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**A critical assessment of Quality Education in Community Day Schools  
in Malawi: A case Study of Mulanje District.**

**By**

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**Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of**

**MASTER OF EDUCATION**

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**POLICY, PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP**

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my wife, Bertha; my son, Marcus; and my parents, brothers, and sisters.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study has been made possible due to the assistance from organizations and individuals. In the first place, I offer my gratitude to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through the Malawi Government, for giving me this opportunity to pursue my studies at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Distance Education Centers (DECs) were intended to provide alternative formal secondary school education to school going age children who had passed their standard eight examinations but had failed to gain access to Conventional Secondary Schools (CSSs) due to limited places. However, despite increasing access, DECs did not offer appropriate instruction and usually produced poor results in national examinations. Among other things, there were acute shortages of teaching and learning materials in these schools. In addition, the majority of teachers in DECs were drawn from primary schools and, therefore, not qualified to teach at a secondary school.

In December 1998, the Malawi Government and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology converted a large number of DECs to CDSSs. This upgrading was meant to unify secondary education system with the aim of improving quality in DECs. In addition, it also meant that the ministry would take full control of the DECs. This would involve, among other things, purchasing and disseminating of relevant teaching and learning materials, the supply of properly trained teachers, and improving and strengthening inspection and supervision services in these schools. This study, therefore, was aimed at assessing the current situation in Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs) with regard to quality education.

The study used mixed methods design approach. Thus, both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were used in order to have a comprehensive analysis and understanding of the problem under study. Qualitative data were collected through

interviews, observations, and review of school documents and records. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaire survey and observations.

Although the policy on CDSSs was a welcome development in that it was intended to improve the quality of education in these schools, the present study has found that the implementation of the policy has not made much impact due to lack of basic resources. The study has found that 92 percent of teachers in CDSSs are not qualified to teach at a secondary school. In addition, there is shortage of teaching and learning materials. Furthermore, these schools have inadequate infrastructure and classroom facilities. In some schools pupils are still learning in temporary shelters and borrowed premises. The study also found that there is evidence of community participation through school management committees (SMCs), but this has little impact as seen from the unfinished development projects. The above scenario, therefore, cannot facilitate quality teaching and learning processes in CDSSs that lead to attainment of much needed quality education.

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CCAP	Church of Central African Presbytery
CDSS	Community Day Secondary School
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CJSS	Community Junior Secondary School
CSS	Conventional Secondary School
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DEC	Distance Education Center
DfID	Department for International Development
DEM	District Education Manager
EDM	Education Division Manager
EMAs	Education Methods Advisors
EMAS	Education Methods Advisory Services
ESSUP	Education Sector Support Project
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross Net Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HoD	Head of Department
IEQ	Improving Education Quality
JCE	Junior Certificate of Education
MANEB	Malawi National Examinations Board
MASAF	Malawi Social Action Fund
MCC	Malawi Correspondence College
MCDE	Malawi College of Distance Education
MIITEP	Malawi Integrated In-service Teacher Education Program
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science & Technology
MPRSP	Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
MSCE	Malawi School Certificate of Education
NACP	National Aids Control Program
NSO	National Statistical Office
PEMA	Principal Education Methods Advisor
PEA	Primary Education Advisor
PIF	Policy & Investment Framework
PSLCE	Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SEMA	Senior Education Methods Advisor
SMC	School Management Committee
SSTEP	Secondary School Teacher Education Project
T/A	Traditional Authority
UCE	University Certificate of Education
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
LIST OF TABLES.....	xii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY.....	1
1.0 Chapter overview.....	1
1.1 Background to the problem.....	1
1.2 Geography and population of Malawi.....	4
1.3 Socio-Economic context.....	5
1.4 HIV/AIDS Situation in Malawi.....	6
1.5 Education system.....	8
1.6 Decentralization in the education sector.....	11
1.7 Statement of the problem.....	13
1.8 Purpose of the study.....	16
1.9 Research questions.....	17
1.10 Significance of the study.....	17
1.11 Limitation of the study.....	18
1.12 Chapter summary.....	19

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	21
2.0 Chapter overview.....	21
2.1 Teaching and learning materials.....	22
2.2 Class size.....	23
2.3 Community participation.....	23
2.4 Financial resources.....	26
2.5 Monitoring and Evaluation.....	27
2.6 Government policies and plans.....	27
2.7 Chapter summary.....	29
 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	 31
3.0 Chapter overview.....	31
3.1 The study area.....	31
3.2 Research design.....	31
3.3 Sample and sampling procedure.....	32
3.4 Brief profile of the sampled schools.....	34
3.4.1 CDSS Ar.....	34
3.4.2 CDSS Bsu.....	35
3.4.3 CDSS Cr.....	35
3.4.4 CDSS Dr.....	36
3.4.5 CDSS Er.....	36
3.4.6 CDSS Fsu.....	37
3.4.7 CDSS Gr.....	37

3.4.8	CDSS Hsu.....	38
3.5	Population of interest.....	38
3.5.1	Head teachers.....	38
3.5.2	Teachers.....	39
3.5.3	Pupils.....	39
3.5.4	School management committee.....	40
3.5.5	Education methods advisors.....	41
3.6	Data collection instruments.....	41
3.6.1	Interviews.....	42
3.6.2	The questionnaire.....	42
3.6.3	Review of documents and observations.....	43
3.7	Data collection procedure.....	43
3.8	Data management.....	46
3.9	Data analysis.....	46
3.10	Validity and reliability.....	47
3.11	Ethical consideration.....	48
3.12	Chapter summary.....	49
CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS.....		51
4.0	Chapter overview.....	51
4.1	Teacher qualification.....	52
4.2	Pupil-teacher ratio.....	54
4.3	Teaching and learning materials.....	58

4.4	School equipment, stationery, and other materials	61
4.5	Assessment of pupils	62
4.6	School infrastructure and classroom facilities	63
4.7	Sanitation facilities and water resources	68
4.8	School administration and management	71
4.8.1	Staff meetings	71
4.8.2	School based supervision	72
4.8.3	School based in-service training	73
4.8.4	Record keeping	74
4.9	Inspection and supervision	75
4.10	Community participation	78
4.11	School finances and government funding	81
4.12	Distance to school	84
4.13	Pupils' performance in national examinations	87
4.14	Chapter summary	89
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION		91
5.0	Chapter overview	91
5.1	Conclusion	92
5.2	Recommendations	95
REFERENCES		100
APPENDICES		105

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	page
Table 1: Pupils' enrolment, 1998 and 1999.....	2
Table 2: Number of teachers and their qualification, 1997.....	3
Table 3: Structure of the formal education system in Malawi.....	10
Table 4: Textbook-pupil ratio in the CDSSs, 1999.....	16
Table 5: Data collection guide.....	45
Table 6: Number of teachers and their qualification.....	52
Table 7: Teacher-pupil ratio.....	54
Table 8: Number of learning periods per school.....	57
Table 9a: Textbook-pupil ratio in Semi-Urban CDSSs.....	59
Table 9b: Textbook-pupil ratio in Rural CDSSs.....	59
Table 10: School equipment, stationery, and other school facilities.....	61
Table 11: School infrastructure.....	63
Table 12: Number of classroom furniture.....	65
Table 13: Pupils' enrolment by form and gender.....	66
Table 14: Number of toilets for teachers and pupils.....	68
Table 15: Water resources.....	70
Table 16: Inspection and supervision visits.....	76
Table 17: School finances and government funding.....	82
Table 18a: Distance to school in Rural CDSSs.....	84
Table 18b: Distance to school in Semi-Urban CDSSs.....	84
Table 19: 2003 Malawi School Certificate Examinations results.....	89

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

### **1.0 Chapter overview**

This study assesses the current situation in Community Day Secondary Schools (formally Distance Education Centers) in Malawi with regard to quality education since December 1998 when they became fully under the Ministry of Education, Science & Technology. The actual implementation of the new policy on Community Day Secondary Schools started in January 1999. The reform was intended to improve the quality of the Distance Education Centers in order to narrow the gap between them and Conventional Secondary Schools so that there can be a favorable competition between these two types of secondary schools in Malawi. This chapter presents background information to the study. The pertinent issues to be discussed are: background to the problem, the geography and population of Malawi, the socio-economic context, the education system in Malawi with special emphasis on secondary education, the research problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, and the significance and limitation of the study.

### **1.1 Background to the problem**

When the new democratic government introduced free primary education in 1994, thus soon after almost three decades of dictatorship, the enrolment in primary schools increased by more than 70% and went up from 1.9 million (1993/1994) to 2.9 million children (1994/1995) (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2001a, p. 81). The increase in enrolment at primary level resulted in further increase in demand for secondary education. Due to limited places in Conventional Secondary Schools (CSSs),

more pupils were, therefore, enrolled in Distance Education Centers (DECs) than in CSSs. By 1995 about 80% of the pupils in secondary schools were in DECs, making DECs the largest provider of secondary education. Table 1 shows enrolment in DECs in 1998 before they were converted to Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs) and enrolment in CDSSs in 1999 after the implementation of the new policy in relation to other types of secondary schools.

**Table 1: Secondary School enrolment, 1998 and 1999**

Type of School	1998			1999		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Government SS	20,151	11,563	31,714	31,159	15,936	47,095
Grant Aided SS	4,177	2,502	6,679	5,261	6,358	11,619
DECs/CDSS	82,826	49,619	132,445	105,058	61,723	166,781
Night SS	118	73	191	-	-	-
Private SS	13,174	8,069	21,243	9,738	7,507	17,245
<b>Total</b>	<b>120,446</b>	<b>71,826</b>	<b>192,272</b>	<b>151,216</b>	<b>91,524</b>	<b>242,740</b>

Source: MoEST, Education Basic Statistics Malawi, 1998 and 1999

However, despite increasing access to secondary school, DECs did not offer appropriate instruction and usually produced poor results in national examinations (Chimwenje, 1998). For example in 1997, 36% of CSS students that sat for the Malawi School Certificate Examinations passed compared to only 8% of DEC students (MoEST, 1997d). And also in 1998, 29% of CSS students that sat for the same examinations passed compared to only 4% of DEC students (MoEST: Education Basic Statistics Malawi, 1998). Among other factors, the majority of teachers in DECs were academically handicapped (MoEST: Basic Education Statistics Malawi, 2000). In addition, they lacked management and administrative skills necessary to perform their duties effectively and efficiently. These teachers were mostly drawn from primary schools and were qualified

to teach at primary school level only, not at secondary school level. Table 2 shows the number of teachers and their qualification in DEC's in 1997 in comparison with other types of secondary schools.

**Table 2: Number of teachers and their qualification, 1997**

Type of School	Degree		Diploma		Other		Total		Total (Both)
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M&F
CSSs	1,094	197	1,159	218	148	109	2,401	524	2,995
MCDE (DECs)	12	6	2	1	1,903	546	1,917	553	2,470
Private SSs	34	17	136	13	79	14	249	44	293
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,140</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>1,178</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>2,130</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>4,567</b>	<b>1,121</b>	<b>5,688</b>

Source: MoEST, 1997d, pp. 32, 34 & 36

Recognizing that these DEC's were no longer offering anything resembling distance education (MoEST, 1999b, p. 8) and that the type of education these schools were offering was not of good quality, in the late 1998 the Government of Malawi and the MoEST converted a large number of DEC's into CDSSs (MoEST, 2001c, p. 5). As of December 1998, 520 DEC's had been converted into CDSSs. About 120 of these had their own premises and the rest were operating in the afternoon in primary schools (MoEST, 1999b, p. 15). This upgrading was, therefore, meant to unify the secondary school education system in Malawi with the aim of improving the quality of education in DEC's. The reform also meant to lift the image of the DEC's in order to narrow or remove the gap between these two types of secondary schools. In addition, it also meant that the ministry would take full control of the DEC's. This would involve, among other things, the purchasing and disseminating of relevant teaching and learning materials, the supply of



properly trained teaching staff, improving and strengthening inspection and supervision services, and provision of finances.

## **1.2 Geography and Population of Malawi**

Malawi, which received her independence in 1964 from the British, is a small landlocked country in the Sub-Saharan Africa. The country is 901 kilometers long and ranges in width from 80 kilometers to 161 kilometers. It covers an area of approximately 118,484 square kilometers of which 94,276 square kilometers are land area. 20% of the total area is covered with water. The largest fresh water body is Lake Malawi, about 475 kilometers long and running down Malawi's eastern boundary with Tanzania and Mozambique (National Statistical Office & ORC Macro, 2003, p. 1). The country lies between latitudes 9 degrees and 17 degrees south of the equator. Malawi shares its boundary with Mozambique to the east, south, and southwest; Tanzania to the north and northeast; and Zambia to the west and northwest.

Administratively, Malawi is divided into three regions: Northern, Central, and Southern. In addition, the country has 28 administrative districts with 6 districts in the Northern region, 9 districts in the Central region, and 13 districts in the Southern region. These districts are further sub-divided into Traditional Authorities (T/As) that are presided over by chiefs. The T/As are composed of the smallest administrative units, which are under the village headmen (National Statistical Office & ORC Macro, 2003, p. 1).

According to National Statistical Office (2002, p. 3), the population of Malawi is currently estimated at 12 million people. About 91% of the population (about 10.9 million people) is said to live in rural areas and 9% of the population (about 1.1 million

people) live in the country's main urban areas. These are the cities of Blantyre, Lilongwe, and Mzuzu, and Zomba municipality. 46.8% of the population consists of children and the youth under 15 years of age. The population growth rate in Malawi is currently estimated at 2.14% per annum (CIA: The World Factbook, 2004).

The Northern region is sparsely populated and accounts for 12% of the total population, mostly Tumbuka speaking. The Central region is highly populated and accounts for 42% of the total population. This region is mostly Chewa speaking and the center for tobacco growing. The Southern region is densely populated; 46% of the population lives in this region. The region is the center for tea growing, especially in the districts of Mulanje and Thyolo. There are four main languages that people speak in the Southern region and these are Chichewa, Chilomwe, Chiyao, and Chisena. The sex distribution showed that there are 5.9 million (49%) males and 6.2 million (51%) females in Malawi (National Statistical Office, 2002).

As explained above, Malawi is a multilingual society. Nevertheless, English and Chichewa are the official languages. About 50% of the population speaks Chichewa as their first language. The other 50% speak indigenous languages and these are: Chitumbuka, Chiyao, Chilomwe, Chitonga, Chingoni, and Chisena.

