Malawi Public Service, therefore, was to empower the citizens to demand better services, because civil servants or public servants they were being paid to provide adequate services to the citizens out there and so the citizens have to be empowered (KI, Salima District Council, 2018). In furthering the foregoing, one KI outlined as follows,

“it was expected that by setting standards which are clear enough, which are providing certainty in the way services will be delivered and will also be communicated to the people deliberately so that the people should know how the services will be provided and demand as such. It was expected that the Duty Bearers would work towards achieving those service standards in such a manner that their efficiency would also be realized” (Lilongwe, December, 2018)

In that vein, the KI further explained that the SC was considered a necessary instrument for getting feedback from service recipients. The feedback would be by way of a mechanism whereby the citizens are involved in determining the service delivery standards and also monitoring the extent to which services are being delivered to them, he concluded.

5.3.2 Making Public Servants More Responsive to Citizen Needs

Responsiveness as a hallmark of quality of services relates to how timely service providers react to citizen needs and demands as well their willingness or readiness to provide a service (Ramseook-Munhurrin et al, 2010). Based on the study findings, the

other rationale for embarking on the service charters initiative is to make the public service more responsive to the needs of the people. As one KI from the MHRC articulated, it was expected that in working out service standards, the various institutions of government would primarily undertake planning baseline studies so that they would monitor and measure delivery of services and the perceptions of the people regarding the same. In that regard, along the way they should be able to identify the bottlenecks, the challenges which must be corrected and even get suggested solutions from the people in how they can turn around the poor service delivery. More importantly they would be able to establish exactly what people are looking for and, therefore, the delivery of services will not be haphazard but mirror set standards and citizen needs (Lilongwe, December, 2018).

The finding above confirmed what the documentation in OPC (GoM, 2012) contains and that the introduction of the MPSC took into account the growing desire to improve quality of service delivery as defined in the Malawi Government Public Service Reforms Programme and the Malawi Public Service Charter Programme 2010-2015 (OPC 2010); the need to put the Output Based Budget and Performance Management Systems into perspective, that encourages public agencies to measure and assess performance in line with citizens demands; and the need to help internalize the culture of vertical and horizontal accountability both by the public servants and the citizens (OPC, 2012).

In view of identifying bottle necks and knowing what citizens need, the public servants will be obliged to provide only those services that citizens are demanding. In doing so, they will be meeting one of the criteria for enhanced service delivery, namely responsiveness, which relates to how timely service providers react to citizen needs and demands as well their willingness or readiness to provide a service as defined in Parasuraman et al. (1988) 's SERVQUAL instrument for measuring quality of services.

5.3.3 Promotion of Accountability and Transparency

The promotion of accountability and transparency in reforms is focused at increasing, and amplifying citizen voices and ultimately responsiveness of service providers (Fox, 2014). In that regard, the justification that was identified as to why the Government introduced the SC in the Malawi Public Service according to the findings was the

promotion of accountability and transparency in the public service delivery chain. The argument, as advanced by the KIs, was that because the citizens would be aware of how the service will be delivered, in what measure by way of standards and also that the Duty Bearers would know what exactly people would expect then the machinery would work towards achieving a certain degree of accountability and transparency and, on that account, deliver quality services to the citizens. To that end, one KI pinpointed out as follows on the rationale for introducing CSC that,

Government introduced SCs so that people can check what we do in terms of public services. What services do we provide and if at all we are efficient and we are providing these services according to their expectations and as well as to our standards (Salima, May 2018).

In that regard, another KI from OPC (Lilongwe, June 2018) went further to attest that the genesis or reason for service charters as per his understanding was that there seems to have been some kind of gap between the service providers and the recipients, on issues of accountability and transparency, thereby creating mistrust between government and service users. Said he,

the service providers were not accountable, and the recipients I think also had no knowledge of what to expect from the service providers. So CSC, the way I understand them, is really a way of saying, these are the services that we are going to provide to you and this is what you should expect so that as customers coming to the institution, they are well aware of the expectation, they understand what services will be given, the time frame, issues of appeal when need be. How complaints will be dealt with etc. So I think in general that would be my understanding on the rationale for introducing the Service charters (Lilongwe, November, 2018).

The finding above is consistent with what is enshrined in the NPM paradigm that service charter reform initiative is grounded in the performance measurement tenet of NPM. To this end, Hollis and Plocker (1995) cited in Tambulasi (2010) argue that based on the performance measurement tenet of NPM, it entails the development of citizen charters which set out the standards of services that the public are entitled to receive and further to this Kaul (1997) and Kettl (1997) as also cited in Tambulasi (2010) reinforce this argument that citizens are ,thus, no longer passive recipients of

services but active customers and not clients, based on the market or private sector ethos.

Further, the rationale articulated above by the KI from the OPC is within the broader Governance theory but more specifically within the Public Value Theory especially where it highlights that creating trust is a product of good governance that further calls for, among others, transparency by state agencies in their relationships with clients, employees, volunteers, legislators, etc.; involvement of citizenry in service planning, delivery, and evaluation; relationships with government regulators, and credibility with civil society (Joshi, 2010; Williams & Shearer, 2011; Fox, 2014).

The call for access to information regarding how certain things have been done and are being done in the public service is inherent within the Service Charter itself in promoting accountability and transparency, another Informant intimated. To this end, and for example, in the Agriculture sector the study found out as one KI (Lilongwe, November 2018) outlined the rationale was more or less the same as in other sectors which is to promote accountability among service providers in whatever they are doing. To this, he said,

You know with the charter, the client has information of what to expect and with a well-informed clientele, you cannot misinform them that this service, for example, you have to pay for the service when they know it is provided for free. Others would want to reap from our clients but if we have a well-informed clientele that is not possible because they know and they speak out, that this service is supposed to be for free and it should not take this long. If we are delaying in serving they will report to relevant authorities (Lilongwe, November 2018).

KIs at the district level had similar understanding of the rationale for the introduction of the service charters as those at the central level. For example, one of the KI at Salima District Council Level (Salima, May 2018) stated that service charters were introduced as Government of Malawi's commitment to ensure citizens are able to demand accountability and transparency from service providers based on set standards. Expressing similar views about CSCs, other informants in Salima said that these are the plans the government put in place for the districts, for example, on how funds should be used by the councilors for the development activities in agriculture or education and

other sectors. Another indicated that the service charters would empower citizens to have freedom to talk to the leaders, adding that if one knows about the service charter, one should also know what one's rights are that enables one to speak when things are not being done in the right way (Salima, 3 May 2018).

5.3.4 Promotion of Efficiency in the Allocation of Resources

Given that the study found that the service charter reform initiative was introduced to promote accountability and transparency in the public service delivery chain, it is, therefore, argued that the above findings are a manifestation that service charters would enable the Duty Bearers to be efficient in the way they allocate resources towards the delivery of service at budgeting level and they would also be efficient in the way they actually work out their processes towards delivering the services. It is in this context, therefore, that Tambulasi (2010, p.25) argues that “most public management commentators support the Public Governance Model because it involves the creation of” “structures and practices that achieve accountability and equity while at the same time providing government flexibility, responsiveness and participation” (citing Nolan 2001, p.191). Public servants will also get feedback from the people while they are delivering the services in such a manner that would satisfy the people, entailing accountability and transparency. This is augmented by the deposition in the Malawi Service Charter Programme Document 2010-2015 that the service charter would provide “a strong performance measurement and accountability tool by mainstreaming standards into sector monitoring procedures and strengthening the inclusion of the public in monitoring and performance audits”, (2010, p.15). In terms of funds to schools, for instance, the teachers, because of the introduction of service charters, are not only informing parents on the funds they have received but they are also involving them, through the Parent Teachers Association, in planning how to use the funds.

5.3.5 Promotion of Citizen Participation in Service Delivery

Citizen participation according to Muriu (2014) constitutes the way in which citizens exercise influence and control over the decisions that affect them. Further, Citizen participation influences service delivery outcomes through impacting its determinants or characteristics that include efficient allocation of resources, equity in service delivery, accountability and reduction of corruption (Azfar et al., 1999; Von Braun and Grote, 2002). Therefore, the study found out that the other rationale for introducing the

service charters was the promotion of citizen participation which is an important ingredient of a democratic state, such as Malawi, said a KI from the Malawi Human Rights Commission. The Service Charter would bring distributive justice because of the certainty that was inherent within the service standards as it was expected that it would be difficult for any MDA to discriminate against any recipient of their services when every citizen was made aware of the level of services hence the essence of distributive justice as one KI pointed out below;

when planning you would already know who would require what, in what measure and where. If this is not taken into consideration, then the complaint mechanism that is within the Service Charter Initiative would deal with the issues providing immediate mitigation. Where people would not be satisfied with how certain things are being done, the feedback mechanism that was introduced within the Service Charter Initiative and also the complaint mechanism where people will be able to complain would mitigate any issue of concern that would be there (Lilongwe, December 2018).

What the informant proffered above, was along the postulation of Crous, (2002) that enhanced service delivery is assessed by the extent to which citizen needs expressed through their participation and done through the established structures are reflected in the decisions and final services provided. To this end, it was expected that through citizen participation in matters that affect them, Duty Bearers or service providers like local governments would have better knowledge of the preferences of the citizens and hence would vary services to suit demands and subsequently enhance service delivery. This argument was further highlighted in the Public Service Charter Programme 2010 – 2015 that active participation of the public is a central element of any service Charter system in that it would help develop strong, active and legitimate bodies to mobilize communities and represent the voice and interest of citizens in an ongoing dialogue with public service organizations and that the Service charters would be a mechanism for strengthening justice in administration and access to justice by bridging existing national accountability and complaints systems and citizens at local level through the introduction of simple understandable standards and local complaint points (GoM, 2010).

In addition to the above, one KI indicated that in terms of promotion of citizen participation the whole process of service charters gave the people the opportunity to participate at almost all levels of service chain delivery including planning, organizing and even monitoring. In addition, because the people are involved it is possible for them to be satisfied with service delivery and in that way, services will be delivered according to their needs (Lilongwe, December 2018). In this regard, and in response to the question as to whether citizen participation was important in the public service delivery chain, the study found that 91% of 204 respondents in Salima said it was important and 71% of 100 respondents in Dedza too said citizen participation in service was important in order to have the views of citizens in what they wanted to be heard by government or Duty Bearers. The finding is graphically presented in Figure 5.3.

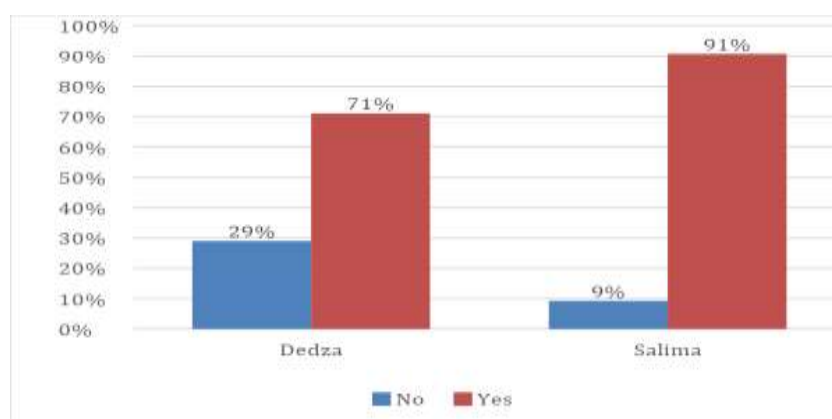


Figure 5.3 Importance of Citizen Participation in Service Delivery

In addition, KIs (Lilongwe, April 2018, Salima, May, 2018; Dedza, June, 2018) were of the view that service charters were introduced to bring confidence in the Government in that through public participation government and the public service will be understood by the people being served. Further, by allowing people to contribute to the way things must be done, they also provide solutions for the public service to meet their needs. This would bring the people closer to the government machinery and that closeness is what brings trust and confidence, said one Informant from NICE (Dedza, June 2018). This task of creating trust is a product of public value (Moore, 2005) that further calls for among others transparency by state agencies in their relationships with clients, employees, volunteers, legislators, etc.; involvement of citizenry in service planning, delivery, and evaluation; relationships with government regulators, and

credibility with civil society (Joshi, 2010; Williams & Shearer, 2011; Fox, 2014). Caviil and Sohail (2004) thus, argues that citizen participation enhances accountability as it is not being about power and people just having a say in official decisions but also to hold those given the mandate to govern to account for their actions or inactions in the public service delivery chain.

5.3.6 Improving Quality Service Delivery

Quality of services is what Zeithaml et al (1990) describe as the difference between customer expectations of service and perceived service. It constitutes satisfaction. To this end, continuing in establishing the rationale for introducing the service charters in the Malawi Public Service delivery chain, an Informant in OPC (Lilongwe, November 2018) articulated that the reason behind introducing the service charters in the Public Service was specifically the call to improve service delivery and also to make people aware of the different mandates and roles of different MDAs. In view of making citizens aware of mandates of different MDAs he elaborated that to the general public or to a lay person outside the government machinery, government is just a ubiquitous system with one similar mandate and to most citizens the OPC is the Government. Therefore, some of the citizens if not many do not actually know that particular services are handled by particular government structures. The service charter, thus, does assist citizens to know where to go for a specific or particular service. In the absence of service charters citizens seek services blindly and, in particular come to OPC asking for services in agriculture, health and education yet OPC is not responsible for providing such services. The KI continued to say that,

if such people, for example wanted services to do with Ministry of Education and came at the Ministry of Justice and checked the service charters and read what the Ministry of Justice offers they should be able to know they are in the wrong Ministry and they can ask the people that they came for these services where we do we go. When they go to the Ministry of Education they will find the charter displayed outside there. So this alone does help the public but is it also a commitment from the organization to ensure that its performance is measured. So it is a tool to enhance service delivery (Lilongwe, November 2018).

Quality, in this regard, is expressed in terms of timeliness (Ramseook-Munhurrun et al., 2010)

Putting in context the above elaboration, in the health sector, for instance, the rationale for introducing customer service charter, according to one KI (Lilongwe, November 2018) was to encourage all patients to know what to expect when they go to the hospitals to seek medical services such that patients would be able to demand better services unlike just waiting to get whatever as it has been happening in the past. The informant went further to say that the charter is helping people to know the services that are offered at a health service center they visit, and in turn tell in advance what not to expect from certain health service centres.

In his contribution on the importance of the SC in the Ministry of Education Science and Technology, one KI (Lilongwe, December 2018) in the education sector observed that, the CSC was a government initiative or a reform aimed at enhancing or improving service delivery such that once institutionalized in a Ministry, service provision improves. The informant explained that the service delivery in the Ministry improves because clients are empowered to know what the Ministry is all about, what its departments are supposed to be doing and where institutions are not doing what they are mandated to do, citizens would protest compelling the ministry to respond to queries and improve services. Further to that, the KI stated that;

as a government office we have services that we need to deliver, to offer to consumers out there which we ourselves know but perhaps the consumers are not aware. So the SC is just a way of making citizens aware what we are doing, how long it takes to give them and perhaps the quality of the service that we are supposed to give them.

In that regard, another KI (Lilongwe, April 2018) highlighted that the Government of Malawi (GoM) introduced service charters in order to improve public service delivery in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and quality of public services. In addition, others explained that service charters were introduced to enlighten service beneficiaries on what to expect when they visit any government office and how they will be served.

The FGD in Dedza (February, 2019) also stated that the rationale and importance of CSC was the help it would give to citizens to understand how public services are delivered, it will also help people understand that when they go to the health service center in what time frame can they be helped. A KI working in Dedza expressed similar

understanding and further stated that the reason for introducing SC in the District was to do with enhancement of service delivery. In her own words, said she;

we realized that as we are delivering the services to the populace, there was lack of meeting the minimum standards of the services and on the other hand those we serve were not given enough feedback in terms of how we are delivering our services. So this (SC) came in to provide a platform for improvement and as well as feed backing to the communities (Salima, May 2018).

According to another Informant (Dedza, May 2019), service charters were actually introduced to draw awareness of both the service providers as well as the beneficiaries in terms of desirable standards, and as to what is supposed to be adhered to in term of service delivery standards. Responding to the question as to whether the Government departments were sharing information about services on offer as a result of the introduction of the service charter, 137 out of 295 responded in affirmative as in the table below, which was about 46.44%.

Table 5.2: Number of Respondents on Government Departments sharing Information with Citizens

		Do government departments inform you of a list of services they offer?		Total
		No	Yes	
District	Dedza	64	34	98
	Salima	94	103	197
Total		158	137	295

The less than fifty percentage point could be as a result of the level of knowledge of the service charter in Dedza because the service charter was introduced later than in Salima. This explanation is depicted in the graphically disaggregated data per district in Figure 5.4 below.

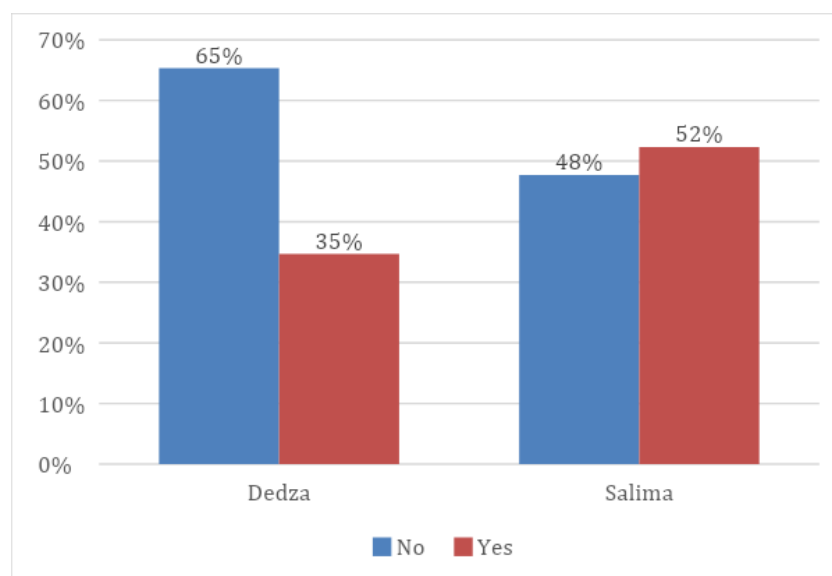


Figure 5.4 District Disaggregated Data on Departments Sharing Information

In Figure 5.4, on one hand 52% of respondents in Salima were of the view that as a result of the introduction of the service charter, government departments were now sharing information with citizens on the services these departments were offering. On the other hand, in Dedza 35% of the respondents were of the view that government departments were now sharing information on the services they were offering to citizens as a result of introducing the service charter.

5.4 Conclusion

In line with study's specific objective of establishing the rationale for introducing the SC in the Malawi Public Service delivery chain and how it was introduced, chapter concludes, based on the findings from central government agencies and from the two districts, that the service charter reform initiative in the Malawi Public Service was introduced in 2008 to enhance accountability and transparency of duty bearers in the delivery of public service and the service charter were introduced as part of the broader Government of Malawi's public service reform initiatives. These reform initiatives are outlined in a number of reforms documents, including the Malawi Public Service Reforms Programme Document 2008 -2012.

The study also concludes that while the service charter reforms initiative was driven by the Government of Malawi through the PSRMU in the OPC, there were a number of development partners who provided technical and financial support. The development partners included UNDP, DIFHR, Irish Aid and GiZ. The participation of these development partners in the introduction of the service charter reform initiative may have had implications on the effective introduction of the reform initiative owing to a substantial financial injection and technical support into the process of introducing the reform. In addition, where the financial support was withdrawn, particularly in one of the districts, there was a lapse in the momentum as revealed in TA Bibi Kuluunda in Salima District.

Further, it is concluded that the rationale for introducing the service charters in the public service was consistent with the broader reasons for introducing the service charters in other jurisdictions which is to enhance public service delivery (Drew, 2005). The reasons were also consistent with elements of the theoretical framework of the study namely the NPM and the Public Value theory. In that context and based on the literature review on the service charters in other jurisdictions, as Drewry (2005) and Balogun (2009) have commented, public service management reform initiatives such as the service charters in some jurisdictions including the United Kingdom, Italy, France, Uganda Nepal, South Africa and India have been introduced with an underlying message of promoting quality in service delivery through citizen empowerment by raising their rights to hold government accountable for their actions; enhancing citizens' preference and; demand for quality services. To this end, and in summary and supported by literature, the findings revealed that the service charters reform initiative in the Malawi Public Service was introduced for purposes of promoting citizen empowerment and voice in the public service delivery chain; making public servants more responsive to citizen needs; promotion of accountability and transparency in the delivery of public services; promotion of citizen participation and distributive justice in the public service delivery chain, and improving service delivery

The introduction of service charters reform initiative was, thus, premised on an implementation model that was designed by government to suit the Malawi environment in general while learning from other jurisdictions. The study, therefore, finds that the conducting of studies, holding of a conference and embarking on study

tours to other jurisdictions was well-grounded in good practices of policy transfer and learning, helped the GoM to develop and introduce a service charter reform that took into account its socio-economic and political environment. These endeavours are an attempt to respond to one of the challenges that public sector reforms are said to be facing in developing countries, where at best they are just adopted from developed countries without recourse to local socio-economic and political environments (Tambulasi, 2010; Dzimbiri, 2012). Pollitt (2004) also argues when a transfer of a particular management system or technique is contemplated, one needs to consider how far each of these major factors-culture, the political system, the pattern of institutions, the management strategy, (and) the nature of the primary task- matches between the ‘exporting’ and importing jurisdictions. The more mismatches the more probable it is that the transfer will fail or produce unexpected results.

In addition, the study, thus, found that the introduction of the service charters in the Malawi Public Service was within the basic principles of enhancing the delivery of public services. As Jean-Pierre Thomassen et al (2014) outlined in their work, the motives of a Service Charter are to promote accountability, responsiveness to citizen needs, efficiency and effective service delivery by putting the users at the center of public service delivery. These factors, the study found out were obtaining in the Malawi Public Service Charter. In his work on service charters, Drewry (2005) concurs with Jean-Pierre Thomassen et al that service charters can help central governments impose discipline on public services by transforming the service standards in the charter into performance indicators. To this end, the study also found that the service charter document was a core indicator of the Performance Assessment of MDAs that the government was implementing at the central level. As a result, thirty –seven MDAs had developed their service charters. While service charters were an integral part of the performance contract at the central level, the study did not find any evidence that the service charters was part of the performance assessment of District Councils.

In view of the findings in this Chapter on the introduction and rationale for service charters, the following Chapter presents findings on whether the service charter reform initiative has been institutionalized. As argued elsewhere the success of institutionalization is dependent on, as Di Maggio puts “...the relative power of actors who support, oppose or otherwise strive to influence it.” (1988:13) and it is argued that

it is further dependent on how the introduction of a reform has been conducted defined on the level of awareness, knowledge and willingness of stakeholders involved in the implementation of a reform initiative.

CHAPTER SIX

INSTITUTIONALISATION OF CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTERS

6.1 Introduction

On the basis of the findings and conclusions in the previous Chapter on the rationale and introduction of the service charter reform initiative, this chapter, thus, presents the findings on whether the institutionalization of the service charters in the Malawi Public Service has been achieved. The findings of the chapter are presented and discussed through six main sections namely the Introduction; Stakeholder awareness and knowledge of the customer service charter; Institutionalization of the service charter; Challenges in the process of institutionalization of the customer service charter reform initiative and; the Conclusion.

It is argued in this chapter that the introduction of a public sector reform initiative is one thing; the impact of that reform initiative in this case the service charters could be yet another thing. Therefore, the argument is that the extent of institutionalization of any reform is dependent on how effective the institutionalization of that reform has been. As argued elsewhere the success of institutionalization is dependent on, as Di Maggio puts "...the relative power of actors who support, oppose or otherwise strive to influence it." (1988, p.13) and it is argued that institutionalization is further dependent on the level of awareness, knowledge and willingness of stakeholders involved in the implementation of a reform initiative.

In that regard, and as noted in the previous chapter there were many actors in the process of introducing the service charters whose roles may have impacted on the institutionalization of the reform. In addition, knowledge of public services and standards is in turn dependent on a number of factors but more importantly on the structures, processes, rules and regulations put in place for people to access information on public services including engagement of citizens in the formulation of service charters and publicity of the services through public means such as displays, radio programs and print media, so argues Bava (2009).

In context of the above, findings in this Chapter are grounded in the second specific objective of the study which was to determine the extent to which the service charters reform initiative was institutionalized within the public service delivery chain. The underlying position is that, if the service charters is indeed introduced and stakeholders in the delivery chain know the existence of the service charters, then they should be able to apply and practice the institutions (values, rules and regulations) related to the service charter within established structures for purposes of enhancing service delivery.

In order to assess the level of understanding of the service charters, the focus was to assess what stakeholders at the central and local government levels knew about service charters, if their organizations had a service charters and how the service charters were institutionalized. In addition, in the two district councils where the semi-structured questionnaires were administered the aim was to establish, by sampling, how many citizens knew about the service charters. The study established the number of Ministries Departments Agencies (MDAs) which had service charters at the time of the study. Establishing the numbers of MDAs with service charters would be an indicator of the extent of knowledge on the service charters initiative, and if these were based on the processes that they are supposed to be followed when developing a service charters. In addition this would help to unravel some of the challenges in the institutionalization process of the service charters. Other focus areas were establishing if central government service charters initiatives were linked to the district level service charters and conversely if those at the two district level were linked to the center; and if at all those MDAs that had the service charters were publicizing the service charters for the knowledge of citizens as a way on citizen empowerment and institutionalization of a reform.

In view of the foregoing, and as Dacin et al. (2002) and Amenta et al. (2009) argue, the process of institutionalization occurs at macro, meso and micro levels of society as well as at individual level. The issue of central government linkage to the local governments and village level is, therefore, considered critical in answering the issues of the centrality of legal and policy frameworks; and management ethos in the institutionalization of the service charters reform initiative and the resultant effect on service delivery in the Malawi public service. According to the Decentralisation Policy (1998) and the Local Government Act (1998), while implementation functions of various development projects and programmes shall be devolved to local governments, policy formulation and direction, monitoring and training of human resource shall remain the domain of central government departments. This is in line with the provision of the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi 1994.

Given the above framework of argument of the chapter, in the following section we present and discuss the findings using semi-structured survey questionnaire, face to face interviews, focus group discussion under three main themes namely (a) stakeholders' awareness of the service charters in the public service delivery chain; (b) institutionalization of the service charter reform initiative; and (c) factors affecting the institutionalization process in the context of the institutionalization theory as discussed in chapter two.

6.2 Stakeholders' Awareness and Knowledge of the Customer Service Charters

The findings of the study show that there is a varied level of awareness and knowledge of the CSC at the Central Government, Local Government and village levels. The study, thus, noted that all KIs (Duty Bearers) at the central government level were aware of the service charters but also indicated that there is limited dissemination of the MDA's customers service charters. The lack or limited dissemination can have an impact on the effectiveness of the service charters on the delivery of services as will be discussed in the latter sections of the chapter. The level of awareness at the district level among the Duty Bearers was not very different from the center except for efforts to widely disseminate the service charters reform initiative that was done as the service charter reform was being introduced particularly in Salima. Interestingly service users in the two study districts and specifically at the area and village levels were quite aware of the existence of the service charters reform initiative. The respondents were able to also,

clearly define the impact of the service charter on service delivery as will be discussed in the later sections of the chapter again.

The paragraphs that follow, therefore, present a detailed discussion on the findings on the knowledge of the service charters initiative in the Malawi Public Service delivery system at the central government, district, traditional and village levels.

6.2.1 Awareness and Knowledge among Public Servants

The study found out that there is a broad knowledge of the service charters reform initiative among Duty Bearers in the targeted study sectors as well as in all other Sectors within the MDAs. All the twenty-nine (29) KIs interviewed at the central government department level and those from the constitutional bodies like the MHRC confirmed knowing the service charters reform initiative, and all of them had participated in the formulation of service charters in the MDAs they were working in. Therefore, responding to the question on his knowledge about service charters one of the KIs from the MHRC contextualized his understanding in the broader public service reforms programme and processes. Thus, he and others pointed out that the service charters is a new reform initiative that government introduced in 2008 through OPC and this being a new concept, the government elected to promote the initiative through the Malawi Public Service Charter Program 2010-2015. This position was consistent with the literature review as discussed in Chapter four.

Through the Malawi Public Service Charter Program (MPSCP), the government designed a ‘model’ of the Service Charter reform initiative that was suitable for Malawi, the Informant further pointed out. To this end, while the emphasis of this model was on enhancing the delivery of public services in MDAs through SC, the model deliberately included a component on public participation and awareness (GOM, 2010). According to the KI, this not only aimed to promote awareness but it also sought to empower the people so that they take part in the process of identifying services and the actual delivery of services. This constitutes 100% of the key informants.

The level of understanding of the SC by this KI was consistent with what the literature review on the justification for the introduction of the Malawi Public Service Charter revealed particularly and to quote among others “to provide a framework for

consultations with service users and assist these public institutions manage expectations of service users” (GoM: 2010: 3) as attached at Annex III. Based on the findings through key informants face to face interviews and the semi-structured questionnaires, therefore, access to information on public services is critical for effective institutionalization of SC. As Bava (2009) argues on the assessment of service charters initiative in India, the Right to Information Act of 2005 in India provided the key element of dissemination for promoting awareness among citizens on service charters. This is consistent with the study findings that indicate that promotion and awareness of the service charters are critical for ensuring that citizens are knowledgeable and have adequate information to enable them to demand services as defined in a service charter. Quantitative data on knowledge and awareness revealed that 70% of all respondents in Salima and Dedza were aware through publicity. It is, thus, contended that this can happen if deliberate efforts are put in place to promote access to information as well awareness through appropriate media channels and structures. The legal framework for access to information emphasizes the importance of information among citizens in enhancing the objectives of service charters and prevent moral hazard, a political-economy determinant whose presence or absence has a great bearing on the dynamics or outcomes in the public service reforms delivery chain (Wilde et al., 2013; Mcloughlin & Batley, 2012). Moral hazard happens when public accessibility to service information and systems of accountability are limited or absent and Duty Bearers descend into a mode of inaction and political patronage, particularly when there is presence of parallel external financing and service delivery system to that of the public service (Wilde et al., 2013; Mwabupighu, 2018).

In view of the above and as an exemplification of the level of knowledge one KI (Dedza, May 2018) defined the concept of service charter in the Malawi Public Service as an agreement or commitment which public organizations make to the public that they will deliver services within a prescribed time period. In her understanding, the SC is about showing or ensuring that public servants are responsible and accountable to the masses and that they have to be accountable for what they do in the course of performing their official duties. To this end, another Informant (Salima, May 2018) understood the service charters as

just a commitment whereby as a service provider you make known to citizens what services these citizens should expect from you and it is an aspiration on how you want to service the clients of your Ministry in this case, Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development.

In that regard, the KI further articulated that he understood a service charter as a tool that helps service providers to communicate to the clients what services they should expect, which are for free and which ones are not, and the time it will take for the service to be given or accessed. The KI concluded that it was helpful if the clients are well informed about the services and how they are provided as they cannot be swindled by anyone. In this regard, the GoM outlines that the MPSC “seeks to make public service institutions more transparent by outlining to the public the standards they can expect and assess how agencies perform against those standards” (GoM, 2010: 3).

In the above context, the Informant gave an example in the Ministry of Agriculture (Lilongwe, 30/11/18), saying that some people think they have to pay a bribe in order to be given a quick service, but with a service charter the temptation to pay does not arise because the service charter stipulates the minimum time or the maximum time for the certificate to be issued. Suffice it to say, through a service charter, clients know when and how to expect a service.

Demonstrating knowledge of a service charter, another Informant (Dedza, June 2018) described his understanding of service charters briefly as a commitment that an organization makes to its customers or the recipients of its services. As organizations he further elaborated, they commit to perform in defined ways and, therefore, the charter is basically a commitment that an organization makes to its customers, to its stakeholders to offer clients the defined services and how these services are going to be offered. To this, another KI (Lilongwe, April, 2018) put simply his understanding of service charter as the contract between the ministry or department and the general public on the services or that specified service that is supposed to be provided by that ministry or department.

Another interesting explanation of the service charters was proffered by an Informant from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (Lilongwe, November 2018)

who described the service charters as a government initiative or a reform to enhance or improve service delivery like in this case in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. In the same vein, another Informant said;

So service charters, the way I understand them, is really a way of saying that ok these are the services that we are going to be providing to you and this is what you should expect. So that as customers are coming to the institution, they are well aware of the expectation. They understand what services will be given, the time frame, issues of appeal when need be, complaints, how those will be dealt with etc. So I think in general that would be my understanding on a service charters.

This definition of a service charters, and the others above is within the broader definition of service charters, for example the one that Mang'era and Bichaga (2013) offers that the service charter is a social pact written by service providers in consultation with service users generally outlining the nature, and quality of a service that service beneficiaries should expect from a service provider.

6.2.2 Awareness and Knowledge of Service Charters among Service Users

Awareness creates a mass of understanding of a phenomenon and thus influences the mind set of citizens and in turn norms and values. This change of norms and values is the process of institutionalization and deinstitutionalization (North, 2009). While the Duty Bearers particularly those in ministries and departments were definite on the level of awareness of their service charters among their clients, the study found out through the FGD that the level of awareness at the village level was as good as at the district council level. For example, in TA Mwanza, the findings from the FGD (April, 2018), the KIs (May, 2018) and the data from the semi-structured questionnaire revealed that service users (citizens 70% of the respondents) were very aware of the service charters reform initiative. This could be because TA Mwanza was in the first phase of the pilot project of introducing the service charters Reform Initiative in Salima between 2008-2010. The members of the village FGD (30, April 2018) held at Mkhula Primary School comprising the Service User Committee (SUC) members and the Complaints Handling committee (CHC) members of T/A Mwanza, showed knowledge of the service charters describing them as minimum standards of service delivery by various sectors of Salima District. The members said they came to know about service charters through the

MHRRC Project which was introduced to Salima District Council in 2008. The knowledge of the service charters was expressed through their articulation of the concept as well the outlining of the key structures that were created to facilitate the reform initiative. The structures are namely the Service Charter User Committee (SCUC) and the Complaints Handling Committee. To this end, and according to the Service Charter User Committee Chair, a baseline survey was conducted before SCs were introduced and communities were sensitized. Two committees were formed namely, the Service Charter User Committee and the Complaints Handling Committee. The District Technical Committee was also established at district level. The SCUC was concerned with awareness campaigns whereas the Complaints Handling Committee was to coordinate any grievances or complaints the communities would have with the service providers for their attention. This finding is consistent with the literature on the roles of key players and structure in the introduction of service charters in the Malawi Public Service delivery chain (GoM,2010).