### **1.3 Socio- Economic Context**

Malawi's economy is predominantly agriculture, accounting for 31% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 90% of export revenue. About 70% of all agricultural produce comes from smallholder farmers. Malawi's major exports commodities are tobacco, tea, cotton, and sugar. In fact, Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world with a Gross National Product (GNP) per capita estimate of US\$210. Most of its

poorest population lives in rural areas. It is reported that 59% of the population are subsistence farmers, 15% are employed in the private sector, 11% are self-employed, and 6% are civil servants (National Statistical Office, 2002, p. 8).

#### **1.4 HIV/AIDS situation**

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has greatly affected many countries, both developed as well as developing countries. However, the situation is quite alarming in developing countries because of lack of resources. In 1999, the Sub-Saharan region alone accounted for over 74% of the new infections and 78.5% of HIV/AIDS-related deaths (Kadzamira, Kamlongera, Maluwa-Banda, & Swainson, 2001, p. 1).

HIV/AIDS has spread rapidly in Malawi since 1985 when the first case was diagnosed at Lilongwe Central Hospital, then Kamuzu Central Hospital. Since that year, HIV-related diseases have affected thousands of people throughout the country. According to Kadzamira, Kamlongera, Maluwa-Banda, and Swainson (2001, p. 9), between 1985 and 1998 a cumulative total of 52,856 AIDS cases were officially reported to the National Aids Control Programme (NACP). It is also important to note that the group that is most highly infected is between the ages of 15 to 49. This age group comprises adults in their most productive years, including teachers and students. The infection is higher in women than men, with women accounting for 60% of infection.

The pandemic has, in fact, affected the teaching staff which is very important when it comes to the implementation of the national curriculum. There is a high rate of absenteeism on the part of teachers. Kadzamira, Kamlongera, Maluwa-Banda, and Swainson (2001, p. 69) argue that absenteeism is higher amongst female teachers than male teachers. They say that absenteeism is “higher amongst female teachers at both

primary and secondary level... Higher female absenteeism is mainly because women in Malawi are responsible for the care of sick children and other family members.” In addition to this, there is also high teacher mortality rate. Many teachers are dying of HIV/AIDS related illnesses in Malawi. This has a great negative impact on the teacher-pupil ratio because more teachers are dying than the system can replace. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning process in schools is negatively affected.

Another related point is that these deaths have great financial implications for the education sector as a whole. The government has to buy coffins and transport dead bodies and family members to their respective homes. In addition, the government is spending a lot of money to pay for the unbudgeted premature terminal benefits. This is the money that could be used to fund other activities in the education sector in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

The other impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic is the growing number of orphans without parental care and support. Usually these orphans withdraw from school because of lack of support and care. Bennell, Hyde, and Swainson (2002, p. 49) report that there were 8.2 million AIDS orphans in Sub-Saharan Africa in 1999. But in Malawi alone, according to Kadzamira, Kamlongera, Maluwa-Banda, and Swainson (2001, p. 40), the number of these orphans has grown from 210,000 in 1998 to 500,000 in 2000. Bennell, Hyde, and Swainson (2002, p. 50) also comment that these orphans, most of the times, absent themselves from school because they look after sick family members. Their academic performance at school is, therefore, greatly affected.

## 1.5 Education System

Formal education system in Malawi consists of three levels: primary, secondary, and tertiary. In terms of the number of years, Malawi has an 8-4-4 system of formal education. That is, 8 years of primary education, 4 years of secondary education, and an average of 4 years of tertiary education.

Primary education is divided into infant section (standards 1 & 2), junior section (from standards 3 to 5), and senior section (from standards 6 to 8). The official age range for primary schooling is 6 to 13 years. At the end of primary school level (that is at the end of 8 years of primary education) the national examination, the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE), is administered. This examination determines entry into secondary education level. The goal of primary education in Malawi is to equip pupils with basic knowledge and skills to allow them to function as competent and productive citizens in a free society (MoEST, 2001c, p. 2). In addition, the primary education also prepares students for secondary education. Some students are selected to Conventional Secondary Schools (CSSs) and some to Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs), depending on their performance. Normally, those selected to CDSSs are students who rank lower on the national examination's results list.

Secondary education level has two cycles: the junior cycle which consists of 2 years and the senior cycle which also consists of 2 years. After 2 years of junior cycle students sit for the national examination, the Junior Certificate of Education Examination (JCE). Almost all students who pass the junior cycle examinations (form 2) continue to the senior cycle. At the end of the senior cycle (form 4), students sit for the Malawi School Certificate of Education Examination (MSCE). This examination is used to select

students into the tertiary education. The official age range for secondary schooling is 14 to 17 years. The purpose of secondary education is to provide students with the knowledge and skills to enable them earn a living, contribute to national development goals, survive in the non-work environment, and to pursue higher education in various institutions of higher learning (MoEST, 2001c, pp. 2-3).

Tertiary education level comprises schooling at the five constituent colleges of the University of Malawi (Bunda College of Agriculture, Chancellor College, the Polytechnic, College of Medicine, and Kamuzu College of Nursing), Mzuzu University, Domasi College of Education, Primary School Teachers' Training Colleges (6), and Technical Colleges (5). The number of years in the tertiary education ranges from two to seven years, depending on the program of study. Tertiary education aims at providing middle and high-level manpower requirements for the management and development of the economy of Malawi and for the teaching and managing of education institutions in Malawi (MoEST, 2001c, p. 3).

It should also be noted that the formal education system in Malawi, like most of the developing countries in the world, puts much emphasis on theory and the examinations assess the cognitive development of the learners. Thus, the education system in Malawi is highly academic and focuses on advancing pupils from one level to the other. Table 3 summarizes the structure of formal education system in Malawi and years pupils (students) spent at school and in various colleges.

**Table 3: Structure of the formal Education System in Malawi**

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	<p>Community Day Sec. Schools</p> <p>9 10 JCE 11 12 MSCE</p> <p>Conventional Sec. Schools</p> <p>9 10 JCE 11 12 MSCE</p>	<p>13 14 15 16 Kamuzu College of Nursing</p> <p>13 14 15 16 Bunda College of Agriculture</p> <p>13 14 15 16 17 The polytechnic</p> <p>13 14 15 16 17 College of Medicine</p> <p>13 14 15 16 17 Chancellor College</p> <p>13 14 15 16 Mzuzu University</p> <p>13 14 15 Domasi College of Education</p> <p>13 14 Primary Teacher Training</p> <p>13 14 15 16 Tchn. &amp; Vocational Education</p>

Source: Adapted from MoEST & UNICEF, 1998, p.6 and MoEST, Basic Education Statistics Malawi, 2000, p.2

There are five types of secondary schools in Malawi (MoEST, 1999b, p. 15).

These are:

1. Government Boarding Secondary Schools:

These are full boarding secondary schools, well resourced, and established.

Selection to these secondary schools is done on a national basis, thus regardless of the district in which the school is found or located.

2. Government Day Secondary Schools:

These cater for the whole district in which they are found and as such they offer boarding facilities to some of the students.

3. Grant Aided Secondary Schools:

Churches mostly run these schools and they receive grants from the government covering about 90% of the total annual budget of each school.

4. Community Day Secondary Schools:

These were originally operating as distance education centers until December 1998 when the new policy to upgrade them was finally announced. The new policy became effective from January 1999 and this is the main focus of the present study.

5. Private Secondary Schools:

Individuals or board of governors run these schools with no subsidy from the government. Under this type, there are those that are known as designated private secondary schools. The designated private secondary schools were established for the expatriate community and they follow mostly British syllabuses. Then there are schools that follow Malawian syllabus and are mainly operated by Malawians.

### **1.6 Decentralization in the Education Sector**

Due to the decentralization process that is going on in Malawi (the decentralization policy was adopted by the Malawi Government in 1998 with the aim of consolidating democratic governance), the Ministry of Education, Science & Technology is divided into six administrative education divisions, each with 4 to 5 districts depending on the number of children enrolled in schools. The government came up with these education divisions for easy management of the education system. In fact, this present structure seeks to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the education system. Commenting on this, McGinn and Welsh (1999, p. 9 & p. 28) argue that decentralization in education helps to improve the operations of the education system by increasing the efficiency in the allocation and utilization of the available limited resources. They also



say that decentralization allows a faster identification of critical problems and a search for appropriate solutions/answers or responses to those problems.

With special reference to this decentralization policy, the Southern region of Malawi has three education divisions:

1. Shire Highlands Education Division: This division has its head office in Mulanje.
2. Southeast Education Division: Its head office is in Zomba municipality.
3. Southwest Education Division: The head office for this division is in Blantyre city.

In the Central region, there are two education divisions and these are:

1. Central West Education Division: Its head office is in Lilongwe, the Capital city of Malawi.
2. Central East Education Division: This division has its head office in Kasungu district.

In the Northern region, there is only one education division and it is called the Northern Education Division. Its head office is in Mzuzu city.

The Education Division Manager (EDM) heads each education division. It should also be noted that each education division comprises a number of districts and in each district there is a district education office that is headed by the District Education Manager (DEM). Each district is further sub-divided into education zones. The education zone comprises a number of primary schools and it has a central office called Teachers' Development Center (TDC). The Primary Education Advisor (PEA) heads each education zone.

In each education division, secondary schools are also grouped into clusters of between 7 to 15 schools for easy management. Each cluster is supposed to have one CSS, but sometimes this does not happen due to geographical position or location of some CDSSs. The main purpose of clustering schools, among other purposes, was to organize zonal in-service training programs so that other teachers, especially from CDSSs, can benefit from their friends in other CDSSs and in CSSs. According to DANIDA (1999) and MoEST (2001c), the establishment of the cluster system was intended to strengthen the relations between government, community, grant-aided and private schools. It was meant to bring all these schools within reasonable distance in order to improve communication, share resources, and allow for local training needs.

Decentralization of the education system is, therefore, of paramount importance with regard to the administration and management of CDSSs in Malawi. It means giving the local community, thus from where pupils come, an opportunity to participate in the management of these schools.

### **1.7 Statement of the problem**

Initially, Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs) were known as Distance Education Centers (DECs). They were meant to provide alternative formal secondary school education to school going age children who had passed their standard eight examinations but had failed to gain access to Conventional Secondary Schools (CSSs) due to limited places. According to a parliamentary statement by the Minister of Education, Science & Technology on the quality of education in Malawi (2001), the government encouraged communities to establish DECs to act as safety valves for the pressure created by the increasing demand for secondary education. Thus, through a self-

help approach, the community took a leading role in establishing and running DEC's at a local level. This self-help approach gave the members of the community a sense of ownership and schools were ready to enroll any pupil who wanted secondary education. Often, the centers did not have their own premises and had to share premises with the nearby primary schools. Nevertheless, they were registered with the Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE). The MCDE was mandated by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) to manage the operations of DEC's.

Historically, the MCDE was known as Malawi Correspondence College (MCC), officially established in 1964 to provide access to secondary education through distance mode of learning to adult students who missed formal education during their youth days. In addition, it also provided primary school teachers with upgrading courses (MoEST, 1997d, p. 30). The name changed from MCC to MCDE in 1980 (MoEST, 1999b, p. 8).

The MCDE provided the DEC's with self-instructional printed materials covering the entire syllabus for each subject known as Sets (also technically known as Modules). Radio instruction and audiocassette programs were also available at the centers to supplement the information in Sets. There was supposed to be a kind of independent learning in these DEC's but under the supervision of a teacher-in-charge who was normally a primary school teacher. It should also be noted that the DEC's were not receiving any financial assistance from the MoEST. According to Al-Samarrai and Zaman (2002, p. 6), the Malawi Government's funding of the DEC's was limited to paying teachers' salaries only and this resulted in fees being substantially higher in these institutions compared to the CSSs. Nevertheless, the Malawi Government through

Ministry of Education was providing the MCDE with funds, though not adequate, only for the production of various instructional materials.

However, lack of infrastructure, other school facilities, and teaching and learning materials and high demand from both pupils and parents for secondary education, caused some of these DECs to eventually start offering formal education. Thus, teachers recruited from the primary school sector started teaching pupils in a face-to-face approach although they were using materials that were specifically designed for distance education mode of learning. The teaching of pupils in a face-to-face approach in DECs was an attempt to copy the Conventional Secondary Schools (MoEST, 1999b, p. 8). Another reason for teaching pupils in a face-to-face approach was that pupils in the DECs were just as young as those pupils in the CSSs and most of them could not concentrate much on their own. But due to wide catchment area and the absence of boarding facilities, many pupils rented houses around the schools for easy access. The concept of self-boarding in DECs had discipline implications; pupils were involved in mini-marriages and drug abuse because there were not being supervised by teachers. As a result, many pupils dropped out of school.

The acute shortage of teaching and learning materials had a negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning process, consequently affecting the quality of education in the DECs. For example pupil-textbook ratio was high in all subjects on the national curriculum, thus making teaching and learning quite difficult and challenging. Table 4 shows textbook-pupil ratio by class in the CDSSs in 1999 soon after the implementation of the new policy.

**Table 4: Textbook-pupil ratio in the CDSSs, 1999**

Subject area	Textbook-pupil ratio per form			
	Form 1	Form 2	Form 3	Form 4
Mathematics	1:18.3	1:22.7	1:12.5	1:9.5
Biology	1:26.6	1:29.6	1:16.5	1:11.8
Agriculture	1:23.0	1:31.6	1:21.3	1:16.2
Geography	1:14.3	1:17.9	1:7.9	1:5.2
History	1:21.3	1:24.0	1:11.7	1:9.3
English Language	1:16.7	1:20.0	1:11.1	1:9.1
English Literature	1:30.2	1:19.8	1:6.5	1:5.2
Bible Knowledge	1:20.0	1:35.6	1:10.1	1:7.1
Chichewa	1:5.0	1:6.0	1:4.0	1:3.1

Source: MoST, Education Basic Statistics Malawi, 1999 (various pages)

In addition to this problem, as already pointed out (see table 2 on page 3), the majority of teachers in the DEC's were not qualified to teach at a secondary school. These teachers were trained to teach at a primary school, and this also had implications for the quality of teaching and learning. It was against this brief background, therefore, that this study was conducted.

### **1.8 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study, therefore, was to assess if there has been any improvement in the quality of education in Community Day Secondary Schools since 1998 when they became fully under the Ministry of Education, Science & Technology.

## **1.9 Research questions**

There are two specific questions that this present study was attempting to answer and these are:

1. Has the implementation of the new policy (thus conversion of DEC to CDSSs) ensured improvement of quality education in the Community Day Secondary Schools in Malawi as expected?
2. What is the quality of education in CDSSs now as a result of the implementation of this policy?

In order to answer these two questions, the study focused on the following indicators of quality: qualification of teachers, teacher-pupil ratio, infrastructure and physical facilities, school administration and management, inspection and supervision, teaching and learning materials, school equipment, administration of assessment tests, sanitation facilities and water resources, community participation, financial resources, the distance that pupils cover when going to their respective schools, and the performance of pupils in national examinations.

## **1.10 Significance of the study**

The study is significant in three main ways. In the first place, since the aim of converting DEC to CDSSs was to improve the quality of education, the study will help policy makers to critically review the impact of the present policy and determine which areas have improved and which areas have not improved. It is, therefore, hoped that the study will highlight some unique educational needs concerning CDSSs. These needs will help the Malawi Government and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to formulate some policies in order to correct the situation.

Secondly, the study will provide much needed information to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology as they contemplate improving quality in CDSSs in the Education Sector Support Project 11 (ESSUP 11). According to the minutes of the Education Sector Support Project 1 (ESSUP 1) meeting held on August 16, 2004 at the Ministry of Education headquarters in Lilongwe, it was reported that they are failing to allocate money to improve CDSSs because there is no reliable information to support their decision. As a result, it was suggested that the ESSUP 1 should be used as a preparatory phase in order to establish proper standards for CDSSs and collection of information.

Thirdly, very few studies, if any, have been done on CDSSs and it is hoped that this study will significantly contribute to the literature about the applicability of educational policies in Malawi.

### **1.11 Limitation of the study**

Firstly, due to limited finances, the study was only conducted in Mulanje education district found in the Shire Highlands Education Division in the southern region of Malawi and as such the results may not be generalized to the entire country. However, there is a high possibility of applying the findings to the rest of the country because the schools have similar characteristics and problems that the Policy and Investment Framework document is trying to address. In addition, these are all public schools and use the same national curriculum. The only difference is that these schools can be categorized into rural, semi-urban, and urban.

Secondly, I faced some problems in accessing some sampled schools during data collection period because the exercise was done in the rainy season. Some of the CDSSs

are deep in the rural areas, and it was difficult for me to access them due to poor road infrastructure.

Thirdly, my position as the district education manager had an impact on the participants. They were responding to my questions in order to give me an impression that the situation was good in these schools. This was like that because they thought that I was visiting the schools to assess them.

Fourthly and related to the above point was that my experience as a secondary school teacher on the one hand and as the district education manager on the other also had an impact. Thus, I was visiting the schools with already preconceived ideas or subjectivities that there is poor quality of education in CDSSs.

Lastly but not least, due to poor information management system at the Ministry of Education headquarters in Lilongwe, it was difficult for me to access reliable 1997 and 1998 data for both CSSs and DECAs that could act as a point of reference for this present study. Much of the information that was available had some inconsistencies and, therefore, could not be used in the study.

### **1.12 Chapter summary**

The chapter has shown that the introduction free primary education in Malawi in 1994 caused the enrolment in primary schools to increase by more than 70%. This increase in enrolment at primary level resulted in further increase in demand for secondary school education. However, due to limited places in CSSs, more pupils were enrolled in DECAs than in CSSs. By 1995 about 80% of pupils in secondary schools were in DECAs, making DECAs the largest provider of secondary education. In addition, the formal education system in Malawi is in the process of being decentralized and it consists



of an 8-4-4 system of education. That is, 8 years of primary education, 4 years of secondary education, and an average of 4 years of tertiary education. The number of years at tertiary level depends on the program of study. The movement of pupils from one level to another is determined by the national examinations.

It was also discovered that there was an acute shortage of teaching and learning materials in DECs before they were converted to CDSSs. Furthermore, the majority of teachers in DECs were under qualified. These teachers were mostly drawn from primary schools and qualified to teach at primary school level only and not at secondary school level, as was the case. Thus, the conversion of DECs to CDSSs was intended to improve the quality of education by, among other things, providing relevant teaching and learning materials, supplying trained teaching staff, improving and strengthening inspection and supervision services, and providing finances. So, the purpose of this study was to assess the current condition in CDSSs with regard to quality education since their conversion from DECs in December 1998.

The chapter has also shown that, although there were some limitations to this study, it was quite significant to conduct the study because its results might help policy makers to review the present policy on CDSSs with regard to quality education and determine which areas have worked and which areas have not worked.

The next chapter will present the discussion of related literature. Thus, it will present what other people have said with regard to factors that affect the quality of education in different countries.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.0 Chapter overview

Quality is one of the major educational challenges facing the whole education system in Malawi today. According to Kuthemba Mwale (2000), the issue of quality in Malawi is the recent one and any discussions on it, especially before 1994, was considered irrelevant and meaningless. Kuthemba Mwale explains that before 1994, there were deliberate restrictions to access and that the education system was elitist and a privilege to just a few people. He further argues that “the need for educated people to perform white collar jobs was limited to a few teachers...civil servants, evangelists, policemen...Those services did not expand and therefore no need for the expansion of that type of education” (Kuthemba Mwale, 2000, p. 12). Thus, limited resources available during that particular period were just enough for those privileged few.

But today there is a high demand for education in Malawi following the implementation of new policies such as Free Primary Education; this has exerted pressure on the limited resources available. As a result, this has brought many educational challenges and quality is one of these. The other challenges are access, equity, relevance, management, planning, and finance. This explains why the Malawi Government wants to enhance the capacity of the education system in order to provide education of acceptable high quality so as to achieve its broad policy of poverty alleviation (MoEST, 2001c, p. 9). This high quality, therefore, can only be achieved if the government can make a deliberate move to invest more in the education sector. The areas to concentrate on are

the supply of well-trained teachers, teaching and learning materials, physical facilities, monitoring and supervision, training of head teachers in administrative and management skills, and provision of financial resources. In addition, all stakeholders interested in the quality of education should be given an opportunity to participate in the management of the education system at all levels. These factors have a great impact on the quality of teaching and learning processes that lead to the attainment of quality education.

It has been argued by some researchers that quality education prepares students for the outside world so that they can live their lives fruitfully and work at their jobs productively. Thus, according to Wagner (2002, p. 1), a quality education system:

provides clear goals, high standards, good teachers, and well-organized curriculum. Produces students with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and work habits needed to become productive, fulfilled citizen.

It should be noted that the quest for a quality education system is not confined only to one country but all countries, both developed and developing countries. However, the problem could be more acute in developing countries than developed countries because of lack of resources: human, material, and financial resources. Commenting on the provision of quality education in Namibia, Ipinge (2001, p. 5) says that:

despite the good endeavour by government to provide... education, there are many factors that hamper the delivery of a most wanted quality education. These factors include lack of teaching and learning materials, poor physical facilities, higher learner-teacher ratios... and lack of qualified teachers.

## **2.1 Teaching and learning materials**

A number of studies have been done by researchers to find out factors that affect the quality of education. Salmi (2002) studied the role of private schools in Haiti. He also made an assessment of whether these schools were playing an important role in providing

quality education. He discovered that the majority of school-going age children were enrolled in private schools because of the absence of a functioning public school system. Nevertheless, much as he appreciated the contribution these private schools were making to the education sector in the country, he noted that the quality of teaching was poor in both public and private schools. According to him, this was due to lack of relevant teaching and learning materials, a large number of unqualified teachers (especially in private schools), and uncoordinated development of the curriculum.

## **2.2 Class size**

Another important area to take note of is class size, which has an impact on pupil-teacher ration. Normally, this is due to shortage of qualified teachers. In his paper, Gilbert (1995) agrees that class size has an effect on the quality of education because this reduces the contact time between the teacher and the learner since there are more learners than a teacher can handle. However, he quickly argues that though this might be the case, there are other factors other than class size that are more important to quality of education. These are, according to him, course organization (organized curriculum), teacher competency, and concern for learners.

## **2.3 Community participation**

Parents and the community as a whole, both in urban and rural areas, have a great role to play in improving the quality of education. Henig (2002) comments that there is a growing acknowledgement in research, practice, and advocacy of the need to create very strong linkages between the school and the community. According to the IDRA Newsletter (1997, p. 1), students come from the community and therefore community members need to support these students so that meaningful teaching and learning should

take place. There must be a good teacher- community interaction that can positively improve students' performance. Also Kamangira and Kasambara (2001, p. 5), with reference to a study that was conducted in primary schools in Mangochi district in Malawi on Improving Education Quality (IEQ Project), comment that:

...the establishment of school committees...were helping to address issues and install discipline in the schools. This is an attempt to make the community look at the schools as their own and that they are part and parcel of their existence.

The government is supposed to take a leading role in encouraging the community to take part in school management.

In addition to the above role, the community also takes part in the construction activities in order to improve the teaching and learning environment for their children. Bray (1996, p. 3) says that community participation is also called community financing. However, he quickly argues that, although the word "financing" is being used, it is not only concerned with the monetary inputs to the education system. According to him, communities and governments contribute materials, labor, expertise, and land. He goes on to say that, because these inputs would have to be purchased if they were not provided, they may be considered substitutes for the money. Bray (1996, p. 3) continues to argue that, community financing or participation is most common where there is high demand for schooling, but the government is failing to provide adequate resources.

With reference to Nigeria, Igwe (1988, p. 110) says that in the early 1970s there was a stiff competition among the communities with regard to community work. This was a response to the problems that were brought by the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in that country. He says that:

Competition among communities in Eastern Nigeria has shifted from the establishment of primary schools to the establishment of secondary schools...the cutting edge of competition has therefore moved up stage, and communities take pride... if their children can attend secondary school in their own villages.

As a result of this competition, many secondary schools were constructed in Nigeria. A good example, thus according to Igwe, was Imo state of Nigeria which had only 147 secondary schools in 1976. But by 1984, the state had 476 new secondary schools fully financed by the community.

This commitment was also evident in Anambra State of Nigeria, Kenya, and Lesotho. Lillis (1988, p. 77) comments that:

in Anambra State of Nigeria... communities became so enthusiastic about building secondary schools that they also took over construction of thirteen new government schools where the state was unable to continue beyond the first stage... in the Kenyan and Lesotho primary schools, community self-help helped reduce a crisis rather than create it.

Another good example of community participation is seen in Togo. In the mid-1980s, Togo experienced a major crisis in government funding and as a result of this the community had to intervene in order to bridge the funding gap. Bray (1996, p. 3) comments that:

in Togo... communities and parents have had to provide one to two thirds of the resources needed to operate public sector schools. Also in mid-1990s about 400 community primary and secondary schools with about 27,000 pupils were operating outside the public system.

All this shows that the communities have a role to play in providing or improving the quality of education in their respective areas.

However, some studies have shown that community participation in many African countries, especially in rural areas, is lacking. There are no strong linkages or relationships between the schools and the communities. In support of this assertion, thus

lack of community participation, the World Bank (2000) discovered that teaching and learning in rural Africa is of poor quality and also poorly supported. The report says that the community has negative attitudes towards education and as a result they provide little or no support to what students learn at school. They don't even take part in development activities in schools. In addition, there is high demand for labor mainly from school children. Thus, because of poverty parents would rather ask their children to work and supplement the small family incomes than send them to school. They find the opportunity cost to be high. And to make matters worse, many Africa governments do not take rural education as a priority. These factors, therefore, affect the quality of education.

#### **2.4 Financial resources**

Another important factor that affects the quality of education in many countries is lack of financial resources in many schools. When tackling the issue of funding in Ontario, Wagner (2002) argued that the quality of students' learning and achievement could be enhanced if funds are made available to the schools so that they can budget and buy relevant teaching and learning materials, and other important school equipment. Teaching and learning without appropriate textbooks, equipment, and facilities cannot be effective and efficient even in the presence of highly qualified teachers. Wagner, however, discovered that it takes a long time for the funds to reach the schools because they are channeled through other offices and on the way a large percentage of the money is diverted before it reaches the schools. This is common, not only in developed countries, but in many developing countries as well. In fact, this is compounded by a rapid increase in population and school enrolments especially in developing countries. Hartwell (1998, p. 1) comments that:

Poorer countries of the world, particularly those in Africa, South Asia, Latin America, public financing for education is unable to keep pace with rapidly increasing populations and school enrollments, resulting in a notable deterioration of school quality.

This assertion by Hartwell is also well supported by Global Campaign for Education (2002, p. 4). It says that:

Many colonial education systems offered a high standard of education to a tiny minority. The challenge facing post-colonial governments has been to transform this elite system into a mass education system, and to maintain standards, all on a very tight budget...it has often proven easier to get children into schools than to ensure that they actually learn during the time they spend there.

## **2.5 Monitoring and supervision**

Monitoring and supervision is another crucial area to be put into consideration when tackling the issue of quality education. In many countries, they fail to monitor how teachers are implementing the national curriculum because of lack of resources such as personnel, vehicles, and finances. The ministry of education in Guatemala, according to Craig, Kraft, & du Plessis (1998), made a radical move in order to improve the quality of education. One of the areas that the ministry of education emphasized was to strengthen monitoring and supervision visits in all schools. This is one way of supporting teachers both administratively (school management) and professionally.

## **2.6 Government policies and plans**

In addition to increased financial resources, improvement in infrastructure, physical facilities, teacher qualification, instructional materials, and administrative and management systems, governments must put in place sound national policies and plans in order to fully realize quality education. These policies will, in a systematic way, explain what is supposed to be done and set an overall direction and guidelines for achieving the



intended goal, which, in this case, is quality education. However, this requires a strong political will on the part of the government in order to put all this in place. It should be noted that this political will is lacking in many countries and this may explain why it is very difficult for them to achieve quality education.

According to Hartwell (1989), before the Botswana Ministry of Education started implementing the policy on Community Junior Secondary Schools (CJSSs) they first of all critically looked at some of the possible policy areas that could have an impact in the smooth running of these schools. Among other things, they looked at secondary school teachers' requirements and development, specifications for school size, the criteria for building a school, and the criteria for providing school facilities and boarding facilities. By doing this, they wanted to make sure that there would be enough supply of qualified teachers, school facilities would be available, and that boarding facilities would be available only in remote areas where students would be walking long distances of about 20 kilometers or further. This only shows that the policy makers and planners in the ministry tried as much as possible to put into consideration possible factors or conditions that could affect quality education in these CJSSs as commented by Heneveld (1994, p. 3). He says that schools in "Sub-Saharan Africa suffer from very poor conditions for learning: dilapidated or half-completed buildings, insufficient desks, overcrowded classrooms, few or no teaching and learning materials, and poorly educated and motivated teachers."