Regarding the level of awareness and knowledge of the service charters reform initiative in Dedza, the study also found out that service users in Dedza were knowledgeable not only of the existence of the service charters but also knowledgeable of the processes of how the service charter was developed and what the service charters is meant to achieve. At the FDG (February, 2019) one participant said that,

the service charter is like a program/process (*ndondomeko*) that government put in place that those who work in government, for example, should tell us how the funds are supposed to be distributed at the district level that are supposed to help to develop or support education, agriculture etcetera.

Another participant at the FGD said he knew that these (SCs) are the plans the government put in place for the districts, for example, to check how funds should be used by the councilors for the development activities like agriculture activities or education. Another participant, a governance volunteer from NICE (Dedza, February 2019), had this to say about the service charters

Actually what I would say about service charter is that these are standards that were introduced within Council setups and basically it is some two to three years ago when most of the Councils participated in the process of putting in shape or developing their service charter It was like an orientation which was conducted. Councils were sensitized

on the service standards provision by a Team from the Central Office. That was actually MLGRD Officials who went around the Councils sensitizing the Councils on the Service Standards.

The findings above were to some extent augmented by the views from a KI in the Ministry of Health (Lilongwe, October 2018) who when asked if the citizens were aware of the concept of Service charters, the KI said that,

it is not that the Districts do not know about the service charters. At council level they should know about the service charters because we have been talking about Patient Charters. Sometime back we were talking about a more or less the same concept. But when you go to the districts some of the district will tell you we have heard about that concept but in terms of having the actual charter and that the charter is being displayed, that is where I would say not so sure what the situation is as of now. But in terms of the knowledge I am sure most of the district councils are aware of the Charter, Patient Charter specifically in the health sector.

In the Ministry of Agriculture too, one Informant (Lilongwe, November 2018) indicated that in addition to their service charter being displayed at the entrance of the Head offices, the Ministry of Agriculture's service charter was widely publicized through the radio. The ministry also holds field days and they have a lot of activities that enjoy publicity whether in the print or electronic media, and accordingly the Ministry uses all those activities to publicize their service charter. On the other hand, KIs in the education sector highlighted that the Service Charter initiative continues to be well publicized, saying the publicity of the SC has made the education sector more popular than any other sector at the Council. The informant in the Primary School Advisory Services (Salima, May 2018) stated that all structures and stakeholders in the sector were highly sensitized such that to date, the Service Charter initiative was still being felt. He mentioned such structures and stakeholders as the DEM's office, Zones, PTAs, PEAs, School Management Committee, Teachers, learners, and TA's to have been among those highly sensitized on the initiative. This was consistent with what one KI at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology Head Office had indicated that once the Ministry at Central level came up with the service charter, they had given themselves a responsibility to make sure that all education institutions in the country should also develop their own service charters. In his own words the KI (Lilongwe, December 2018) said that,

the approach is that we are now engaging the Division and the District Offices but besides that we are saying let us move down to the Zones. Zones are like sub-divisions of the Basic Education. District Education Managers move to the Zones. From Division Offices we moved to what we call Clusters, (a number of secondary schools put together they form a cluster). So the approach we have taken now is we are involving the Zone Management Teams and Cluster Management Teams. But on top of that we have said let us even involve Chairpersons of School Management Committees (SMTs) and Parent Teachers Association (PTAs)

A case of macro-meso-micro level linkage in the institutionalization of the service charter.

In light of the above, the KI gave an example that the Head of Central Eastern Division that covers Kasungu, Nkhonkhotakota, Salima, Ntchisi, and Dowa districts had called to inform that he had moved around the Division and indicated that about 82% of the education establishments had developed service charters.

The level of knowledge of the service charters reform initiative as presented above from the qualitative data at the district and local levels was very much in line with the findings from the quantitative data from a total of 304 questionnaires that were administered in Salima and Dedza District Councils. In Salima 204 participants were interviewed around Salima District Headquarters, in TA Kaphuka and Ndindi giving a percentage of 67.1%. In Dedza the questionnaires were administered around the Boma and TA Kaphuka, giving us 32.9% of the total. Out of all those interviewed, 213 indicated that they were aware of the service charters reform initiative, while 82 said they were not aware and 9 did not record anything. This translated into 70% of respondents being aware of the service charters reform initiative while 27% indicated that they were not aware and 3% did not record anything as presented in Figure 6.1 below.

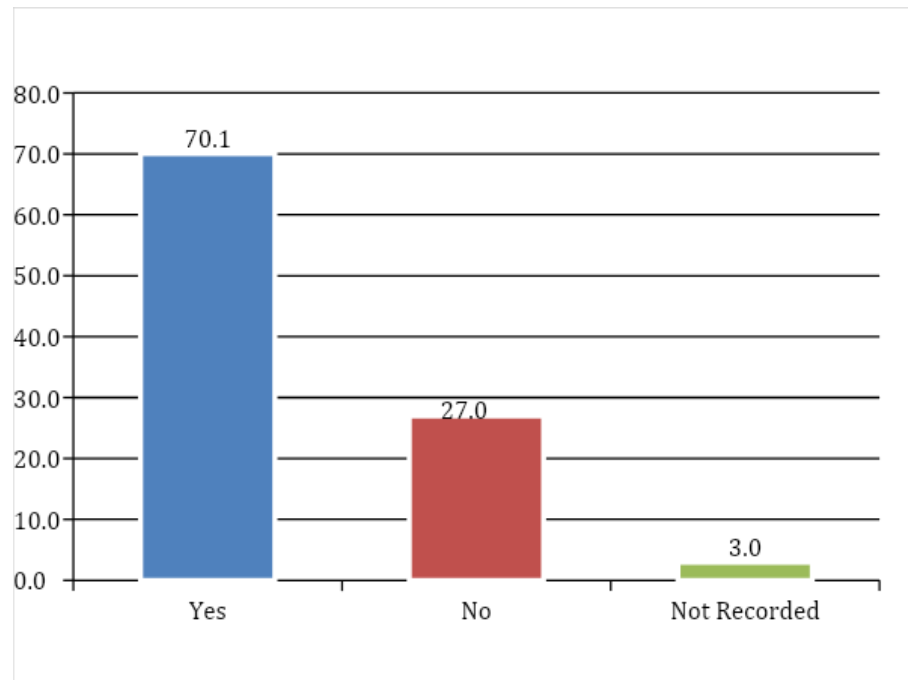


Figure 6.1 Knowledge of existence of CSCs in Salima and Dedza

The study also found out that the level of knowledge of existence of SCs was very different in the two study districts as a proportion to the number of respondents e.g 70 % for Dedza and 60% in Dedza as presented in figure 6.2 below indicated were knowledgeable. The difference as discussed in the previous chapter could be owing to the fact that while the introduction of the reform initiative started at the same time, there was sustained implementation in Salima while there was some disruption in Dedza.

The total number of respondents from the 304 of the semi –structured questionnaires on this question was 282 of which 94 and 188 were from Dedza and Salima respectively. Of these figures 56 and 148 from Dedza and Salima said they are aware of the service charter respectively.

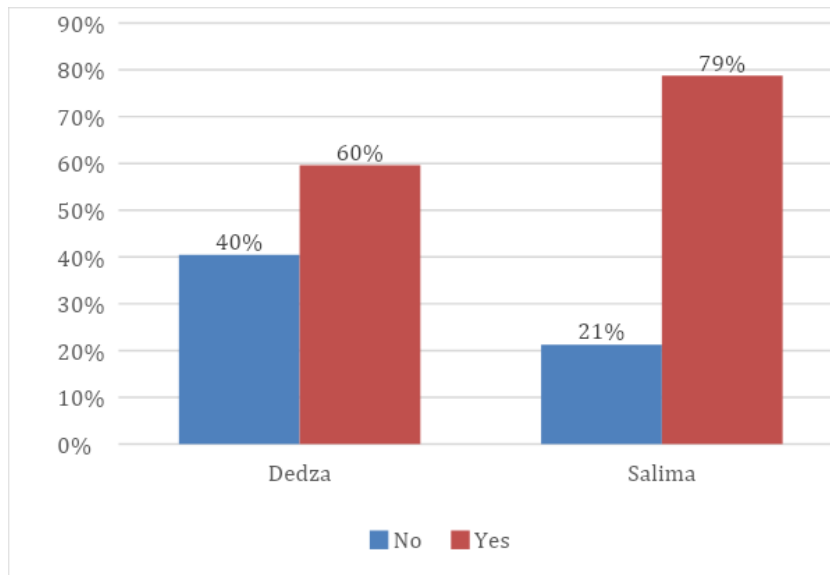


Figure 6.2 Knowledge of Existence of Service Charter Reform Initiative per District

6.3 Institutionalization of the Customers Service Charter

Dacin et al (2002) argue that institutionalization is the creation, transformation, layering and diffusion of structures and institutions to create legitimacy and public value in societies and organizations. To this end, one of the challenges of effectively implementing reforms particularly in developing countries is to have well-defined organization structures and institutions (O’Flynn, 2007) to guide the implementation of reforms to create legitimacy and public. In Malawi’s review of the reforms initiatives, for example, and as argued by Wamalwa (1996) and Rugumyamheto and Kamanga (2008) the major challenge to successful implementation of reforms in Malawi is the absence of a lead organisation to champion and coordinate, including at the highest political level of the land, the reform initiatives.

Therefore, the need for a well-structured organization for coordination and management is imperative in the institutionalization of the service charter reform initiative as would be policy, relevant legal instruments and dissemination for all other reforms. It is within this understanding that the following section discusses the extent of institutionalization of the CSC reform initiative.

6.3.1 Service Charters and the Organisation Performance Contracts: The Institutionalization Efforts

Given the understanding in the preceding section, the study found that while at the start of the CSC reform initiative in 2008, the service charter was an independent endeavour from other reform initiatives, at the time of the study it was linked to the Organisation Performance Contracts introduced by OPC (GoM, 2012). The organisation performance contracts that are assigned between OPC and MDAs include the service charters as one of the key performance indicators. The inclusion of the service charters as one of the key performance indicators (KI, Lilongwe May, 2018) as discussed elsewhere have helped to increase the number of MDAs that have developed their service charters. In this regard, this KI (Lilongwe May, 2018) felt a number of public servants knew about the SC because a number of MDAs were engaged in the formulation of service charters and said he;

the Service Charter is part of the Performance Management System which has six categories namely: Finance Standards, Non-Finance Category, Service Delivery Category, Dynamic Quality and Corruption, Ethics Category..... key factors in assessing MDAs' are that the Service Charter should include timeliness, mechanisms for complaints, display of Service Charter at the entrance of the Organization's office, no hiding of information to users on the services provided and related costs in accessing the services if any at all, check if users have received feedback on the complaints or compliments raised (if any at all).

Practically only 131 MDAs are on the Performance Contract management system according to an Informant at PED (Lilongwe, May 2018). To that effect, evidence on the ground at time of data collection was that at the start of the 2015/16 Malawi Government Financial Year, 25 MDAs had developed their CSC out of the 166 official number of MDAs that includes 40 parastatals and 35 District Councils (KI, PED May 2018). This figure was consistent with official documentation on performance assessment reports during the 2017/18 financial year (OPC, 2018). In the 2016/17 Financial Year the number was at 26 and by the end of the 2017/18 Financial Year, 37 MDAs had SCs. This represented a 32.34% increase from the 2016/17 Financial Year. The increase in number is attributed to the Performance Management System including the service charters as part of the key deliverables in the Performance Management System and more and more MDAs were signing up to the performance assessment after preparing the SC according to the Informant. The number of MDAs who would have

SC was projected to increase to 50 in the 2018/2019 Financial Year, institutionalization of the service charter as diffusion.

In view of the above, it is important to note though, that the 35 district Councils were yet to be linked to the central Performance Contract managed by PED and, therefore, not subjected to the need to formulate CSC as a performance contract requirement. Nonetheless, local governments are preparing SC and had their own Local Authorities Performance Assessment (LAPA) introduced in 2015 (GoM-MoLGRD). To this end, while the CSC is one of the performance indicators that is assessed it is not clearly defined as a key performance indicator as is the case at the central level.

Given the above context on SC in the local government, in general the study found that there was a fair of institutionalization, signified by the level of knowledge and awareness of the concept of the SC among the Duty Bearers (KIs) at the district level. The definition of the CSC, however, varied between and among Salima and Dedza KIs. To this end, the KIs in Salima expressed their knowledge of the SC as follows. One KI at Salima District Council Secretariat (May 2018) described a SC as a contract or agreement between the service providers and service beneficiaries. He further stated that the contract stipulates the standards of those services, responsibilities and the rights of service beneficiaries. In the same vein, an informant in the Extension Methodologies Office (May 2018) understood a SC as a document specifying how any government office or department will be operating and delivering its services while offering service users the liberty to launch complaints in case of unsatisfactory performance. The informant did not only outline what a SC was but also indicated that the Salima SC was first produced in 2009 and accordingly produced physical evidence in form of a service charter booklet for Salima. To this end, the study verified a booklet that the informant presented as the service standards for the five sectors namely agriculture, health, education, social welfare and security (police services). Below is a quote from the acknowledgement of the District Commissioner in the CSC Booklet as at attachment II:

As the relevant entity for service delivery and implementation at the district level and beyond, Salima District Assembly is, therefore, committed towards exploiting the Service Charter for the ultimate application of all relevant services in respect of addressing the demands

and needs of its citizens. More than that, it is our express commitment to optimize the essence of public service charter as a living entity whose dynamic aspects should continuously move with changes in the socio-economic structures in resonance with the times and seasons” (Salima District Council, 2009, p.1).

This is evidence too of creation of new institutions and structures- institutionalization. This finding was consistent with the literature review on the introduction of the CSC reform initiative in Malawi as discussed in chapters II and VI that the MHRRC and the DIHR, GIZ played an important technical and financial role in introducing and supporting the implementation of the CSR in Salima on a pilot basis (MHRRC, 2010) through creation of structures and institutions in order to ensure legitimacy and public value. The technical support included orientation and training of Duty Bearers and service users in the selected pilot TAs in the concept of service charters, said a KI in (Salima, June 2018). However, according to the KI the study also noted that sustainability of the CSC at Salima District Councils was being threatened due to a number of factors including limited financial resources after the MHRRC and GIZ pulled out of the district and there was no dedicated budget line for service charters. To that end, the study further found that indeed in 2010 the MHRRC handed over to GoM a to continue the institutionalization of the initiative through Salima District Council (KI, Salima May, 2018) and GIZ pulled out her support around 2015 (FGD, TA Ndindi Salima, June 2018).

Like the informant at the District Council Secretariat stated above, an informant in the Complementary Basic Education Coordinating Unit (May, 2018) understood a service charter as a tool for expressing the functions of a government department to communities whereby the vision, mandate, mission statement and functions are communicated to service users. He stated that in doing so, a Charter puts forward the expectations of rights holders. Said he;

A Service charter puts forward community’s expectations in terms of what time to open and close our schools or offices, including the time our teachers have to report for duties.

In order to achieve the above, relevant structures and institutions were put in place.

As was the case in Salima the majority of KIs in the Dedza District Council Secretariat and its Directorates testified that they were aware of the initiative. For instance, an Informant from the Community Development Directorate (KI, Dedza June 2018) stated as follows in demonstrating her awareness:

what I would say about service charters is that these are standards that were introduced within Council setups and basically it is some two to three years ago when most of the Councils participated in the process of putting in shape or developing their service charters’.

Similarly, an informant (Dedza June 2018) from the Development Planning and Development Directorate of Dedza District Council expressed his knowledge in historical and rationale context by that stating that it was about two –three years ago (2015-2016) when the OPC championed the process of introducing the service charters in Local Authorities. In his understanding basically the reason for introducing the CSC was to do with enhancement of service delivery. He further narrated it was realized and indicated that as local authorities are delivering services to the populace there is lack of meeting the minimum standards of the services that those being served are not given enough feedback in terms of how services are delivered. So the service charter came in to provide a platform for improvement of services and as well as feed backing to the communities.

In the same vein and expressing his knowledge of a SC, an informant (Dedza, June 2018) from an NGO, United Purpose who is also a member of the District Executive Committee also understood CSC as;

standards that the service providers set as a measure that could be provided to the citizens and actually the SC is where the citizens or the service provider can judge himself whether they are achieving the intended goal.

The informant from the NGO further indicated that by the nature of his work as a Governance Coordinator, he had to support the Government in general and the Council in particular in implementing the concept of service charters. At the time of the study, it was discovered that United Purpose was in the process of supporting Dedza District Council to review its outdated service charter, starting at sector level. In his own words the Informant said,

We are trying to update the individual sector or service provider charter and then we are going to support consolidating charters into one service charter as a district. So by nature of my work I know how the service charter can be developed and also have read some books and I have done quite a number of work.

Concurring with the above, a KI from the Development and Planning Directorate pointed out at that time that there was an initiative to include all sectors within the Charter because as he had highlighted earlier Dedza had 15 devolved sectors but only 6 sectors have got their service charters ready and being used. Which was the reason efforts were underway to include the remaining, proof again of an institutionalized reform.

One of the KIs (Lilongwe, October 2018) who was involved in the formulation of SC in a local council level in particular Dedza but was now at the at the Ministry of Local Government head office also had this to say about the knowledge of service charters:

Yes, I should admit I know service charters. I have known the service charters in the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development from the time we were developing our own service charters sometime back as well as when I was District Commissioner for Dedza District Council from 2012-2013.

The KI went further and stated that in terms of developing the SC, the technical input was mostly from OPC. According to her, there was a Unit in OPC that coordinated task teams that were facilitating the process in district councils. She further indicated the same thing applied while the service charters for Local Government head office was being developed. The same OPC task team guided the process. The team included the Performance Enhancement Department (PED) and Economic Planning Department in terms of providing the standards and requirements.

Some of the KIs were of the view that the level of awareness could have been much better had there been deliberate dissemination of the charters in most, if not all cases beyond displaying the SC at the entrance of the offices or in the offices in some cases. That being the obtaining scenario, the most likely service users to be aware of SC are the ones that visited the offices seeking a service and were directed to the charter or

read the same as they entered the premises. To this end, one Informant (Lilongwe, May 2018) summarized the situation as follows,

But what we need mostly is civic education to the masses. That is all. Because as DHRMD yes, we did our Service Charter, we educated mostly those in Ministries and Departments and we have put it on the notice board. We donot know how many of our clients come and read the Service Charter and demand our services.

The study found through interviews that in the case of the Malawi Public Service delivery chain particularly in MDAs at the central level, knowledge of the SC was more skewed to Duty Bearers who participated in the formulation of the SC at sectoral level. There was also limited public awareness of the SC through public means such as open out door displays, radio programs and print media except for the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development and to some extent the Ministry of Health. Publicity was left to chance. However, this is contentious as the study acknowledges that there was no attempt to collect data from citizens nationally to ascertain levels of knowledge of the service charter reform initiative to have a comparative basis and cross check the opinion of Duty Bearers at the centre. This could be an aspect for future research.

Given the above scenario and as Acharya (2010) argues, access to information is important to enhance knowledge of both Duty Bearers as well Service Users in the public service delivery chain and lack of it may affect levels of knowledge of a reform among citizens. The lack of a functional legislation of access to information as is the case in Malawi and lack of wide dissemination of the SC by some MDAs as the study found out affected a more effective institutionalization process as will be discussed in the later sections of the chapter. In spite of this challenge, the following section discusses the findings on the level of awareness at district level where the situation is apparently different from the centre and it was the core of the study.

6.3.2 Organisation Structure and Coordination of the Institutionalization Reform

The success of service charters, it is argued, is dependent on a number of factors including putting in place structures and systems to enable people access relevant information on the public services as well as providing a conduit for coordinating the institutionalization process (Brava, 2009). Thus, the study found that in order to effectively institutionalize reforms in the Malawi public service government in 2006 established the PSRMU in the OPC to be responsible for identifying reform areas coordinating the implementation and monitoring of various public service reforms (GoM, 2006). Further, the CSC being a new concept the government elected to promote the initiative through the PSRMU (GoM, 2008). Within the PSRMU there was a Service Charter Team whose core business on a daily business was to manage the SC charters activities defined in the Malawi Service Charter Program Document 201-2015 that further developed an implementation programme (KI Lilongwe, November 2018). It is argued that the foregoing was an attempt at institutionalize of the SC reform by creating, transforming, layering and diffusing of institutions and structures to create legitimacy and public value as postulated by (Dacin et al, 2002). To that end an Informant referred to this as a model that,

Government set up structures for developing the design and also formulating the service charters. At national level, we had a Steering Committee which was Chaired by Chief Secretary being the head of the Public Service but also comprising some key Principal Secretaries and other heads of organizations including representation of the Civil Society Organizations. Then we had line Sector Directors within the Public Service that constituted what was called the National Technical Committee.

In addition, the KI further explained there was a component of Working Groups focusing on the various thematic areas of the programme namely resource generation, allocation and utilization; budgeting; monitoring; local level initiatives, which was like district focus; accountability involving complaint handling by institutions of accountability like the Malawi Human Rights Commission, the Anti-Corruption Bureau, the office of the Ombudsman; and finally public participation and awareness. In this context the KI also explained that the public participation and awareness component sought to promote awareness and empowerment of the people so that they

could take part in the process of organizing service delivery and the actual delivery, and in the provisioning of services.

In view of the above, the Duty Bearers thus acknowledged, through key informant interviews the role that MHRRC and OPC played in the institutionalization of the service charter reform initiative in the district councils. In that regard, according to the Service Charter User Committee Chair in Salima, a baseline survey was conducted before service charters were introduced and communities were sensitized. Equally in Dedza a KI indicated that the process initially involved the briefing of the District Executive Committee (DEC) on the Service Charter reform initiative by the OPC. According to the District Development Planning Manual, the DEC is a committee of all the Heads of Sectors and NGOs at the District Council that is chaired by the District Commissioner and whose Secretariat is the Directorate of Planning and Development. The DEC is responsible for executing Council decisions as well as development planning among other duties (MoLGRD, 1996). All the informants attested to the process that after the OPC had briefed the DEC, a Task Team was established to look at the various standards pertaining to sectors which were earmarked for formulating the initial Charters. In view of the foregoing, one KI (Dedza, June 2018) stated that;

It was only six sectors that were selected as a start-up namely Health, Agriculture, Water, Security, (Malawi Police, Prison), and the Secretariat itself. So they (DEC Task Team) looked at the policies of these sectors and the guiding principles of the service delivery pertaining to these sectors and what they are supposed to do according to their guiding principles.

In that regard, the KI went on to state it was important to note that alongside the guiding principles of these sectors there are also standards in terms of procedures and, the quality which these sectors need to meet as they are providing the services to the populace. These being not known to the local people, the Task Team, as a result, sat down and highlighted the critical standards which were to be met by each sector and disseminate this information even to the locals so that they could easily demand the services being well informed.

The finding above was consistent with the available literature on the process of introducing the SC in the Malawi Public Service delivery chain that indicated that the service charters would be implemented on a pilot basis and in phases (OPC, 2010); starting with selected sectors (MDAs) at the centre and the same sectors in selected local governments. Thus, the process of developing organization service charters was initiated in the Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC), Malawi Immigration Department (MID), Department of Public Service Management (DPSM), Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development, Ministry of Education of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Electricity Supply Commission of Malawi, and the Department of Immigration Services.

The study also found out from another KI (Lilongwe, May 2018) that the process of developing and institutionalization of the service charters reform initiative was based on the Guidelines on Formulating Customer Service Charters developed in 2010 by the PSRMU (OPC, 2010) as part of the Malawi Public Service Charter Program Document 2010 -2015 (OPC, 201). It is argued therefore that new institutions (guidelines) were introduced to influence both Duty Bearers and users to change their behaviours in the delivery of public services. MDAs were duly oriented to the contents of the Guidelines at a number of meetings as was the concept of service charters itself. This, according to the KI from the MHRC (Lilongwe, December 2018) was done in order to increase the level of awareness and knowledge among public servants. This assertion was indeed couched in the Guidelines which among others, require that a Ministry, Department or Agency should establish a Task Team that will facilitate the formulation of a SC under the guidance of OPC, specifically the PSRMU (GoM, 2010). The study also learnt that PED was also given the mandate to facilitate the formulation of service charters as part of the performance contracts KI, PED, 29 May, 2018, OPC-PED, 2015). To have a more meaningful impact the new institutions were accompanied by introduction of new structures as discussed elsewhere.

In view of the above context, one KI (Lilongwe, December 2018 said,

The initial structures have not been maintained except for the PSRMU. If they have been maintained then, the same question of popularizing (service charters) comes into play because it is like at the

moment we cannot confidently say that this is the coordinating Unit of the whole of this (service charters). Who is in charge of the Service Charter Initiative at a national level? That is lacking.

Asked if the assertion that there was no clear leadership in coordinating service charters reform initiative another KI (Lilongwe, May 2018), said with some uncertainty, that OPC was in charge and as an office that is mandated to take a leadership role in managing the public service OPC has to ensure that this is done in all MDAs using the PSRMU. In that regard, he thought the PSRMU was better placed at providing that coordination given that the objective is to ensure that there is efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of services or to clear bottlenecks that have impinged on better service delivery in the Malawi Public Service. He thus concluded that the PSRMU, just like PED, is better arm for handling or enforcing or ensuring that MDAs are developing these SC.

PED's mandate was acknowledged as a leading role in ensuring that all MDAs live up to their expectations, that is, all MDAs are developing service charters as defined in the Performance Contracts (PC). In the PC the study noted that there is an area where MDAs are obliged to develop CSCs and launch them. In the view of another informant (Lilongwe, May 2018) OPC was still in control PED like PSRMU is under OPC. The informant further argued that these two can ensure that the whole public service lives up to its development of public service charter. In that context another KI (Lilongwe, May 2018) was of the view that these two were complimentary in their mandate and said he,

PED is like a monitoring tool while PSRMU is like a bull dozer to say you are not doing better here because of ABCD can you do this. PED coming on the toes to say are we now living up to what we agreed. the PSRMU will assist institutions to overcome that bottleneck. The bottleneck they take in the delivery of services. So it is the PSRMU that will assist those institutions overcome them. While PED will follow on the toes of the PSRMU to ensure that what these institutions, OK, have pledged or have promised to resolve the bottleneck that they have resolved now they were to deliver services in a better way. Then PED will come and say this is what you agreed, this is what you promised, and this is what you committed. Now what have you done? So it is complimentary.

However, probing into this assertion through snowballing and follow -up interviews revealed that there were no clear terms of reference that would ensure the desired coordinated effort. The study also found that there was a difference in the structure and presentation of the SC between those developed at the center facilitated by PED and those developed in the district councils that were facilitated by OPC. In response to the observation a KI in the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (Lilongwe May, 2018) cited lack of clarity regarding who provides strategic leadership in the formulation of service charters between PED and PSRMU on one hand the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development on the other. The informant put it this way,

so I think their understanding was that OPC will reach out to the District Councils by themselves (OPC) not us as MoLGRD. But I am yet to check with colleagues in the Planning Department whether it was done like that. Because I remember as I said when I was in Dedza we were dealing directly with OPC and a colleague, an officer from Local government will accompany. You know, even this time around I should expect that it should be the role of OPC. If OPC can say MoLGRD can you facilitate the development of service charters in the councils that can be done.

The findings on the structures at the District Council and Traditional Area levels were that the structures that were established at the inception of the SC in 2008 were maintained with a new structures evolving that were not purposefully set for FGD SC but were enhancing the case for the SC, for example the PED as will be further discussed in the following paragraphs.

The general view from the KI at the local level was that the service sharter reform initiative has all the structures required for a vibrant system that could lead to the attainment of enhanced service delivery. The narration was that all the relevant structures from the community level up to the DC office (secretariat) were fully incorporated to guarantee a functional Service Charter system. An informant from the DoA in Salima (May 2018), for example, cited such structures as the DEC, the Steering Committee, the Technical Committee, the Service Charter Service Users Committee, the Complaints Handling Committee, the Media Committee, and the Monitoring Committee as being in place. The consensus among the informants was that the prevailing organization and implementation arrangements were functional. The study

though noted that some of the Committees were not as active as they were at the onset of the SC reform initiative namely the Media Committee. As an Informant from the MHRC (Lilongwe, December 2018) said that,

some of the structures that were established at the introduction of the service charters have not been maintained. If they have been maintained then, the same question of popularizing comes into play because it is like at the moment we cannot confidently say that this is the coordinating unit of the whole of this. Who is in charge of the Service Charter Initiative at a national level? That is lacking. Then if you go into the interplay between the various components, like at the moment budget estimates for 2018/19 have been formulated, if the Service Charter Initiative was still active, then one would expect the service standards to inform the budgeting.

The inactiveness and or absence of the Media Committee particularly could also explain the limited awareness activities.

One demonstrable issue from the management structure found at the district and local council level is collaborative management, what in the Public Value Theory is defined as steering network (O'Flynn, 2007); steering networks towards defined goals in this case enhanced service delivery. Williams and Shearer (2011) have also commented on the element of collective governance that ideally public value refers to whatever action is actually undertaken and produced by agencies utilizing public resources (that is, their inputs, outputs and outcomes), in aiming to achieve collectively desired social outcomes.

The study also found out that apart from the formal structures prescribed under the Decentralisation Policy namely the ADCs and VDCs, Dedza District Council had other structures that were promoting social accountability of Duty Bearers. Inherently, accountability revolves around the question of interactive relationship between the principals and agents; evaluation of performance of those entrusted with delivery of services. These structures were the Community Citizen Forums established with the VDCs and the ADCs. One informant, thus, said in addition to the VDCs there were Community Citizen Forums where communities can channel their needs and that as part of community empowerment some VDCs have also been trained in Social Accountability. Social accountability is broadly defined in this study as citizen-led

action that demands accountability from public service providers (Joshi, 2010; Fox 2014). In view of this, and to quote one KI,

the Community Citizen Forums are specifically trained in social accountability to demand from the service providers or the authorities for them to explain or justify some of their actions. So I think these are some of the structures.

The findings on the effort to empower the community is consistent with the study's operating definition of accountability as being about power and people not just having a say in official decisions but also to hold those given the mandate to govern to account for their actions (Cavil et al., 2004).

In addition, in Dedza the study found that there were other programmes that were contributing to the objectives of the service charters, for instance, the Social Accountability Monitoring Programme being championed by United Purpose. Through this programme they had established another structure, the Social Accountability Monitoring Committee (SAMCOM). SAMCOM is composed of indigenous people from the villages to champion accountability; people have been mobilized to claim their rights, claim their services, to demand services that are meeting their needs. In that regard, another KI said,

SAMCOM has been trained and empowered given enough exposure to carry out even Social Audits so that the DBs are held accountable for the services they are providing.

The findings noted though that SAMCOM had just been established and its duties had not yet taken much root to cross check if it had performed any tangible activity in the context of its mandate. In addition, much as SAMCOM was a Committee established to conduct social audits and promote accountability in the delivery of public services, the study observed that SAMCOM was not directly part of the formal decentralization policy or local movement recommended structures but was driven by the NGO sector as part of the governance programmes being implemented in the district.

In addition to these committees the study also noted through the face to face interviews and semi-structured data collection that at Council Level they have the District Advisory Teams (DATs) which are responsible for a particular ADC and that whenever

the ADC meetings were being held, these members from the Council attend the ADC Meetings for purposes of responding to any complaints that may have come from the citizens regarding delivery of services.

The organizational structures established in the District Councils to facilitate implementation of the service charters reform initiative are reflective of the Public Value Theory and legitimizes the call for social accountability as it espouses the need for multiple accountability systems (Grant & Fisher, 2010; Fox, 2014). These, in addition, provide support for decentralization which is thought to enhance political accountability and the responsiveness of local government politicians and executive staff towards citizens thereby enhancing the legitimacy of local government (Chiweza, 2010).

6.3.3 Management of the Institutionalization of the Service Charters Reform Initiative

Given the above organizational structure in the institutionalization of SC, as discussed in the preceding section of this chapter, the study argues reveals that the approach taken by OPC was one of steering a network of key agencies using Task Teams in delivery of public goods and services. This approach sits well with one of the key elements of Good Governance Theories and in particular the Public Value Theory and the New Public Service proponents, that good governance is a matter of mechanisms for interactions or relationships between the governing and the governed, and emphasis being on effective steering of networks in the delivery of public services (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000; Grant & Fisher, 2010). As elsewhere and as Humphreys (1998) postulates public service delivery thrives on a nexus of relationships involving policy makers, service beneficiaries and service providers guided by institutional and structural arrangements or systems put in place by governments to provide goods and services to its citizens. In the frame of steering networks, it is clear that Duty Bearers, according to one KI (Lilongwe, December 2018), played different roles at different stages during the institutionalization of the Service Charter system at the district and village levels, guided by the structures as defined in the Public Service Charter Programme Document 2010-2015 as presented in Figure 126 in Chapter V. For instance, the informant at Salima District Council Planning Directorate (May, 2018) indicated that during the initial stages, he was in the Monitoring Task Team where the

team's role was to monitor the implementation of all activities related to the implementation of Service Charter activities. Similarly, another Informant in the Directorate of Administration (DoA) (May, 2018) indicated that his role was to work with T/As so that they take a leading role in mobilizing and sensitizing their subjects on what service charters were all about. Said the informant in the DoA;

As you know, chiefs are very critical when introducing a new project in their communities, so I worked hand in hand with the TA's in implementing service charters.

Similarly, an informant from the District Information Office (May 2018), indicated that he played the role of Vice Chairperson of the Publicity Committee on Service Charters in Salima during the initial stages. In that regard, he stated that the committee's role was to publicize and popularize the service charters in the targeted T/As. On the other hand, a KI from the Social Welfare Office (May, 2018) pointed out that her Office acted as the Secretariat to the initiative for two years (since 2016) before the study, but NICE had since increasingly taken over most of the Secretariat functions. She hinted that prior to NICE taking over some functions; her office was responsible for facilitating all activities related to the implementation of Service Charter activities in the district. At the point of the interview, she indicated that the Assembly through her office was working closely with NICE in terms of facilitating activities related to service charters with NICE in the forefront as it has financial resources earmarked for the initiative. Said the informant;

We are now working according to NICE schedule in as far as service charters are concerned at the assembly.

However, some KIs (Salima May, 2018) indicated they played no role in the initial stages of institutionalizing service charters at the district council because they were either not part of any committee, or they joined the district councils understudy from other districts where there was no SC reform initiative. Therefore, the study notes and concludes that level of knowledge is also dependent on the role each of the Duty Bearers and KIs played in the introduction, implementation and management of the service charters as well as length of service in the District Council, with the resilience of the structures through which the reform initiative is introduced.

6.3.4 Legislation and Policy Instruments for the Institutionalization of the Customer Service Charters Reform Initiative

The study found out that SC reform initiative was designed, introduced and implemented based on a number of legislations and policies at the international, national and sectoral levels. The supreme legislation being the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi (1994). The other legal instruments with a broader relation to the service charters being the Public Service Act- PSA- (1994) and the Local Government Act of 1998. The policies at the national level are the Malawi Public Service Management Policy (2018), the National Public Sector Reforms Policy (2018) and the Decentralization Policy (1998). The study also found that there were sector specific policies and legislation for the three sectors under study which were intrinsically supporting the institutionalization of the service charters reform initiative. The study further found out that the ACVPPSA (AU 2009) was used as a reference prototype-policy that guided to develop and domesticate the concept of service charters in Malawi. This finding was consistent with what the Guidelines for Formulating Customer Service Charters (GoM, 2010) stipulates that the formulation of service charters should take place within existing frameworks for service delivery that include, but are not limited to the Constitutional guarantees and administrative principles, legal mandates including the Malawi Public Service Act (1994), the Malawi Public Service Regulations (MPSR), National development policies, and Ministerial policies and strategic plans.

While there was no explicit mention of the service charters in the Constitution, the study found that the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi (1994) provides for a broader legal framework necessary for the public service to consistently deliver service that meet the needs of Malawians. To that end, the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi Section 13; 11 subsection (O) provides for promotion of good governance. Specifically, it provides that the State shall actively promote the welfare and development of Malawi by progressively adopting and implementing policies and legislation aimed at achieving trust and good governance by, among other things, introducing “measures which will guarantee accountability, personal integrity and financial probity and which by virtue of their effectiveness and visibility will strengthen confidence in public institutions” (GoM, 1994). Further in Section 30, subsection (3) “the state shall take measures to introduce reforms aimed at eradicating social injustices and inequalities.

This provision are consistent with what Drew (2005) and Baidoo (2014) who have written that in most jurisdictions service charters are in resonance with legal, policy and international protocols.

The study further found out that the Public Service Act (1994) is not explicit on the Service Charter reform initiative but under section 19 subsection (c) and (d) speaks to the development and maintenance of sound and effective public service systems and practices appropriate to the requirements of Malawi, and to periodically review the extent of centralization or delegation of authority necessary for efficient and effective performance of the public service respectively. In this respect, one KI (Lilongwe, May 2018) had this to say when asked whether there was any legal framework that prescribes or anchors the Service Charter in the Malawi Public Service:

The PSA gives us the mandate that we can prepare service charters but we have to be responsible to what we are doing and people can question us on whatever we are doing. So the PSA gives that mandate.

The mandate the KI was referring to in the above context does not explicitly provide for the service charters in the Public Service Act (1994).

The study also found that at the time the service charters reform initiative was being introduced in the Malawi Public Service there was no Policy Framework that was guiding the management of the Malawi Public Service let alone, Public Service Reforms. However, as discussed above, the legal framework allowed for administrative decisions to embark on the service charters reform initiatives using various instruments including the Malawi Public Sector Reforms Programmes which the government was already implementing around 2007 – 2008 and the 2010 Principal Secretaries Annual General Meeting Resolutions (GoM, 2010).

When asked whether there was specific policy on service charters, KIs at the central and district council attested to the position that there was no specific policy. In that vein one informant in OPC said,

I think I wouldn't say that we have a specific policy for the service charters but may be would talk about the Code of Conduct for the Public Service, the MPSR. Those are the broader ones. They will prescribe that

we are supposed to provide services to the public. But then having said that we know that policies lead into legislation.

In this regard, the study also found that in the later years that the service charters reform initiative was more aligned to other Government Initiatives like the Performance Management System that some Informants (Lilongwe, May 2018) classified as policies. To this end, an informant from DHRMD (Lilongwe, May 2018) had this to say,

there are some policies which are in place we have to look into. For example, the Performance Management Policy which looks at what you have agreed and includes the service charters as a key performance indicator. So we can say that there are some policies and the legal frameworks that guide us in preparing service charters.

In the context of the above, the study found indeed that the SC is part of the Performance Management System. The Performance Management System has six categories namely: Finance Standards, Non-Finance Category, Service Delivery Category, Dynamic Quality, Corruption, Ethics Category. According to this KI, the SC falls within the Service Delivery Category and the availability of a CSC is one of the key indicators upon which the MDAs are assessed (GoM, 2012). Thus, the SC should include timeliness and mechanisms for complaints. In addition to the Performance Management System, there are strategic planning issues which are there as well which give MDAs some leeway on how to manage the SC reform initiative.

Regarding the above policy and legal frameworks, a KI (Lilongwe, 2018) indicated that the Public Service Act (1994) was being reviewed based on what the new policy on public service management was providing. The Malawi Public Service Regulations (MPSR) equally would be reviewed to be in line with the legislation on public service management. To that end said he,

So hopefully, we should see these issues of service charters which are mentioned in the policies also reflected in the legislation that will be coming up very shortly, or that will be reviewed.

The two policies the informant was referring to were the Malawi National Public Sector Reforms Policy and the Malawi Public Service Management Policy Malawi that the Government had just launched in late 2018 (GoM, 2018). The study further found out that though the Government approved and adopted the Malawi Public Service

Management Policy (2018-2022) and the Malawi Public Sector Reform Policy (2018-22), the two policies do not explicitly mention the service charters initiative. The two policies do mention aspects that are related to core elements of a service charter. For example, the Malawi Public Service Management Policy under Policy Priority Area 4 says the government will seek to institutionalize a customer and citizen- centric and service culture in the public service. This is further amplified under Priority Area 6 where Government seeks to improve Public Sector Governance by strengthening collaboration between public service institutions and citizens in improving service delivery, entrench principles of equal access, accountability and transparency, and also increase awareness and knowledge of the public on national development agenda, policies and services delivered by various institutions. There is no explicit mention of the service charters.

The analysis of study findings revealed that the lack of explicit inclusion of the SC in both policies would limit the motivation of Duty Bearers to implement the service charters reform initiative. In response to the observation one informant from the DHRMD (Lilongwe, May 2018), an authority on public service management policies was of the view that it would not. He argued that sometimes Government Policies are made implicit to avoid constant reviews whenever things change. He added that with technologies (public service management technologies) coming around so fast, policies are left to be implicit to allow for such changes. In that context, he further said that there are some sectoral policies that will mention specific issues when the overarching Government policy does not and to quote,

what we are trying to say is, the Public Policy Management Policy is a broader one. Then implementing agencies like DHRMD should come with a certain policy on service charters as so specific on Service Charter because if we are to talk of all the things we want to do, I do not think that policy will be as nice as it is. So sometimes we mention at a higher scale and so ministries will come up with specific issues which they want to highlight and articulate. So we do not want a certain policy to be overridden by the other one..

The KI, however, conceded that the none-explicit inclusion of the SC in the current policy documents has an impact on the implementation of the SC. In view of this context another Informant (Lilongwe, December 2018) said the government was moving towards developing policies that directly support the case for service charters

but was cautious that the process was sadly spontaneously not purposeful. He cited the example of the Access to Information Policy 2014 and Act 2016 that came into being not as a result of the service charter initiative reform although is a key legal instrument and support mechanism for institutionalizing the service charter reform initiative. The study further recorded that Duty Bearers were also considering the Gender Equality Act (2013) as necessary legal framework when they look at the distributive justice element, within the Charter systems. The informant (Lilongwe, December 2018), argued that although this Act again came spontaneously and not as a result of service charter reform initiative, with the Gender Equality Act, to, some extent, deal with the issue of equity between different genders. But all this will have to be rested on a pillar because the Service Charter itself is just a social pact.

In view of the above and the focus of the study on key three sectors of health, education and agriculture, the following sections are a presentation of findings in the three sectors, health agriculture and education. The findings on the legal and policy framework of the study sectors of health, education and agriculture were that each of the sectors had some legal and policy that was guiding the level of service standards. The KIs in the three targeted study sectors confirmed that while the sectors were supported by legal instruments in all cases the legal instruments did not explicitly provide for the service charters as were the sector policies as discussed in the sector specific sections as follows.

6.3.4.1 Agriculture Sector Legislation and Policy Frameworks

The following section discusses findings on relevant agriculture legislation as it relates to the service charter.

Agriculture Sector Legislation

The study found out at the time of data collection that there was no single law that governed the agriculture sector in Malawi much as there is an Agriculture (General Purposes) Act, 1987. However, there were a number of pieces of legislation that guided the delivery of services and standards in the agriculture sector, including those relating to the Agriculture Extension Services, Crops and Agriculture Act, and Animal Husbandry. Even these laws do not explicitly provide for the aspect of SCs much as they define standards in their respective areas.

Despite the absence of a singular piece of legislation, the sector had one National Agriculture Policy (NAP) that was approved in 2016 (MAIWD, 2016), and other sub-agriculture policies like the District Agricultural Extension Services Guidelines, 2006 and revised in 2017 (Cai, T., and Davis, K., 2017). In addition, the Agriculture Extension Policy promotes the provision of decentralized, demand-driven services that allows for involvement of a variety of service providers. By offering decentralized services it aims at ensuring that decisions that are made are as close to the farmer as possible, thereby increasing the chances for farmers to participate in the decision making process and improving chances of accessing the services. Demand-driven services, on the other hand, imply that farmers receive services that are relevant to their needs. The study found these policies to be very relevant to the institutionalization of the service charters reform in the agriculture sector as discussed as follows.

Agriculture Policy Frameworks and other Strategic Documents to the Customer Service Charters

Responding to the question as to whether there is a policy that was guiding the delivery of service in the agriculture sector, one KI (Lilongwe, November 2018) confirmed that the Ministry of Agriculture had a National Agriculture Policy (NAP) and a National Agriculture Investment Policy (NAIP, 2016). The informant also indicated that the CSC was related to these two documents. Another KI in the Ministry (Lilongwe, November 2018) in the Planning Directorate corroborated the same in response to the same question saying

We have the overarching Policy itself, the National Agriculture Policy whose focus is really on the transformation of the agriculture sector via the commercialization of production. And we also have the sub-sector policies in Research for instance, we have just completed the Fertilizer Policy, the Seed Policy which has just passed and again in the Livestock Sector we have the Livestock Policy as we do also have the Fisheries Policy.

The above assertions by the KI were consistent with the literature on the NAP and other policy documents. To this end, the NAP outlines and sets some targets and standards such as the ratio of agricultural extension service workers to farmers by 2020, being 1:1000 (extension worker to farmers) from the 2014 1:3000 (GoM -MoAIWD, 2014). However, and according to Cain and Davis (2017), while the government has been

desirous to improve governance and add value to the extension services by engaging a number of stakeholders including the civil society and the private sector, evidence on the ground is that extension service provision across multiple providers—including both public, private and civil society agencies— remains top-down and supply-driven. This challenge is a result of the service providers’ failure to understand farmers’ individual demands and subsequently failure to integrate farmers’ needs into service design and implementation. Where institutionalized, the service charter may help to resolve this challenge.

In addition to the NAP and the subsidiary policies, the study also found that the Ministry of Agriculture used the Agriculture Sector Wide Approach (ASWAP), technically an Investment Plan according to another Informant (Lilongwe, November 2018), to formulate the service charters. The Strategic Plan was also very instrumental in the process of formulating the CSC as it elaborates on what the Ministry was going to do in the Investment Plan and the Policy itself, the KI argues, (Lilongwe, November 2018).

6.3.4.1 Education Sector Legislation and Policy Frameworks

While recognizing the importance of citizen participation in the improvement of education service, the legal and policy fireworks do not explicitly outline any social accountability mechanisms let alone service charters for citizen engagement. The following section, however, discusses findings on relevant education legislation as it relates to the institutionalization of the service charter.

Education Sector Legislation

The basic legislation that regulates the education sector is the Education Act, 2013 (GoM, 2013) which mandates the Ministry of Education to provide services related to the education sector. The Act provides for the establishment, organization, governance, control, regulation and financing of schools and colleges; stipulates the general duties and powers of the Minister as promotion of education for all people in Malawi irrespective of their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, or any discriminatory attributes; and provides in Section 1 (e, g) the powers to set and maintain national education standards and provide effective mechanisms for a transparent and accountable education system at all levels. Specifically, the section provides that,

“the Minister in exercising these duties and powers shall have regard to the general principles of access, quality, relevance, efficiency, equality, equity, liberalization, partnership, decentralization, accountability and transparency”.

In that regard, while the Act does not explicitly provide for the service charter, the provision mentions a number of fundamental aspects of the customer service charter including the promotion of accountability and transparency, equality and equity and decentralization in the delivery of education services.

Policy Frameworks and other Strategic Documents

The study found that service charters in the education sector were duly aligned to the National Education Policy. A review of the NEP policy framework reveals that the sector basically focuses on three main areas of equitable access to education, the quality of education, and governance and management of the education sector. These areas in broad terms are consistent with the philosophy of the service charters reform initiative, that is, a) inform stakeholders and Customers of the services, the rights or expectations and obligations of the customer, and the commitments that the organisation is making in terms of coverage, service quality, efficiency and effectiveness; b) provide an accountability framework for the public service organization to account to its customers and stakeholders on a regular basis, at least annually, on the progress made towards meeting the commitments set out in the Charter; c) Enable the Customers and stakeholders to hold the Ministry, Department, Agency or Local Government to account for its outputs and services and commitments and, thus, contribute to enhancing transparency in the Public Service; d) Act as a tool for continuous performance improvement by addressing service delivery challenges and periodic revision of the Charter to set new standards of performance, from time to-time, that are more consistent with the changing demands of the Customers and other stakeholders (GoM- OPC, 2010).

As one informant in the education sector (Lilongwe, November 2018) put it, whether one was talking about or looking at primary, secondary or higher education, the issue of access and equity, quality and relevance of education then governance and management are very critical. The informant thus, qualified his position that,

if you look at the third one, the Governance and Management of education already the service charter is part of the Governance and Management issue. So it should not be difficult to include it in the programme in the sector.

This finding was consistent with what was contained in the National Education Policy (NEP) of 2016 and the National Education Act (2013). The NEP's goal, according to the literature review, is to promote access to education and improve relevance, quality and management of the education sector. Among the priority areas that policy seeks to address, the issues of quality, accessibility and equitable basic education; and quality teacher education (MoEST, 2017).

In addition to the NEP there is the National Education Sector Plan (NESP), 2012-17. The NESP' focus was on expanding equitable access to education to enable all to benefit, improving quality and relevance of education to reduce drop-out and repetition and promote effective learning, and more relevant to improve governance and management of the system to enable more effective and efficient delivery of services.

In view of the above findings, asked if they were aware of any policy and legal frameworks that guided the formulation of the service charters all the KIs at the District Council level mostly referred to the National Decentralisation Policy and the National Sector Policies as the documents that were used in the formulation of the service charters. More importantly the informants said they relied on the technical support that they received from the central Government. For example, one Informant (Dedza, June 2018) said,

an orientation which was conducted where councils were sensitized on the service standards provision by a Team from the Central Office. That was actually MLGRD Officials who went around the Councils sensitizing the Councils on the Service Standards.

Another informant (Salima, May 2018) further said that the process was like once the OPC briefed the DEC at the district level and there was a Task Team which was established. The Task Team looked at the various standards pertaining to sectors which were earmarked then.

6.3.4.2 Health Sector Legislation and Policy Frameworks

The following sections discuss the legislation and policy framework in detail in relation to the service charter in the health sector.

Health Sector Legislation

There was no relevant health legislation in Malawi that speaks to the service charter concept. The Public Health Act which was acted in 1948 is outdated and not in sync with a number of national laws including the Constitution of the Republic Malawi (1994), the Local Government Act of 1998 that provide for decentralized delivery of public services to the local governments and the institutionalization of good governance in the delivery of public services including health with focus on the citizen and in tandem with the democratic dispensation of governance that Malawi adopted in 1993. Further the Public Health Act (1948) does not reflect a number of international health delivery protocols that have been adopted in the last six decades. This, therefore, poses a great challenge in the adaptation of relevant service standards critical in the health service delivery chain.

In view of the above, the study established from KIs (Lilongwe, November 2018) when asked if the Ministry of Health had any legislation that guided the delivery of health services in Malawi, that health service delivery was guided by the Public Health Act of 1948 (GoM, 2012). Further, in response to the question as to whether this Act was providing for the institutionalization of the service charters, all the KIs (Lilongwe, November 2018) from the Mistry of Health indicated that this legislation was outdated. It being outed, therefore, was not in sync with a number of national laws including the Constitution of the Republic Malawi (1994), the Public Service Management Act (1994) and the Local Government Act of 1998. These pieces of legislation provide for a people centered and decentralized delivery of public services through the local governments as well as mechanisms for the institutionalization of good governance in the delivery of public services including health and are in tandem with the democratic dispensation of governance that Malawi adopted in 1993. In that regard, one KI (Lilongwe, November 2018) said

that the Public Health Act (1948) is there but outdated and does not reflect a number of international health delivery protocols that have

been adopted in the last six decades and you cannot find anything on service charters. This, therefore, poses a great challenge in the adaptation of relevant service standards.

The KI went further to clarify that much as the Act was outdated, government since 2017 had developed a National Health Policy in line with the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi and relevant laws in particular the Local Government Act (1998); the National Decentralisation Policy (1998); the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Ouagadougou Declaration on Primary Health (WHO, April 2008) among other international instruments which triggered the review and repeal of the Public Health Act 1948.

Health Policy Frameworks and other Strategic Documents

KIs mentioned two policies in the health sector that were relevant to the service charters reform initiative. These were the National Health Policy (2017) and the Quality Management Policy on Health (2017). Not until 2017 did Malawi have a National Health Policy to coherently and properly guide stakeholders in the implementation of health delivery to improve efficient and quality of services (MoH, 2017).

The National Health Policy (2017)

The study found that the Health Policy was formulated based on a number of legislation notably the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi 1994, the Local Government Act 1998. The policy also reflects the Decentralization Policy 1998 among other policies and international protocols, key among these being the Ouagadougou Declaration on Primary Health Care and Health System in Africa: Achieving Better Health for Africa in the New Millennium (WHO, 2008). While the priority areas in the policy are consistent with the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi (1994), Section 13 (c) which stipulates that the State is obliged to “provide adequate health care, commensurate with the health needs of Malawian society and international standards of health care”, the National Health Policy 2017-2022 does not explicitly mention the aspect of service charters. The closest to service charters is the objective that health service provision and management shall be in line with the Local Government Act 1998, which entails devolving health service delivery to Local Government structures; and that community participation shall be central in addressing health needs of the people of Malawi. More precisely again, the call to ‘establish social

accountability mechanisms within the community health system with key activities that shall include community monitoring and evaluation through a two-way follow up and feedback mechanisms suggestively using scorecards, Community Action cycle (CAC), performance appraisals, assessments, and quarterly meetings to share information; and semi-annual meetings with local leaders and chiefs to improve accountability for implementation of the integrated district-level community health action plans and Village Action Plans (GoM, 2017).

The study found the following objectives of the National Health Policy (GoM-MoH, 2017), to be relevant to the institutionalization of the service charters : 1) Increase equitable access to and improve quality of health care services; 2) Reduce environmental and social risk factors that have direct impact on health; 3) Improve the availability and quality of health infrastructure and medical equipment 4) Improve availability, retention, performance and motivation of human resources for health for effective, efficient and equitable health service delivery 5) Improve the availability, quality and utilization of medicines and medical supplies 6) Generate quality information and make it accessible to all intended users for evidence-based decision-making, through standardized and harmonized tools across all programs 7) Improve leadership and governance (particularly setting direction and regulation) across the health sector and at all levels of health system 8) Increase health sector financial resources and improve efficiency of their allocation and utilization

The National Health Policy (2017), according to one KI (Lilongwe, November 2018) acknowledges that client satisfaction has not been a priority for a long period in the Malawi health system and the Policy, therefore, places the issue of client care and satisfaction as one of the three main health goals of the Malawi health system. This priority area is consistent with the service charters philosophy, being citizen-centric service delivery systems. Although National Health Policy was adopted in 2017, efforts to develop customer service standards have been made in the health sector using various instruments since 2010 based on the Malawi Public Service Charter, the study established. In that vein, a KI (Lilongwe, November 2018) emphasized that it was not until some two or three years ago that the Ministry of Health started coming up with service charters and this was at headquarters level. The time frame the KI mentioned

was three years from 2018 when the study was conducted and therefore outside the period when the National Health Policy was developed.

The Health Quality Management Policy (2017)

The study found out that the government of Malawi had approved a Quality Management Policy in 2017 (GoM, 2017). This policy can be described as a subset policy of the National Health Policy (2017) given the definition of sector policy as provided for in the Guide to Executive Decision Making Process (GoM, 2010) and was preceded by the National Quality Assurance Policy of 2005. According to one KI (Lilongwe, November 2018) the policy has seven priority areas of which priority areas one and five focus on leadership, governance and accountability and people centered care respectively. These two can be said to be a bedrock of the service charters in the health sector delivery. Other areas are human resource for health; clinical practice; support systems; and evidence-based decision making. In addition to the QMP, the study also found out that the health sector has other instruments such as the five-year National Health Strategic Plan II: 2017- 2022 and the National Community Health Strategy: 2017-22 (GoM, July 2017) that are supportive of the service charter reform initiative as discussed below.

Ministry of Health (MoH) Strategic Plan 2017-2022

The Ministry of Health (MoH) through its 2017-2022 Strategic Plan further recognizes that health service delivery in Malawi is below acceptable quality standards and is faced with a myriad of challenges, including poor access and unresponsive health system to citizen requirements (GoM, 2017). The MoH will therefore, among other interventions set in the National Health Policy (2017), Policy Priority Area number one – Service Delivery, promote active citizen participation in delivery of health services. While this priority area is consistent with the spirit of the service charters and the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi (1994), Section 13 (c) which stipulates that the State is obliged to “provide adequate health care, commensurate with the health needs of Malawian society and international standards of health care”, the National Health Policy 2017-2022 does not explicitly mention the aspect of service charters. In view of this, and when asked to comment on the relationship of these objectives to the service charters reform initiative, one KI (Lilongwe, July 2018) said that the closest to CSC is the objective that health service provision and management shall be in line with the

Local Government Act 1998, which entails devolving health service delivery to Local Government structures; and that community participation shall be central in addressing health needs of the people of Malawi. In that regard, more precisely again, the call to

establish social accountability mechanisms within the community health system with key activities that shall include community monitoring and evaluation through a two-way follow up and feedback mechanisms suggestively using scorecards, Community Action cycle (CAC), performance appraisals, assessments, and quarterly meetings to share information; and semi-annual meetings with local leaders and chiefs to improve accountability for implementation of the integrated district-level community health action plans and Village Action Plans (GoM, 2017)

Review of the literature indicated that integrating health services and engaging communities for the next generation is at the center of the policy and strategic documents, ideally moving towards the actualization of the provision in the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi. To this end, communities have been classified to have primary ownership of the community health system. Therefore, they have three overarching roles: to use, provide, and monitor community health services. The key issue is community engagement described as the process of working collaboratively with community members which involves generating awareness of and demand for services; planning for community health; helping to improve services (e.g., via feedback mechanisms); and supporting the enabling environment for community health. The latter includes advocating for inclusion of community health priorities in Village Action Plans and contributing community resources, where possible. This position in the policy documents though does not mention service charters explicitly. Community participation, engagement, and ownership form the essential foundation for a strong community health system, an integral part of the health system (GoM-MoH, 2017) and is consistent with a number of tenets in the NPM like standards and measures of performance; decentralization of public service delivery; increasing customer or citizen choices, and parsimony in resource allocation (Hood, 1989, Frederickson et al., 2012; Tambulasi, 2010 Geleta;2014).

Given the above, integrating health services and engaging communities for the next generation is at the center of the policy and strategic documents, ideally moving

towards the actualization of the provision in the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi and the Ouagadougou Declaration. The Ouagadougou Declaration seeks to promote community ownership and participation in the health service delivery processes by creating an enabling policy framework that enhances citizen participation and reorienting health service delivery system to improve community access and utilization among others. These aspects are characteristically aligned to the service charter elements. To that end, communities have been classified to have primary ownership of the community health system. Therefore, they have three overarching roles: to use, provide, and monitor community health services.

The National Health Policy (2017), acknowledges that client satisfaction has not been a priority for a long period in the Malawi health system. The Policy, therefore, puts the issue of client care and satisfaction as one of the three main health goals of the Malawi health system, consistent with the CSC. Despite the absence of a National Health Policy, effort to develop customer service standards have been made in the health using various instruments and since 2010 based on the MPSC.

Given the above legal and policy frameworks, the Malawi Public Service Charter, it is here argued, can be said to be a reform tool that has been designed by taking into perspective such legislative and regulatory issues as may be required to create propitious conditions for the proper functioning of the public service and improve the quality of its services (OPC: 2010). While some standards are provided for in some sector policies and laws, it is important that a deliberate effort is made to include the aspect of service charters if meaningful impact is to be made in realizing the intended objectives. This would be realized only when service charters are developed by local councils.

The issue is to understand if the service charters so introduced have had an impact on the quality of services, cognizance of the understanding that the impact is subject to the institutionalization mechanisms that are put in place, understanding institutionalization as the act of introducing new institutions and structures (Scott, 2000) for purposes of improving service delivery. To this end, the next section reflects on the institutionalization mechanisms of the Malawi Public Service Charter.

6.4 Challenges in the Process of Institutionalization of the Customer Service Charters Reform Initiative

The challenges were identified as lack of a very definitive legal and policy framework to guide the implementation of the service charters; frequent transferring/posting of key Duty Bearers (high staff turnover); resistance from line ministries to fully devolve their functions; no dedicated financial resources for formulating, implementing and popularizing service charters; resistance from Duty Bearers to embrace the service charter initiative; publicity and dissemination of the service charters; limited engagement of stakeholders by MDAs in the formulation of service charters; changes in the organisation structures and leadership of reform initiatives; different formats of the service charters; lack of inter-agency linkages; limited or no dissemination/Civic Education on service charters; slow implementation of the CS Reform initiative across the districts; and weak linkage of Central Government Agencies with the Local Governments; and implicit policy on service charters.

6.4.1 Lack of Definitive Customer Service Charters Legal and Policy Framework

The macro legislation and policy framework providing for public service management and service delivery in Malawi including the Public Service Management Act (1998) and Public Service Management Policy (2018) do not explicitly provide for the customer service charter. To this end, the major challenges as cited by the KIs were that there was lack of a very definitive legal and policy framework to guide the implementation of the service charters Reform Initiative except for tagged attempts. To this end, a KI at central government level (Lilongwe, May 2018) said

I wouldn't say that we do not have a specific policy for the service charters but may be would talk about the Code of Conduct for the Public Service, the MPSR. Those are the broader ones. They will prescribe that we are supposed to provide services to the public and the Public Service Act (1994) will be reviewed shortly based on what the policies are saying and we hopefully, should see these issues of service charter which are mentioned in the policies also reflected in the legislation.

As discussed elsewhere, the policies that should have addressed the gaps are the Malawi Public Service Management Policy 2018 and the National Public Service Reforms Policy 2018. These policies unfortunately do not explicitly include the issues of service charters. The consequence of this is that the service charters would continue to be selectively implemented in selected areas and sectors unless there is strict enforcement through organisation performance contracts by PED.

The situation in the local governments is different in that all the informants indicated that they have never heard of any policy or legal instrument guiding service charters in Malawi. However, mention was made on the availability of Service Charter guidelines and the directive that was issued to all MDAs to formulate service charters. For instance, one Informant (Salima, May 2018) stated that he was not aware of the existence of any policy or legal instrument guiding service charters but that there were only guidelines that are issued to participating MDAs to follow when formulating service charters. Similarly, another KI (Dedza, June 2018) indicated that there is no policy or law on the matter under discussion. Other than the presence of the public service code of conduct and ethics, he was only aware a directive was issued to all MDAs to formulate Service Charters. The other KIs in the district councils expressed complete ignorance on the same but acknowledged that guiding principles existed.

In view of the above, some KIs (Salima, May 2018) said there was need to enact a law that will mandate all MDAs to formulate and implement service charters to avoid undesirable cases like in the district councils for instance, where some sectors have service charters, others do not have yet all sectors are serving the same communities. Another KI (Salima, May 2018) was of the contrary view that enacting laws specifically for service charters would be too restrictive and binding in a sense that the resources (human and financial) are very limited to meet the citizen expectations. Her argument was similar to the one argued by a KI from DHRMD (Lilongwe, May 2018). This notwithstanding, she said that a policy and legal framework would help to institutionalize the service charters and increase the voice of the citizens and promote accountability and ultimately enhanced service delivery as is the case in other jurisdictions. This view was obtaining in the Philippine where, for example, there is the Republic Act 9485 with provisions, that mandates all government national offices and agencies including local government units and government-owned or controlled

corporations providing frontline services to develop their respective service standards to be known as Citizen's Charter (Principe, 2009). This act, it is argued ensures that all public agencies develop service charters and are popularize them.

6.4.2 Lack of Stability of Tenure in Posts of Key of Duty Bearers

The issue of frequent transferring/posting of key Duty Bearers particularly who started or were well versed with the service charter reform initiative in district councils had negatively affected sustained and effective institutionalization of the reform. The argument was that in the process of institutionalizing service charters, some key personnel in the participating sectors were posted away to other district councils on instruction from the parent/line ministries without regard to how vital such personnel were in championing the initiative. Consequently, there had been an influx of new Duty Bearers joining the district councils who have either little knowledge or no interest in pursuing service charters objectives. As a result, focus on meeting service standards as set in service charters was distorted and due to lack of appreciation of the objectives of the service charters some Duty Bearers were resisting the use of service charters. To this end, a participant at the FGD in TA Ndindi (Salima, May 2018) summarized the concern as follows:

Duty Bearers who started the service charters at the District Council have been transferred and replaced with those who do not know anything about service charters and, therefore, have no interest to continue supporting the service charters concept. It is important that the service charters should be implemented country wide and not only in selected district in order to solve the above challenges.

A number of KIs both at the centre, district and local levels, therefore agreed that Government should make it mandatory for local councils including MDAs to formulate service charters within a specified period so that there is mass knowledge across to counter the effects of staff turnover that draws from areas that do not have service charters. In this regard even if officers are transferred, continuity would exist as the incoming officers will already have acquired knowledge of service charters from their previous duty stations.

6.4.3 Low Level of Devolution of Functions Line Ministries to District Councils

Effective institutionalization of the Service Charter initiative according to a number of KIs in the district council, is beset by resistance from line ministries to fully devolve their functions. One of the sectors that was cited at village level (TA Mwanza, Salima, May 2018) was transport and public works. The lack of full devolution had negatively affected the effective delivery of services because the councils were not in a position to develop service charters of the sectors whose functions were not devolved. In the absence of knowledge on the set standards, citizens as cited in TA Mwanza tend to be prevented from engaging such sectors on their services. In turn, the councils were failing to meet standardized service delivery.

The resistance to fully devolve is contrary to the Local Government Act (1998) and the Decentralisation Policy (1998) provisions and objectives. On one hand, Part II of the Local Government Act (1998), provides for Local Governments and Section 3 in particular outlines that the objectives of local government shall be to further the constitutional order based on democratic principles, accountability, transparency and participation of the people in decision making and development processes; while on the other hand the Decentralisation Policy objective is to transfer planning and implementation of services to the lower level of governments, that is the district councils and villages.

6.4.3 Lack of Dedicated Financial Resources for Institutionalizing Customer Service Charters

The consensus among Duty Bearers both at the national and local government levels was that it requires a lot of resources to formulate, implement, train and popularize the Service Charter initiative. However, there was a lack of financial resources to support the sustainability of the service charters reform initiative because there is no budget line in MDAs for formulating, implementing or popularizing the service charters. Since the pulling out of MHRRC a few years ago and GIZ in the case of Salima, the initiative has neither been integrated into the budgeting or planning process of local council nor supported with financial resources under the charge of the council. Service charters continue to be a stand-alone initiative which is at the expense of non-state actors hence not a priority when it comes to planning for the councils' yearly activities argued two

KIs (Salima, May, 2018; Dedza, June 2018). Activities relating to the initiative are undertaken only when a non-state actor has shown interest to fund them. Interestingly and according to the Public Service Charter Program of 2010-2014, the service charter initiative, was meant to be integrated in the activities of MDAs to avert the effects of development partners pulling out their support as Fox (2014) argues that social accountability tools have succeeded in developing countries, where governments have provided own resources and incorporated these initiatives in their annual budgets. When such donor support is withdrawn, the result is deinstitutionalization or loss of the gains made. A case in this regard was mentioned in TA Ndindi where in 2017 an ambulance and a police vehicle were withdrawn after GIZ withdrew its support. According to the FGD participants, since the withdrawal, people have to hire a vehicle to get to Salima District Hospital when they fall sick.