The point being emphasized here is that government must put in place effective national policies and plans that can play an important role in facilitating or improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools. In addition, there must be a strong political

will and commitment on the part of the government when it comes to the implementation of these policies and plans. The global Campaign for Education (2002, p. 2) comments that:

quality education is not a mystery. It can be achieved when all teachers are properly trained, supported... when every classroom has enough textbooks, desks and learning materials; when schools provide a safe and welcoming environment; and communities have a say in decision-making. Above all, it can be achieved when governments and civil society build a strong political commitment to the ideal of good public education for everyone...

These are some of the factors that planners and people involved in the development of educational policies should bear in mind with regard to quality education. This present study, therefore, concentrated on these factors with special reference to Community Day Secondary Schools in Malawi and Mulanje district in particular.

## **2.7 Chapter summary**

This chapter has highlighted some of the factors that affect quality of education as the review of literature indicates. For example, literature has shown that qualification of teachers in the system is of paramount importance. These are key actors in the implementation of the national curriculum and if not well qualified, they may not be able to impart necessary skills and knowledge as expected of them. This, therefore, has an impact on the quality of teaching and learning process.

The literature has also shown that parents and the community play an important role with regard to quality education. They take part in development activities, such as classroom construction, by contributing labor and other resources in order to improve the teaching and learning environment for their children. Good examples of community participation have been noted in Nigeria, Lesotho, Togo, and Kenya. In addition, parents

play an important role in improving the performance of students by checking what they learn at school. The point is that students come from the community and if there is a good teacher-community interaction, then meaningful teaching and learning process will also take place in schools.

This chapter has also revealed that lack of relevant teaching and learning materials affect the quality of teaching and learning in schools, as seen in Haiti. Teachers may not be able to prepare their lessons properly and this will obviously have an impact on the delivery of instruction.

It has been discovered from the literature as well that monitoring and supervision is another crucial area to be put into consideration with regard to quality education. Teachers are supposed to be monitored to find out if they are properly implementing the curriculum following acceptable pedagogical processes. Thus, monitoring and inspection will ensure that quality is maintained in schools. This is also one way of supporting teachers administratively and professionally.

The next chapter of this paper discusses the methods that were used to collect data during the study in order to answer the research questions with regard to quality education in CDSSs in Mulanje district. It is, therefore, hoped that this study will significantly contribute to the literature about the applicability of educational policies in Malawi.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Chapter overview**

This chapter discusses the methods that were used to collect data during the study in order to explain the situation with regard to quality education in CDSSs since 1998 when they became under the MoEST, thus following the implementation of the new policy. Table 5 on page 45 summarizes data collection methods for this present study. This present chapter focuses on the following areas: a brief discussion of the study area, the research design, the sample and the sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedure, data management, data analysis method, validity and reliability, and ethical considerations in data collection procedure.

#### **3.1 The study area**

The study was conducted in the southern region of Malawi and specifically in the Shire Highlands Education Division. This Education Division has four educational districts and these are: Chiradzulu, Mulanje, Thyolo, and Phalombe. However, this study was only conducted in Mulanje education district due to financial constraints. The district has 22 Community Day Secondary Schools; 6 semi-urban and 16 rural.

#### **3.2 Research Design:**

The main aim of this study was to assess the quality of education in CDSSs and as such the approach to the study hinged on the mixed methods design. According to Creswell (2003, p. 21), in this approach the researcher uses both quantitative and qualitative data sequentially or simultaneously in order to provide a comprehensive

analysis and understanding of the research problem being investigated. Qualitative data were collected through interviews, observations, and review of school documents and other records. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaire surveys and observations. This, actually, helped me to fully arrive at a rich interpretation of the data. The data was collected and presented so as to have a better insight and understanding of quality education in the sampled schools. The study focused on the following areas: teacher qualification, teacher-pupil ratio, teaching and learning materials, infrastructure and physical facilities, school equipment, assessment of pupils, sanitation facilities and water resources, school administration and management, inspection and supervision, community participation, financial resources, the distance that pupils cover when going to their respective schools, and performance of pupils in national examinations.

### **3.3 Sample and sampling procedure**

Selection of the sample is regarded as one of the most important stages in the research process. Gay and Airasian (2003) argue that it is not feasible or necessary to collect data for the study from the entire target population in a given study area. This explains why only a sample from the target population is selected for the study. A sample, therefore, refers to “a number of individuals selected from a population for a study, preferably in such a way that they represent the larger group from which they were selected” (Gay & Airasian, 2003, p. 591). However, the process of selecting a sample in the research process is called sampling. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (1996, p. 588), sampling is “the process of selecting a number of individuals (sample) from a population preferably in such a way that the individuals are representative of the larger group from which they were selected.”

In this study, I used both simple random sampling and stratified random sampling. According to Gay and Airasian (2003, p. 117), simple random sampling is defined as the process “ of selecting a sample in such a way that all individuals in the defined population have an equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample.” They also define stratified random sampling as the process “ of selecting a sample in such a way that identified subgroups in the population are represented in the sample in the same proportion that they exist in the population.” Thus, when I was selecting a sample of Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs) to be studied, simple random sampling was used in order to provide an equal chance to all CDSSs of being selected for the study.

As said earlier on, there are 22 CDSSs in Mulanje education district and one of these is a junior CDSS (it has forms one and two only), remaining with 21 from which the sample was selected. It should be noted that the junior CDSS was left out because the study targeted pupils in forms three and four only. The 21 CDSSs were categorized into semi-urban and rural in order to have a fair representation of the sample across the district. Following this grouping (categorization), I came up with 6 semi-urban CDSSs and 15 rural CDSSs. However, the study only focused on 8 of these 21 CDSSs: thus, three from the semi-urban area and five from the rural area. This suggests stratified sampling. It should also be noted that only 33 percent of rural CDSSs, as compared to 50 percent of semi-urban CDSSs, were selected for the study. This was done deliberately in order to cut transport costs because the majority of rural CDSSs are far from the district education office.

In order to select these eight CDSSs randomly (thus, three from semi- urban area and five from the rural area), the name of each school from each category was written on

a separate strip of paper. These strips of paper were put in two separate boxes, labeled semi-urban area and rural area. The boxes were shaken vigorously and to avoid bias an independent person was asked to pick a strip of paper from each box, representing a school to be studied from each category. The process of shaking the boxes was repeated for a number of times until all the eight CDSSs were picked from the boxes, three from the box labeled semi-urban area and five from the box labeled rural area.

It should be noted that the selected schools have the same characteristics in the sense that they are all CDSSs, public schools, co-educational schools, and they use the same official national curriculum. However, the only difference, which is geographical or location, is that some are semi-urban CDSSs and others are rural CDSSs. The section below briefly discusses the profile of each sampled CDSS.

### **3.4 Brief profile of the sampled CDSSs**

#### ***3.4.1 CDSS Ar***

This is one of the oldest schools in Mulanje district. It started in 1976 through community self-help approach. This means that, before its conversion, it was fully under the control of the community. The school is located deep in the rural area and 25 kilometers away from the district education office. It was a very popular DEC in the district, especially in the 1980s and early 1990s, before its conversion to CDSS. This was so because teachers were not only supervising pupils, but they were also teaching them in a face-to-face approach. The school administration in collaboration with the community made an effort to offer boarding facilities to some students, especially those who were coming from very far. In fact, some students were renting houses around the school.

Although this is an old school, it has inadequate classrooms and teachers' houses. However, the community has molded bricks for the construction of additional classroom block and the head teacher's house.

#### **3.4.2 CDSS Bsu**

This school is located in the semi-urban area, about 7 kilometers away from the district education office. It is found along the Blantyre-Mozambique boarder tarmac road and just few meters away from the road. The Catholic Church established this CDSS in 1997 in collaboration with the local community and it is within the church premises. However, the church is doing very little with regard to development work at the school. The community is doing most of the development work, such as molding of bricks and collection of river sand.

The school has inadequate classrooms, and has no administration block. The community is failing to complete a classroom block that was started in 2001 due to lack of other construction materials, such as cement, iron sheets, and roofing poles.

#### **3.4.3 CDSS Cr**

The community started the school in 1994 through self-help approach. It is located in the rural area and to the southern part of Mulanje district 36 kilometers away from the district education office. The school has one classroom block and one teacher's house. Forms one and two have their lessons at the nearby primary school and an old Catholic Church, respectively. The use of the church by the school forms the basis for the church to claim ownership of the school. However, the church is doing very little for the school with regard to development work. Thus, like CDSS Bsu, the community is doing most of the development work, such as molding of bricks and collection of river sand for



construction purposes. This also explains why the community is failing to complete a classroom block that was started in 2000.

#### **3.4.4 CDSS Dr**

The school is located to the north west of Mulanje district, about 71 kilometers from the district education office. The school is located far away from the rest of CDSSs and CSSs. This explains why the community started the school in 1995 through self-help approach after noting that many pupils were unable to access secondary school education due to geographical position of the area. In fact, this is a waterlogged area and it is difficult to access it during rainy season. Teachers do not like the place because of its poor communication and its long distance from Mulanje sub-boma.

The school has only one classroom block and a shelter that is being used by forms one and two. Nevertheless, the community with assistance from MASAf is building another classroom block and the library. The community and students are contributing labor through the collection of river sand.

#### **3.4.5 CDSS Er**

This school, which started in 1997, is found at the foot of Mulanje Mountain. It is located to the north east of Mulanje, 29 kilometers away from the district education office. The school is very close to some big tea estates. The community started the school through self-help approach. These estates provide very little assistance to the school, and the community does most of the development work. In most cases, these estates provide the school with construction poles only.

There is only one classroom block, and forms one and two have their lessons in temporary shelters. In addition, there is no administration block at the school. Teachers

don't like the place because the area is hilly and has poor road network. Furthermore, there is no agricultural land that teachers can make use of because of the estates. The community has molded bricks, but they are failing to put up a classroom block because of lack of other resources.

#### **3.4.6 CDSS Fsu**

This is one of the recent schools in Mulanje and was started by the community in 1998. However, the Catholic Church is claiming ownership of the school simply because of its close proximity to the church premises. The church does very little in terms of development work. There are two classroom blocks at the school that were built with the assistance from the European Union (EU). The community provided labor by molding bricks and collection of river sand.

The school has no administration block and it uses a small room at the nearby primary school as an office. In addition, there are no teachers' houses at this school. The school is located along the Blantyre-Mozambique boarder tarmac road and 12 kilometers away from the district education office.

#### **3.4.7 CDSS Gr**

It is located some 23 kilometers away from Mulanje district education office. The community started the school in 1994 through self-help approach. It is difficult to access the school in the rain season because of poor road network. The school has four classrooms and two teachers' houses. Some students at this school are renting houses around the school because they travel long distances from their respective homes to the school. Self-boarding was a common feature in many DEC's before their conversion to CDSSs.

### **3.4.8 CDSS Hsu**

The school is located about 6 kilometers away from the district education office. The community started the school in 1990 in collaboration with the Church of Central Africa Presbytery (CCAP, Blantyre Synod). The church plays an important role with regard to development work at the school. With assistance from their fellow Christians in the United Kingdom and other European countries, the church has managed to assist the school in the following ways: it has donated 15 computers and two printers, provided the school with electricity, and has also built a laboratory and a library.

### **3.5 Population of interest/Sample**

Both in the Semi-Urban CDSSs and Rural CDSSs, target populations for this study were: head teachers, teachers, members of school management committee, pupils, and Education Methods Advisors. The people representing these categories were purposefully selected because they have a very important role to play in promoting quality education in schools and they have a major influence in the day to day running of education institutions. According to Merriam (1988), purposive sampling entails the selection of the sample from which the researcher can learn more in order to have a clear understanding of the problem being studied. In addition, Gay and Airasian (2003, p. 115) also comment that “in purposive sampling, the researcher selects a sample based on his experience and knowledge of the group to be sampled.”

#### **3.5.1 Head teachers**

At each sampled CDSS, the head teacher was automatically selected for the study. However, at one Semi-Urban CDSS (this was CDSS Hsu: *See section 3.11, p. 48 for an explanation for using letters Hsu*) the head teacher was not present and as a result the

deputy head teacher was interviewed. Their information was very important in this study bearing in mind that they are regarded as custodians of the school. In total, seven head teachers and one deputy head teacher were interviewed.

### ***3.5.2 Teachers***

Teachers were also involved in this study because they play a vital role in providing quality education in schools. They are major implementers of the national curriculum and are always in close contact with the pupils in the classroom almost every day. A total of 29 teachers (24 male teachers and 5 female teachers) responded to the questionnaire. Initially, it was planned that 5 teachers from each CDSS would be selected to answer a questionnaire, but due to an acute shortage of teachers in these schools, this was not possible. Another reason was that I was targeting teachers who had stayed at the particular sampled school for quite a good number of years so that they could provide reliable information with regard to quality education. Thus, those teachers who had been at the school longest were selected to respond to the questionnaire. This means, therefore, that in some schools it was not possible to come up with 5 teachers to respond to the questionnaire. This explains why only 29 teachers were selected for the study instead of 40 teachers as planned. The sample shows that only 5 female teachers out of 18 female teachers teaching in the sampled CDSSs participated in the study.

### ***3.5.3 Pupils***

Pupils also participated in the study because these are the primary beneficiaries of quality education. The study focused on pupils in forms 3 and 4 because these are senior classes where some of the skills and knowledge obtained from school are beginning to emerge significantly. Thus, it was assumed that, based on their knowledge and

experiences in the previous two or three years, pupils in these senior classes would be able to give reliable information on quality education. In the first place, it was planned that 128 pupils would answer the questionnaire, that is 16 from each school (8 from each class: 4 boys and 4 girls), but due to the low enrolment in these senior classes in some CDSSs (see table 13 on page 66), 115 pupils answered the questionnaire.

When selecting the pupils for the study, simple random sampling was used. One of the approaches with regard to simple random sampling, according to Gay and Airasian (2003, p. 104), “ is to write each individual’s name on a separate slip of paper, place all the slips in a hat or other container, shake the container, and select slips from the container until the desired number of participants is selected.” Thus in this study, the names of pupils in each class at each school were written on separate strip of paper and put in a box. The box was shaken vigorously and to avoid bias an independent person was asked to pick a strip of paper from the box. This represented a pupil from that class to participate in the study. The process was repeated until all the 8 pupils were picked from the box. This process was done separately for boys and girls. However, if any class at a CDSS had less than the number of pupils required for the study, the above process could not be done. Instead all the pupils present in the class had a chance of participating in the study. For example, CDSSs Cr, Dr, and Er (see table 13 on page 66).

#### ***3.5.4 School management committee***

The members of school management committee that participated in the study were the chairperson, the secretary, and the treasurer. Although this was the original plan, at one CDSS (this is CDSS Gr from the rural area) there was only the chairperson; the other members are no longer taking an active role in the SMC’s activities. At a CDSS Cr

(another rural CDSS), the secretary was not present and as a result a committee member participated in the study. This is what is called convenience sampling and, according to Gay and Airasian (2003, p. 115), convenience sampling is also known as accidental sampling or haphazard sampling. They say that convenience sampling includes in the sample whomever happens to be available at the time of the interview.

The school management committees were chosen for this study because they play an important role in school management as well as in development activities. They act as a bridge between parents (or the entire community) and the school. The school management committee members were interviewed because the majority of them could not read or write and also the number was small.

### ***3.5.5 Education Methods Advisors***

Last but not least, Education Methods Advisors (EMAs) from the advisory section at the Education Division Office took part in the study. Two EMAs were interviewed. Their information was of paramount importance in this study as well because they have an important role to play in monitoring the quality of education in schools. According to MoEST (1999b, p. 49), quality assurance in secondary schools is the responsibility of the Education Methods Advisory Services (EMASs). They fulfill this responsibility by undertaking and co-coordinating quality related activities such as teacher inspection and supervision, teacher advisory services, teacher pre-service and in-service education, teaching and learning researches, just to mention a few activities.

### **3.6 Data collection instruments**

As already pointed out (section 3.2 on page 31), in this present study both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments (methods) were used to collect

data from the sampled CDSSs in order to fully understand the quality of education in these schools. These methods are discussed in detail in sections 3.6.1 to 3.6.3 below.

### ***3.6.1 Interviews***

Interviews were conducted with the selected sample in order to collect information with regard to quality education in CDSSs. In this case, head teachers, Education Methods Advisors, and members of school management committee were interviewed. According to Rossman and Rallis (2003, p. 180), “in-depth interviewing is the hallmark of qualitative research...deeper understandings develop through the dialogue of long, in-depth interviews, as interviewer and participant ‘construct meaning’.” Thus, duly prepared questions were used when interviewing the participants.

### ***3.6.2 The questionnaire***

The questionnaire was used to collect some quantitative and qualitative data from teachers, and pupils. Creswell (2003, p. 153) comments that a survey “provides quantitative or numeric description of trends...or opinion of a population by studying a sample of that population. From the results, the researcher generalizes or makes claims about the population.”

It should also be stressed here that before the questionnaires and the interview questions were actually used to collect data from the targeted sample, they were pretested. A few participants who responded to the questionnaires were also asked to comment on the content, meaning, and phraseology of the question items. This really assisted me because, following their comments, the questionnaires were redesigned accordingly. Fowler (1995, p. 115) says that:

when a survey instrument is near final form...interviewers conduct...interviews with people similar to those who will be respondents in a planned

survey... interviewers... are asked to report on questions that they see as posing problems for them or their respondents.

Supporting what Fowler has said, Gay and Airasian (2003, p. 292) also comment that:

the interview guide, procedure... should be tried before the main study begins, using a small group from the same or a very similar population to the one being studied. As with written questionnaires, feedback from a small... study can be used to add, remove, or revise interview questions. Insights into better ways to handle certain questions can also be acquired.

### ***3.6.3 Review of documents and observations***

In addition to the above approaches, other qualitative approaches were also used. These are review of documents and observations. According to Creswell (2003, p. 187), documents are very important because they represent “data that are thoughtful, in that participants have given attention to compiling.” He goes on to say that documents, as written evidence, save a “researcher the time and expense of transcribing.” In this case, documents such as attendance registers, enrolment registers, financial records, school equipment records, and textbooks records were reviewed. Commenting on the importance of observation, Rossman and Rallis (2003, p. 194) argue that “observation generates field notes as the running record of what you notice in a setting ... observation takes you inside the setting ... it entails systematic noting and recording of events, actions, and interactions.” Thus, the information collected from the documents and observations were used to supplement data collected from the questionnaire and interviews.

### **3.7 Data collection procedure**

I conducted the study myself. This was to make sure that all the targeted people are reached. However, one research assistant was recruited to assist me mainly in the administration of a questionnaire to pupils only.



But before the actual collection of data started, I had to get permission from a number of people in order to have access to the setting of the study. In research activities, these people are technically called “gatekeepers.” Rossman and Rallis (2003, p. 163) comment that “most bureaucracies have policies...defining who can or cannot have access to what. The individuals who implement or enforce these ...policies are typically called gatekeepers.” Also Creswell (2003, p. 184) comments that “it is important to gain access to research or archival sites by seeking the approval of gatekeepers.” The point being emphasized here is that gatekeepers can influence the quality of your study because they are custodians of information.

The first gatekeeper to be contacted was the Director of Secondary and Higher Education at the Ministry of Education headquarters. A letter was written in which I introduced myself to him, explained the purpose of my study, and asked for permission from him to use CDSSs in my study. Secondly, in order to access the schools, the Education Division Manager (EDM) in the Shire Highlands had to be contacted. Thus, a Letter of authority to conduct the study in the CDSSs was written to the EDM in which I outlined the purpose of my study and asked for permission to visit the sampled schools. Thirdly, I also wrote a letter to Education Methods Advisors at the Division Office and asked them to participate in the study bearing in mind the role they play in improving the quality of education. Last but not least, head teachers of sampled schools were also contacted. I visited them personally and explained to them the purpose of my study. They also promised to brief other sampled participants, for example teachers, pupils and members of school management committee. Head teachers are key persons and can facilitate effective data collection if you create a good relationship with them.

The actual data collection task at the school level began by checking the available school documents such as attendance registers, enrolment registers, financial records, school equipment records, and textbook records. These documents provided basic relevant information with regard to the area under study. After this, I worked with the head teachers then administered the questionnaires to teachers and pupils. Members of school management committee were the last to be interviewed. Interviews for this group was in vernacular language (Chichewa) because the majority of them could not read or write in English or Chichewa. Table 5 summarizes data collection methods for the study.

**Table 5: Data collection guide**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Source of Information</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
Teacher qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office documents</li> <li>• Head teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review documents</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>
Teacher-pupil ratio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>
Physical facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office documents</li> <li>• Head teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review documents</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Observation</li> </ul>
Teaching & learning materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office documents</li> <li>• Head teachers</li> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Pupils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review records</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Questionnaire</li> <li>• Observation</li> </ul>
School management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head teachers</li> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• SMC</li> <li>• Office documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Review documents</li> <li>• Observation</li> </ul>
Financial assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head teachers</li> <li>• SMC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Review documents</li> </ul>
Inspection & supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office documents</li> <li>• Head teachers</li> <li>• Methods Advisors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review documents</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>
Performance of pupils at national examinations (JCE & MSCE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MANEB</li> <li>• Office documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review documents</li> </ul>

### **3.8 Data management**

Extra care was taken to make sure that the data collected were organized, kept and easily accessed by the principal researcher. In the first place, interviews were recorded on the questionnaire form and in the notebook against each theme under study. The data was then entered in the computer and kept both in the hard disk and floppy diskette.

Secondly, the data from questionnaires was tabulated with special reference to the issues under study. The tabulated data was entered in the computer and kept both in the hard disk and floppy diskette.

Lastly, notes from the documents and observations were organized according to areas under study and entered in the computer. The information was also kept in the hard disk as well as in the floppy diskette. The completed questionnaires, the interview notes, and notes from the documents and observations were safely kept for later reference.

### **3.9 Data analysis**

The data collected through interviews, review of documents, and observations were retrieved from the computer and reorganized in order to develop main themes. These themes, according to Rossman and Rallis (2003), were analyzed and categorized according to the areas that the study was focusing on. The areas are number of teachers and their qualifications, teacher-pupil ratio, availability of relevant teaching and learning materials, infrastructure and physical facilities, school equipment, sanitation facilities and water resources, school administration and management, inspection and supervision, community participation, and financial resources. After this, interpretation of the data collected was done by comparing it with policy documents from the Malawi Ministry of Education and other important literature on quality education as discussed in chapter 2.

### 3.10 Validity and Reliability

According to Gay and Airasian (2003, p. 135-p. 141), validity is mainly concerned with the “appropriateness of the interpretations” made from the data collected while reliability is concerned with the “dependability or trustworthiness” of the results. Commenting on the same issue, Bakewell (2003, p. 61) says that “data is valid when it accurately measures what it set out to measure... data is reliable when you can be confident that you will get... similar results if you repeated... data collection exercise within the same time period, using the same methods.” Thus, I tried to tackle the issue of validity and reliability in the following ways. In the first place, the interview questions and the questionnaires were pretested to a given sample of the target population. This helped me to identify some ambiguities and inconsistencies in terms of the content, meaning, and phraseology of the question items. Secondly, the interview questions and the questionnaires were given to some experts in the field of education in order to have a critical look at them.

The above approach helped me to refine the questions so that respondents should be able to provide the expected and meaningful information. Another thing was that, the approach helped to assess and evaluate the questions so that they could provide the necessary and consistent information that I was looking for. Lastly, the approach helped me to develop some experience in data collection procedure in order to avoid bias. Borg and Gall (1979, p. 319) comment that:

a careful pilot study is the best insurance the research worker has against bias and flaws in the design. After the interview guide has been developed, a pilot study should be conducted to evaluate and improve the guide and interview procedure and help the interviewer develop experience in using the procedure before any research data for the main study are collected.

### **3.11 Ethical considerations**

In this study there were some important ethical issues that were closely observed for the study to be well conducted. According to Creswell (2003, p. 62-p. 65), these are called codes of professional conduct for researchers and they are applicable to all research methods: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods.

The first issue that I observed, thus according to Floyd (1995, p. 30), and Rossman and Rallis (2003, p. 73), was about privacy and confidentiality during data collection exercise. Vaughn, Schumm, and Sinagub (1996, p. 69) also support the above issue. They say that it is important that the participants' responses be kept confidential. In addition to this, they also say that the participants should be told that the purpose of the study is to obtain their points of view on the topic under study. In this study, all the participants were assured of their privacy and confidentiality both during the interviews and the administration of the questionnaires. Most important of all, all the participants were advised not to disclose or write their names or names of their schools on the questionnaires. This was done in order to try as much as possible to conceal their identity. This also explains why letters were used to identify or name and locate CDSSs studied. For example, CDSS Hsu stands for Semi-Urban CDSS H.

The second issue was about deception on the part of the participants. Gay and Airasia (2003, p. 79 and p. 84) comment that for unknown reasons some research participants tend to withhold information or tell lies about the topic understudy. So, in order to overcome this problem, the participants in this study were told the truth about the issue understudy and its importance to the education sector and the Malawi nation as whole.

The third issue, which is closely related to what has been discussed already (see section 3.7 page 43), was to obtain an informed consent from the participants in the study. Gay and Airasian (2003, p. 85) say that very rarely is it possible to conduct research without the cooperation of people in the setting of the study. Also Rossman and Rallis (2003, p. 74-p. 75) comment on the importance of gaining the informed consent of research participants. They say that “gaining the informed consent of participants is crucial for the ethical conduct of research.” They go on to say that “informed consent... serves to protect the identities and privacy of participants.” Thus in this study, permission was obtained from the Ministry of Education Headquarters and the Education Division Manager to conduct the research in CDSSs in Mulanje district. I also personally met the head teachers and explained to them the purpose of the study and ask for their consent to participate in the study. The head teachers were told to brief teachers, pupils, and members of school management committee about the study and its purpose. Nevertheless, at the start of the actual research I spent some time explaining to the participants about the study and ask for their consent to participate in the study. They were also told that in any case their names would not be disclosed in any discussions or in the written documents.

### **3.12 Chapter summary**

This chapter has discussed the research design of the study. Mixed methods approach was used to collect data. Thus, both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were used. Quantitative data were collected through the questionnaire and observations. Qualitative data were collected through interviews, observations and review of school documents and records. The chapter has also discussed at length the population

of interest in the study and these are head teachers, teachers, Education Methods Advisors, pupils, and members of school management committee. In addition, the chapter has also looked at important ethical considerations (codes of professional conduct for researchers) that are applicable to all research methods such as the issue of privacy and confidentiality during data collection exercise.

The next chapter of this paper will present research findings of the study and the discussion of the findings. The discussion will focus on the following areas: teacher qualification, teacher-pupil ratio, teaching and learning materials, infrastructure and physical facilities, school equipment, administration of assessment tests, sanitation facilities and water resources, school administration and management, inspection and supervision, community participation, school finances, distance pupils cover when going to their respective schools, and performance of pupils in national examinations.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.0 Chapter overview**

This chapter presents research findings of the study that was conducted in Mulanje education district in Shire Highlands Education Division. As highlighted in chapter one of this paper, the main purpose of the study was to find out the current condition in Community Day Secondary Schools (formally Distance Education Centers) in Malawi with regard to quality education since December 1998 when they became fully under the control of the Ministry of Education, Science & Technology. The actual implementation of the policy on CDSSs started in January 1999. The reform was meant to lift the image of the DECs in order to narrow the gap between them and the CSSs so that there can be a favorable competition between these two types of secondary schools. Specifically, the study intended to answer two major questions and these are:

1. Has the implementation of the new policy improved the quality of education in the Community Day Secondary Schools in Malawi as expected?
2. What is the quality of education in Community Day Secondary Schools now as a result of the implementation of the policy?

The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to present the findings of the study. The discussion focuses on the following areas: qualification of teachers, teacher-pupil ratio, teaching and learning materials, infrastructure and physical facilities, school equipment, assessment of pupils, sanitation facilities and water resources, school administration and management, inspection and supervision, community participation, financial resources,



the distance that pupils cover when going to their respective schools, and the performance of pupils in national examinations.

#### 4.1 Qualification of teachers

According to the Ministry of Education, Science & Technology, any person who would like to be considered to teach in the Malawian secondary schools must have a Diploma in Education as a minimum qualification (MoEST, 2001c). This Diploma must be obtained from a well-recognized university or college, either in Malawi or outside Malawi. Sometimes the ministry gives a chance to any person with a Diploma or Degree from a different field to join the teaching profession, but this person is encouraged to go for a one-year special course in teaching methodology (MoEST, 2001c, p. 29 calls this an in-service training program). Normally the course is offered at the University of Malawi, Chancellor College and at the end of the course, the person is awarded University Certificate of Education (UCE). Table 6 shows the number of teachers and their qualification in the eight CDSSs studied.