Given the above scenario, a strong recommendation was made that service charters should be included in the in the national as well as district councils budget for sustainability purposes. To guarantee its funding, the government was urged to mainstream the service charter initiative into the planning and budgeting process and declared it as a cross cutting issue just like issues of Gender, HIV and AIDS with a budget line for the initiative.

6.4.5 Limited Linkage between the Budgeting Process and Financing of Customer Service Charters

Linked to the challenge of no dedicated financial resources for the formulation of service charters is limited or lack of linkage of the budgeting process, financing and what the services citizens were desiring to be delivered. And thus, a KI (Lilongwe, November 2018) argued that

like at the moment budget estimates for 2018/19 have been formulated and then one would expect the service standards to inform the budgeting. But budgeting is done elsewhere, delivery of services is done elsewhere. So these do not speak to one another even when they are saying we are doing budgeting cuts, you find that they cut where you need more resources and allocate the resources where you expect less allocation.

The informant was of the view that if the government was really serious about the service charters, this time around budgeting should have begun with the local councils because that is where services are being delivered. This would promote the level of distributive justice he argued, in that the government would know how much money Likoma, for example, requires be based on population. To this end, he explained that, say if the government allocated MK4 billion to Likoma because there are 60 people and in another area there are 120, then by extrapolation you would expect MK8 billion but that is not how it is being done now.

6.4.6 Lack of willingness of Duty Bearers to Embrace the Service Charter initiative

Another challenge cited was that there has been resistance from Duty Bearers to embrace the Service Charter reform initiative. The argument by one KI (Dedza, June 2018) was that the Service Charter reform initiative hinges mainly on behavioral change, as it demands strict adherence to core public service values such as professionalism, integrity, accountability and transparency among others. There has always been, therefore, a tendency by Duty Bearers to resist the initiative for various personal reasons hence frustrating its smooth implementation contended another KI (Lilongwe, June 2018). This is an example of moral hazard (Mwabupighu, 2017). Thus, the success of institutionalization is dependent on, as Di Maggio puts "...the relative power of actors who support, oppose or otherwise strive to influence it." (1988:13). The critical issue is, therefore to understand the underlying power plays and interests of stakeholders (actors) that support or legitimize the existing arrangements push for change to safeguard or promote their interests which become critical in determining whether there will be resistance or legitimation of the reforms as Dimaggio further argues.

In view of the foregoing, the following interventions were proposed by the KIs as remedies (mechanisms) to ensure effective institutionalization of the service charter initiative the government needs to review and include the service charters in its policy documents, and the law and Government should make it mandatory for MDAs including local councils to formulate service charters across the country and within a specified period. Service charters should be an integral part of performance appraisal systems at the district council level as it is at the national level as this will likely ensure

that all district councils develop and implement service charters. This would make sure that all officers are exposed to the concept of the service charters and in turn this would likely deal with behavioral challenges emanating from resistance to the implementation of service charters. The argument is that adherence to service charter principles, values and standards should be one of the criteria for appraising Duty Bearers' performance (GoM, 2012). Further, it is deemed, this would deal with the challenge of resistance to the initiative from the Duty Bearers, and the generally held view is that this action sanctions commitment to pursue the objective of reform initiative by all Duty Bearers.

6.4.7 Lack of Publicity and Dissemination of the Customer Service Charters

The study found that the knowledge of sector service charters was limited due to poor publicity of the reform by Duty Bearers. In most cases, and particularly at the central government level service charters dissemination was limited to within a Ministry, Department or Agency and that there was limited publicity to the Service Users. For example, one KI in the Ministry of Agriculture (Lilongwe, December 2018) made this observation that,

service charters are not widely known even among public servants. Even for the communities, what is it that they expect from their service providers to provide.... So when we launched the CSC we went through orientations but I know we were not able to reach out to the whole general public. May be we were only able to address a few. So not many people are aware of the CSC.

Another KI (Lilongwe, November 2018) in the same Ministry was of the same view that at the national level they had not sensitized the users.

The challenge of limited awareness of the service charters was further expounded by a KI from OPC (Lilongwe, November 2018) who, commenting on the question of awareness said that on the issue of publicizing service charters the only short fall that he observed was that OPC did not launch the charter so that other stakeholders become aware that the OPC has a charter. The informant argued that general good publicity would still have enabled the citizens to know what to expect from OPC. In this regard the KI was of the view that and quote,

that may be we need to post these charters on the website, e.g. government website. All charters in MDAs to be available in all

districts through the district council offices. The people can access all the information regarding the Ministry of Education. Health, Finance, OPC and others so that if they want to access a service they will be able to know where and how access that service.’

The above, notwithstanding, the informant was of the understanding that some stakeholders were aware that OPC does have a SC despite it not being launched. This was based on the premise that when citizens come to OPC to seek services like change of names they come with full documentation, and that, he argued, showed that the public knows what is expected of them to meet before OPC can process their applications. A similar position was expressed in the Education Sector where one KI (Lilongwe, November 2018) said that

it is one thing to have a service charters and it is one thing to have it implemented and the most important aspect is if you have a CSC you need to bring awareness to all the people. And more importantly if you are looking at the Education Sector, I think we need to put much more emphasis on ensuring that where the actual services are being delivered people are aware of the services.

In terms of publicity at the district and village levels, there were different narrations from the KIs with the majority stating that the initiative was well publicized in Salima district, specifically in the targeted T/As. Incontrast, some KIs had a different opinion on the matter in as far as the popularity of service charters was concerned. For instance, a KI from the Social Welfare Office (Salima, May 2018) stated that service charters were only well publicized and popular in the participating T/As and not anywhere else in Salima district. She said other than being popular in the targeted T/A’s, the initiative was not known in other TA’s in Salima. On the contrary, the informant from the DoA (Salima, May 2018) was of the view that due to recent NICE sensitization activities, the initiative was now well publicized in a larger part of Salima and not only confined to the implementing pilot T/As. On the other hand, the informant from the Development and Planning Directorate (Salima May, 2018) believed that despite being well publicized during the initial stages, popularity of service charters has drastically slowed down after the pulling out of MHRRC who were the pioneers and main financiers of the initiative. He stated that after the pulling out of MHRRC from the initiative in Salima, momentum on service charters subsided such that there were only remnants of the initiative even in the implementing sectors and T/As. However, evidence from the

Traditional Area Mwanza indicated that the CSC was well known and citizens were still using the CSC effectively. The position of the informant from the DoA could be true to some extent only for TA Ndindi in Salima where the FGD participants confirmed that soon after GIZ pulled out its technical support, an ambulance and a police vehicle were withdrawn but even this did not disapprove the level of awareness of the community on service charters.

In the context above, access to information on service charters is as critical to the process of institutionalization as is the dissemination of the service charters. The study, thus, found that in Malawi legal frameworks for Duty Bearers to enable citizens access public service information and acquire knowledge on public services and service charters were in place but application was limited. For example, the Local Government Act (1998), Section 42 subsection (1) provides that a Local Government

shall arrange for the publication in its area, of information related to local government, and shall make or assist in making arrangements whereby the public may readily obtain, either at premises specially maintained for the purposes or otherwise, information concerning the services available within the area of the Local Government.

In subsection (2) a local government is, therefore, expected to publish an annual report of its operations and affairs not later six months after the end of each financial year. Brava (2009) commenting on the importance of access to information in institutionalizing service charters in India argues that the Right to Information Act of 2005 helped India to legitimize and sanction the implementation of the service charter concept by enhancing publicity and popularization of the charter among stakeholders. In Malawi, the Access to Information Act, 2016 has not been put into effect yet and, therefore, while Duty Bearers have a Constitutional duty seem to act as if they are not bound by any law to make available information on services let alone disseminate or publicize the service charters. To this end, the study argues that with its robust provision for access to information by citizens on service delivery, when implemented the Access to Information of 2016 could support the knowledge growth among citizens on the public service delivery chain.

6.4.8 Limited Engagement of Stakeholders in the Formulation of Customer Service Charters

In view of stakeholder engagement in the formulation of service charters the study found out that unlike in local governments, stakeholders' engagement at central government level was limited to those who participated in the development of the charter within MDAs. An informant in OPC (Lilongwe, November 2018) had this to say:

we did not go to other Ministries, for example to ask them to say we want to develop a service charters. What is it that we should do or what do you think we should include in the charter. But indirectly through meetings, interactions we also get views from other MDAs, what other stakeholders expect us to be doing. So from those experiences, from those lessons got from those formal interactions sometimes informal interactions we said ok there is also need for us to be on the leading line.

The effect of this is that the service charters so developed did not reflect citizen preferences let alone enhance their understanding of the process that would enable them to hold the Duty Bearers accountable when they failed to meet the service standards. This had a further effect of limiting the institutionalization of the reform and delegitimize it. Unfortunately, the limitation was in one case, as serious as not engaging even Duty Bearers that were not involved in the formulation of the MDAs service charters. As explained by one KI (Lilongwe, June 2018) the formulation was limited to those that were part and parcel of the team that developed the charters and those who are in senior management positions as these are informed especially when they are called upon to be part of the performance contract preparatory meetings, or the drafting of the performance contract. He further said a good number of staff in OPC only see it posted but doubted they had a comprehensive understanding of CSC.

As discussed, the level of formulation of service charters in the district councils and at area level was elaborate and very consultative with stakeholders. As to the reason for such limited consultation at the centre, the study found that changes in the organisation leadership and establishment of new organizations between 2010 and 2012 in the reforms endeavours would have played a role as follows.

6.4.9 Organisation Structures and Leadership Changes

From the time Government introduced the service charters Reform Initiative in 2010 to the time the study was conducted, a number of changes had occurred in the organizations structures including the introduction of the Performance Enhancement Department (PED) in 2012, the establishment of a Public Service Reform Commission in 2014 which was chaired by the State Vice President (GOM, 2014). The establishment of this Commission necessitated the relocation of the PSRMU from the OPC to the Vice President's Office with implications on the leadership of the broader issues of reforms and the service charters reform initiative in particular. This left the MDAs with limited or no oversight by the PSRMU. In view of this, one KI (Lilongwe, November 2018) said,

The initial structures at the launch of the service charters reform initiative have not been maintained except for the PSRMU. If they have been maintained then, the same question of popularizing (service charters) comes into play because it is like at the moment we cannot confidently say that this is the coordinating Unit of the service charters. Who is in charge of the Service Charter Initiative at a national level? That is lacking.

Asked to comment on the assertion that there was no clear leadership in coordinating service charters reforms another KI (Lilongwe, May 2018) said with some uncertainty, that OPC was in charge. This informant was of the view that OPC as an office that is mandated to take a leadership role in managing the public service has to ensure through PSRMU that the service charter reform was implemented in all MDAs. The argument he proffered was that by creating structures like the PSRMU, OPC intended to ensure that there is efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of services or to clear bottlenecks that have impinged on better service delivery in the Malawi Public Service. However, he hoped for good coordination between PSRMU and a new structure within OPC called PED with a neighborly mandate of enforcing performance using reform parameters.

In view of the above, PED's mandate was acknowledged as a leading role in ensuring that all MDAs live up to their expectations, that is, all MDAs are developing service charters because of the Performance Contracts (PC). In the PC, the study noted that

there is an area where MDAs are obliged to develop service charters and launch them but noted that the aspect of process was not assessed. In this context another KI (Lilongwe, May 2018) was of the view that these two were complimentary in their mandates and said he,

PED is like a monitoring tool while PSRMU is like a bulldozer to say you are not doing better here because of ABCD can you do this. PED comes on the toes of the MDAs to check whether the MDAs were now living up to what they had agreed to deliver. On the other hand, the PSRMU will assist institutions to overcome bottlenecks they face in the delivery of services.

The study also found that there was a difference in the format of the service charters between those developed at the center facilitated by PED and those developed in the district councils which were facilitated by OPC-PSRMU, see Attachments of the Ministry of Education Charter and Salima District Council Service Charter. In response to the observation a KI in the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (Lilongwe, May 2018) said that this resulted from lack of clarity as to who provides strategic leadership in the formulation of service charters between PED and PSRMU on one hand the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development on the other. As the informant put it,

so I think the understanding was that OPC will reach out to the District Councils by themselves (OPC) not us as MoLGRD. But I am yet to check with colleagues in the Planning Department whether it was done like that. Because I remember as I said when I was in Dedza we were dealing directly with OPC and a colleague, an officer from Local government would accompany. You know, even this time around I should expect that it should be the role of OPC. If OPC can say MoLGRD can you facilitate the development of service charters in the councils that can be done.

However, probing into this assertion revealed that there were no clear terms of reference that would ensure the desired coordinated effort and, therefore, the complementarity did not materialize. This situation it must be pointed out was suggestive that service charters were not being developed based on streamlined frameworks to reflect the understanding in the National Decentralization Policy that the central government agencies shall provide policy directions to the district councils (GoM, 1998). This situation is a manifest of political socio-economy determinant of reforms in particular the collective action problem political- economy determinant which arises when there

is no longer cohesion and coordination in the delivery of public services by the many actors and also lack of convergence between citizen interests and service providers leading to failure to act in a collective-self at the expense of benefits to individuals if they were to act collectively (Mwabupighu, 2017). The behaviour undermines the inherent philosophy that, as argued elsewhere by Humpreys (1998), effective delivery of public goods and services are a nexus of relationships. The absence of a well-coordinated nexus has the potential to undermine effective institutionalization of the service charters reform as a tool for enhanced service delivery as further implied in the NPM and the theoretical framework of the study in particular the public value theory.

In a further attempt to resolve some of the challenges that have emerged in the course of implementing broader reform initiatives the study noted that the government had through the Malawi Public Sector Reforms Policy – 2018-2022 set coordination and implementation of reforms as a priority. Specifically, the policy acknowledged that reforms across sectors and MDAs have not been adequately coordinated to create synergies that can have a higher impact on achievement of reform objectives. To this end, through the policy Government would establish the PSRMU into a fully-fledged Department to give it more leverage for it to be able to spearhead the reforms agenda and; manage and coordinate the reforms agenda. The policy while focusing the need to have a fully-fledged department it does not propose any other key structures for reforms management other than those that they would they consider critical in the implementation of the Policy.

The findings on the structures at the District Council and Traditional Area levels were that the structures that were established at the inception of the service charters in 2008 were maintained with some new structures evolving that were not purposefully set for service charters but were enhancing the cause for the service charters as was the case in Dedza where, as discussed elsewhere, the study found that a Social Accountability Monitoring Committee (SAMCOM) composed of indigenous people from the villages was established to champion accountability by mobilizing citizens to demand services that are meeting their needs (KI, Dedza June, 2018).

6.4.10 Indistinct Linkage of Central Government Agencies and Local Governments

All the KIs held the view that the Service Charter system at the Council was linked to the centre. However, explanations on how the initiative might be linked with the centre differed which implied different understanding of the Duty Bearers on the nature of the linkages and the Service Charter system in general. For instance, an informant from the Extension Methodologies Office in Salima (KI, Salima June 2018) argued that the linkage was based on the fact that when the agriculture sector was drafting the charter, they took into consideration the priorities of the line ministry, the Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation, and Water Development. He, however, added to say the Service Charter did not include all the key priority areas since they were using a template which mainly focused more on the behavior of local council officers rather than on the actual agricultural service standards. The linkage, therefore, is based on the fact that the sector incorporated the line Ministry's priorities only.

In the same vein, a KI from the DPD office (KI, Salima June 2018) indicated that, other than that the Service Charter had to be adopted/vetted by the parent ministry, the only linkage he thought exists was that there was an announcement from OPC that all MDAs should formulate service charters based on certain guidelines (KI, Salima June 2018). The linkage in this case is on the basis that drafting of service charters in MDAs had to be in line with centrally generated guidelines. The assumption was that the local guidelines were well disseminated and that the Duty Bearers were well oriented on these guidelines.

Another KI (KI, Salima June 2018) was of the view that the linkage with the centre is complex because of the piece meal decentralization (devolution) process. He said as follows;

imagine, not all sectors at the assembly have service charters. Even those that have, some link properly with their line ministries others not because some ministries are yet to relinquish devolved functions. And then we have the Social Welfare Office which is not clearly linked to any ministry but has a Service Charter at the district level.

Yet, for the education sector, the linkage with the centre was portrayed as being clear cut. According to a KI in this sector in Salima (KI, Salima June 2018), formulation of the service charter in the sector took into consideration all the functions of the line ministry. He mentioned such functional areas as, basic education, disability and special needs. He said the education Service Charter embraced all structures attainable at the ministry level and heavily borrowed ideas from the national education sector plan during formulation.

Much as most of the KIs in Salima indicated that there was a link with the center, the study found out that the service charters at the center and those at the District Council levels were different in structure and presentation. While the service charters at the center were a single sheet display, the ones at the District Council level were a booklet and did not include elements of cost. As the informant from PED put it,

service charter's format used at the center and the one used at the district level are different. Local Authorities Performance Assessment and the Performance Enhancement System at the Centre are not harmonized. The instrument for assessing Ministry of Local Government (HQ) and the one to be used at the District Level are not reconciled.

Given that there was no explicit policy on the service charters reform initiative to guide local governments, it was not surprising to note in terms of format of CSCs produced by central governments departments was different from those produced in district councils. This lack of uniformity had a knock on effect on the institutionalization process in the long term.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented and discussed the findings on the institutionalization of the service charters reform initiative in the Malawi Public Service. The study revealed that institutionalization of the service charters reform is dependent on the level of awareness, knowledge and willingness of stakeholders involved in the implementation of a reform initiative to facilitate the process of institutionalization, as indicated by key informants and participants of the focus group discussions. Knowledge of public services and standards is in turn dependent on a number of factors but more importantly

on the structures and systems put in place for people to access information on public services including engagement of citizens in the formulation of service charters and publicity of the services through public means such as displays, radio programs and print media, as revealed by key informants.

In view of the above, the study found that all necessary factors e.g. relevant policy and legal frameworks and structures for citizen participation prevailed in order to effectively institutionalize the service charter reform in the public service delivery chain. To this end, it is concluded that the reform was institutionalized as citizens were knowledgeable and were able to hold duty bearers accountable and demand better services in line with service charter standards. Key factors in that conclusion are located in the presence of institutions to facilitate the institutionalization of services charters as well as structures to facilitate the same. The development of guidelines to guide in the behaviour of Duty Bearers is considered fundamental as it created a platform for public awareness, and provided prototypes of the expected service charters that were to be consistent with the legislations and policies and service standard in sectors.

With regard to the structures, the government in 2006 established the PSRMU in the OPC that is responsible for identifying reform areas coordinating the implementation and monitoring of various public service reforms as indicated by key informants at the central government level and there is evidence to that effect. Further to that, the government later had put in place other organizational structures at the central government namely the PED also in the OPC that were responsible for facilitating the institutionalization process through linking the service charters to the performance contracts initiative. The study also found out that the process of developing and institutionalization of the service charters reform initiative was based on the Guidelines on Formulating Customer Service Charters developed in 2010 by the PSRMU (GoM, 2010) and part of the Malawi Public Service Charter Program Document 2010 -2015 (GoM, 2010).

Equally at the district and village levels, relevant structures required for a vibrant service charter system that could lead to the attainment of enhanced service delivery were established, right from the community level up to the DC office (secretariat). These structures were the DEC, the Steering Committee, the Technical Committee, the

Service Charter Service Users Committee, the Complaints Handling Committee, the Media Committee, and the Monitoring Committee.

The study found out that the institutionalization of the service charter reform initiative was based on the generic legal and policy frameworks as per secondary data as well as key informants responses. The Constitution of the Republic of Malawi 1994, the Public Service Management Act (1994) and the Local Government Act (1998) are the enabling laws. There was no single policy that guided explicitly the service charters reform initiative. While there was a huge expectation that the Malawi Public Service Management Policy 2018-2022 would explicitly articulate the service charters initiative, it sadly fell short to outline the service charters as a key priority area. Instead, it only refers to the service charter as one of the deliverables under accountability and ethics. Worse more the Malawi National Public Sector Reforms Policy 2018-2022 which should have addressed the shortfall in the Malawi Public Service Management Policy 2018-2022 does not refer to the service charters reform initiative in any form. In terms of the Sectoral legislations, broad provisions related to the quality of services are there but equally they are not definitive. As is the case in other jurisdictions there is need for some very definitive legal and policy frameworks to ensure that the service charters reform initiative is extensively and intensively implemented across the country if the gains made so far are to be sustained as any absence of a clear legislation leaves the Duty Bearer with the option implementing or not implementing the reform depending on their perceived benefits. The outcome may be a moral hazard in public service.

Despite a sound base that facilitated institutionalization of the service charters in the Malawi Public Service delivery chain, the study unearthed some factors that were critical for a more grounded service charters system in the Malawi Public Service. The factors needed to be enhanced or removed in some instances. The factors were frequent transferring/posting of key Duty Bearers (high staff turnover); resistance from line ministries to fully devolve their functions; no dedicated financial resources for formulating, implementing and popularizing service charters; resistance from Duty Bearers to embrace the service charter initiative; publicity and dissemination of the service charters; limited engagement of stakeholders by MDAs in the formulation of service charters; changes in the organisation structures and leadership of reform

initiatives; different formats of the service charters; lack of inter-agency linkages; limited or no dissemination/Civic Education on service charters; slow implementation of the CS Reform initiative across the districts; and weak linkage of Central Government Agencies with the Local Governments; and implicit policy on service charters.

In view of the above, the conclusion of the chapter analysis is that both Duty Bearers and service users were generally aware of the service charters reform initiative and had sufficient knowledge to facilitate the process of institutionalization of the service charters Reform initiative in the Malawi Public Service delivery chain. In addition to awareness and knowledge the institutionalization process was supported by appropriate legislation and policy frameworks. To this end, it is concluded that the service charters in the Malawi public service delivery chain where it was institutionalized would have or have a push on the drive to enhance service delivery.

Having discussed and established that the service charters was institutionalized in spite of some challenges, the following chapter will present and discuss and answer the question about whether as a result of the institutionalization the public service charter public services service delivery is enhanced.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PUBLIC SERVICE CHARTER AND ENHANCEMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

7.1 Introduction

This Chapter is a presentation of findings on the correlation of institutionalization of public service charters and enhanced public service delivery. The discussion is premised on the main objective of the study and on the specific objective which was to analyze the extent public sector reforms lead to enhanced public service delivery using the Malawi Public Service as a case study. The Chapter's analysis is structured under the Introduction; Accountability and Transparency; Citizen empowerment in the public delivery chain; Quality of services as yardsticks for measuring enhanced public service delivery and; the Conclusion sections.

In regard to the specific objective of the chapter, enhanced service delivery was contextualized using Murui's contention (2013) that enhanced service delivery is determined by the extent to which citizen needs expressed through the established structures are reflected in the decisions and satisfaction of the services so provided. It is, thus, expected that through citizen participation in matters that affect them, Duty Bearers or service providers at any level of government will have better knowledge of the preferences of the citizens and hence can vary services to suit demands and subsequently enhance service delivery.

In view of the foregoing, the conceptual framework of the study postulates that realization of enhanced service delivery is dependent on institutionalization accountability and transparency, citizen empowerment and service quality standards in the public service delivery chain.

These factors are at the core of the service charters reform initiatives and service charters, it is argued, are enablers in enhancing public services delivery (Drewry, 2005). Service charters are enablers because they facilitate institutions of good governance accountability and transparency as indicators of good governance; and service standards namely reliability, responsiveness, accessibility credibility of services delivered, courteousness and of Duty Bearers; and enhancing citizen participation and voices through decentralized governance structures in the public service delivery chain. To this end, it is argued that when accountability and transparency, citizen participation and quality standards of service are institutionalized in the delivery of public services delivery chain, enhanced public service delivery is attained (Lewis, 1993; Schedeler, 1999; Joshi 2010; Grant & Fisher, 2010; Fox, 2014). In dealing with these terms, the study argues that transparency is a precursor to accountability and, as such, it is further considered to be one of the key governance principles that seeks to ensure that citizens are provided with the right information on goods and services that the various public service entities are mandated to provide or deliver (Kosack & Fung, 2014). While accountability has been understood as Cavil and Sohail (2004) argue being about power and people not just having a say in official decisions, but it has also to be understood as holding those given the mandate to govern to account for their actions or inactions. Further, these terms have been considered to be within the philosophy of the study's theoretical frameworks as when reflecting on the NPM paradigm one is made to realize that NPM seeks to reinvent government business by being adaptable, accountable and responsive to citizen needs (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). Equally because the public value model as Tambulasi (2010) argues involves the creation of organizational structures and institutions that help to achieve accountability and equity while at the same time providing government the capability and flexibility to be responsive to citizen need and promote citizen participation in state matters.

Given the above context and having concluded in the previous chapter that the service charters reform initiative in the Malawi public service was generally well institutionalized, the question that arises is to ascertain whether enhanced service delivery was obtained. In that regard, the following section discusses the issue of accountability and transparency.

7.2 Accountability and Transparency

The focus of the study was on determining whether Duty Bearers were more accountable to the citizens as a result of the institutionalization of the service charters by producing and disclosing Performance Reports (Annual, Biannual etc. as may be agreed); and Financial Reports to the citizens through established structures. In terms of transparency, focus was on Corporate Transparency where MDAs were expected to display their Name, Legal status, Mandate, Mission, Goals, Contact information, Physical address, Organization Structure, and Staff compliment (list who is who) as well Financial Disclosures through Annual Budget details, that is amount received and sources; expenditure reports, tariffs of services if any and service quality standards, Audit Reports; and finally social transparency by listing services offered by public organizations- describing places where the services are offered.

In the following sections the study presents detailed findings at the central local government and village levels on the impact of service charters reform initiative on the two indicators of good governance namely accountability and transparency.

7.2.1 Accountability

As discussed above, generally citizens and KIs were of the view that accountability in the delivery of public services had improved as a result of the institutionalization of the service charter reform initiative in the public service delivery chain. In that regard, responding to the question as to whether the introduction of service charter has improved accountability of service providers to the citizens out of all the 303 respondents, 152 said that accountability by Duty Bearers had improved following the introduction of the service charter. Of these 152, 31 were from Dedza and 121 were from Salima giving a 31% and 59% per district perceptions respectively as presented in Figure 7.1below.

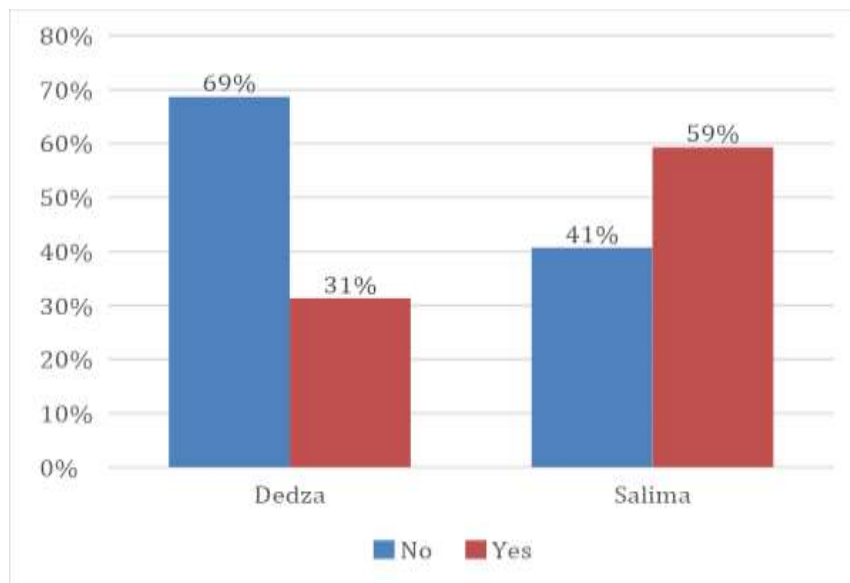


Figure 7.1 Service Charter and Accountability Improvement

Given the disaggregated presentation in the figure above, the study found that there was a low perception of accountability in Dedza than was in Salima. The explanation, to this end, could be related to the timelines in which the service charter was introduced in these two districts and the role the various actors particularly played and still continue to play in institutionalizing the service charter reform initiative as a tool for promoting accountability of Duty Bearers in delivering public services as informed by key informant interviews (Lilongwe, June 2018).

Responding to issues of financial reports, KIs testified through the face to face interview that Financial Reports were being produced by Duty Bearers. However, the study noted that in some instances the Financial Reports were not directly linked to the service charters but were legal obligations as provided for in the Public Financial Management Act (2003) and Local Government Act (1998). One Informant (Lilongwe, May 2018) had this to say when asked if the service charters had improved accountability in her Ministry in terms of financial report disclosures,

In terms of Financial and Performance reports, honestly it is not time that we can confidently say that we are doing so. I am saying this the kind of reports we produce are not for local people but for Auditors.

The above assertion was also reflected in the responses that were derived from the questionnaire administered in the two study districts when asked if they have ever seen any financial reports or information on the annual budget. Most of the respondents, 85% in both districts never saw these reports as presented in the Figure 7.2 below. The 15% constitutes citizens who had an opportunity to attend meetings at the ADC or District Council.

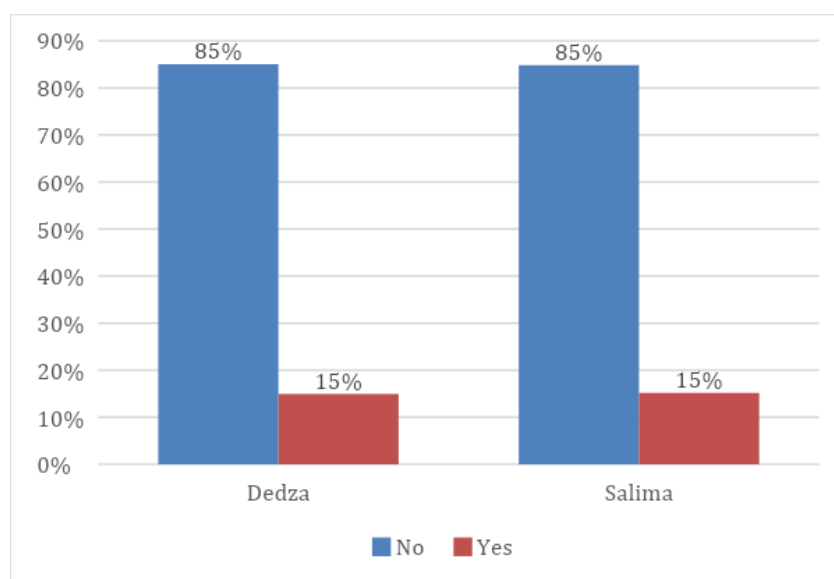


Figure 7.2 Access to Financial Information by Citizens

The KI from the DIO (Salima, June 2018) was also of the opinion that the initiative had led to improved accountability among the Duty Bearers. He recalled that a number of officers at the Council are always updating his office on the status of progress on the implementation of various development projects in the district. As a public relations officer, he relays the information to communities either on demand or as his routine duties. He attributes this scenario to the impact of service charters on both the service providers and beneficiaries' appreciation of the benefits of the service charters.

Issues of improved accountability due to the presence of the Service Charter were even more visible in the agriculture sector. In his contribution on the issue, the informant from the Extension Methodologies Office (Salima, June 2018) argued that due to the initiative, the office was now obliged to involve chiefs and service beneficiaries when planning their yearly activities to ensure accountability. Of particular importance, he

stated, is that service users and other stakeholders are always engaged when planning on the distribution of fertilizer input subsidy coupons which is a critical issue in the agriculture sector. According to the officer, failure to involve communities in this respect is a recipe for chaos as the service beneficiaries were already empowered to demand explanations if not satisfied (KI Interview, Salima District Council Boma, June 2018). This, he believes, is an indication that Service charters have improved accountability on the part of service providers.

In the DPD, an informant (Salima, June 2018) equally believed that service charters initiative had led to improved accountability in the public service delivery chain. According to him, the reason why the initiative led to improved accountability was the presence of a strong complaint handling mechanism. Citizens were now lodging complaints if they were not satisfied with a service. He pointed out that the Complaints Committee was very vibrant, such that it could follow up on any complaint whether involving an officer or a mere case of deficiency in the public service delivery chain. To this end, said he;

For example, in 2017 Salima Secondary School had no water supply for a month. This forced the students to go and complain to the District Education Manager with a petition. Previously students could not complain because of fear and secondly they did not know where to go with their complaints. This time it was possible because of the Service Charter.

He, therefore, believes the Service Charter initiative had enforced a spirit of accountability among Duty Bearers in Salima and enhanced service delivery.

7.2.2 Transparency

Any transparency initiatives in service delivery should clearly define obligations and expectations by states or citizens; and place information or processes that were previously opaque in the public domain, accessible for use by citizen groups, providers or policy makers (Joshi, 2010). To this end, in the study focus was on Financial Disclosures through Annual Budget details and Corporate Transparency. Financial Disclosures through budget details constitutes services to be provided and therefore citizens can easily make follow ups if they know details thereof. Corporate Transparency focuses on MDAs ability to display their Name, Legal status, Mandate,

Mission, Goals, Contact information, Physical address, Organization Structure, and Staff Complement (list who is who) expenditure reports, Disclosure of tariffs of services if any and service quality standards, Audit Reports; and finally social transparency by listing services offered by public organizations- describing places where the services are offered.

7.2.2.1 Financial Disclosures

Commenting through interviews on the relationship of service charters and financial disclosures, most KIs were of the view that service charters had helped to promote financial disclosures by Duty Bearers although the disclosures were limited. The study noted consensus that the initiative has improved transparency and, in that regard, a KI from the Complementary Basic Education Coordination office (Salima, June 2018) explained that in the education sector, all schools receive a school improvement grant and once a school receives the grant, the school is required to call for a community meeting where the grant is announced to beneficiaries. Once this is done, planning and prioritization on the utilization of the grant is jointly done by the school management committee and communities through governance structures such as the PTA and Service Charter User Committees. All transactions revolving around utilization of the grant are publicized on the school notice board, allowing any member of the community to verify since the Service Charter empowers them to do so. In this regard, the informant emphasized that not only has the education sector Service Charter improved transparency, but it has also enhanced accountability because at the end of every school term, the School Management Committee produces reports on various activities taking place at the school. A KI (Lilongwe, 2018) also expressed a similar position and highlighted that Duty Bearers in the education sector were more transparent now than before because of the service charters. Unlike in the past when issues to do with use of school funds was perceived as a school management issue or a domain of school management and not one that involved parents, with the institutionalization of the service charters the management is now able to share all the information with parents and everyone knows the transactions.

Providing another case for improved financial disclosures, an informant from the DoA (Salima, June 2018) added that the Council usually displays how they have utilized project funds e.g. on Local Development Fund owing to the Service Charter initiative

because in areas where the initiative was instituted, communities are always eager to learn how funds were being utilized. The general conclusion from the above assertions is that the Service Charter initiative has not only improved accountability and transparency but has enhanced the transparency by promoting financial disclosures but only in the sectors that have the service charters at various levels of the public service delivery chain.

The results from the semi-structured questinnaires gave a mixed picture on financial disclosures when citizens were asked if public servants informed them about the Council's finances and how they are being used. In Dedza, as presented in Figure 7.3 only 14% of the 100 respondents said public servants informed citizens about the council's finances, while in Salima this view was expressed by only 12% of the 203 respondents. The results are coming from a situation where before the service charter was introduced, public servants never 14% and 12% rarely disclosed the finances of the councils to the people. Given this, the study concludes that financial disclosure has improved as a result of the institutionalization of the service charter.

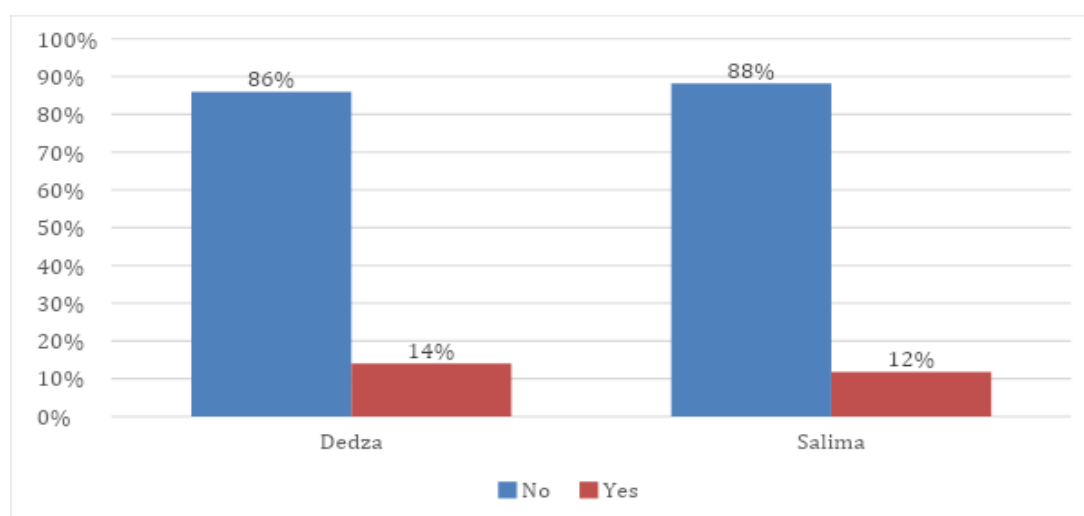


Figure 7.3 Financial Disclosures by Duty Bearers

The Figure 7.4 below further depicts how service users perceived the improvement levels in financial disclosures since the service charters reform initiative was institutionalized. About 12% of respondentts indicated that as a result of service charters duty bearers were sharing annual budgets with the citizens and 9.5% also were

of perception that expenditure reports were being shared as were 9.2 % on disclosures of tariffs or charges on services.

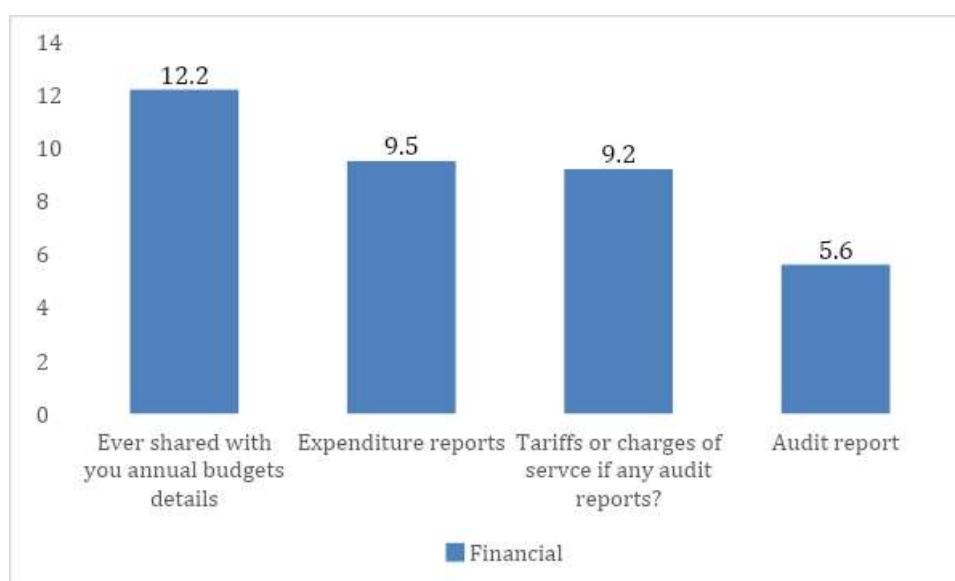


Figure 7.4 Perception Indicators on Financial Disclosures

While one KI (Dedza, July 2018) said that the service charters had improved transparency because there is always information posted on the notice boards which are accessible to citizens another KI (Dedza, July 2018) when asked if district council were producing financial reports and displaying them was of the opinion that,

as Councils we are supposed to be producing Performance Reports, quarterly, bi-annually and even yearly and paste/post them for everyone to see. But suffice to say that not many reports are provided to the local populace and posted. Other Expenditure Reports and Performance Reports are provided for whenever there is need. Suffice to say that within the standards it is stipulated that every quarter and disseminated all over. The budgets are usually disseminated at full Council Meetings.

The view above was consistent with the findings depicted in the above figure. As indicated earlier there was consensus from Duty Bearers and citizens that service charters influence disclosure.

7.2.2.2 Corporate Transparency

The study found that sectors with service charters (6) and in particular the the three sectors under study were complying with corporate transparency indicators namely the display of Name, Legal status, Mandate, Mission Goals, Contact information, Physical address because these were incorporated in the service charters and displayed at the entrance of offices. Organisation structures were not displayed and staff compliment lists were only produced for purposes of salary preparations. In the graph, Figure 7.5 below the perception of service users on display of various corporate indicators as a result of the service charters was at 69.4% for Names, 37.1% for Legal status; 46.1% for Mandate; 45.5 for Mission; 43% for Goals, 32.2% for organisation structure; 53% for Contact information, 61.1% for and Physical addresses. What this entails is that the respondents that had an opportunity to participate in the formulation of the service charters and were familiar with the process. Most likely also the respondents were those that were frequenting the services and knew the physical location of the service providers.

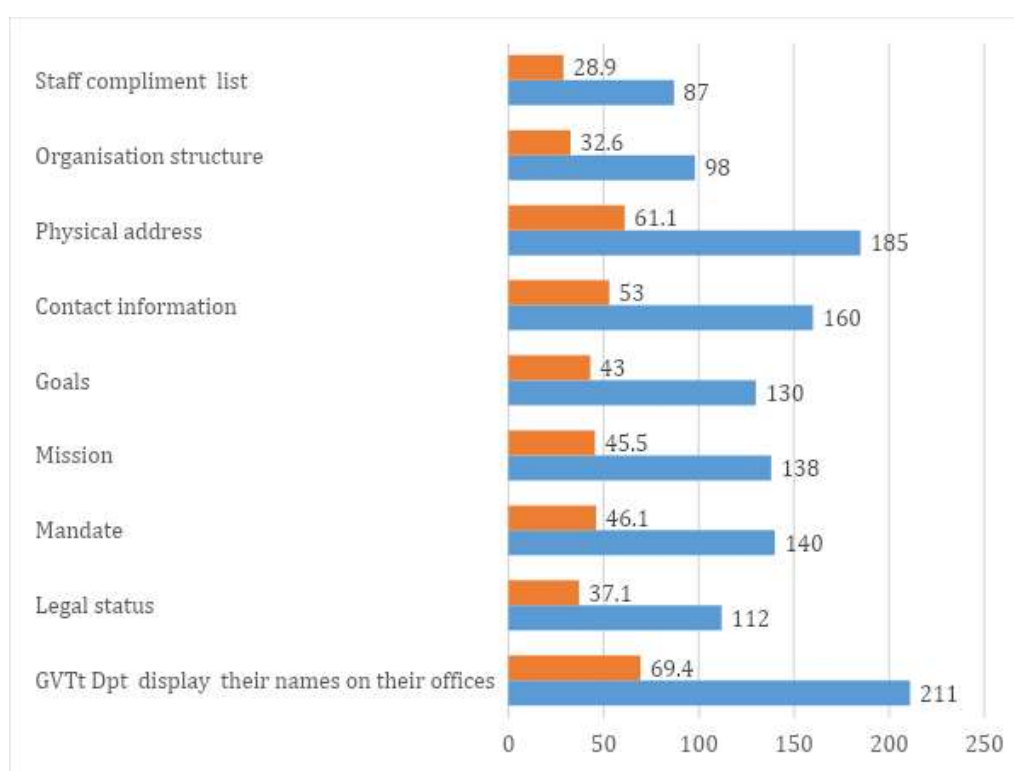


Figure 7.5 Corporate Transparency Indicators

7.2.2.3 Social Transparency Disclosure of Tariffs of Services and Service Standards

Social transparency in this study refers to Duty Bearers' listing and displaying of services offered; service standards and also informing citizens of the places where the services are offered as a result of the introduction of the service charters (Joshi, 2010). Commenting on the impact of the service charters on disclosure of tariffs of services and service standards KI (Salima, June 2018) said that public service organizations in Salima were now listing and displaying services offered as well as informing citizens where they can get these services. To this end, the KI further said there is a great improvement to the effect that before the service charters was developed one would see most people going behind the back and bribing officers to solicit services. However, with the charter, well displayed, people know that they have to get these services on a first come first serve basis. Services that attract a fee are also clearly indicated so that citizens are no longer duped into paying for services that are offered for free.

Through the semi-structured survey questionnaire, the study established that indeed as a result of the service charter Duty Bearers were displaying information about services on offer in each government department. In this regard, 35% respondents on the issue in Dedza indicated that governments departments were displaying information. In Salima it was 52% who affirmed as presented in 7.6 Figure.

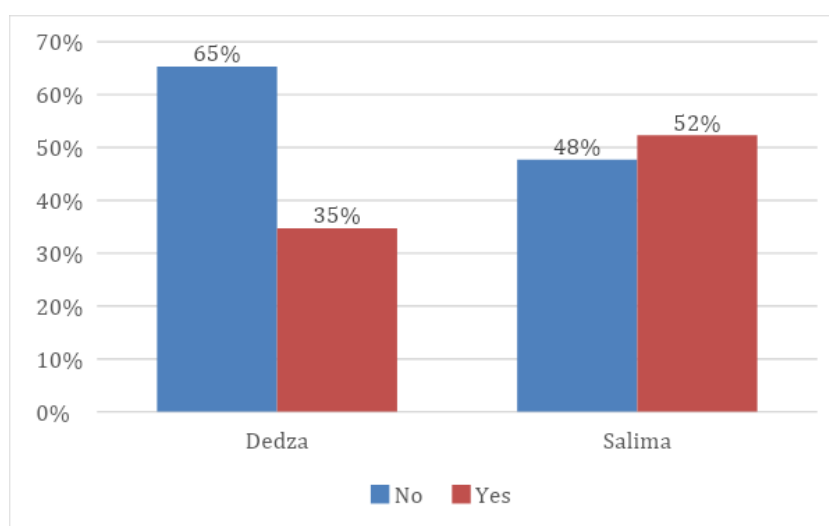


Figure 7.6 Duty Bearers Displaying Information on Services on Offer

In the agriculture sector a KI (Lilongwe, November 2018) disclosed that they had experienced great reduction in unofficial charges on services that were not meant to be charged as a result of institutionalizing the service charters at the ministry's head office. Said he,

Yes, there is a great improvement to the effect that before, we developed the charter, you would see most people going behind paying for services that they were supposed to get for free. But with the charter, well displayed, people know that they have to get these services for free.

The KI went further to state that a service charter for the Ministry was also a precondition for the Performance Contract which the ministry signed with the Office of the President and Cabinet. This was the case for all MDAs at the centre the study found out.

With regard to other social transparency indicators, including informing citizens where to get services, views from KIs and respondents of a questionnaire were also indicative that the introduction of the service charters reform initiative had positively impacted on elements of social transparency as espoused in the service charters. A KI (Dedza, July 2018) thus said that Duty Bearers were now able to advise citizens where they can get services. If, for example, the hospital does not have some medicines, Duty Bearers will accordingly inform the concerned people and direct to a pharmacy or private clinic to buy the medicines. In that regard, as presented in the Figure 7.7 below, there was a 46.4% perception that government departments were informing service users services these departments were offering. 50.5% perception that service providers described to users the services they were offering; and a 40.2 % perception that service users were able to inform service users quality standards they would expect from the public service providers. This is an aggregated data from the respondents from both Salima and Dedza.

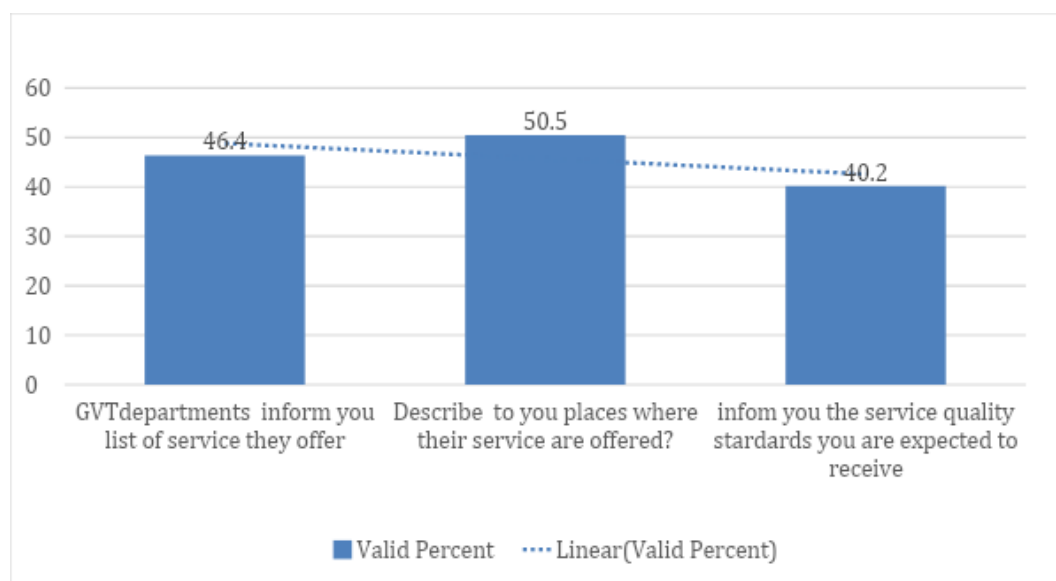


Figure 7.7 Social Transparency Indicators

When the above is disaggregated, particularly on whether the Duty Bearers were describing or informing citizens where to get services, in Salima 56% said Duty Bearers were informing them while in Dedza it was 36% as in Figure 7.8 below.

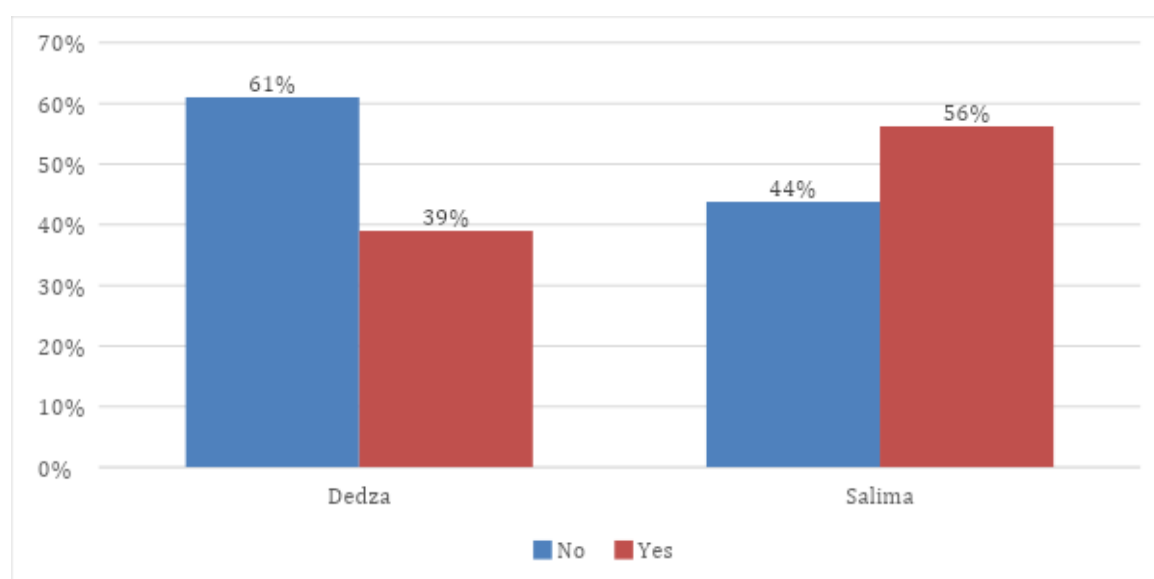


Figure 7.8 Duty Bearers Informing Citizens where Services Are Offered

The above findings are in line with Myers and Lacey (1996:337) cited in Therkildsen (2013) and Rhodes (1997) who observed that in the United Kingdom, for example, charters had been successful in encouraging transparency, openness and accountability. This state of affairs after the introduction of the charter sits well with the arguments advanced in the NPM among which accountability and transparency are prime tenets.

7.3 Citizen Empowerment

The focus of the study is establishing whether service charters had enhanced citizen empowerment as a critical aspect in the public service delivery chain. Citizen empowerment encompasses opportunities and accessibility provided to citizens through social institutions and structures for these citizens to develop capabilities to enable them to actively participate in matters that affect their lives (Kieffer, 2008; Rowlands, 2010). For empowerment to occur, citizens have to participate in the processes that affect their livelihoods. In that vein Murui (2014) defined citizen participation as the way in which citizens exercise influence and control over the decisions that affect them and therefore ideally it happens within prescribed structural and institutional frameworks that evolve from time to time. To this end, Drewry (2005) commenting on citizen participation as it relates to enhanced service delivery pointed out that enhanced service delivery is assessed by the extent to which citizen needs expressed through the established structures are reflected in the decisions and final services provided. Using Nabatchi's (2012) framework in analyzing the impact of service charters reform on enhancing citizen empowerment in the public service delivery chain the study used (a) Democratic Decentralization; (b) Access to information; and (c) institutionalized mechanisms for regular consultations between local governments and civil society organizations as yard sticks. The sections that follow, discuss the yardsticks in relation to enhanced service delivery.

7.3.1 Democratic Decentralization

Decentralisation as a public service reforms agenda itself entails the transfer of authority and responsibility for public functions (political and technical) from the central government to subordinate structures in this case local governments to promote citizen participation in matters of state (GoM, 1998; Sikwese, 2003; Chiweza, 2010; Tambulasi, 2010); and the NPM inherently promotes it as a tool for enhancing service delivery. Decentralisation is a matter that is also at the centre of the Governance Theory and Public Value Theory in particular (Moore, 1995). Democratic Decentralization obtains, when legislated and non-legislated governance structures and institutions are available. Legislated and non-legislated governance structures and institutions facilitate citizen empowerment when and where they enable citizens to engage in state matters are established at local level in any jurisdiction (Malena et al, 2004; Arroyo and Sirker, 2005; Nabatchi, 2012).

7.3.1.1 Legislated and non-legislated governance structures

In view of the above, the study's findings were that there were legislated and non-legislated (formal and informal) governance structures at the district and local level which were providing for citizen participation. In that regard, there were functional District Councils in both study districts and across the country established under relevant legislation and policy namely the Local Government Act (1998) and the Decentralisation Policy (1998). The sitting members of the councils at the time of data collection particularly the Councilors, were elected during the Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Elections held in May 2014. The councilors so elected were representatives of Wards that were duly demarcated by law. Therefore, citizens' participation was through these elected Councilors. As Chiweza (2010) argued, decentralization enhances political accountability and the responsiveness of local government politicians and executive staff towards citizens, thereby enhancing the legitimacy of local governments.

The study also found out that apart from the formal structures prescribed under the Local Government Act (1998), there were structures that are formalized through other Local Governance Documents like the District Development Planning Manual (GoM, 1997) and these are the Area Development Committees and Village Development Committees. The study also found out that Dedza District Council had other structures that were promoting social accountability of Duty Bearers (KI, Dedza July 2018). These structures were the Community Citizen Forums established within the VDCs and the ADCs. One KI (Dedza District Council, August 2018) thus said in addition to the VDCs, there were Community Citizen Forums where communities could channel their needs and that the communities have also been trained in Social Accountability as part of community empowerment (KI, Dedza District Council, August 2018). Inherently, in this regard, the issue of accountability is central. It is argued accountability, in this particular case, revolves around the question of interactive relationship between the principals and agents; and also the evaluation of performance of those entrusted with delivery of services among other issues discussed elsewhere. The objective of the Citizens Forums, the study thus argues, is also in line with the Public Value Theoretical Framework that among others provides for multiple accountability systems in the public service delivery chain including citizens as overseers. To this end, one KI said;

the Community Citizen Forums Members are specifically trained in social accountability to demand from the service providers or the authorities for them to explain or justify some of their actions. So I think these are some of the structures.

The establishment of Citizen Forum as social accountability platforms has been well documented in the governance circles. In that vein Fox (2014) emphasizes that such platforms are tools for social transparency that promote social accountability and expand the horizon of citizens in ensuring that citizen preferences are met and that set standards are achieved by Duty Bearers. This assertion is not outside the postulations of the theoretical framework of the study and its framework in vouching for service charter reforms as tools for enhancing public service delivery.

The above scenario, it can be argued argue is within the institutionalization theory, presents a case where the introduction of the service charter is one of incremental introduction of institutions and layering of structures giving a ‘fused’ framework for institutionalizing the service charter reform initiative.

When asked if they knew any structures through which they were to participate in matters affecting their welfare, almost 50% of the respondents said the district councils had legislated structures that they use to participate in matters of service delivery. The following Table 7.1 is a summary of legislated and non-legislated structures that facilitate citizen participation in public service delivery including service charter

Table 7.1: Structures for Citizen Participation in Service Charters

STRUCTURES	STATUS	OPERATIONAL LEVEL
District Council	Legislated - Act of Parliament	District Level
District Executive Committee		District Level
Area Development Committee	Non-legislated – Defined in District Development Planning Manual	Traditional Authority Level
Village Development Committee	Non-legislated	Group Village Level
District Service Charter Committee	Non-legislated: Defined in Public Service Charter Guidelines	District Level
Area Service Charter Committee	Non-legislated: Defined in Public Service Charter Guidelines	Traditional Authority Level
Complaints Handling Committee	Non-legislated: Defined in Public Service Charter Guidelines	District, Area and Village Levels
Citizen Forum Committee	Non-legislated: promoted by NICE	Group and single Village Level
SAMCOM	Non-legislated: promoted by United Purpose – NGO	District Level and only in Dedza

7.3.1.2 Institutionalized Mechanisms for Citizen Participation

The relevance and importance of legislated and non-legislated structures in enhancing citizen participation in service delivery cannot be ignored, particularly in ensuring that the service charters reform initiative achieves its objective. Establishing institutional frameworks at the sub-national level allows citizens to organize themselves to participate in political and economic decisions that affect them (Cheema, 2007, Madumo, 2014). Indeed, as Murui (2014) argued on the same, effective participation is more likely to work where formalized or legislated structures that compel or move politicians, government officials and citizens interact to strike a common ground and share information. Service charters formulation processes are more likely to guarantee citizen participation as they are a platform for exchanging information. It is in this context that when asked why citizen participation in service delivery is important in the service charters Reform Initiative, one KI (Salima, June 2018) said;

It is important because citizens are the users and in terms of customer satisfaction, if the citizens are satisfied it means the service is doing its intended work. So I think if the citizens are able to participate they will also provide good impression for the service provider for them to know they are doing well or not. Because if the service is not satisfactory then

it is a wrong use of the resources as the services are meant to satisfy the citizens or the users. Finally, whenever the citizens participate that also helps service providers to improve the service delivery.

All the key informants (100%) in the two study districts indicated that as a result of the introduction of the service charters, community participation in decision making at the Councils had increased. A case in point was cited where planning and prioritization on the usage of school improvement grants in the education sector cannot proceed without the involvement of communities (Salima District Council, June 2018). Previously, the grants were being centrally managed by the Division Education Manager's office.

In his contribution on the issue, an informant from the Extension Methodologies Office (Salima, June 2018) argued that due to the service charters reform initiative, the office was now obliged to involve chiefs and service beneficiaries when planning their yearly activities. Of particular importance, he stated that service users and other stakeholders are always engaged when planning on the distribution of fertilizer input subsidy coupons which is a critical issue in the agriculture sector. As discussed earlier on the issue of transparency, failure to involve communities in this respect is a recipe for chaos as the service beneficiaries were already empowered to demand explanations if not satisfied (KI Interview, Salima District Council Boma, June 2018). This, he believes, was an indication that service charters have helped to enhance citizen empowerment in the delivery of public service and also promoted accountability on the part of service providers.

In line with the above findings, it was no surprise that all KIs, therefore, appreciated that the Service Charter initiative had improved citizens voice in Salima and Dedza in not only determining the quality of services but demanding provision of such services. The consensus was that prior to the introduction of service charters, communities in the participating T/As were less vocal in terms of demanding better services than they were now (FGD Salima, May 2018; FGD Dedza, February 2019). A number of reasons were cited as to why the KIs and FGD participants believe citizens' voice greatly improved as follows: (a) the Council was constantly overwhelmed with demand for more and quality services e.g. the demand for more teachers, health centres, early childhood development centers and other social services; (b) Service beneficiaries now feel

obliged to monitor progress on the implementation of development projects such as those from LDF; (c) Service users currently speak with authority than before. To support the foregoing, a case where citizens continue to demand for an ambulance which was withdrawn by the DHO each time the assembly holds a community meeting at Chipoka Health Centre in TA Ndindi was cited (FGD, TA Ndindi Salima June 2018). These assertions by the FGD and KII at the Traditional Area level were collaborated as well as by the results of the questionnaire.

In view of this, when asked if they had participated in the formulation of any service charter 34% Of respondents in Salima said that they had participated while 25% of the respondents in Dedza had also participated as presented in Figure 7.9 below.

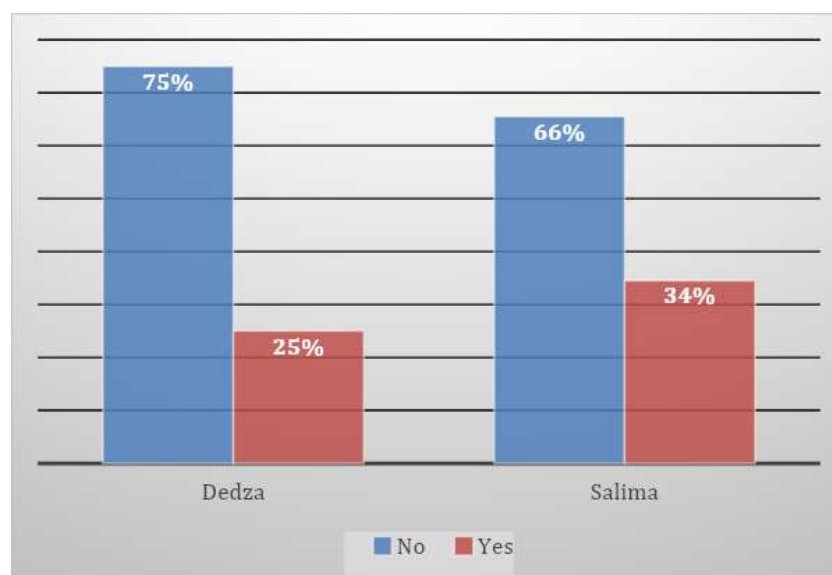


Figure 7.9 Participation in the formation of Service Charters

When further asked whether participation of citizens in the public service delivery was important, respondents overwhelmingly said that participation was important as 256 out of the 304 said so. In that regard, in Salima 185 out of 204 respondents considered it was important while in Dedza it was 71 out of 100. Graphically the picture was as presented in Figure 7.10.

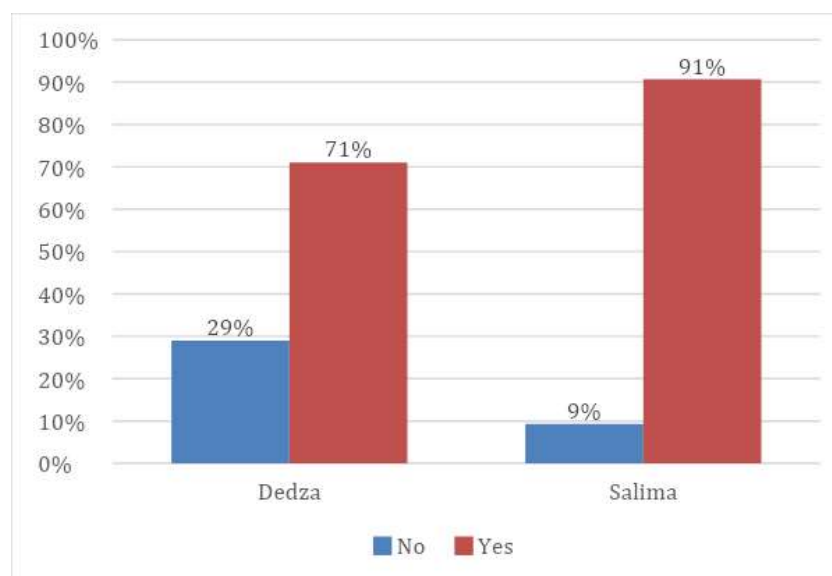


Figure 7.10 Importance of Citizen Participation in Service Delivery Chain

7.4 Functional Complaints and Feedback Mechanism

In the Department of Human Resource Management and Development, one KI (Lilongwe, May 2018) expressed satisfaction that the service charters had made some positive change to the way services were being delivered especially in relation to complaints of poor service experience in service delivery and taking responsibility for action and inaction among other things not attending timely to clients. In view of accountability, he put it that some strides have been made because the officers know that, including the KI himself, if a client complained to the Principal Secretary (PS) for not getting a service, the PS will check what the service charter says and query the responsible officer who will have to explain to him why he/she did not deliver that service. This, he argued, was not the case before the service charter was commissioned. While that was the case, the study noted that while Duty Bearers in the DHRMD might be implementing the service charters to improve service delivery, they were facing a mindset challenge entrenched in the Malawi Culture. Said the Informant (Lilongwe, May 2018),

where people do not want to come and ask or take us to task for accountability. That may be because people who come to demand services or from ministries are afraid of destroying personal relationships, when I report them to their bosses but in essence the office itself is bound by the Charter and knows that anything happening I will be answerable to the Department and to the country.

The challenges reflected above where service users are not able to report when they do not get an appropriate service or delayed service as stipulated in the service charters, may be as a result of limited civic education to the masses or cultural issue.

Members of the FGDs in both study districts displayed knowledge and understanding of the various committees or institutions through which complaints could be channeled to the relevant authorities for their attention as stipulated in the service charters. These institutions included VDCS, ADC, School Management Committees, Community Policing Committees, Service Charter User Committees, and Service Charter Complaints Handling Committees. Related to this, therefore, the study noted that the citizens are able to lodge complaints with the Complaints Handling Committee and the complaints are duly forwarded to relevant authorities (FGD TA Mwanza, June 2018; FGD, TA Ndindi Salima June 2018; FGD Dedza, February 2019). The District Council is very responsive to complaints said participants at the FGDs, citing removal of some Duty Bearers from the area when it had become untenable to still have them operate in the area. In another case a Key respondent in Salima said that,

the Service Charter has helped citizens to voice out their concerns i.e. in hospitals and schools. For example, in 2017 in TA Mwanza a Medical personnel could open a health centre at his will but when the service charters were introduced and citizens were aware that it opens at 07:30hrs we confronted him and he changed. This was possible because of the Service Charter.

In view of the above 67% of the respondents when asked if they were aware that they can report poor service, they said they were aware and when further asked if they have ever reported on any poor service only 36% said that they had ever reported. On whether they knew availability of organizations where to complain about poor service 49% said they knew. As read from/indicated in Table 7.2 below more citizens in Salima were aware that they can report poor services, and a good number had reported as to compared to those in Dedza. The explanation for the difference is likely because Salima had a more institutionalized service charter system considering that the service charter reform initiative was introduced much earlier than in Dedza.