**Table 6: Number of teachers and their qualification**

CDSS	Degree		Diploma		UCE		T2+		T3+		Other		Total		Total (Both)
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Ar	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	5	-	-	-	8	1	9
Bsu	-	-	3	1	-	-	3	7	-	-	-	-	6	8	14
Cr	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	5
Dr	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	-	-	-	4	-	4
Er	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	4
Fsu	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	4	-	-	-	-	5	4	9
Gr	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	1	-	-	-	-	5	1	6
Hsu	-	-	1	-	-	-	8	3	-	-	-	1*	9	4	13
<b>Total</b>	-	-	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	-	-	<b>36</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>	-	-	<b>1</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>64</b>

\* Peace Corps Volunteer with Bachelor of Science degree

+ T2: primary school teacher with MSCE certificate. T3: primary school teacher with JCE certificate

The table shows that there are 64 teachers teaching in these eight CDSSs. Out of these only 5 teachers (7.81%) have a Diploma in Education and thus are qualified to teach at a secondary school. Three teachers underwent SSTEP (Secondary School Teacher Education Project) program that is being coordinated by Domasi College of Education, but funded by Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). SSTEP is the distance education program paralleling the regular diploma in education program at Domasi College of Education that was introduced as an upgrading course for primary school teachers deployed in the CDSSs to diploma in education (S.S.T.E.P. Malawi, 2004). The other two teachers went through a normal three-year program at the same college. Two of these teachers are heads, one is the deputy head, and two are heads of department. They have, therefore, a big role to play in assisting the other under qualified teachers professionally.

The other 59 teachers (92.19% of the teachers) are not qualified to teach at a secondary school. These 59 teachers have either the Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) or the Junior Certificate of Education (JCE) with a professional certificate, Primary School Teaching Certificate, obtained from Primary School Teachers' Training College. It was also noted that some teachers in the CDSSs have just graduated from the MIITEP (Malawi Integrated In-service Teacher Education Program) mode of training with only 2 years teaching experience as primary school teachers. The MIITEP program was launched in 1996 to meet the needs for primary school teachers created by the introduction of Free Primary Education in Malawi in 1994 (Kadzamira, Nthara, & Kholowa, 2004; Lewin, 2002). In fact, one of the teachers openly commented that "we are not supposed to teach at secondary school, but because of shortage of

teachers we were posted here. We hope that the Ministry of Education will send us to Domasi College of Education for a diploma course”. Another teacher at one CDSS said that “I am teaching Biology in forms 3 and 4, and I have problems explaining the content to pupils. In most cases, I just read the textbook to the pupils.” This is a clear indication of how pathetic the situation is in CDSSs with regard to the teaching staff. These teachers are not comfortable to teach at secondary school level.

In such a situation, as curriculum implementers, these teachers will not be able to impart knowledge to pupils as expected of them as secondary school teachers. This, therefore, has an impact on the quality of teaching and learning in the CDSSs, which in turn will affect the attainment of much required quality education.

#### 4.2 Pupil-Teacher ratio

According to the Ministry of Education policy, the current recommended average pupil-qualified teacher ratio at a secondary school level is between 30:1 and 35:1 (Danish International Development Agency, 1999; Kuthemba-Mwale, 2000). Table 7 shows pupil-teacher ratios and the pupil-qualified teacher ratios in the CDSSs studied.

**Table 7: Pupil-teacher ratio**

CDSS	School Enrolment	Number of Teachers	Qualified Teachers	Pupil-teacher Ratio	Pupil-qualified Teacher ratio
Ar	135	9	-	14.7:1	No qualified teacher
Bsu	292	14	4	20.9:1	73:1
Cr	94	5	-	18.8:1	No qualified teacher
Dr	87	4	-	21.7:1	No qualified teacher
Er	117	4	-	29.3:1	No qualified teacher
Fsu	139	9	-	15.4:1	No qualified teacher
Gr	222	6	-	37.0:1	No qualified teacher
Hsu	442	13	1	34.3:1	148:1

The pupil-teacher ratio for each school as shown in table 7 is quite good. Thus, it is below the recommended national norm and only CDSS Gr has high pupil-teacher ratio, 37:1. The problem here, however, is that the number of teachers at each school is very low as compared to the number of subjects being offered in these schools. In addition, 92.19 percent of these teachers are under-qualified. The study has found that each teacher teaches an average of five subjects instead of two teaching subjects per teacher as recommended by the Ministry of Education, Science & Technology (MoEST, 2001c). For example at a CDSS Cr, a certain teacher who qualified as a primary school teacher in 1999 under MIITEP program teaches five subjects: Mathematics, History, Integrated Science, Science & Technology, and Bible Knowledge. This teacher has one-year teaching experience at a CDSS. The teacher said that “ I have problems to prepare for classes and sometimes I just give pupils notes to copy.” The situation is worse at CDSSs Dr and Er where each school has 4 teachers; this means that each teacher has his own class. The point is that the more the number of subjects a teacher teaches, the more the number of pupils that particular teacher actually attends to. This is the actual situation in all the schools studied. Thus, each teacher has a higher teaching load than expected.

In those CDSSs where there are qualified diploma teachers, the pupil-qualified teacher ratio is very high. These qualified teachers are mainly found in the two semi-urban CDSSs: Bsu and Hsu. One of the head teachers from rural CDSS commented that “qualified diploma teachers refuse to come to rural schools because of poor teaching conditions. For example, there is no decent accommodation here, no electricity, and there is poor road infrastructure”. Kadzamira, Nthara, & Kholowa (2004) also noted the rural urban disparities with regard to the deployment of qualified teachers when they studied

the policy reform around the Universal Primary Education in Malawi. They argue that “while the pupil-teacher qualified ratio has remained... constant in urban schools before and after 1994, in rural schools the pupil-qualified teacher ratio increased substantially from 84:1 in 1993/4 to 117:1 in 1994/5 and has continued to rise...reaching 132:1 in 2000”.

It should be noted, therefore, that the number of teachers in all the CDSSs studied is not enough as compared to the number of subjects being offered. On average, each teacher is teaching about five subjects. In addition, the majority of the teachers are not qualified to teach at a secondary school. If the education system has many pupils per teacher, obviously the quality of teaching and learning is negatively affected. Furthermore, the quality of teaching and learning is affected if the teacher has more subjects to teach as seen in this study. The teacher has no time to assist individual pupils because of fatigue due to a heavy teaching load. This may explain why 70% of the pupils in the CDSSs studied responded that teachers are never present at the school for the full school day to assist them if they have difficulties in some subjects. The point being emphasized here is that the more the number of subjects a teacher teaches at a school, the less effective the teaching and learning process, and therefore the lower the quality of education being provided to the pupils. In other words, the quality of education is being compromised because the teacher has less time to facilitate the teaching and learning process, and at the same time provide assistance to each pupil individually.

The study also found that there is high teacher absenteeism in the schools. This problem, coupled with the acute shortage of teachers, has an impact on the number of periods pupils learn per day. According to the responses from pupils, it was discovered

that in all the CDSSs except two urban schools (Bsu and Hsu), pupils learn fewer periods per day as compared to the number of periods shown on the school timetable (in fact, 9 periods per day is the recommended number). Table 8 shows the average number of periods that pupils learn per day in forms 3 and 4 at each school studied.

**Table 8: Average number of periods per school**

Form	Average number of periods							
	Ar	Bsu	Cr	Dr	Er	Fsu	Gr	Hsu
Form 3	4.2	7.2	3.7	4.6	3.2	2.6	6.0	7.2
Form 4	3.1	7.3	4.0	5.0	4.4	2.5	4.0	8.2

According to the head teachers in the studied schools, there are a number of reasons why teachers absent themselves from duty. Firstly, teachers argue that they were trained to teach at primary schools and not at secondary schools, and the teaching load in these CDSSs is relatively higher than what they had at primary schools, yet they get the same salary they were getting while teaching at primary schools. As a result, they choose to absent themselves from duty in order to compensate for the low salaries. Secondly, again according to the head teachers, there is an acute shortage of teachers' houses and teachers travel long distances from where they reside to the schools. So, they deliberately absent themselves from duty in order to rest. Thirdly, related to the issue of salaries, one of the head teachers disclosed that "teacher absenteeism is a common phenomenon in schools. Teachers argue that they get little salaries and they absent themselves from duty to do some business in order to increase the little salaries they receive." Teacher absenteeism is high during market days in their respective workstations.

Of course, some teachers absent themselves from school because of sickness or because they are attending to sick relatives. This is what was noted at CDSS Fsu when I

visited the school. According to the head teacher at this school, three teachers had been absent from duty for about two months because they were seriously ill, and two female teachers had been absent from duty for one month because they were looking after sick relatives. This may explain why the average number of periods per day is very low at this CDSS as compared to other Semi-Urban CDSSs (see table 8, p. 57).

The point being emphasized here is that teacher absenteeism has a negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Thus, there is very low interaction between teachers and pupils in the already understaffed schools, and this obviously has an impact on the quality of education.

#### **4.3 Teaching and learning materials**

Textbooks are very important because they facilitate effective teaching and learning process in schools. According to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the ideal recommended textbook-pupil ratio is 1to1 (MoEST, 2001c; A parliamentary statement by Minister of Education Science & Technology, 2001; & Kuthemba Mwale, 2000). However, this study has found that there is a great shortage of textbooks in the CDSSs studied. Tables 9a and 9b show the average textbook-pupil ratio in the core subjects in semi-urban CDSSs and rural CDSSs, respectively. (For more details on the availability of textbooks in each CDSS studied, see appendices F1 to F8 from page 129 to page 132).

**Table 9a: Average textbook-pupil ratio in semi-urban CDSSs**

Subject area	Average textbook-pupil ratio			
	Form 1 (272)	Form 2 (291)	Form 3 (184)	Form 4 (130)
Mathematics	1:4	1:4	1:3	1:3
English Language	1:2	1:2	1:3	1:5
Chichewa	1:1	1:1	1:2	1:4
Science & Tech	-+	-	1:12	1:15
Social & Dev	-	-	1:9	1:21
Social Studies	1:17	1:11	-	-
Int. Science	1:9	1:10	-	-
Agriculture	1:14	1:11	-	-
Life Skills	0*	0	1:38	1:26
Physical Education	0	0	0	0

Note: Figures in brackets represent total enrolment in each form; \* No textbook available;  
+ That subject not offered at that level

**Table 9b: Average textbook-pupil ratio in rural CDSSs**

Subject area	Average textbook-pupil ratio			
	Form 1 (259)	Form 2 (204)	Form 3 (121)	Form 4 (71)
Mathematics	1:6	1:6	1:5	1:4
English Language	1:7	1:7	1:4	1:3
Chichewa	1:7	1:6	1:4	1:3
Science & Tech	-+	-	1:40	1:14
Social & Dev	-	-	1:13	1:10
Social Studies	1:64	1:29	-	-
Int. Science	1:17	1:19	-	-
Agriculture	1:12	1:7	-	-
Life Skills	0*	0	1:8	1:5
Physical Education	0	0	0	0

Note: Figures in brackets represent total enrolment in each form; \* No textbook available;  
+ That subject not offered at that level

Much as we appreciate that it may not be easy to achieve the ideal textbook-pupil ratio of 1to1 due to Malawi's poor economic environment, the situation leaves a lot to be desired. The average textbook-pupil ratio in the core subjects is low in both semi-urban CDSSs and rural CDSSs studied. However, the situation is a relatively good in some



subjects in semi-urban CDSSs. The reason is that one of the semi-urban CDSSs (Fsu) has more textbooks than the rest of the CDSSs (see appendix F8 on page 132). According to the head teacher, this was one of the pilot CDSSs and some organizations, such as DANIDA, donated a lot of textbooks to the school.

In all the CDSSs studied, teachers also expressed concern over the lack of teachers' guides and syllabuses in many subjects on the official national curriculum. Teachers fail to prepare their lessons properly, and this has an impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Of course, some teachers become resourceful by borrowing materials from their fellow teachers at the nearby schools, but such an arrangement cannot be effective and efficient. It consumes a lot of time which can be used for lesson preparation had it been that the materials were readily available. (For more details on the availability of teachers' guides and syllabuses from teachers' responses, see appendices G1 and G2 on page 133)

Another thing is that the government does not provide exercise books and other writing materials, such as pens and pencils, to pupils in the CDSSs. Schools collect tuition fees that are remitted to the central government. The money was supposed to be used by the government to buy these materials and distribute them to schools. However, this is not being implemented and as a result parents are spending a lot of money buying exercise books and pens for their children. Thus, the failure by the government to implement this creates an extra burden to the already poverty stricken parents in the rural areas who fail to meet other school expenses such as textbook revolving fund, general purpose fund, and school development fund, just to mention a few. It was also observed that other notable teaching and learning materials that are missing in the CDSSs are flip

charts, topographical map sheets and ordinary maps, globes, chalkboard rulers, and chalkboard mathematics instruments.

In such a situation where there is low textbook-pupil ratio, teaching and learning process is negatively affected. In fact, it becomes a problem on the part of teachers to give pupils work or reading assignment because it is very difficult for pupils to share the few available textbooks. In addition, teachers cannot give pupils an assignment to do at home because they operate from different places. This, therefore, affects the quality of education in CDSSs because very little teaching and learning is taking place.

#### 4.4 School equipment, stationery, and other facilities

Shortage or lack of the above equipment and materials has a negative impact on the effective teaching and learning process in schools. Table 10 shows the availability of school equipment and stationery in the CDSSs studied.

**Table 10: School equipment, stationery, and other school facilities:**

Item	Quantity at each CDSS						
	Ar	Bsu	Cr	Dr	Er	Gr	Hsu
Computer	-	-	-	-	-	-	15
Printer	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Duplicating machine	1	-	-	-	-	-	
Duplicating ink	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Duplicating paper	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Printing paper	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Typewriter	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Typewriter stencils	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Electricity	-		-	-	-	-	Yes

Table 10 shows that there is a great problem in the availability of school equipment, stationery, and other materials that support effective teaching and learning

process in schools. Only one urban CDSS has 15 computers, 2 printers, telephone, and electricity. This CDSS is under the church called Church of Central Africa Presbytery (CCAP, Blantyre Synod), and fellow Christians from the United Kingdom and other European countries donated these computers to the school. The school does not have a qualified computer teacher, but there is a Peace Corps volunteer with Bachelor of Science degree. She has general computer skills and is able to orient the pupils on how to operate a computer. This may explain why there are more pupils at this school than other CDSSs, apart from it being a double stream school. There is also one rural CDSS that has an old typewriter and a duplicating machine, but these do not function and they require major maintenance. However, the school is failing to maintain these due to lack of finances.