Table 7.2: Complainants Mechanisms Indicators

		Are you aware you can report poor service delivery?		Have you every reported on any poor service?		Availability of organizations where to complain about poor service	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
District	Dedza	65	34	91	9	73	27
	Salima	36	167	102	101	82	122
Total		101 (33%)	201 (67%)	193 (64%)	110 (36%)	155 (51%)	149 (49%)

Commenting on the issue of complaints mechanisms, a KI (Lilongwe, November 2019) was aware that the service charters have been accompanied with use of suggestion boxes where people have to put their experience on the quality of services and delivery.

7.5 Quality of Services

Analysis of data from KI, FGDs and the questionnaire concludes that the service charters reforms initiative has had a positive impact on public service delivery in different dimensions ranging from improved service provider-service user relationships, satisfaction to improved access and quality of services. The perception on the quality of services is within Zeithaml et al. (1990) description of quality, being the difference between customer expectations of service and perceived service. Quality of service is, therefore, embedded in the concept of customer satisfaction against perception. As discussed elsewhere, customer satisfaction refers to the utility value derived by the customer upon consumption of a product or service as attested by the independent opinion of the consumer of the product or service (GoM, 2016). To this end, the yardsticks used to measure the quality of services or the utility value in this study are reliability, accessibility, responsiveness, credibility, and courteousness. These are based on the SERVQUAL Model (Ramseook-Munhurrun et al., 2010). In view of this the findings in this section are discussed under indicators of reliability, accessibility, responsiveness, credibility, and courteousness. However, before that is refelected on, dimensions of quality service will be discussed.

In view of the above, understanding of what constitutes quality services, the focus of the study was on perceptions of service users and in that regard, and as far as the study was concerned, focus was not about finding absolute truths from without and the choice

of an interpretive methodology was appropriate. Indeed, as Justin (2008) and Silverman (2017) argue, public administration as both a field of scholarly inquiry and a field of professional practice dictates the use of diversity of paradigms, designs, and methods of research according to the specific purposes and audiences; and therefore, the conclusion that this study was largely on perceptions, experience, and feelings of people on services they consume and not about absolutes, the choice of interpretive methodology was appropriate. Therefore, the results are treated as positives as far as services are perceived to have improved as a consequence of the institutionalization of service charters reform initiative.

Given that dimension in which quality was interpreted in the study, a general position that is based on the analysis of the responses from the KI, FDG participants and the respondents from the questionnaire on the selected indicators of reliability, responsiveness, accessibility, and courteousness, is that the quality of services had improved as a result of institutionalizing the service charter reform initiative. The rating is based on the questionnaire responses on whether service charters have made any difference to the quality of services as in the Table 7.3 below.

Table 7.3: Introduction of Service Charters and Quality of Services

		Has the introduction of Service Charters made any difference to the quality of services?		Total
		No	Yes	
District	Dedza	82	17	99
	Salima	103	100	203
Total		185	117	302

Given the above information in Table 7.3, in Salima 100 out 203 respondents said the introduction of services had a positive impact on quality of service delivery translating into 49%. In Dedza 17% (17 out of 99) were of the perception that the service charter had a positive impact as presented in Figure 7.11 below.

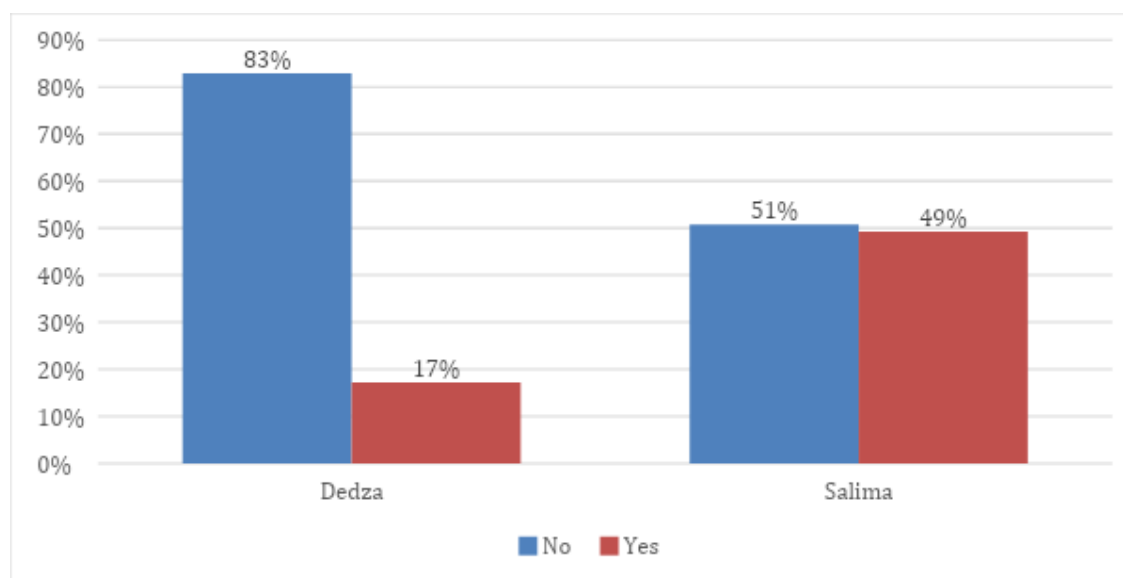


Figure 7.11 Introduction of Service Charter and Quality of Service Delivery

Below is a presentation of the perceptions from the respondents to the questionnaire on reliability, responsiveness, accessibility, credibility, and communication.

7.5.1 Reliability

Reliability manifests through consistent performance and dependability of provision of a service by Duty Bearers (Ramseook-Munhurrin, et al., 2010). In this regard, when asked if the service providers had become more reliable when providing services as a result of the institutionalization of the service charters, many respondents both KIs and participants in the FGD and those who responded were of the view that there was a big improvement. For example, according to the participants at the FDG reliability included experiencing better relationships with health personnel in the three health facilities in TA Mwanza and as a result more women are now giving birth at the facilities. People know that health facilities are supposed to be open from 07:30 – 16:30 hours and indeed the health facilities do open and facilities and services can be accessed off these hours on emergency (FGD, TA Mwanza June 2018).

In another case one KI (Dedza, July 2018) rated the Duty Bearers' reliability at 60%. His argument was that this would have been much more were it that the service charters were consistently disseminated. He further argued that the limited dissemination was a deliberate move by some Duty Bearers to bar communities from accessing information on service for fear that they would be exposed. On the other hand, respondents to the questionnaire as presented in the graph above put reliability of Duty Bearers at 41% as

a result of the institutionalization of the service charter reform initiative. It is argued that had it been that the Access to Information Act (2016) was operational the results would have been different. Figure 7.12 is a presentation of disaggregated data for the two study districts in terms of their perceptions on how the service charters had impacted on reliability of service delivery.

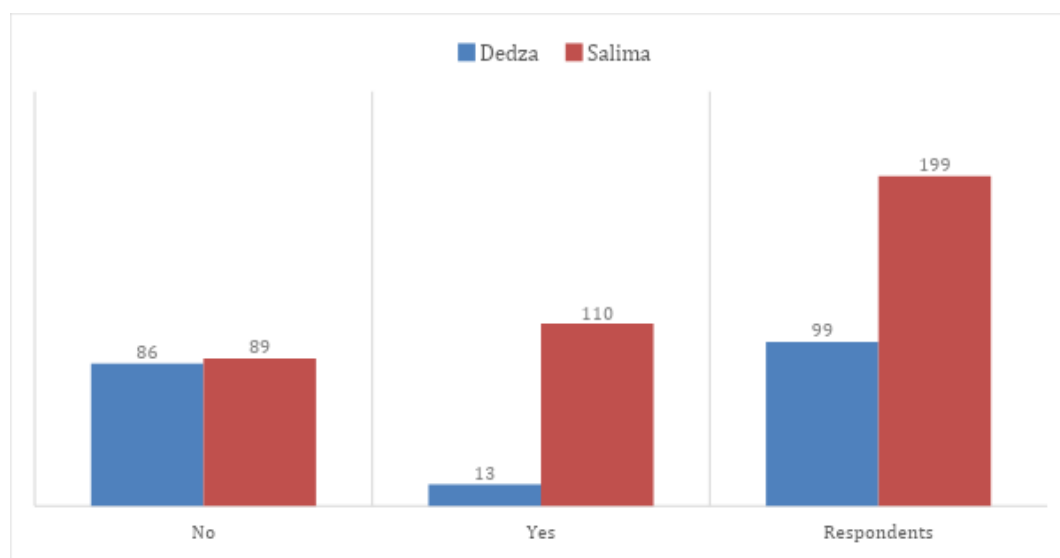


Figure 7.12 Reliability Indicator

The overall picture is that reliability of services has improved as a result of the introduction and institutionalization of the service charter.

7.5.2 Accessibility

Accessibility involves approachability to the service providers by service users as well the convenience of location of a service (Ramseook-Munhurrun et al., 2010). Depending on the services sought, this may also include waiting time to receive a service and the time service is offered. Given that understanding of accessibility KIs at the central, local and village level were of the opinion that accessibility to services had improved as a result of service charters. To this end, in the agriculture sector a KI (Salima, June 2018) cited the way Lead Farmers get information at Agriculture Offices where there was increased accessibility to services as a result of the introduction of the service charters reform initiative as time is clearly indicated. Through the service charters, Lead Farmers get information regarding farming and this is passed on to all farmers.

One KI (Salima, June 2018) at the district level in his narration, argued that service charters have improved relationships between service users and service providers especially in areas where previously, there were conflicts. The health sector was cited as one such sector which was characterized by conflicts. An example of an outstanding conflict revolved around the opening times of health facilities in the rural areas, and the reporting time of health attendants. The study found out that before the introduction of service charters, health personnel could open health service centers anytime they wished against the provisions in the Health Policy of 2017 and the Malawi Public Service Regulations which state that citizens can still access health services from 07:30 a.m. to 5:00 pm as outpatients and that citizens can access these facilities anytime beyond normal working hours in case of emergencies (KIs, Dedza July 2018). The service charters promoted knowledge among citizens on the operating hours and, therefore, the health personnel could no longer behave as if the health facilities were operating at their mercy to the extent that when citizens required services, they were being denied access at times. The conflicts have significantly reduced as the service charters has exposed the citizens as to what they can expect from Duty Bearers in the health sector

The assertion above was well corroborated with KIs at the TA level. The study found that in Traditional Authority Mwanza, the KIs, the FGD participants were of the view that there has been an improvement in the delivery of services since the introduction of service charters in the sectors that had the service charters namely; Health, Education, Social Welfare, Police and Agriculture. The improvements included resolving conflicts that arose between Duty Bearers and citizens due to citizens not knowing what to expect from service providers. To that end the FGD in TA Mwanza (Salima, June 2018) revealed that the opening time of the health center is no longer an issue as it opens on the prescribed times defined in the service charter.

Confirming that that there were some improvements in accessing the health services, another KI (Dedza, July 2018) summarized the situation as follows:

the service charter is encouraging all patients to know what to expect when they go to the hospitals to seek medical attention and patients should be able to demand better services unlike just waiting as it has been happening in the past. The charter is helping people know what services

are offered at the hospitals they visit so that they should know in advance that their other expectations cannot be met at certain hospitals.

In the education sector the study found out that service charters were being used to lobby for more teachers to be placed in schools thereby lessening the tensions that arose due to dysfunctional pupil-teacher ratios. This assertion was well corroborated with KIs at the TA level. In TA Mwanza, for example, the FGD participants (Salima June 2018) revealed that the number of teachers in schools within the area had improved following the introduction of service charters as communities were told of the standard number of teachers required at a school and wherever there was a gap they were able to demand from Duty Bearers to post more teachers. This in turn has enabled more children to be going to school because they are being attended to. In his own words one FDG participant said for example,

we have more than 10 teachers/school which never used to be the case before we knew the minimum number of teachers in primary schools. Having known we are now able to demand. For example, at Kalokola School, there was only 1 Teacher but after a complaint was raised with the PEA within a short period 4 more teachers were posted.

The FDG participants also explained changes in the agriculture sector where an Extension Worker just disappeared from the area denying citizens the much needed services. The Service Charter User Committee in conjunction with the ADC wrote the relevant office with the support of the Traditional Authority and a replacement was eventually made while acknowledging that it took a bit of pushing and time. The FGD revealed that agriculture productivity had also improved due to the ability of the people to reach them for advice where necessary following the empowerment experienced through the service charters Reform Initiative.

One KI (Salima, June 2018) also indicated that more students are on bursary due to their increased awareness of the functions of the Social Welfare Department and more importantly they were able to demand the services. The above qualitative data affirm that accessibility of services had improved as a result of institutionalizing the service charters reform initiative. Analysis of responses from the questionnaire as per Figure 7.13 indicates about 39%% respondents were of the perception that accessibility to services had improved.

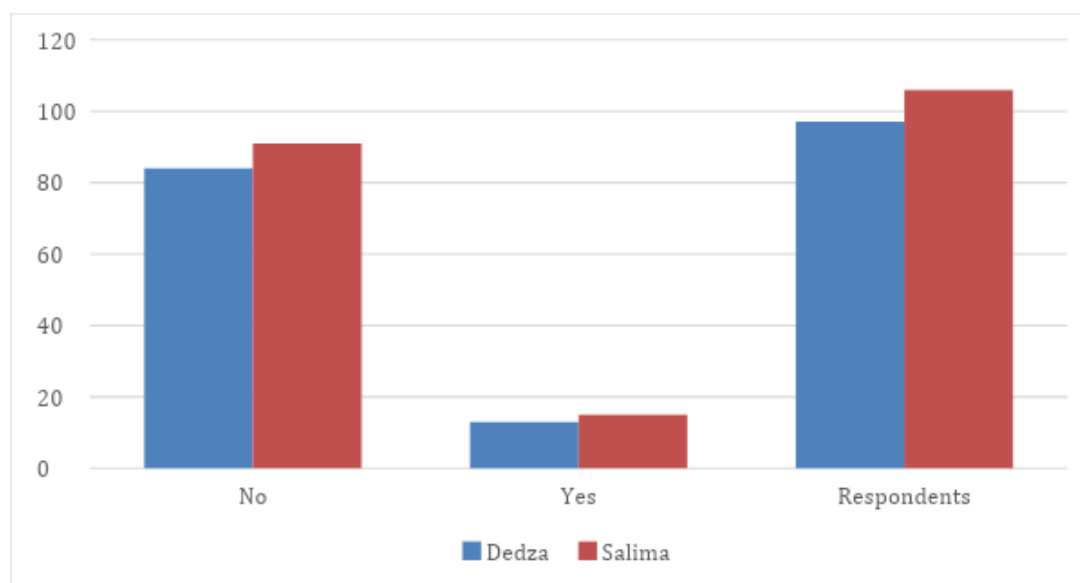


Figure 7.13 Accessibility Indicator by District

7.5.3 Responsiveness

Responsiveness relates to how timely service providers react to citizen needs and demands as well as their willingness or readiness to provide a service (Ramseook-Munhurrin et al, 2010). In that vein an informant in the OPC (Lilongwe, May 2018) indicated that the institutionalization of the service charter reform initiative has assisted the office in enhancing responsiveness in the course of service delivery. The informant qualified his assertions by saying;

the objective of service charters is to improve the service delivery in the public service. We, therefore, made commitments in the service charter that if someone just wants to enquire on a matter he/she can be assisted within a day and within minutes depending on the complexity of the issue being enquired on. Secondly, we also committed to say when an applicant comes here for change of name or to use the protected names like Malawi, we will ensure that any applicant gets an approval or feedback by the end of 14 days. To this end, the service charter is forcing us to say we should fulfil our commitments.

He further said that sometimes they deliver the service before the two weeks' elapse. In addition, he said they deliver a service within days, sometimes if there were some delays it was two weeks but they always ensured that by the end of that period they commit themselves to provide a service they should actually deliver. In that case he argued that the service charters have helped Duty Bearers in the OPC to improve on

timeliness as previously they could exceed that time frame without fear of any repercussion.

In responding to whether the service charters had improved responsiveness to customers in the Ministry of Health, one KI (Lilongwe, November 2018) said that there were some improvements at the head office of the Ministry but was not sure of the impact at the district level. In affirming that service delivery has improved, he gave an example of the front desk where clients /service users commended the way they were being welcomed following the introduction of the service charters. In addition, the study also found out that Duty Bearers that were aware of the service charters were courteous and responsive except where resources were not available. One KI, thus, said that the service charter had improved time management both on patients' side as well as on health workers since there were disclosures on times that services would be offered and therefore improved on responsiveness.

However, another KI (Salima, June 2018) said the workers seem to be responsive at times but their unreasonable reaction at some times suggests they are not concerned at all. To that end, one respondent felt the Duty Bearers were not responsive. Said he, for example,

Citizens arrive at the health facilities in the morning but service providers just dillydally and eventually they tell you to go back without attending to you... and those who go to health facilities at night are not attended to instead they are just rebuked by health workers. On the list of the services they offer they indicated time as well as what they offer but what they do is contrary.

In Dedza District Council the findings from the KIs, the FGD and the questionnaires' results (Dedza, July 2018) on the impact of the service charters particularly on responsiveness were not very different from those in Salima much as the period of implementing the reform initiative was deemed short for a meaningful assessment. To that end an informant from the Directorate of Planning and Development (Dedza July, 2018) stated that there was some change in terms of performance. Much as he was of the opinion that the time factor was a limiting issue to assess the effect of the service charters, he acknowledged that there are key areas where he could say that there have

been some key improvements mainly in the health water sector and security. In that vein, therefore, he gave examples in the health sector that:

we had one of the health centres in TA Kaphuka where the service providers were closing the center during the weekends which is not supposed to be that the case. Once the Service Charter was introduced, it was disseminated to the local level and the locals knew the standards, how these health personnel should conduct themselves. So through their Citizen Forum, because they were empowered, they knew what is within the Service Charter they raised a concern to the DHO and the Council and that was resolved. And as I am talking now that Health Centre is operating all days of the week. I may allude that to the Service Charter because that tendency was there because the local population did not know the standards and to what levels they are supposed to report and due to the Citizen Forum they raised it up and it was resolved. I feel that is one of the examples I may provide.

Another case cited as an example of improved responsiveness was in the Water Sector where there are prescribed standards to be followed when the sector has to provide potable water to locals. The informant said there are a number of players in the sector on the ground and these players include the Water Department which is the Policy Holder. These are expected to further guide the NGOs and the Faith Based Organizations (FBO) which are also providing the same services to the locals. To augment the case on the impact of service charter in the Water Sector, the informant referred to case of a FBO, which instead of drilling boreholes were just providing shallow wells against the set standards of a borehole. In addition, the District Water Office was not consulted and did not even know that there was another player on the ground. So because these communities were empowered through the service charter they informed and queried the District Water Office to provide reasons why they allowed this other FBO to provide shallow wells instead of boreholes. The issue was quickly resolved as well the KI indicated. Another KI concurring with the informant from the Department of Planning and Development said that he was of the view that to some extent the service charter has had an impact as there were some communities that are aware of the standards and are able to demand services in reference to the Service Charter (KI, Dedza July 2018) and duty bearers are now responding to citizen queries in time.

While Informants acknowledged some improvements in the efficiency of service delivery at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology head office, the study noted a number of issues that may have contributed to the improvement of delivery of some services that were not necessarily as a result of the introduction of the service charters. For example, the Ministry had decentralized management of Basic Education Teachers to the Local Authorities Service Commission and District Education Managers Office more or less at the same time of formulating or implementing service charters (KI, Lilongwe November 2018). The transfer of this function led to decongestion at the head offices particularly due to teachers who were visiting the office to process their leave grants. One KI qualified the developments as follows,

that has two sides of the issue because; I think you are aware that this is one of the Ministries that has gone out in terms of decentralization. Right now as I am talking to you if we are left with anything as far as basic education which is primary, it could be very few files if I could use that word. Because we had a stakeholders meeting last year in September that involved the Secretariat, LASCOM and other stakeholders from all over the Ministry of Education, Divisions the Districts where we agreed that come December, 2017 should be the last month where the Ministry should be seen like handling files to do with Primary School Teachers. So we had agreed that any outstanding disciplinary issues, those between September, and December, those should be sorted out and handed over to LASCOM so that that would be one of the reasons that there is no commotion around.

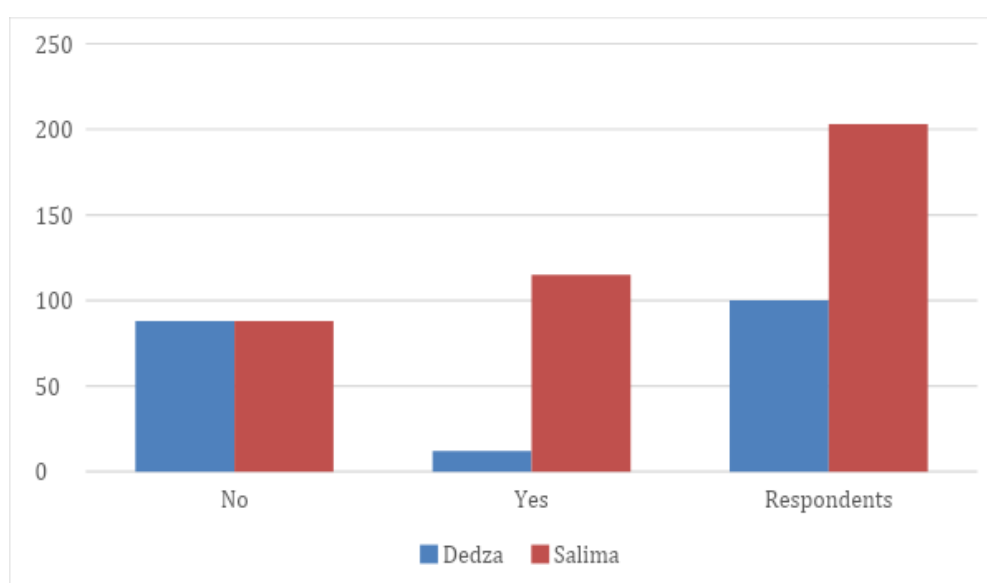


Figure 7.14 Responsiveness Indicator per District

As per results from the quantitative data present in Figure 7.14 above, the respondents' perception on the responsiveness of Duty Bearers as a result of the institutionalization of the service charters in the public was that it had improved with at about 42% of the respondents, saying so.. More respondents in Salima were of the view that responsiveness had improved and this owes to the fact that the service charter reform initiative was more institutionalized in Salima than in Dedza; a factor that is further attributed to historical timelines in the introduction of the service charter reform initiative as discussed in the previous chapter.

7.5.4 Credibility

According to Ramseook-Munhurrin et al. (2010) credibility includes elements of trustworthiness, believability, and honesty of Duty Bearers in the course of discharging their duties by service users. In that regard, FDG participants (Salima, TA Mwanza June 2018) said with the introduction of service charters the situation has improved and citizens are having some confidence in the Duty Bearers, citing the case of health services where according to the participants included a better relationship with health personnel in the three health facilities in TA Mwanza and as a result more women are now giving birth at the health facilities as opposed to traditional birth attendants. This finding is supported by one of the objectives of introducing service charters which is to build and harness trust of the citizens in the Malawi Public Service (OPC, 2010). In that regard, an informant from the MHRC (Lilongwe, November 2018) in outlining the rationale for establishing the service charters said that among the objectives of the service charters there was the issue of building confidence of citizens in the public service by ensuring that public servants were delivering services according to law and their mandates.

On the other hand, the study encountered concerns regarding the construction of school blocks suggesting the service charter did not improve the quality of services in terms of credibility. A case of Ching'ombe Primary School block in Salima where funds depleted before a structure was not yet finished was cited as an example that construction is associated with corruption (Salima, June 2018). Another case of lack credibility was when one respondent said the Duty Bearers prescribing medication before patients finished explaining their problems were not credible questioning how they would prescribe medication and tell patients to get medication before they hear all

about the problem of a patient (Respondent to Questionnaires, Salima Boma, June 2018). The study concluded that these were genuine issues, much as they were not directly related to the subject under study.

In as far as perceptions on credibility were concerned, respondents said that credibility of service providers as well as services had improved by about 36% as a result of the institutionalization of the CSC service charters reform initiative. A number of respondents said now people have confidence in Duty Bearers (Respondent to Questionnaires, Salima, June 2018; Dedza July 2018). Graphically this is presented as in Figure 7.15 below.

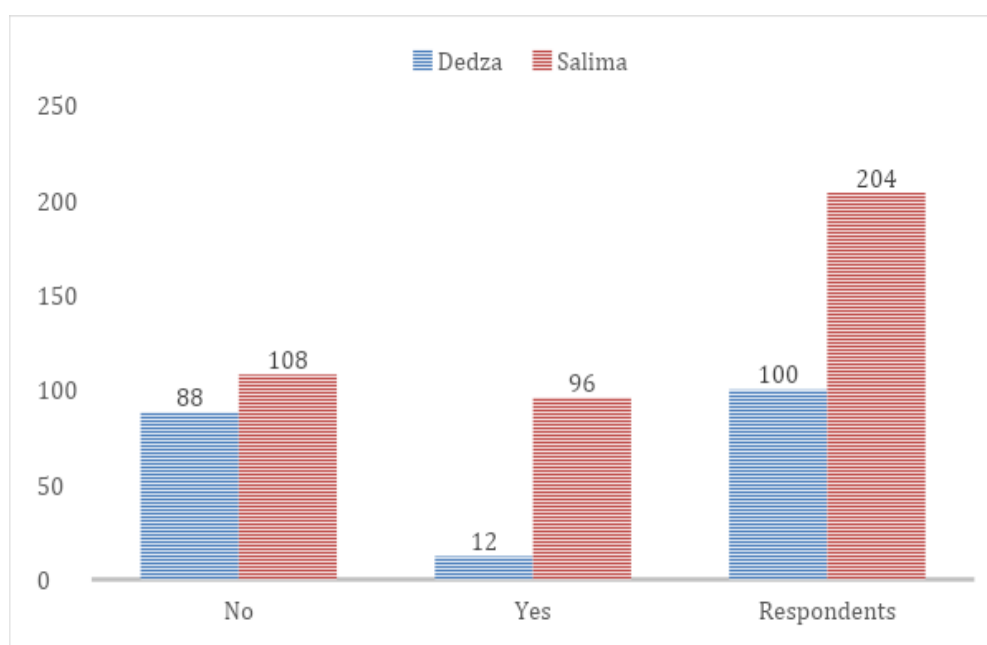


Figure 7.15 Credibility Indicator per District

7.5.5 Communication and Courteousness

Communication on one hand constitutes mechanism through which service users are informed in a medium that they will clearly understand and listen. Courteousness on the other hand involves politeness, respect, consideration and friendliness of contact persons. Courteousness is dependent on communication skills or public relations (Ramseook-Munhurrin et al., 2010). Courteousness, therefore, involves explaining politely the kind of services, the cost if any in a friendly manner by the street-level bureaucrats. In that regard, out of the 304 respondents when asked if communication to them by Duty Bearers on the services they expect had improved as a result of the

introduction of the customer service charter, 129 said it had and 175 said it had not as presented in Figure 7.16 below. Those who said yes represented about 42.3%. More respondents in Salima were in the affirmative to the question, a factor that could be related to the fact that Salima had implemented the service charter reform earlier and for a longer period than Dedza.

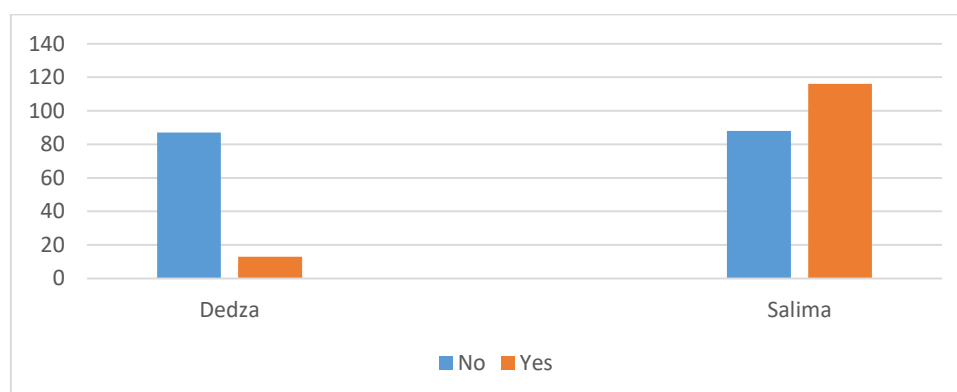


Figure 7.16 Communication on Services to Expect

In view of courteousness, in organizations where the service charters were introduced most teachers and even health workers who knew about the service charters were said to be very courteous. However, these workers, in the words of one respondent, seem not to be happy with their salaries hence they transfer their anger on clients and not their employers.

7.6 Conclusion

The objective of this chapter was to present findings on the effect of institutionalization of public and enhancement of public service delivery. The presentation and analysis was premised on the main objective of the study which was to analyse whether the public sector reforms lead to enhanced public service delivery using the Malawi Public Service Charter as a case and on the specific objective which was to assess how the introduction of has led to enhanced quality of public services. The overall conclusion is that where the institutionalization of the service charters reform in the public service delivery chain in Malawi is done, citizens have experienced enhanced service delivery.

The conclusion is arrived at as the KIs and FGD participants' indicated improvement in key indicators of enhanced service delivery namely accountability and transparency;

citizen empowerment; and quality of services defined in reliability, responsiveness, accessibility and credibility of Duty Bearers in the execution of their duties. The findings also justified the conceptual framework of the study that postulated that realization of enhanced service delivery is dependent on the institutionalizing of accountability and transparency being indicators of good governance; citizen empowerment and service quality standards in the public service delivery chain. This also was consistent with literature on what constitutes enhanced services. Enhanced service according to Murui (2013), is, among others the extent to which citizen needs expressed through the established structures are reflected in the decisions and final services so provided. This further is supported by the SERVQUAL model of quality services namely reliability, accessibility, responsiveness of service providers, credibility of services, effectiveness of communication and courteousness of service providers.

In that context, the study also concluded that the service charter was duly promoted through legislated structures namely the district councils, and area development committees. In addition, there were other informal structures like CFC and SAMCOM though only in Dedza, that enhanced citizen participation. These factors are at the core of the service charters reform initiatives and service charters and, is argued, were enablers in enhancing public services delivery (Drewry, 2005) by instituting good governance (accountability and transparency), and transforming service standards namely reliability, responsiveness, accessibility credibility of services delivered, courteousness and of Duty Bearers; and enhancing citizen empowerment (citizen participation and decentralized governance).

The study also concludes that there are a number of factors that affect full realization of the benefits of reforms that need to be addressed or enhanced. The factors were identified as lack a very definitive legal and policy framework to guide the implementation of the service charters; frequent transferring/posting of key Duty Bearers (high staff turnover); resistance from line ministries to fully devolve their functions; no dedicated financial resources for formulating, implementing and popularizing ; resistance from Duty Bearers to embrace the service charter initiative; publicity and dissemination of the service charters; limited engagement of stakeholders by MDAs in the formulation of service charters; changes in the organisation structures and leadership of reform initiatives; different formats of the service charters; lack of

inter-agency linkages; limited or no dissemination/Civic Education on service charters; slow implementation of the CS Reform initiative across the districts; and weak linkage of Central Government Agencies with the Local Governments; and implicit policy on service charters.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Introduction

This Chapter presents conclusions drawn from the study's findings guided by problem statement, the main objective of the study and the conceptual framework. The chapter is structured into Introduction; Major findings with focus on the rationale and process of introducing reforms, institutionalization of public sector reforms, public sector reforms and enhanced public service delivery and; Study implications that speaks to the contribution of the study to the knowledge build, key lessons and proposed areas of future research.

Public sector management reforms are an inevitable occurrence in public services worldwide as governments always have to develop or solicit management technologies that will enable them to meet the ever-changing public service demands of citizens (Fatile et al., 2010; Tambulasi, 2010). It is, therefore, not surprising that there is a plethora of public sector reforms under implementation in developing countries that are either borrowed from western countries and home grown in some instances (Olufemi, 2010). Despite the many and diverse public sector management reform initiatives that developing countries (Olufemi, 2010) including Malawi undertake, and the tremendous progress made in adopting development-oriented legislation and policies, gaps still remain in documenting or ascertaining whether enhanced delivery of services is attained as a result of these reform initiatives (Mutahaba, 1989; Humphreys, 1998).

It is in the context, of the public sector charter reform initiative that this study analyzes whether the public sector reforms lead to enhanced public service delivery using the Malawi Public Service Charter as a case. Inherently, the study focuses on establishing the rationale for introducing the service charter as a reform initiative in the public service delivery chain and the approach used in the to introduce the service charters reform initiative matters in terms of key actors, their roles and interests.

The study seeks to determine the extent to which the service charters reform initiative is institutionalized within the public service delivery chain; and, if it is institutionalized, assess whether the service charter reform initiative leads to enhanced public service delivery. The study, thus, also seeks to fill the knowledge gap in the service charter area as tools for enhancing service delivery, acknowledging that while there are a number of studies that have been done on public sector reforms, these studies particularly in Malawi did not speak to how public sector charter reforms lead to enhanced service delivery.

In view of the above, the study concludes and has revealed that public sector reforms lead to enhanced public service delivery. Enhanced service delivery in this study is understood to constitute the extent to which services delivered by public service agents at the central government and in the two districts studied match the preferences of the citizens. Attainment and sustained enhanced service delivery is, therefore, the desire of every government and the public service thereof. Enhanced service delivery is assessed by the extent to which citizen needs expressed through their participation done through established structures are reflected in the decisions and final services provided and consumed (Patterson, 1998; Murui 2013). The hallmark of enhanced public services, therefore, the study's conclusion is attested through citizens' satisfaction in the two districts of the services they consume and value for their taxes. The call to enhancing services is driven by needs of citizens who are in pursuit of quality of services from public service Duty Bearers to meet their ever changing needs and who often complain of poor services but in most cases lack means to complain and take to task duty bearers (Josh, 2010). Many factors are cited by scholars and public administration practitioners as causes of poor quality of service delivery including public services in these countries being adjudged to be inefficient, less transparent and not accountable to the people they serve (Lane, 1997). It is in pursuit of delivering quality services that governments, including the government of Malawi, undertake public service reforms including service charter reform initiatives to ensure that citizens are satisfied with services (GoM, 2010).