#### **4.5 Administration of assessment tests**

The study has found that there is a problem in the administration of tests in all the CDSSs studied. According to the responses from head teachers and teachers, this may not be necessarily their problem, but lack of resources. They fail to administer assessment tests to pupils frequently because of lack of equipment and stationery such as typewriters, duplicating machine, duplicating paper, and duplicating ink (for more details see table 10 on page 61). In addition, tests for CDSSs are typed at a central place, at the Division Office, and this arrangement is made because of lack of the above facilities. Head teachers and teachers expressed their disappointment with regard to this arrangement because it consumes a lot of time and sometimes they close the term before pupils finish writing end of term tests. They commented that “Moving up and down the Division Office wastes a lot of time”. According to pupils’ responses in the CDSSs studied, they are given assessment tests only once a term, thus end of term tests, because of lack of

materials. It is recommended, however, that pupils should be given assessment tests at an average rate of two times a term apart from other short assessment tests within the term.

It should be noted that assessment tests are very important and are part of the teaching and learning process in schools. They help pupils to master the content in various subjects on the national curriculum. In addition, tests act as a monitoring tool in the sense that they help teachers to monitor pupils' progress. As a result, teachers are able to identify problems pupils are facing in each subject area and how such problems can be ironed out effectively in preparation for the national examinations.

#### 4.6 School infrastructure and classroom furniture

School infrastructure and classroom furniture are very important components of quality in the education system in any country because they provide the much-required conducive and necessary environment for effective teaching and learning process in schools. Tables 11 and 12 show the situation with regard to the availability of school infrastructure and classroom furniture in the eight CDSSs studied, respectively.

**Table 11: School infrastructure**

Type of structure	Number at each CDSS								
	Ar	Bsu	Cr	Dr	Er	Fsu	Gr	Hsu	Total
Classrooms	4	4	2	2	2	4	4	4	26
Administration block	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Staff room	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Library	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Store rooms	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	2
Laboratories	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Teachers' houses	1	-	1	2	2	-	3	4	13
Special rooms	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hall	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

The study has found that the problem of school infrastructure and classroom furniture is evident in all the schools studied. Table 11 shows that there is an acute shortage of infrastructure. Some CDSSs, for example Cr, Dr, and Er, have one school block each and this means that some pupils either have their classes in temporary shelters or in borrowed classrooms from the nearby primary schools. A good example is CDSS Er that was established in 1997: forms 1 and 2 learn in a shelter constructed using bamboo and thatched by grass. Another example is CDSS Cr that was established in 1994: forms 1 and 2 learn in a borrowed classroom from the nearby primary school and in an old dilapidated church, respectively. CDSS Hsu has four classrooms only, but it has a total enrolment of 442 and this gives a pupil-classroom ratio of 110.5:1. It is a well-known fact that such an environment is not pleasant and conducive for effective teaching and learning process. As a result, this scenario cannot effectively facilitate the attainment of much talked about quality education.

The above poor teaching and learning environment is also worsened by shortage or lack of classroom furniture, for example desks and chairs. Table 12 shows the situation with regard to the availability of classroom furniture against the number of pupils at each school.

**Table 12: Number of classroom furniture**

CDSS	Number of pupils against classroom furniture							
	Enrolment	Desks	Chairs*	Stools	Benches	Forms	Tables	Shelves
Ar	135	91	29	-	-	-	-	-
Bsu	292	52*	184	-	-	-	-	-
Cr	94	65*	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dr	87	60	31	-	-	-	-	-
Er	117	46	29	-	-	-	-	-
Fsu	139	86	35	-	-	-	-	-
Gr	222	173	47	-	-	-	-	-
Hsu	446	253	164	-	-	-	-	-

\* Made up of plastic material

Table 12 shows that the available number of desks and chairs is not enough in all the CDSSs studied. A good number of pupils in the schools have no desks and they sit either on the plastic chair or an improvised sitting material or even on the floor. For example at CDSS Er, the total number of desks and chairs is 75 and yet the total enrolment for the school is 117. One of the head teachers commented that in most cases forms 1 and 2 are the victims of such a situation and they sit on the improvised material or on the floor. Again, girls are affected more than boys and, thus out of decency consideration, it becomes difficult for them to respond to teachers' questions if they are requested to stand. Table 12 also shows that in all the CDSSs studied there are no stools, benches, and forms that can be used by pupils in place of desks or chairs. Such an environment, as already pointed out, is not conducive for effective teaching and learning, and indeed does not facilitate the attainment of quality education.

One other important issue that the study has revealed is that shortage of teachers, lack of infrastructure, and classroom furniture has a negative impact on pupils' attendance and this leads to drop out of pupils. One of the head teachers said that pupils

had stopped coming to school because they were not learning effectively due to shortage of teachers. Another teacher said that poor teaching and learning environment frustrates pupils. Thus, he said, when pupils compare what they experience at CDSS and what their friends experience at the CSS, they feel that learning at the CDSS is just a waste of time. Also one member of SMC at one CDSS commented that pupils feel that CDSS is just similar to a primary school. He argued that when pupils were at a primary school, and especially in standard eight, they were learning in a classroom and each one of them had at least a desk. But in a sharp contrast they are learning in a shelter at a CDSS and some of them are sitting on the floor. As a result, they become frustrated and stop going to school. Table 13 shows the number of pupils in each class at each CDSS studied.

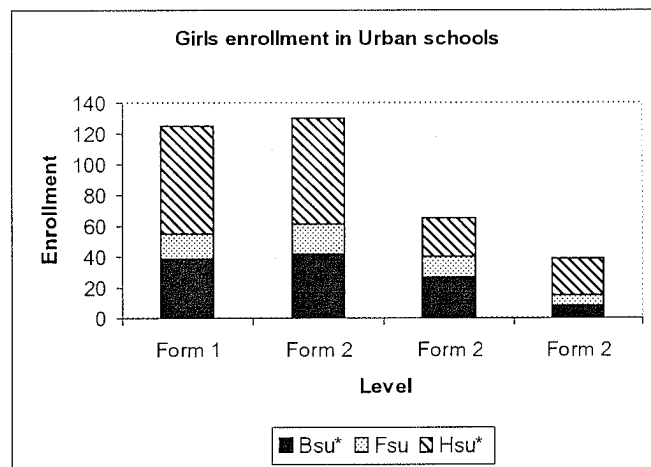
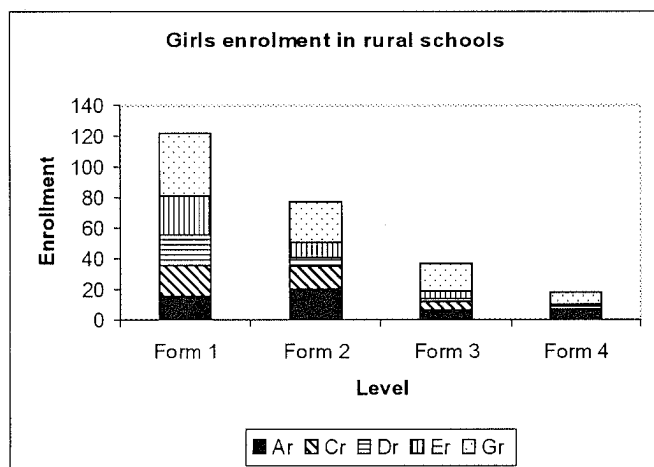
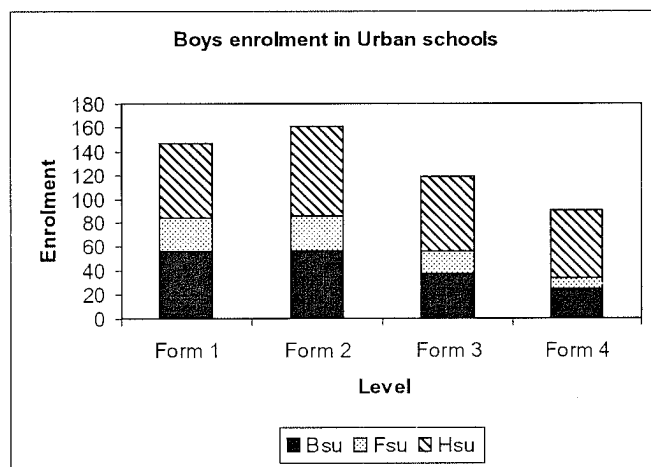
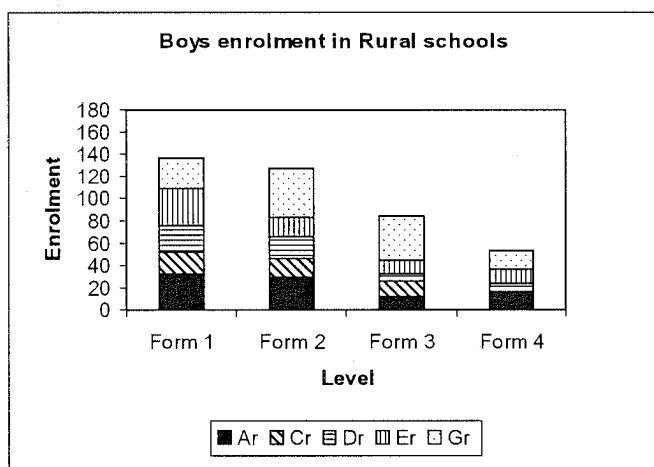
**Table 13: Pupils' enrolment by form and gender**

CDSS	Form 1		Form 2		Form 3		Form 4		Total		Total Both
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Ar	32	16	29	20	12	6	14	6	87	48	135
Bsu*	56	39	57	42	38	27	25	8	176	116	292
Cr	20	20	17	15	14	6	1	1	52	42	94
Dr	23	20	20	6	6	2	8	2	57	30	87
Er	34	25	17	10	12	5	13	1	76	41	117
Fsu	28	16	29	19	18	13	9	7	84	55	139
Gr	28	41	44	26	40	18	17	8	129	93	222
Hsu*	63	70	75	69	63	25	57	24	258	188	446
<b>Total</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>919</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>1532</b>

\* Double stream CDSSs

Table 13 shows that there are few pupils attending classes in all the CDSSs except one CDSS, Hsu, which is double stream school (each form has two classes). When one looks at the enrolment from form 1 to form 4, the number of pupils is rapidly decreasing. This is an indication that many pupils are dropping out of school. Normally, apart from

other reasons, pupils' drop out is caused by poor quality of education. This could be as a result of poor teaching, poor infrastructure, lack of classroom furniture, and unstimulating teaching and learning environment. Of course, one of the members of the SMC also commented that pupils drop out of school because of poverty and as such they prefer going into the tea estates looking for jobs in order to supplement the small family incomes rather than going to school. The figures below show the decline in enrolment from form 1 to form 4 between semi-urban CDSSs and rural CDSSs, and by gender.





#### 4.7 Sanitation facilities and water resources

Sanitation facilities and water resources are very important with regard to the running of an education institution. They provide conducive teaching and learning environment for the entire school. Well-constructed toilets, and clean water are important for the health of both teachers and pupils. A sick teacher cannot teach effectively, and similarly a sick pupil cannot learn effectively. Thus, the absence of good sanitation facilities and clean water can have an impact on the drop out rate of pupils as well as on the welfare of the teaching staff in schools. Table 14 sheds some light on the availability of toilets for both teachers and pupils in the CDSSs studied.

**Table 14: Number of toilets for both teachers and pupils**

CDSS	Number of toilets				Quality of toilets
	Teachers		Pupils		
	Male	Female	Boys	Girls	
Ar	2	1	2	2	Poor quality
Bsu	1	0	1	1	Poor quality
Cr	1	0	1	1	Fairly good
Dr	2	0	2	2	Fairly good
Er	1	0	2	2	Poor quality
Fsu	1	1	2	3	Poor quality
Gr	1	1	2	2	Poor quality
Hsu	1	0	2	2	Poor quality

The study has found that despite the fact that teachers' and pupils' toilets are available, they are far less than adequate. It should also be noted that there are no flush toilets and urinals for both male teachers and male pupils in all the CDSSs studied. In addition, it was observed that almost all the toilets in the CDSSs studied are of poor quality and require major maintenance or rehabilitation. The latrines are not well

constructed, maintained and looked after, and are a health hazard to both teachers and pupils. Maintenance or rehabilitation of these facilities prove to be difficult due to financial problems these schools are facing. According to a female member of SMC, this contributes to the drop out of pupils and the assertion is supported by several studies. In fact, this explains why the Ministry of Education is determined to promote good health and sanitation practices in Malawian schools (MoEST, 2001c).

As noted in table 13 (page 66), the number of pupils dropping out of school is higher among the girls than boys in the schools studied, especially as one moves to the senior classes (see also figures on page 67). Even teachers commented that normally girls feel uncomfortable in such a situation where toilet facilities are not enough and that they are likely to share with boys. The point being emphasized here is that the inadequacy of toilet facilities does not contribute to a conducive teaching and learning environment in schools, and this can have an impact on the attainment of quality education. A healthy pupil will concentrate and learn better in class than a sick pupil. Similarly, a sick teacher cannot effectively and efficiently facilitate teaching and learning process.

As already pointed out earlier on, the availability of clean and potable water at an education institution is equally of paramount importance because the spread of waterborne diseases is minimized. Table 15 shows the availability of water resources in the CDSSs studied.

**Table 15: Water resources**

<b>CDSS</b>	<b>Water source</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Ar	Borehole	Not functioning; its an old one & frequently breaks down
Bsu	-	No water source
Cr	-	They use a borehole from the nearby community
Dr	Borehole	They share with the community
Er	Surface water	Teachers & pupils drink water from the nearby river
Fsu	-	They use a borehole from the nearby primary school
Gr	Borehole	They share with the community
Hsu	Borehole	They share with the community

The study has found that there is a problem of water supply in some CDSSs studied. Only three CDSSs have water supply despite the fact that they share this resource with the rest of the community. There is no problem with that, as commented by one of the head teachers, because this strengthens the relationship between the school and the whole community. However, this head teacher was quick to say that if the “situation is not well handled it can create conflict between the school and the community”.

The pathetic situation is seen at CDSS Er where there is no clean drinking water for both teachers and pupils. They drink water from the nearby river, about three hundred meters away from the school. This river has its source from Mulanje Mountain. The head teacher at the school had this to say: “this is a frustrating situation to see that secondary school teachers are drinking from unprotected water source, from a river for that matter, located some three hundred meters away from the school and yet the ministry expects us to teach effectively”. It should be noted that these are already frustrated teachers and with that situation they cannot perform as expected of them. This situation, therefore, affects the quality of teaching and learning in the schools.