8.2 Major Findings of the Study

The study concludes that public sector charter reforms lead to enhanced service delivery. The thesis is a buildup of the findings on the main objective of the study which was to analyse whether public sector reforms enhance public service delivery using the Malawi Public Service Charter reform initiative as a case study. The findings are summarized and presented under the key thematic areas namely; establishing the rationale for introducing the service charters in the Malawi public service delivery chain; and how the service charters reform initiative was introduced in terms of key actors their roles and interests; determining the extent to which the service charters reform initiative was institutionalized within the public service delivery chain; and assessing whether service charters led to enhanced public service delivery. The summary of the results is presented as follows.

8.2.1 Rationale and the process of Introduction of the Customer Service Charters in the Malawi Public Service

The study found that the approach the government of Malawi took in introducing a reform determines the efficacy of its implementation, a bearing on the level of institutionalization, and let alone on the efficacy of such reform vis a vi its intended objectives. This study has, thus, examined comprehensively a number of issues with an emphasis on the criticality of defining key stakeholders and the roles that these play in the process of introducing a reform mindful of the importance of local social-economic and political institutions and structures. The study also concretizes the understanding of the rationale for introducing the service charter public sector reform initiative as a tool for improving accountability and transparency in service standards; empowerment of citizens to participate in the public service delivery chain and finally the quality of services.

In view of the context above, the study further concludes that in the introduction endeavours of the service charter in the Malawi Public Service, the government took ownership and a proactive approach that was based on policy learning supported by development partners without whole sale policy transfer being mindful of local socio-economic and political factors. The policy learning was in the form of analysis of what was obtaining in other jurisdictions through study tours, conferences facilitated by policy entrepreneurs and practitioners in the area of service charters. The policy

learning was accompanied by local studies to assess relevance and adequacy of legislation and policies and piloting. These aspects are essential steps in the effective introduction of public sector reform.

The study, thus, concludes, that policy learning outcomes and synchronization of the same to local institutions is critical as it is to relevant legislation and policy instruments in ensuring that a reform is not only introduced but institutionalized ref. Further, one-point of learning on policy from the study is that learning from other jurisdictions, using policy entrepreneurs and piloting is essential not only to avoid pitfalls but also to enhance capabilities as evidenced by the learning tours, studies related to establishing adequacy of existing legislation and conferences that were conducted before introducing the service charter reform initiative ref.

The study also concludes that stakeholder analysis and categorization is important to help in mapping out the roles of these stakeholders and the analysis enhances coordination. The study, thus, also noted that the implementing agency at the centre the PSRMU, identified key stakeholders in the introduction process namely central government agencies mainly the OPC; international Development Partners to the government; Non-Government Organizations, local government (District Councils); Traditional Leaders; and policy entrepreneurs. The Government of Malawi, through the OPC and the PSRMU, as a structure mandated to champion reforms, took a leading role in providing policy direction by first approving that the service charter reform initiative be part and parcel of the broader reforms agenda and also by deciding that the implementation of such a reform falls under the PSRMU to leverage on synergies that come when reforms are implemented under one roof. To this end, all participating development partners were able to support the initiative through one structure, the PSRMU. The international development partners' (UNDP, Irish Aid, GIZ, and DIHR) roles were critical in that they provided the technical knowhow on introducing the service charter as well the much needed financial support both at central and local government levels. The use of relevant existing structures also not only enhances credibility of the process of introducing a reform but it also saves resources and legitimizes efforts of government especially when these structures are established for purposes of championing the reforms agenda as is the case of the PSRMU in Malawi.

Given the above context, the study finds that the rationale for introducing the service charters as indicated by KIs and FGD participants is consistent with the broader reasons for introducing the service charters in other jurisdictions which is to enhance public service delivery (Drew, 2005). The reasons were also consistent with elements of the theoretical framework of the study namely the NPM and the Public Value theory. In that context and based on the literature review on the service charters in other jurisdictions, as Drewry (2005) and Balogun (2009) have commented, public service management reform initiatives such as the service charters in some jurisdictions have been introduced with an underlying message of promoting quality in service delivery through citizen empowerment by raising their rights to hold government accountable for their actions; enhancing citizens' preference and; demand for quality services.

To this end, the findings revealed that the service charters reform initiative in Malawi was introduced for purposes of promoting citizen empowerment and voice in the public service delivery chain; making public servants more responsive to citizen needs; promotion of accountability and transparency in the delivery of public services; promotion of citizen participation and distributive justice in the public service delivery chain which, when they prevail, will lead to enhanced service delivery.

Therefore, it is concluded that the rationale for introducing service charter reform initiatives in Malawi public service in general and in the two districts was aimed at enhancing public service delivery and was within international justifications as referenced to the AU's African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and the Administration but with a local orientation which includes promotion of distributive justice.

8.2.2 Institutionalization of the Public Sector Reforms

The study concludes that the public service charter reform initiative is institutionalized in the Malawi Public Service delivery chain. It can be argued, based on Peters (2000) contestations that success of institutionalizing a public sector reform is a factor that is contingent on effective application of elements of the Institutional Theory.

In that regard, in public sector business, Institutional Theory is said to be speaking to policy making, stressing on the process of putting in place formal and legal structures for carrying out services efficiently. Essentially, the study explains how relevant

institutions and structures have been identified, adopted, adapted, created and implemented in various public organizations over time for purposes of realizing the objectives of a particular public service reform. The study further explains how institutions and structures succeed or fall into decline, obsolete or disuse and how they have been replaced or integrated with new ones in the Malawi Public Service.

In view of the above, the study thus concludes that in order to effectively institutionalize reforms in the public service it is necessary to have relevant structures that will coordinate and manage the attendant steps in the institutionalization process. In the study's case, the Malawi Public Service, government in 2006 established the PSRMU in the OPC that is responsible for identifying reform areas and developing strategies for implementation including processes and structures, coordinating the implementation and monitoring of various public service reforms. Further to that, government has put in place other organizational structures at the central government namely the PED also in the OPC that is responsible for facilitating the institutionalization process through linking the service charters to the performance contracts initiative.

In addition to the OPC and sub-structures like the PSRMU, and the various committees that are put in place, equally at the two district's and village levels relevant structures that are critical and required for a vibrant service charters system that could lead to the attainment of enhanced service delivery are established at the community level up to the DC office (secretariat). These structures are the DEC, the Steering Committee, the Technical Committee, the Service Charter Service Users Committee, the Complaints Handling Committee, the Media Committee, and the Monitoring Committee.

The study further concludes that other structures that are not legislated but emerging in support of the institutionalization of the service charter are equally important, the case in point being the Social Accountability Monitoring Committee (SAMCOM) and the Community Citizens Forums in Dedza.

The study also concludes that the process of developing and institutionalizing of the service charters reform initiative is more effective where it is based on creating appropriate institutions for implementing the service charter reform initiative including guidelines for formulating the service charter both at the national and local government

level. These institutions are developed to ensure relative consistency in the institutionalization process across all public service structures. In the case of Malawi's public service there are Guidelines on formulating service charters developed in 2010 by the PSRMU (GoM, 2010) and a Malawi Public Service Charter was also developed as a prototype, all key elements that are applicable across all Ministries, Departments and Agencies in the Malawi Public Service Charter.

In addition, the study concludes that public service reform initiatives are effectively institutionalized where they are part of broader public service reforms agenda to benefit from complementarities and synergies from other reforms as is the case with the Malawi Public Service Charter Program Document 2010 -2015 (GoM, 2010) that was crafted within the broader Public Service Programmes.

The study, thus, concludes that creating institutions and structures alone is not enough to institutionalize reforms but legislating these is as important as legitimizing the activities in the process of implementation. Reforms have to be introduced based on relevant legislation and policies (Acharya, 2010). The study found out that while there was no single legislation that explicitly provided for the service charters, the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi (1994), the Public Service Act (1994) and the Local Government Act (1998) contained fundamental provisions for the institutionalization of public sector reforms in the Malawi Public Service.

In addition, there are a number policy instruments namely the Decentralization Policy (1998), the Malawi Public Service Management Policy (2018), the National Public Sector Reforms Policy (2018) and sectoral policies that guide the implementation of the service charter much as they equally do not, except the National Public Sector Reform Policy explicitly mention the service charter. To this end, administrative, legislated and none legislated structures are defined and utilized in the process of institutionalizing a reform initiative in the institutionalisation of public sector reforms in the Malawi Public Service.

8.2.3 Public Service Charter Reform Initiative and Enhanced Public Service Delivery

Public Sector Reforms and Enhanced Service Delivery: A Critical Analysis of the Malawi Public Service Charter is the title of the study and in this regard, the main objective of the study is to analyse if the service charters reform initiative leads to enhanced public service delivery in the Malawi Public Service. In this context, enhanced service delivery is analyzed through parameters of a) accountability and transparency; b) citizen empowerment to participate in the public service delivery chain; and c) quality of services assessed. The quality of service is assessed based on the SERVQUAL Model of quality parameters (Ramseook-Munhurrun, et al., 2010). The study has used reliability, responsiveness, accessibility and credibility of Duty Bearers as indicators of enhanced service delivery. To this end, the conclusion drawn is that public service reforms lead to enhanced service delivery in the Malawi Public Service delivery chain.

Realization of enhanced service delivery the study reveals, is dependent on institutionalizing of reforms by establishing structures, procedures, values and norms that promote accountability and transparency as good governance indicators; empowering citizens to participate in the public service delivery based on established legislated and no-legislated structures and institutions.

In addition, enhanced service delivery prevails when service standards that define quality have to be transparently set or communicated to citizens to help hold Duty Bearers accountable in an event that there is failure to meet such set service quality standards in the public service delivery chain. This conclusion is buttressed in the literature on what constitutes enhanced services, which among others provides that enhanced service is the extent to which citizen needs expressed through the established structures are reflected in the decisions and satisfaction in services so provided and how these are provided (Murui, 2002).

Accountability and Transparency

The study, therefore, concludes that public sector reforms have led to enhanced public service delivery in the Malawi public service. A conclusion is, therefore, made that public sector reforms lead to enhanced public service delivery on the basis of that

accountability and transparency had improved as a result of institutionalizing the service charters reform. As result of the service charters, Duty Bearers are now able to provide information to citizens on the state of finances through financial reports that are being posted at the district councils. In the case of school funds, that are given to each school, teachers are not only informing parents on the funds they have received but they are also involving them in planning how to use the funds through the Parent Teachers Association.

Transparency has also improved in the 2 districts as a result of the institutionalization of the service charters as evidenced by the findings that Duty Bearers are now informing citizens the type of services they can get in a particular public service institution. The citizens in the two districts are also made aware where to get such services and the standards to expect and what services attract a fee or tariff. This transparency, the study concludes has enabled citizens not to be paying bribes for services. Related to increased transparency is that citizens are now able to complain to authorities in cases where the service so provided is below the agreed standards. These findings justify the conceptual framework of the study that postulates that realization of enhanced service delivery is dependent on institutionalizing of service charters for for purposes of promoting accountability and transparency.

Citizen Empowerment

In terms of citizen empowerment, as a result of institutionalizing the service charters there has been an improvement in citizen participation and, therefore, empowering these citizens to have a voice in the public service delivery chain. In that regard, all the informants in the study districts indicated that as a result of the introduction and institutionalization of the service charters, community participation in decision making at the Council had increased. A case in point was cited where planning and prioritization on the usage of school improvement grants in the education sector cannot proceed without the involvement of communities (Salima District Council, June 2018). Previously, the grants were being centrally managed by the Division Education Manager's office.

In addition, citizens having been made aware of service standards in various sectors that had the service charters, they are now able to demand services from government

public organisations. The study uses the case of TA Mwanza in Salima where citizens having known the number of teachers that are required per school are now able to demand for more teachers and Duty Bearers have responded positively. Service charters are helping to enforce performance standards, facilitating one of the tenets of the NPM as well as the Public Value theory particularly in advocacy for discipline and parsimony in resource allocation (Hood, 1989; Frederickson et al., 2012; Tambulasi: 2010; Geleta igussa,2014); and that public resources should be used to increase value (Moore, 1995).

Quality of Services

The study concludes that the hallmark of enhanced public services is attested through citizens' satisfaction of the services they consume and as discussed elsewhere, the findings reveal that reliability, responsiveness, accessibility and credibility have improved in the two cases studied as a result of the institutionalization of the service charters reform initiative.

Reliability

Acknowledging that reliability is manifest through consistent performance and dependability of provision of a service, the study concludes that providers had become more reliable when providing services as a result of the institutionalization of the service charters in the public service. Many respondents both KIs and participants in the FGDs and those in the quantitative were of the view that there was a big improvement. An example to this end, include citizens' better relationship with health personnel in the three health facilities in TA Mwanza now open from 07:30hrs – 16:30 hours and services can be accessed off these hours on emergency (FGD, TA Mwanza June 2018).

Responsiveness

Responsiveness is a hallmark of quality of services, which relates to how timely service providers react to citizen needs and demands as well their willingness or readiness to provide a service (Ramseook-Munhurrin et al, 2010) has also improved, the study concludes. For example, the time it is taking to replace teachers when they have been posted away is now shorter and when communities complain of wayward Duty Bearers as was the case of an ADMARC official in the Salima district, the government responded very urgently. Further, public service organisation live up to commitments

stipulated in the service charters in terms of timelines they will assist citizens, as indicated by KIs at central government and FGD participants in both Salima and Dedza districts. As an example, at OPC there has been an improvement in the times it takes to get feedback and approval on application of change of names which happens within 14 days unlike in the past when it could be over thirty days.

Accessibility

Accessibility involves approachability to the service providers by service users as well convenience of location of a service (Ramseook-Munhurrin et al, 2010). Depending on the services sought, this may also include waiting time to receive a service and the time service is (Ramseook-Munhurrin et al, 2010). The study concludes that public services are now more accessible to citizen than before the service charters. For example, In TA Ndindi in Salima, the government placed an ambulance within the area as a result of the service charters. This is in addition to the regular opening of health facilities which previously could open at the whim of health personnel and against the provisions in the Health Policy of 2017, and the Malawi Public Service Regulations that state citizens can access health services from 07:30 a.m. to 5:00 pm. Citizens can access these facilities anytime beyond normal working hours in case of emergencies (KIs, Dedza July 2018). In addition, more farmers are now able to get more information and services.

Credibility

Credibility is intertwined to the other quality hallmarks and it essentially includes elements of trustworthiness, believability, and honesty (Ramseook-Munhurrin et al, 2010) of Duty Bearers in the course of discharging their duties by service users. The study concludes that credibility has also improved and in that regard, as indicated in the FGD by participants (Salima, TA Mwanza June 2018) said with the introduction of service charters the situation has improved and citizens are having some confidence in the Duty Bearers citing the case of health services where as a result more women are now giving birth at the public health facilities. This finding confirms one of the objectives of introducing service charters which is to build and harness trust of the citizens on the Malawi Public Service (OPC, 2010).

8.3 Study Implications

Like any study of this nature, this study identified three implications categorized into contribution to the knowledge gap; key lessons; and areas future research. These are presented as follows.

8.3.1 Contribution to the knowledge gap

In concluding that service charters enhance service delivery in the Malawi Public Service, the study relates and extrapolates some tenets of the NPM paradigm to enhanced service delivery in the context of the service charters' philosophy. These tenets being standards and measures of performance; decentralization of public service delivery; increasing customer or citizen choices; advocacy for discipline and parsimony in resource allocation (Hood: 1989, Frederickson et al., 2012; Tambulasi: 2010; Geleta igussa, 2014). The study contends that these tenets only render meaning when sufficiently institutionalized. Therefore, the study further argues the importance and relevance of the Institutional Theory to the extent and manner in which a reform is introduced. To this end, the application has to include heightened levels of awareness of the objectives of a reform among stakeholders as well sustaining the knowledge created thereof, putting in place relevant structures for coordinating and facilitating the implementation of the reform and the participation of citizens in the public service delivery chain; and also having enabling legislation and policies. Where institutionalization of a reform takes such steps enhanced services delivery is likely to be realized, so concludes the study. Enhanced service is characterized by a recognizable and experienceable level of accountability and transparency not only in the delivery of public service by citizens but also in the quality of services as well as the participation in the public service delivery chain. Enhanced service delivery is, thus, an encapsulation of the public value theory.

The above theoretical framework application and interpretation are cognizant of the objective of the study and that, accordingly as discussed elsewhere the focus is on perception on experiences of citizens on the services they consume after the service charter reform was institutionalized in the Malawi Public Service. In that vein, as far as the study is concerned it is not about finding truths or absolutes and, therefore the data so collected was predominantly qualitative and analysis so used was equally guided by the data collected.

8.3.2 Key Lessons

Key among the major lessons from the study are that the introduction of service charters reform initiative should be premised on an implementation model that suits the local environments while learning from other jurisdictions. This approach helps to resolve one of the challenges that public sector reforms are said to be facing in developing countries where at best these countries just adopt reform initiatives from developed countries without recourse to local socio-economic and political environments (Tambulasi, 2010; Dzimbiri, 2012).

The study concludes as also argued by Pollitt (2004) that when a transfer of a particular management system or technique is contemplated, one needs to consider how far each of these major factors-culture, the political system, the pattern of institutions, the management strategy, the nature of the primary task- matches between the ‘exporting’ and importing jurisdictions. The more mismatches the more probable it is that the transfer will fail or produce unexpected results.

Second, public sector management reforms occur within a geo-social-economic and political space and time. In that regard, politics, economics and culture, policy and legal frameworks have a great bearing on how well public sector reforms are introduced and institutionalized in different jurisdictions. The case in point being how the public sector reforms were shaped by various actors as defined in the five generations of the social-economic and political timelines in Malawi’s public sector reform endeavours.

8.3.3 Areas of Future Research

While there are a number of lessons generated from the study, the study identifies a number of issues that are critical to the study’s conclusion that public sector reforms lead to enhanced public service delivery which call for attention and possible areas for future research. First, the study focused on two districts Salima and Dedza both in the central region. There is a possibility that the other two regions of Malawi, the northern and southern regions, offer a different experience based on different socio-economic factors and, therefore, it would be interesting in future to conduct a comparative study involving districts from all the regions.

Whereas this study offers a general perspective on the impact of service charters reform initiatives on enhancing service delivery focusing on the health, education, and agriculture sectors, it is important to study in depth on how failure to promote service charters in sectors that have not devolved their functions to the district councils affects quality of services in other in Malawi's public service.

The study did not find any evidence that the service charters was part of the performance assessment of District Councils. While at the central government level the service charters were an integral part of the performance contract. Suffice it to say there is no definite policy framework to guide and synchronize these two. As is the case in other jurisdictions there is need, therefore, for some very definitive legal and policy frameworks to ensure that the service charters Reform Initiative is extensively and intensively implemented across the country if the gains made so far are to be sustained. Accordingly, this is an area that requires further research on how this affects delivery of services.

Despite a sound base that facilitated institutionalization of the service charters in the Malawi Public Service delivery chain, the study unearthed some factors that were critical for a more grounded service charters system in the Malawi Public Service. These factors needed to be enhanced or removed in some instances.

The factors were frequent transferring/posting of key Duty Bearers (high staff turnover); resistance from line ministries to fully devolve their functions; no dedicated financial resources for formulating, implementing and popularizing service charters; and resistance from Duty Bearers to embrace the service charter initiative. Further, publicity and dissemination of the Service charters; limited engagement of stakeholders by MDAs in the formulation of Service charters and changes in the organisation structures and leadership of reform initiatives were wanting. The challenges were also manifest in different formats of the Service charters; slow implementation of the service charter reform initiative across the districts; weak linkage of Central Government Agencies with the Local Governments; and implicit policy on service charters. In that regard, the conclusion of the study is that if these challenges, were addressed by way of policy directions the efficacy of the public service reforms on service delivery would further be enhanced.

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ANNEXES

Annex I: Data Collection Tool for KIs in Central Agencies

A. STUDY OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the study is to analyse whether public sector reforms lead to enhanced public service delivery in the districts of Salima and Dedza using the Malawi Public Service Charter as a case

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- a. To trace the introduction and rationale for service charters in the districts of Salima and Dedza in Malawi public service;
- b. To determine how service charters are understood by the Duty Bearers and service users of the public service delivery chain in the two districts;
- c. To assess how the introduction of Service charters has enhanced quality of public services (Reliability, Responsiveness, Accessibility and Credibility), and good governance (transparency, accountability and citizen participation in public service delivery);
- d. To investigate the implementation and management framework of Service charters reform initiatives in the 2 districts;
- e. To assess how the service charter reform initiative has been implemented; and
- f. Critically assess the policy implications for effective implementation and management of service charter system in the two districts.

DRAFT GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR KI INTERVIEWS QUESTIONS – CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

- a. Trace the introduction and rationale for service charters in the Malawi public service**
 - 1. When were service charters introduced in Malawi?
 - 2. Why do you think government introduced service charters?
 - 3. Who and what were the main drivers behind the service charter reform initiative?
- b. To determine how service charters are understood by the agents of the public service delivery chain (Duty Bearers and service users)**
 - 4. What do you know about Service charters?
 - 5. Does your organisation have a Service charters?
 - 6. How many MDAS have service charters to date? – OPC, PED
 - 7. Within your Sector, have the district level developed service charters?
 - a. If they have how many and what role did you play?
 - b. How well publicised are these charters?
 - 8. Are these charters in anyway linked to the Centre?
 - a. If they are, how?
 - b. If not, why and what does this mean to the efficacy of service delivery?
- c. To assess how the introduction of service charters has led to enhanced quality of public services (Reliability, Responsiveness, Accessibility and Credibility), and good governance (transparency, accountability and citizen participation in public service delivery) in the 2 districts?**
 - 9. What impact has the introduction of service charters had on the public service delivery in your organisation? Be specific? 2 districts?
 - a. If it has had no impact why not?
 - 10. Has the introduction of service charters improved:
 - a. Accountability;
 - b. Transparency; and
 - c. quality of services? If yes which services?
 - 11. Has the introduction of the service charter improved citizens' voice and determination of quality of public services?
 - a. If it has not, what do you think are the major factors behind this?
- d. To assess how the service charter reform initiative has been implemented and investigate the implementation and management framework of Service charters reform initiatives in Malawi in the 2 districts??**

12. Would you consider the current organisation arrangement in facilitating the implementation of service charters to be an effective one?
 - a. If not, why?
 13. What do think are the major challenges affecting the effective implementation of service charters in the Malawi Public Service?
 14. What can be done to improve the implementation of service charters?
- e. Critically assess the policy implications for effective implementation and management of service charter system in the public service.**
15. Is there or are there any policy and legal framework(s) that guides the implementation of the service charter reform initiative in the Malawi Public Sector and in specifically in your sector?
 - a. What are these?
 16. Would consider these to be adequate for an effective operationalisation the service charter culture in Malawi?
 17. If not what mechanism would you propose to be put in place to achieve the intend objectives of introducing service charters?
 18. What would you consider to be the most critical issues that need to be addressed in order to realise the intended objectives of service charter reform initiative?
 19. Any other comments you would like to make?

Thank you very much for your answers

Annex II: Data Collection Tools at District Level

A. Focus Group Discussion Questions Local Government Level– Salima District Council

a. Knowledge About service charters

1. What do you know about Service Charter?
2. How did you know about the service charters?
3. When were the service charters introduced in Salima/Dedza?
4. How were the service charters introduced in Salima/Dedza?
5. Who were the key players in the introduction of charters?
6. And what role did the Council play in the introduction of these charters
7. Which services have a Charter in Salima?
8. How widely known and used are the service charters in Salima/Dedza?

b. Enhanced Service Delivery

1. Quality of Services

Key Guiding Determinants

- Reliability: is manifest through consistent performance and dependability of provision of a service;
- Responsiveness: how timely service providers react to citizen needs and demands as well their willingness or readiness to provide a service;
- Competence: possession of required skills and knowledge for one to execute or provide a service;
- Access: involves approachability to the service providers as well convenience of location of a service. Depending on the services sought this may also include waiting time to receive a service and hours of service operation;
- Courtesy: involves politeness, respect, consideration and friendliness of contact persons;
- Communication: this calls for service providers to be informed in a medium that they will clearly understand and listen. This therefore involves explaining the kind of services, the cost if any;
- Credibility: included in this are elements of trustworthiness, believability, honest; and
- Tangibles: In this determinant included are physical evidence of the facilities, the appearance of the human resource, tools and equipment.

QUESTIONS

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">Has the introduction of service charters made any difference to the quality of services?If yes which services and how?If not, how?Since the service charters were introduced in Salima what do you think have been the benefits?What would you consider to be the most critical issues that need to be addressed in order to realize the intended objectives of service charter reform initiative? |
|--|

2. Good Governance

a. Accountability

The key yardsticks include:

- i. Performance Reports (Annual, Biannual etc as may be agreed);
and
- ii. Financial disclosures of public servants)

QUESTIONS

6. Has the introduction of service charters improved accountability of civil servants in the delivery of public services? If it has, how?
7. Do you produce or prepare performance reports of the council?
8. Do you share with the citizens the budget of the council? If you do how? If you do not, why?

b. Transparency

Transparency key indicators:

- i. Corporate Transparency: Name, Legal status, Mandate, Mission, Goals, Contact information, Physical address, Organization Structure, and Staff compliment (list – who is who);
- ii. Financial Disclosures: Annual Budget details (amount received and sources); expenditure reports, tariffs of services if any, Audit Reports;
- iii. Social Transparency: list of services- description of places where the services are offered, and service quality standards (timeliness, equity and fairness disclosures). This is more effective if citizens are given a platform to participate in matters of state.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Has the introduction of service charters improved accountability of civil servants in their operations? If it has how?
- 2 Do you display or disclose the name, legal status, mandate, mission, goals, contact information, physical address, organization structure and staff compliments to the general public?
- 3 Do the council staff tell the budget of their operations? Have you ever seen the budget for the council? Agriculture, health and education
- 4 Does the council share with you expenditure reports, i.e. audit reports (Annual or Quarterly)?
- 5 Do the officials at the district council tell you the kind of services they offer in their sectors? Where they are offered? If not have you ever complained
- 6 If they tell you the kind of services, how do they do it?
- 7 Do you ever raise concern on the quality of services the council provides? How do you do it?

3. Citizen Participation

Yardsticks to assess citizen participation, therefore, include:

- a. Democratic Decentralization: Legislated and non-legislated governance structures at local level;
- b. Access to information, freedom and pluralism of the media; and
- c. Institutionalized mechanisms for regular consultations between local governments and civil society organizations

QUESTIONS

1. Did ordinary people participate in the formulation of the service charter?
2. What structures (committees) do people use to engage with the district council on services?
3. Do you think citizen participation in service delivery is important? Why?
4. What do think are the major challenges affecting the effective implementation of service charters in Salima?
5. Has the introduction of service charters by the ministries of health, agriculture, education and the police led to improved voice of citizens in service delivery?

B. QUESTIONNAIRE

1. PROFILE

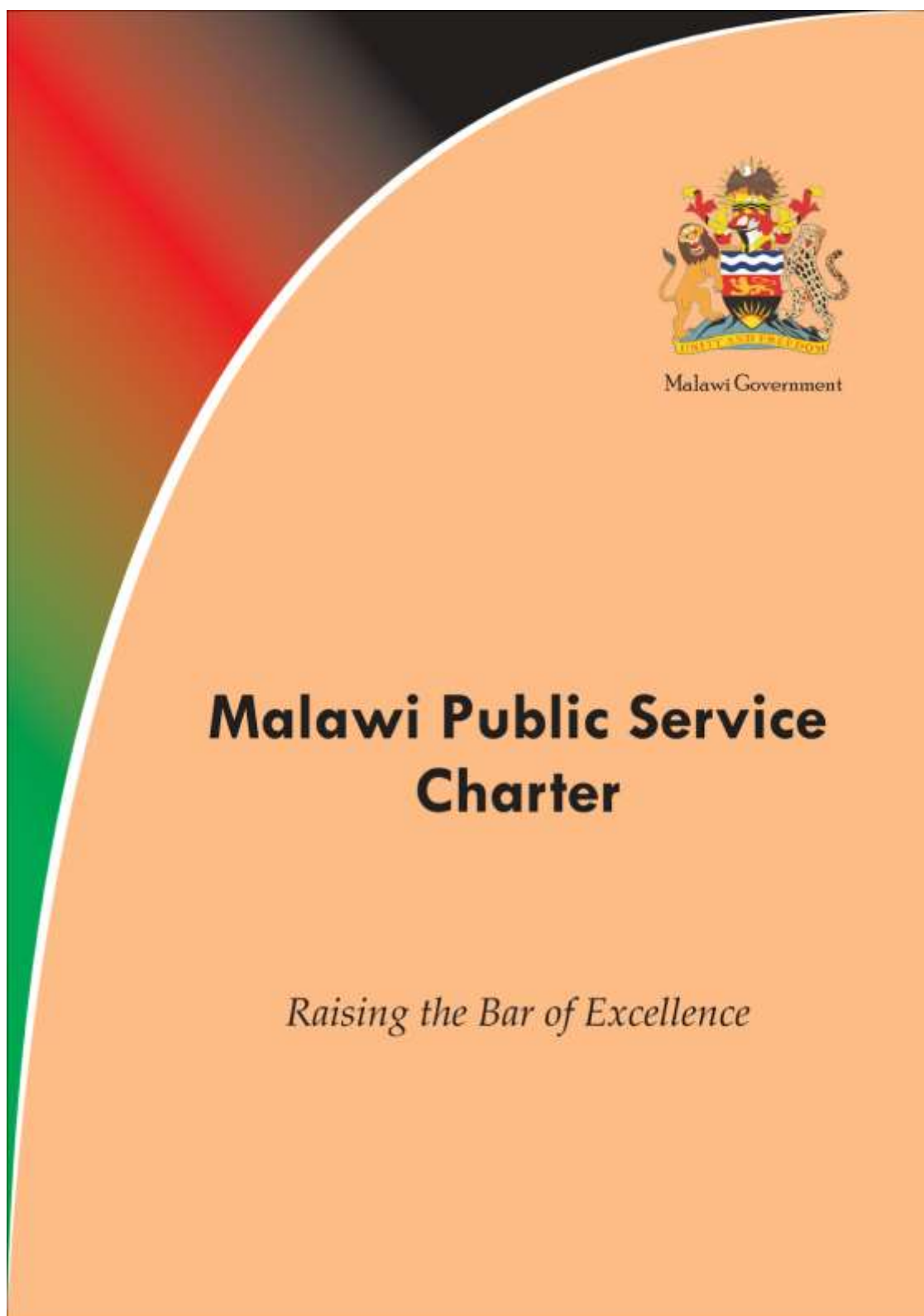
GENDER	Male		Femal	
AGE GROUP	18-35		35-60	
Length of stay in the Local Council	Months		Years	
Date and Place of Interview				

SR	VARIABLE	QUESTIONS	ANSWERS	
			YES	NO
1	KNOWLEDGE OF service charters	Do you know the existence of service charters in Salima?		
		How did you know about the service charters?		
2	ACCOUNTABILITY	Has the introduction of service charters improved accountability of service providers to the citizens?		
	Performance Reports: Annual, Biannual etc. as may be agreed	Have you seen any financial reports or information on the Annual Budget		
	Financial disclosures by public servants	Do public servants tell you the councils finances and how they have been used		
3	TRANSPARECY	Has the introduction of service charters improved transparency in service delivery?		
		Corporate Transparency: Name, Legal status, Mandate, Mission, Goals, Contact information,	Do government departments display their:	
		Names on their offices		
		Legal status		

	Physical address, Organization Structure, and Staff compliment (list)	Mandate		
		Mission		
		Goals		
		Contact information,		
		Physical address		
		Organization Structure		
		Staff compliment (list)		
	Financial Disclosures: Annual Budget details (amount received and sources); expenditure reports, tariffs of services if any, Audit Reports	Have the Departments ever shared with you		
		Annual Budget details (amount received and sources		
		Expenditure reports		
		Tariffs or charges of services if any		
		Audit Reports		
	Social Transparency: List of services, description of places where the services are offered, and service quality standards (timeliness, equity and fairness disclosures)	Do government departments		
		inform you List of services they offer		
		Describe to you places where their services are offered		
		Inform you the Service quality standards you are expected to receive (timeliness, equity and fairness disclosures)		
4	CITIZEN PARTICIPATION Democratic Decentralization: Legislated and non-legislated governance structures at local level Access to information, freedom and pluralism of the media	Did you participate in the formulation of any service charter?		
		Do you think citizen participation in service delivery is important?		
		Has the introduction of service charters improved citizen voice in the delivery of services?		
		Are you aware that you can report on a poor service?		

	• Institutionalized mechanisms for regular consultations between local governments and civil society organizations	Have you ever reported on any poor service?		
		Do you have institutions that you use to complain about poor services?		
		What are these?		
5	QUALITY OF SERVICE	Has the introduction of service charters made any difference to the quality of services?		
	Have the following improved			
	Reliability: is manifest through consistent performance and dependability of provision of a service	a. Reliability		
	Responsiveness: how timely service providers react to citizen needs and demands as well their willingness or readiness to provide a service	b. Responsiveness of Duty Bearers to your needs		
	Competence: possession of required skills and knowledge for one to execute or provide a service	c.		

	Access: involves approachability to the service providers as well convenience of location of a service. Depending on the services sought this may also include waiting time to receive a service and hours of service operation	d. Accessibility to services		
	Courtesy: involves politeness, respect, consideration and friendliness of contact persons	e. Courteousness of service providers		
	Communication: this calls for service providers to be informed in a medium that they will clearly understand and listen. This therefore involves explaining the kind of services, the cost if any	f. Communication to you on what services to expect from service providers		
	Credibility: included in this are elements of trustworthiness, believability, honest	g. Credibility of service providers		
	Tangibles: In this determinant included are physical evidence of the facilities, the appearance of the human resource, tools and equipment.	h. Facilities as a result of Customer Service Chatters		



Our Vision

“A highly motivated, productive, professional and results oriented public service”

Our Mission

“To deliver quality services to the public in an efficient, effective and responsive manner in order to satisfy national aspirations and promote the advancement of the people of Malawi”

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Foreword

The Malawi Vision 2020 envisages a Public Service which is market oriented and sustaining an environment of good governance. This Vision cannot be realized without dedicated strategies. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy is Malawi's current overarching medium term policy for directing development efforts towards sustainable economic growth and ultimately achieve the Malawi Vision 2020.

My Government, through the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy recognizes that successful achievement of the objectives of the MGDS is more likely if the country has an efficient Public Service. My Government is pursuing a Public Sector Reform Programme with a view to improving service delivery and restore public confidence. Public confidence requires that the quality of public service meets acceptable international standards. This Public Service Charter is, therefore, aimed at creating a value system for the Public Service. It is a useful source of guidance and reference in the quality of expected services of your Public Service. It calls for the highest standards of integrity in the Public Service.

This Public Service Charter fulfils one of the objectives of my Government, that is to establish a responsive Public Service which will dutifully serve people and enable them to meet their legitimate expectations in a new Malawi. It is, therefore, my hope that this Public Service Charter will transform the relationship and general environment of Public Service delivery and greatly improve public service delivery in the country.

I once again wish to reaffirm my Government's commitment to improving the standard of living of the general public through an efficient and effective Public Service.

Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI
AND MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Preface

The Malawi Public Service Charter was developed with the participation of Public Servants, Civil Servants, representatives of various independent bodies established under the Constitution, and different categories of stakeholders as a result of Government's desire to improve service delivery in the Public Service. For quite some time now, it has become evident that there is need to introduce a comprehensive Public Service Charter framework to govern the delivery of Public Services. The Malawi Public Service charter is consistent with the provisions of the Constitution of Malawi, the Malawi Public Service Act and the Malawi Public Service Regulations. It has been designed to respond to the growing desire to improve service delivery that has necessitated various Public Sector Reforms; and the need to help internalize the culture of reforms both in the public servants and the citizens.

The Malawi Public Service Charter therefore seeks:

- To make public institutions become more transparent by outlining to the public the standards they can expect – and how agencies shall perform against those standards;
- To encourage these public institutions and agencies to improve performance where promised standards have not been achieved and subsequently increase satisfaction of service users; and
- To provide a framework for consultations with service users and assist these public institutions manage the expectations of service users.

Therefore, this Public Service Charter contains key Public Service values and fundamental principles on the Public Service. It is not possible to provide exhaustively for all public services and therefore individual public service institutions are expected to prepare specific Service Charters. This Service Charter should, however, be able to serve as reference material for the promotion of high quality standards of public services. It is my sincere hope that the Charter will set a basis for the creation of a culture of responsiveness to public demand on expected standards of services. It will also form a basis on which all public institutions shall be assessed on their performance. While this charter may not address most of the challenges facing the delivery of Public Services in Malawi, it is expected that it will help the Public Service to create a new image for itself. I, therefore, urge all Public Servants and the public to familiarize themselves with this Public Service Charter and the Malawi Public Service Code of Ethics and Conduct.

Bright Msaka SC

CHIEF SECRETARY AND HEAD OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE

1. Introduction

The Malawi Public Service Charter is a statement of intent of the Public Service's commitment to provide the best possible service standards to the people of Malawi. It sets out the standards of services the public can expect from its Public Service. It is also the evidence of our resolve to offer the best services.

The charter is a cornerstone of the Malawi Public Service initiative to improve the service delivery. It serves as a benchmark, a gauge against which our Public Service can measure its performance.

This Charter is a framework designed to introduce service charters in all public institutions and guide those institutions in taking such legislative, regulatory, technical and practical measures as may be required to create effective conditions for the proper functioning of the public service and ensure that public services are available, accessible and acceptable.

In addition the public service charter shall help to establish new relationship between the public service and its environment in order to meet citizens' expectations, development needs and adapt to the profound changes taking place in this new millennium.

The Charter is based on the African Public Service Charter and is consistent with the provisions of the Constitution of Malawi, the Malawi Public Service Act and other key government policies and regulations. More specifically it has been designed to respond to the situation in Malawi taking into account the following:

1. The growing desire to improve service delivery that has necessitated various Public Sector Reforms
2. The need to put the Output Based Budget and Performance Management Systems into perspective, that encourages public agencies to measure and assess performance; and
3. The need to help internalize the culture of standards service, non-discrimination, participation, responsiveness, transparency and accountability both in the public servants and the citizens

The Public Service Mandate

The Malawi Public Service consists of the Civil Service, Parastatals, the Judicial Service, Parliamentary Service, the Malawi Defense Forces, the Malawi Police Service, Immigration and Prison Services, and the Constitutional bodies.

The Public Service's core mandate as derived from the Constitution of Malawi and the Public Service Act (2004) is to provide;

- Finance & Economic Management Services
- Natural Resources Management Services
- Social Services
- Security and Rule of Law
- Governance Management Services

Services are delivered to the public for sustained economic growth and human development of all Malawians. Public services shall be provided to all the people of Malawi, regardless of tribe, race, gender, colour, physical condition, religion or creed, political belief or affiliation.

Our Vision

"A highly motivated, productive, professional and results oriented public service"

Our Mission

"To deliver quality services to the public in an efficient, effective and responsive manner in order to satisfy national aspirations and promote the advancement of the people of Malawi"

2. Core Principles of the Public Service

The Public Service commits itself, through this Charter, to the following fundamental principles:

- **Principle of equality of treatment**

The public services shall recognize the equality of citizens before the law and that they will not be discriminated against based on the place of origin, race, gender, religion, ethnic group, philosophical or political convictions or other personal considerations.

- **Principle of neutrality**

The public service shall not discriminate against its employees because of their personal traits. The public service shall remain non partisan and support policies and programmes of the government of the day.

- **Principle of legality**

Public services shall be provided in strict compliance with the law. Administrative decisions shall be taken in conformity with existing regulations.

- **Principle of continuity**

The public service shall be impartial, independent and permanent to enable the delivery of uninterrupted services so that the functions of the Government continue irrespective of which political party is in power.

3. Our Core Values

The core values of the Public Services are as follows:

<i>Accountability</i>	Being responsible and accountable for decisions and actions.
<i>Honesty</i>	Acting in good faith and truthfully.
<i>Impartiality</i>	Acting solely according to the merits of a case and serving the public fairly
<i>Loyalty</i>	Being loyal and committed to the policies and programmes of the government of the day regardless of ones political, religious, social or cultural beliefs
<i>Integrity</i>	Putting the obligations of the Public Service above one's own personal interests and conducting oneself in a manner that is beyond reproach. Being ready to serve the most humble member of the public
<i>Justice</i>	Adhering to the principles of natural justice.

<i>Objectivity</i>	Favouring meritocracy and basing one's advice and decisions on rigorous analysis of evidence.
<i>Selflessness</i>	Being noble and avoid seeking personal gain or financial or other material benefits for one's family or friends through one's official position.
<i>Transparency</i>	Being as open as possible in all their dealings and give reasons for any administrative decisions and actions if required.
<i>Excellence</i>	Being diligent, committed, efficient, and effective in the execution of one's duties

4. Our Services

The Public Service is responsible for the provision of the following products and services

- Finance & Economic Management Services
- Natural Resources Management Services
- Social Services
- Security and Rule of Law services
- Governance Management Services

5. Our Clients

The foremost client of the public service is the citizen of Malawi. More specifically the public service serves and interacts with the following:

- The Public
- Civil Society
- Private Sector
- Development Partners

Client rights

Public Service clients and stakeholders have the right to:

- Access services and public information that best meet their distinct needs.
- Be treated with courtesy and respect
- Information on the nature of our services
- Privacy and confidentiality
- Be heard and provide feedback on the performance of service delivery
- Participate in arriving at solutions or recommendations aimed at addressing their respective issues

Client Obligations

To help the Public Service provide them with high quality services and to ensure a meaningful continuing relationship, clients and stakeholders are obliged to:

- Treat Public Servants with courtesy and respect
- Desist from offering gifts, favours, and inducements to or exerting undue pressure on Public Servants
- Respond to requests for information by Public Servants comprehensively and promptly

- Punctually attend scheduled appointments
- Contribute to service provision in accordance with laid down policies and regulations
- Abide with the legal requirement(s) that make them eligible for the services sought

6. Our Service Standards

The Public Service shall strive to improve service delivery and forge closer relationships with its clients. It is the Public Service policy and commitment to consistently and reliably provide accessible and sustainable public services that meet and exceed the quality expectations of our clients.

The public service will strive to provide services that are consistent with acceptable international standards. Public institutions will define the specific service standards in their charters.

- **Proximity and accessibility of services**

The Public Service shall be organized along functional and decentralized lines designed to bring public service management closer to the people and provide them with appropriate and accessible basic services.

Accessibility shall also be enhanced by application of appropriate information and communication technologies (e-governance).

- **Participation and Consultation**

The Government shall ensure that individuals, the public and all stakeholders are consulted in arriving at solution or recommendations aimed at addressing their respective needs.

The government shall ensure mechanisms of participation and consultation involving the public, and all other stakeholders are effectively put in place.

- **Speed and responsiveness**

The Public Service shall be delivered in a timely manner. Time limits must be established by regulations and communicated to the public. Evidence of unusually long delays shall be subject to investigation.

- **Reliability and confidentiality of information concerning citizens**

With the exception of administrative departments such as the police and the judiciary who may be authorized by law, no files kept by the Public Service shall contain information that would violate personal privacy, individual freedoms or human rights, without the express authorization of the individuals concerned.

Any person who can prove his/her identity shall have the right to be informed about any personal information concerning him/her, and to challenge and have such information removed or corrected.

- **Client Orientation**

In delivering services the Public Service shall ensure that all clients are treated with courtesy and respect. Members of the Public Service shall attend to clients with promptness and shall listen and make every effort to find solutions to client needs.

- **Redress and Remedial Action**

The Public Service shall ensure the availability of mechanisms for redress, where clients have not received services according to guaranteed standards.

The Public Service shall acknowledge and apologize when it fails in delivering services according to standards, and strive to rectify the mistake promptly.

7. Operating Hours

All Public Servants are ideally employed for 24 Hours

The Malawi Public Service offices are open from

07:30 Hrs to 12:00 Hrs

Lunch break 12.00 Hrs to 13.00 Hrs

13.00 to 17.00 Hrs from Monday to Friday except on Public holidays.

Strategic public services e.g. health services, security services; ambulance services operate twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week.

8. Feedback

- Let us know as soon as possible when we do not meet your expectations and when we have exceeded your expectations
- To help us give you best possible services, Clients are encouraged to make genuine complaints, suggestions and compliments to Chief Secretary.
- The staff in the Office of the President and Cabinet is committed to handle issues raised by the public on services all the time.

Please contact us through:

The Chief Secretary
Office of the President and Cabinet
Capital Hill
Private Bag 301
Capital City
Lilongwe 3

Tel: 01 789 411
Fax. 01 788 456
email: opc@malawi.gov.mw

9. This Charter

Copies of this charter will be available to the citizens through all public offices and on the government website: www.malawi.gov.mw.

10. Amendment of the Charter

In light of the changing circumstances, we will, in consultation with our clients and stakeholders, subject this Service Charter to constant amendments with a view to continuously improving our services.

Notes

[illegible]

The Secretary for Public Sector Reforms Management

Office of the President and Cabinet

7th Floor Tikwere House

Private Bag 301,

Lilongwe 3 - Malawi

Tel: +265 1 776 550 / 554

Fax: +265 1 774 540

E-mail: scu@opc.gov.mw

Annex IV: Ministry of Education Service Charter



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, service chartersIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

SERIAL NO.	SERVICE RENDERED	REQUIREMENTS FROM CLIENTS TO ACCESS THE SERVICE	COST IMPLICATION	TIME TO ACCESS SERVICE
1.0	Inspection and Advisory Services to Private schools and colleges	Letter of request	Payment towards transport costs	One day per school / college.
2.0	Provision of information on quality and standards	Details of information needed	No charges	One day
3.0	Provision of information on Curriculum	Letter of request	No charges	One day
4.0	Registration of private schools and colleges	Application letter for Registration	Payment towards transport costs	Four weeks
5.0	Linking the public to institutions of higher education for them to access services of their choice	Application letter with details of the required information	None	One day
6.0	Provide information on students' admission and	Application letter specifying the desired information	None	One day

	financial support in institutions of higher education			
7.0	Provision of information on health, nutrition and HIV/AIDS, gender and education in emergencies	Letter of request	None	One day
8.0	Placement of Inclusive Education learners	Relevant document about the learner from school or parent	None	Three to five days
9.0	Provision of information on the Administration of Primary School Improvement Programme (PSIP)	Details of information needed	None	One day
10.0	Provision of various Policy documents and guidelines	Letter of request specifying the exact policy/guide document needed	None	One day
11.0	Processing of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NGOs	Letter of Request Copy of the proposed (MOU)	None	Four weeks at Ministry level
12.0	Selection of school leavers into teachers training colleges	Application letters	Processing fee	Three months
13.0	Processing of terminal benefits	Relevant documents	Free	One day
14.0	Provision of technical advice and direction on matters of Science, Technology and innovation	Letter of request on specific information needed	Free	One day
15.0	Resolving students' disciplinary cases	Letter of expulsion / suspension from school	Free	Six weeks
16.0	Students' transfers and readmission in Secondary schools	Application letter for the transfer / readmission stating reason for the transfer / readmission	Free	Four weeks

17.0	Provision of Annual Education Statistics (Hard copy)	None	Free	One day
18.0	Provision of Technical Drawing of Education Infrastructure	- Application letter - Electronic storage device	Free	One day
19.0	General Enquiries	None	Free	Five minutes

ALL ENQUIRIES SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO:

The Secretary for Education Science and technology
Private Bag 328
LILONGWE 3

TEL : 01789422
FAX : 01788064

Annex V: Salima District Council Service Charter - Booklet

SALIMA DISTRICT ASSEMBLY

**Service charters
For
Departments of**

AGRICULTURE
EDUCATION
HEALTH
POLICE
SOCIAL WELFARE

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June 1 2009 Production

Foreword

Service Standards and Charters in the ideal context provide some powerful and integral tools / instruments that offer logical rationale for all players and actors (departments, management, field operators and the target communities). They give clear directions and parameters for continuous improvement as well as checks and balances in respect of service delivery and execution management.

It is the general concession globally emanating since the era of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacque Rosseau's social contract in the integration of the governing and the governed that due recognition is clarified in matters of rights, authorities, duties and responsibilities are properly put into their perspectives for there to be defined accountability and transparent landmarks in service deliveries. Presently, there are several challenges that have been confronting us in pursuit of both broad and specific realization of policy and operational mandates which are enshrined in various instruments contained in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the Malawi Growth and Development Strategies (MGDS), the Decentralization Policy and Strategies, etc. The evolution of piloting Service Standards Charters therefore offers us an opportunity window to address some of these challenges. The implementation of sector service standard charters creates for us the motivation to translate what were hitherto abstract policy frameworks to more substantive and concrete measures for increasing accountability, transparent, and responsive interaction between duty- bearers and rights holders.

As the relevant entity for service delivery and implementation at the district level and beyond, Salima District Assembly is therefore committed towards exploiting the Service Charter for the ultimate application of all relevant services in respect of addressing the demands and needs of its citizens. More than that, it is our express commitment to optimize the essence of public service charter as a living entity whose dynamic aspects should continuously move with changes in the socio-economic structures in resonance with the times and seasons.

This can therefore be only meaningful when both the rights holders and Duty Bearers continuously engage in consultative processes throughout the project implementation cycle. Otherwise, one anonymous pacesetter rightfully remarked "Footprints in the sands of history are never made by people that just sit down."

Finally, what we are just launching is not sheer intention and expectation. We hope that as a team, we can translate these aspirations if we commit ourselves in following the words of wisdom that one legendary leader in history Mahatma Ghandi once reflected, "Be the change you want to see in others."

Gift Abraham Rapozo.
District Commissioner.
June 3 2009 Production

Acknowledgement

The development and production of the service charters would have been impossible without the contribution of various institutions and organizations. Our gratitude, therefore, goes to our technical and financial partners, the Malawi Human Rights Resource Centre (MHRRC), the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) and the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) that have been instrumental in the initial process of our piloting the formulation of preliminary service standards.

In a special way, we would like to thank our District Executive Sub-committee that had been assigned to work on this pilot phase. We sincerely recognize and appreciate their active involvement in the formulation of these standards. We would also like to thank the Area Development Committees (ADC) in the three impact areas for their fruitful contributions during the formulation of these Charters. In addition, we also salute our comrades in the Gauteng Province Prime Minister's office and directorates in the Republic of South Africa for accommodating us with their presence, time, and discussions they shared with us on their experiences. We immensely appreciated their input which we feel has contributed to our perspectives and dedication to forge ahead with the program.

May the good Lord bless you all.

June 4 2009 Production

1.0 District Agriculture Sector

Vision: A district that enjoys food security and sustainable agricultural growth and development.

Mission: Promotion of agricultural and fisheries productivity, sustainable management of land and water resources for the attainment of food security, increased income and sustainable socio-economic growth and development.

Our values

- ☐ Integrity
- ☐ Professionalism
- ☐ Equity
- ☐ Efficiency
- ☐ Courtesy
- ☐ Impartiality
- ☐ Dignity

Our clients

Our clients are farmers who grow crops, raise livestock, raise and catch fish. We also serve fish catchers.

Our core duties

Our core duties are to:

- Facilitate the distribution of seed and livestock to farmers' clubs on demand;
- Provide training on soil, water and fisheries conservation;
- Investigate, prevent diseases and pests and treat crops and livestock;
- Disseminate information (messages) on crop, livestock, fisheries production and management, food, nutrition and marketing;
- Carry out Agricultural Production Estimates surveys to ascertain food security at household level;
- Link farmers and farmers' organizations to lending institutions and other service providers;
- Facilitate the formation of associations and farm organizations and train them in various agribusiness skills such as Entrepreneurship, Marketing, Appropriate Technology and Credit Management.

Standards for our services

We shall ensure that:

- All our offices are accessible to all our clients from 7:30 am to 12:00 pm and from 13:00 pm to 17:00 pm during working days except during public holidays and weekends. However, our officers shall be on call to respond to emergencies during public holidays and weekends;
- All our services are rendered for free except on routine treatment of livestock and hiring of oxen and tractors for ploughing and ridging. Where payment for our services is made, clients are provided with Government General Receipt;
- One extension worker is responsible for 500 farming families and that one veterinary officer caters for livestock within a radius of 8 km;
- Priority is given to people with special needs such as persons with disabilities, women, children, orphans and other vulnerable groups;
- Agricultural shows are conducted every year;
- All emergencies are attended to within three days;
- Irrigation technology is accessible to our clients throughout the year.

Clients' roles and responsibilities

For us to serve you better and meet the above standards, we expect you to:

- Come to the demonstration sessions on time;
- Participate in our agricultural and fisheries activities;
- Quickly report emergency cases to your nearest contact point, cases like drought, pests and disease outbreaks and floods;
- Provide our staff with information on what services you would want, especially for those services that are demand driven;
- Observe laws and regulations;
- Contact your nearest contact point, if there is need for further assistance;

Feed back

We ask you to objectively assess and give us suggestions on how we can serve you better. You also have the rights to complain where need be. You may request information on how to complain from our offices.

How to contact us

You can contact us in writing or coming in person to the following address

District Agriculture Development Officer,

Salima District Agriculture Office,

P.O. Box 491,

Salima.

E-mail: salimadado@globe.mw.net

Tel: 01 262 213/663.

Fax: 01 262 663.

Or

By dropping your letter of complaint or suggestion in the complaints/suggestion boxes provided at our District and Extension Planning Area offices.

2.0 Salima Education Sector

Vision

Quality Primary and Secondary School education for all in Salima by the year 2015.

Mission:

Ensuring delivery of quality education for both primary and secondary schools realized through:

- Intensified inspection and supervision;
- Enhancement of in-service trainings;
- Equitable distribution of teachers;
- Decentralized resource mobilization.

Our values

- Professionalism
- Integrity
- Equity
- Efficiency
- Courtesy
- Impartiality
- Dignity

Our core duties

We offer the following services:

- Teaching and learning in schools;
- In service training and deployment of teachers;
- Teaching and learning materials;
- Establishment of new schools;
- Training of School Management Committees (SMCs) e.g. School committees, Parents Teachers Associations (PTAs) and Mother Groups;
- Inspection of schools for quality control and supervision of teaching and learning.

Our clients

Our clients are primary school learners, secondary school students, vocational students and parents. Our clients have the right to education and other attendants' rights.

Standards for our services

We shall ensure that:

- Our offices open at 7:30 am and close at 5:00 pm with one lunch break from 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm from Monday to Friday except during public holidays while schools open between 7:00 am and 7:30 am to 2:00 pm unless the school has adapted an overlapping system;
- Children are admitted into Standard One at the age of six years or more;
- Each text book is used by not more than 1 learner;
- Primary schools are established at a radius of 5 km where each class shall have not less than 10 learners;
- Primary education is provided for free, with free learning materials. However, Secondary and Vocational education will be paid for using rates revised from time to time;
- Schools facilities are user friendly to learners with physical disabilities i.e. those using wheel chairs;
- Deaf and dumb pupils are sent to special schools;
- Each classroom accommodates not more than 60 pupils at primary level and 50 students at secondary level;
- Disciplinary measures are administered after classes. However, no school shall administer corporal punishment;
- Each standard desk is used by not more than 2 pupils;
- Each school has at least a borehole or tap for safe water;
- Each school has a trained and active School Committee, Parent Teacher Association and Mother Group which meets at least once a month to discuss issues relating to their school;
- Each school has at least 10 permanent toilets, 2 urinals and hand washing facilities depending on enrolment to cater for boys and girls as well as male and female staff;
- Qualified teachers are deployed at all levels;
- Drop outs due to pregnancies are given one more opportunity for readmission;
- Teachers abide by the professional code of conduct.

Clients' roles and responsibilities

We expect our clients to:

- Attend classes and participate in all other school activities regularly;
- Obey school rules and regulations;
- Settle misunderstandings through peaceful means.
- Participate in decision making through students' bodies in place;
- Come to school with all necessities e.g. school uniform and fees for secondary school students, food and clothes etc for primary school pupils. In cases where financial

assistance will be needed, those in need may contact other departments which render services such as social welfare department and other institutions;

We also expect the parents or guardians of our clients to:

- Attend PTA meetings;
- Participate in school development projects that are initiated at your school including construction and maintenance of school blocks, teacher's houses and toilets. However, in some cases the assembly and the donor community may intervene.

Feed back

We ask you to objectively assess us and give us suggestions on how we can serve you better. You also have the right to complain where need be. You may request information on how to complain from our offices.

How to contact us

You can contact us in writing to the following address:

District Education Manager,
Opposite Salima Agricultural Offices,
P.O Box 98,
Salima,
Tel. 01 262 344

Or

By coming in person to our offices which are opposite Salima Agricultural Offices

Or

By dropping your letter of complaint or suggestion in the complaints/ suggestion boxes provided at each school and Teacher Development Centre.

3.0 Salima Health Sector

Vision

To ensure delivery of Essential Health Package through a strengthened health care delivery system.

Mission:

To stabilize and improve the health status of Salima community through improved accessibility to quality and cost effective Essential Health Package services to reduce the suffering from illnesses and premature deaths.

Our core duties

The following are our services:

- Preventive & promotive;
- Information Education and Communication, immunizations, Maternal and Child Health, family planning methods, Counselling and hygiene and sanitation promotion;
- Curative;
- treatment of illnesses (Out-patient department and In-patient), surgery, referrals and nursing care;
- Rehabilitative;
- orthopaedic care/services, Nutrition Rehabilitative Unit (NRU, physiotherapy and mental health;
- Diagnostics;
- Laboratory and Radiology.

Our Values

- Professionalism
- Impartiality
- Dignity

- Courtesy
- Empathy
- Diligence
- Privacy

Standards of our services

In provision of our services we try as much as possible to meet your expectations, therefore the following are our standards:

- Opening hours: Health facilities are opened from 7:30 am to 12:00 Noon & from 1:30 pm to 5:00pm from Monday to Friday and 7:30 am to 12:00 Noon on Saturday. Since the services are for 24 hours, there is stand-by staff during lunch break, at night, public holidays and weekends in case of emergencies and during handovers;
- Emergency cases are given a priority and are attended to within 10 minutes irrespective of any irregularities e.g. absence of health passport books;
- Clients/patients are told where to go within 30 minutes depending on the number of people on the cue;
- Consent is obtained from our clients/patients before any physical examination, test and surgery;
- Enough time is given to a client to explain his or her problem/illness
- All our services are for free except for solicited medical examinations where a Government General Receipt of payment must be issued;
- We shall provide information to our client/patient on how to get assisted in times of low staffing levels;
- Health facilities are provided at maximum radius of 5 kilometres to a population of 10,000 people. However, outreach clinics are provided to those people living at distant places from the health facility;
- Referral cases are provided with transport to and from the hospital they have been referred to. However, transport is not provided to and from individual homes.
- One nurse serves ten in-patients in the wards and one Health Surveillance Assistant serves one thousand people in the communities.

Clients' roles and responsibilities

For us to serve you better, we request you to undertake the following:

- To take or consider health staff members as part of your community;
- ☐ To respect and cooperate with any health staff member;
- To comply with treatment and appointments;
- To keep your health records e.g. health passport books in good condition;
- To report any disease outbreak or strange health condition within the community;
- To seek medical help in time.
- To observe personal hygiene.

Feed back

We ask you to objectively assess us and give us suggestions on how we can serve you better. You also have the right to complain where need be. You may request information on how to complain from our offices

How to contact us

You can contact us in writing or coming in person to the following address:

District Health Officer,
Salima District Hospital,
P.O. Box 53,
Salima.
Tel: +265 1 262 277

Fax: +265 1 262 516

Or

By dropping your letter of complaint or suggestion in the complaints/ suggestion boxes provided at our hospitals and health centres.

4.0 Salima Police Service

Vision

A safe and secure Salima as a District.

Mission

Salima Police Service working in partnership with the community shall provide quality internal security services.

Our values

As a service, we embrace the following values:

- Independence and professionalism;
- Impartiality;
- Openness and accountability;
- Quality in service provision;
- Efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

As individuals, every officer embraces the following values:

- Empathy
- Courtesy
- Diligence
- Selflessness
- Decisiveness
- Honesty and integrity
- Sound judgement
- Fairness and non-favouritism

Identity of the organisation

For men

- They are identified / recognised by our khaki uniform with a black mohair hat with a black peak bearing a silvery metallic eagle badge on the cap on the forehead, a name tag and an identity card.

For ladies

- They are identified by a sky blue top and navy blue pair of trousers with a navy blue hat with a cap surrounded by a band with white, sky blue, and navy blue stripes bearing the same silvery metallic eagle badge.

Traffic police

- These wear a white hat and navy blue hats with a black and white band on the cap for men and ladies respectively.

Our clients and access to our services

Our clients are:

- The complainant;
- The suspect;
- The criminal;
- The general public.

Our core duties

- Protection of life and property;
- Prosecution of offenders;
- Serving individuals who are destitute/vulnerable;
- Investigation and acting on reported and unreported cases;
- Promoting road safety;
- Crime prevention;
- Promotion of partnership with stake holders in community policing;
- Protection of individual's rights;
- Protecting victims of domestic violence;
- Sensitisation of communities about community policing;

Standards for our services

We shall ensure that:

- Telephone calls to the Salima Police will be answered before the third bell rings;
- The ratio of police officers against the number of clients to be served is 1:500;
- Meals and other food stuffs are provided to and received by suspects as many times as possible from 07:30hrs to 16:30hrs daily during our normal operating hours. During this time the suspects can also be visited by their relations;
- Meals are provided to the detained suspects at least once a day.
- Bail is granted to all suspects regardless of the seriousness of the case on condition that there is likelihood of the suspect to appear before court and that bail is for free. However, murder and treason cases bail is granted by the courts;
- Every suspect is taken to court within 48 hours (2days) where the 48 hours expires outside on the first court day from the day of arrest. However, suspects arrested on public holidays and weekends appear before court on the first court day;
- There are police posts and units in the District manned by a Sergeant or a Sub-Inspector where the public can access required information on security matters;
- Police units are planted at all major Trading Centres and in communities where there are overwhelming levels of crime;
- Action is taken within 48 hours when a report or complaint is received at the service station, unit or post;
- A warrant of arrest is used when apprehending a suspect or suspects. However, a police officer may arrest without a warrant for all serious offences known by the public and/or those that are cognizable;
- Our services are for free. However, there are special cases which attract a
- fee of some kind in accordance with Government regulations on general receipt;
- Our services are readily available at our service station, posts and units and even from individual police officers who happen to be present at the time of need;
- All sensitive issues are treated with confidentiality.

Clients' roles and responsibilities

For our service to meet the above stipulated standards, we expect you, our clients, to:

- Follow the times stipulated above when bringing food to your relations in custody;
- Quickly report serious cases such as rape and defilement to your nearest police. Victims of rape and defilement are encouraged not take a bath, change clothes or tamper with the scene of the incident;
- Not touch your property that has been tampered with by suspects until the matter is reported to police;
- Tell us about suspected criminals that live in your area and we promise to treat the matter with confidentiality;
- Comply with bail guidelines and conditions;

- Properly use and take care of suggestion boxes that are placed in various places;
- Observe all traffic laws and regulations. This applies to pedestrians and cyclists as well;

Feedback and complaints

Feedback mechanisms

Give us your fair assessment of our service through suggestion boxes placed near you or contacts given.

Complaints mechanisms

In case you have complaints related to the way we discharge our duties, lodge them with the Officer In-Charge any time through phones, in writing, or come in person.

How to contact us:

Our clients can reach us through a 24 hour 997 toll free line on any ground phone or through the address below:

The Officer InCharge,
Salima Police Station,
PO Box 37,
Salima.

Tel: (265) 01 262 033

Or

You can, at any time, come in person at our service station, which is situated behind the District Commissioner's Offices at Salima Boma, or at the police post at Chipoka and the following police units: Kamuzu Road, Lifuwu, Sengabay, and Chitala. You can access information about our services by:

- Visiting our institutions and asking for particular information;
- Attending various community police meetings that are held in your respective communities;
- Listening to or reading statements that are issued by our Public Relations Officer through electronic and print media respectively.

5.0 Social Welfare Sector

Vision

A vibrant society where the vulnerable groups are protected and empowered to effectively contribute to district development

Mission

To provide social economic support to those suffering and those that are at risk of deprivation.

Our values are:

- Confidentiality and privacy
- Individualization
- Acceptance
- Integrity
- Professionalism
- Equity
- Efficiency
- Client self determination
- Courtesy
- Impartiality

Our clients are:

- Elderly

- Orphans and other vulnerable children
- People with disabilities
- Widows and widowers
- Children in and on the street
- HIV and AIDS infected and affected people
- Chronically ill people
- Destitutes
- Children in conflict with the law
- General public

Our Core duties

We provide the following services:

- Counselling;
- Bursaries;
- Facilitate internal and external repatriation of Malawians and foreign destitutes;
- Process of foster care and adoption;
- Facilitate the establishment and registration of Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Community Based Child Care Centres (CBCCs) and Faith Based Organisations (FBOs);
- Inspection of Police cells, prisons and orphanages;
- Economic empowerment of households that host Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC);
- Settlement of family and other forms of disputes;
- Child rights protection.

Standards of our services

We shall ensure that:

- Our offices are opened from 07:30 hrs - 1200hrs and 1300hrs-1700hrs Monday to Friday. However, during weekends and public holidays, we work on call basis;
- All our services are offered for free;
- Each group village headman (GVH) is serviced by 2 well trained marriage councillors;
- A matrimonial case is concluded within 2 days;
- Every child without a family has a foster home;
- CBOs and FBOs are registered within three months after submitting applications;
- One CBCC caters for 100 children and each caregiver serves 15 children between the age of 3-5 years and 10 children between 2-3 years;
- Bursaries are disbursed within the first month of the beginning of each school calendar;
- Bars, Night Clubs, Taverns, Rest houses, Lodges, Motels and Restaurants are inspected once in every three months to check the presence of children;
- Malawian destitutes are repatriated within two days;
- Police cells, prisons, Children homes and orphanages are inspected once every quarter.

How can you help us?

For us to serve you better, we request you to:

- Accompany clients with visual impairment and mobility problems;
- Meet your own traveling expenses when visiting our offices;
- Respect the rights of officers you find at our offices;
- Provide us with genuine assessment and advise us of problems when they arise;
- Comply with dispute resolution arrangements.

Feedback and complaints

Feedback mechanisms

Give us your fair assessment of our service through suggestion boxes placed at Teacher Development Centres (TDC) and the District Social Welfare Office.

Complaints mechanisms

In case you have complaints related to the way we discharge our duties, lodge them with the District Social Welfare Officer any time through phones, in writing, or come in person.

How to contact us:

Our clients can reach us on the address and phone number below:

The District Social Welfare Officer,

PO Box 256,

Salima.

Tel: (265) 01 262 303

Or

You can, at any time, come in person at our main offices which are situated behind the District Commissioner's Offices at Salima Boma, or at any of our field staff at community level.

June 18 2009 Production