## **4.8 School administration and management**

This is equally an important area with regard to the running of an education institution, be it a private or government education institution. In fact, effective and efficient management facilitates successful implementation of the official national curriculum, education policies as well as school programs in order to achieve national education goals as set by the Central Ministry. An effective and efficient management will also help to create and provide an enabling environment for quality teaching and learning.

The study has revealed that there is a lot to be done in the CDSSs with regard to management if progress is to be made in the achievement of quality education. The head teachers and deputy head teachers lack leadership and managerial skills and as result they fail to capitalize on the presence of their fellow teachers to assist them to plan the implementation of the official national curriculum and other school programs. According to Kuthemba Mwale (2000), effective management helps to harness the limited available resources to benefit the education institution and also prudently utilizes the available resources such as human, material, and financial resources.

### ***4.8.1 Staff meetings***

According to this study, there is lack of communication between head teachers and other members of staff, and this is common especially in those CDSSs whose heads are primary school teachers. In these schools they do not convene staff meetings frequently, and yet this is a good forum to plan the activities of the school and how these activities can be executed. It has been discovered during the study that these schools normally have one staff meeting, thus at the beginning of the term only. In another CDSS

that is headed by a diploma teacher, it was discovered that they have staff meetings at least two times a term, at the beginning of the term and towards the end of the term. One good point to take note of, however, is that in all the CDSSs teachers said that they are very free to contribute to the discussions during staff meetings.

#### ***4.8.2 School based supervision***

As part of management, teachers are supposed to be frequently supervised in their respective classes while teaching in order to assist them to improve the quality of teaching at the school. This is part of quality assurance at school level and the activity is mainly entrusted to heads of department (HoDs), but head teachers are also expected to carry out the supervisory and advisory work. The study, however, has found that very little is being done with regard to this activity. It was discovered that only 10 percent of teachers who responded to the questionnaire indicated that the HoD supervised them at least once in 2003 academic year. Thus, two teachers at CDSS Cr and one teacher at CDSS Er were supervised. Similarly, only 14 percent of teachers indicated that they were supervised by the head teacher at least once in 2003 academic year, two teachers at CDSS Hsu and one teacher at CDSSs Cr and Er.

This means that supervisory and advisory work is rarely done in these schools because of lack of managerial skills on the part of head teachers and heads of department. In addition, the majority of teachers in CDSSs, as noted in tables 6 and 7, are under qualified and hence not suitable to carry out such an important exercise. They are not professionally trained to perform duties as subject managers or specialists. It means, therefore, that little attention is being paid to quality assurance or quality development at school level and this has a negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

#### ***4.8.3 School based in-service training***

School based in-service training programs are very important because they assist teachers to grow, both academically and professionally. However, the study has revealed that the schools studied do not organize in-service training programs. These programs could have been of much help bearing in mind that 92.19 percent of teachers in these schools are primary school teachers.

There is an explanation why these in-service training programs are not organized. In all the schools studied head teachers and teachers cited lack of funds to buy necessary materials for training programs. One of the teachers also said that they need money to hire competent subject specialists to assist them in areas of difficulty. He went on to say that, “we are all primary school teachers and are equally handicapped and as such we cannot assist one another, although at times we have informal subject discussions”.

As discussed in chapter one under decentralization, the study has found that the idea of grouping schools into clusters in which there is at least one CSS is a good one. However, this is not functioning properly with the pulling out of DANIDA. The cluster concept was the brainchild of DANIDA and they were funding it, both financially and materially. This was a good arrangement because it intended to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools, and in particular in the CDSSs because these schools are staffed by under qualified teachers. In addition, these schools lack basic teaching and learning materials.

It was also noted during the study that, since the implementation of new junior curriculum and new senior curriculum, teachers in CDSSs have not been oriented. This is a very sad development bearing in mind the caliber of teachers in these schools. Both

head teachers and teachers said they were promised that they would go for curriculum orientation two years ago, but this has not been implemented. However, this can be effectively covered under school based in-service training programs if schools are supported both financially and materially. One of the head teachers said that “if given resources we can invite qualified teachers from CSSs to assist us right here at the school”. The point being emphasized here is that teachers in CDSSs are not conversant with the new curriculum and this is affecting the quality of teaching and learning in these schools.

#### ***4.8.4 Record keeping***

Information management at any other institution or organization must be taken seriously for an effective and efficient running of that particular institution. In fact, information management is important for planning purposes as well as for future reference or use. The study has found that record keeping and management in almost all the CDSSs studied is not good. Nevertheless, the situation is a bit encouraging in the two semi-urban CDSSs that are being headed by diploma teachers. In the other six CDSSs, I had problems finding information on school finances, teachers’ particulars and textbooks. Some of the head teachers did not even know what sort of records should be kept at an education institution. The truth of the matter is that these head teachers and teachers require training in school administration and management. One of the head teachers at a rural CDSS Er commented that “I was posted to head this school in 2001 and nobody from the office has visited me to brief me on what to be done in order to run this school effectively”.

The point being emphasized in this section is that head teachers and teachers in CDSSs lack administrative and management skills. They fail to appreciate the usefulness

of school records as well as educational data in school management. In such circumstances, head teachers and teachers cannot make good decisions that can improve the quality of teaching and learning in CDSSs, and this can obviously have an impact on pupils' attainment of quality education.

#### **4.9 Inspection and supervision**

School inspection and supervision is the role of the Education Methods Advisory Services (EMAS), both at the Ministry of Education Headquarters and Division Offices. The advisory section has the responsibility to ensure that quality in schools is maintained as stipulated by the Ministry of Education, Science & Technology. This is what the Policy & Investment Framework (MoEST, 2001c) is advocating and emphasizing. Due to the decentralization process that is currently going on in Malawi, the administration of inspection and supervision is done by the Principal Education Methods Advisors (PEMAs) and the Senior Education Methods Advisors (SEMAs) at the Division Offices, but in collaboration with the personnel at the Ministry of Education Headquarters.

The study has found that school inspection and supervision is not done as expected because EMAS visits to schools are either based on the period a particular school has remained without being inspected and supervised or a reaction to an urgent disciplinary issue requiring advice and guidance. This is what Roger Riddell and Mark Robinson describe as “the fire brigade approach” with reference to evaluation of programs and projects. They argue that evaluation is “most often embarked upon either because things have gone very wrong-the fire brigade approach-or when a particular project is completed but there is a request for future funding.” (Lindenberg & Bryant, 2001, p. 226). But according to the Ministry of Education, each school is supposed to be



visited at least three times a year (MoEST, 2001c). However, in this study both head teachers and teachers from seven CDSSs said that they were visited only once in 2003 academic year. Professionally, one visit per school for the whole academic year is not enough. It means that PEMAs and SEMAs do not adequately provide professional support to head teachers and the teaching staff. They have the responsibility to make sure that all subjects on the official national curriculum are properly taught following good pedagogical practices, especially now that schools are implementing the new curriculum. Nevertheless, both head teachers and teachers commented that verbal feedback as well as written feedback were given to them, but no follow-ups were made to their schools. They also indicated that the visits by the Advisors and their reports were very helpful considering that they are not qualified to teach at a secondary school.

It was, however, disappointing to note that rural CDSS Er had not been visited since its establishment in 1997. Even Education Methods Advisors from the Division Office admitted that the school had not been visited and the rest were visited. Table 16 shows the number of inspection and supervision visits in 2003 academic year.

**Table 16: Inspection and supervision information**

<b>CDSS</b>	<b>Number of visits</b>	<b>Feedback type</b>	<b>Follow-ups</b>
Ar	Once	Verbal & written	None
Bsu	Once	Verbal & written	None
Cr	Once	Verbal & written	None
Dr	Once	Verbal & written	None
Er	None	None	None
Fsu	Once	Verbal & written	None
Gr	Once	Verbal & written	None
Hsu	Once	Verbal & written	None

Despite the fact that head teachers and teachers indicated that the visits and the reports were helpful, follow-ups are equally important with regard to quality assurance. Table 16 shows that no follow-ups were made to schools after the recommendations were sent to them. Normally, follow-ups help Education Methods Advisors to find out if the recommendations contained in their reports are being successfully implemented. In addition, follow-ups help to reinforce the implementation of the recommendations in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning which later may have a bearing on the attainment of quality education.

The Divisional Education Methods Advisors argued that there are quite a number of factors that affect their operations. Firstly, they cited financial constraints as one of the factors. According to them, the section requires about K150, 000 per month in order to successfully implement their planned activities for that particular month. In fact, this amount can be used to visit about 12 secondary schools in a month. However, they said that the section is allocated an average of K20, 000 per month, and this is far less than adequate. This explains why they fail to make the required number of visits and follow-ups to schools. Secondly, the section has no vehicle and this affects their operations as well. The Division has one reliable vehicle and it is at the disposal of each section depending on the activity to be carried out at that particular time. Thirdly, the section is heavily understaffed. There are only two Education Methods Advisors. According to Danish International Development Assistance (1999), the advisory section at the Division Office is supposed to have at least six officers: one PEMA and five SEMAs.

The point being emphasized in this section is that Education Methods Advisors (EMAs) play an important role with regard to quality improvement through inspection

and supervision visits to schools. They have the responsibility to ensure that all subjects on the official national curriculum are properly taught following good and acceptable methodologies. In addition, they are supposed to set up an effective monitoring mechanism on quality assurance in schools. Their frequent and regular visits, especially in CDSSs, are of paramount importance bearing in mind that there are more under qualified teachers in these schools than in CSSs that need their assistance. Thus, they need to monitor quality and support teachers professionally in CDSSs in order to improve the attainment of quality education.

#### **4.10 Community participation**

Community participation is a very important element that could quickly help to consolidate democratic governance both at national and local levels. It is based on the belief that democracy, which many Sub-Saharan countries embraced in the 1990s, requires the participation of everyone in the society for effective and meaningful decision-making process. According to Ministry of Education, Science & Technology, relevant stakeholders such as parents, students, and communities are supposed to be involved in the management of schools in order to make them accountable to the communities they serve (MoEST, 2001c). Thus, parents and communities participate in the activities of the school through properly set up structures in the name of the school management committees (SMCs) and parents teachers association (PTAs).

The present study has found that there are SMCs in all the CDSSs and PTAs in two CDSSs only. However, it has been discovered that four SMCs have overstayed and some members are not active enough. As a result, the SMCs fail to perform their duties effectively. A good example is the SMC at CDSS Gr where it was elected in 1996 and

there is only the chairperson doing the work of the whole committee. According to the Education Act (Laws of Malawi, 1966, Chapter 30:01), the elected SMC at any school is supposed to serve for two years only. However, if the performance of the committee is good parents may decide to extend this period to at least three years.

Members of the SMCs who were interviewed commented that they make contributions to the development activities at the school. This is normally done through the collection of river sand and molding of bricks for construction purposes. The development activities that were planned in all the CDSSs studied are similar because they share the same problems, for example lack of school infrastructure (see table 11 on page 63). Topping the list is the construction of teachers' houses and school blocks.

Although the community contributes labor through the collection of river sand and molding of bricks, the study has revealed that there is one major problem that is associated with the implementation of the identified projects. It takes time for the development projects to take off or to be implemented, and there are reasons for this delay. Firstly, in many schools the SMCs rely on the money that pupils contribute to schools as school development fund. Pupils' contribution ranges from K100 to K150 per pupil per term depending on the agreement between the school and parents. However, the total amount collected from pupils is too small to fund big projects like the construction of school blocks and teachers' houses, despite the fact that other raw materials such as river sand and bricks are already available. It should be noted that efforts by schools to raise development funds through pupils enrolled in these schools are frustrated because there are few pupils to raise substantial amount of money for the planned projects (see enrolment, table 13 on page 66). One of the members of the SMC commented that

“parents are reluctant to contribute any money apart from the labor they contribute because of poverty”. In addition, he argued that “what pupils contribute to school development fund is what their parents give them”. In situations like this, therefore, according to the head teachers, they turn to other donors and organizations such as the European Union (EU), Department for International Development (DfID), United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), and the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) for assistance.

Another reason why development projects take time to be implemented, again according to the head teachers, is that members of the SMCs and parents rarely convene meetings because they have other critical family problems to be sorted out. So, they meet when there is an urgent issue to be discussed. Furthermore, some members of the SMCs ask for money when they come to attend meetings. As a result, they fail to make progress with regard to the implementation of the projects.

Failure to implement development projects, like the construction of additional school blocks and teachers’ houses, has a negative impact on the quality of education. For example, by embarking on the construction of school blocks it means that parents would like to improve the teaching and learning environment, because temporary shelters and overcrowding classes are not conducive to effective teaching and proficient learning. Similarly, teachers play an important role with regard to the implementation of the official curriculum in class and if poorly housed, they become frustrated and demotivated. As a result, they cannot perform their duties effectively. Such conditions, therefore, provide low level of education.

The study has also found that SMCs and parents participate in maintaining pupils' discipline as well as teachers' discipline in this new political dispensation in Malawi. Some teachers and pupils do not properly understand the concept of democracy and, according to them, they feel that they have the freedom to do whatever they want. Such behavior of teachers and pupils does not create a conducive teaching and learning environment and as a result quality of education is negatively affected. So, when there is a problem concerning teachers and pupils, members of SMC are invited to assist head teachers and members of the discipline committee at the school to sort out the problem. The point being emphasized is that, despite some other problems associated with the availability of members of SMCs as discussed earlier on, both head teachers and teachers acknowledge the role that the community is playing in school management. They commented that without involving parents and the community where children come from, they cannot manage to mold the children's character on their own. Good behavior of pupils and teachers facilitates effective teaching and learning process leading to the attainment of quality education.

#### **4.11 School finances and government funding**

The money collected both at CSSs and CDSSs is divided into five main categories depending on their uses. These are government subvention, tuition fees, school development fund, textbook revolving fund, and general purpose fund.

1. Government subvention: this is the money that the government allocates to each secondary school through Division Offices. The money is meant to assist schools to pay for utility bills and other services.

2. Tuition fees: this money is collected from pupils and then remitted to central government. The government is supposed to use the money to buy school equipment, and teaching and learning materials to be distributed to schools.
3. School development fund: this is the contribution pupils make to schools for the implementation of planned development projects at the school.
4. Textbook revolving fund: this was introduced by DANIDA and the money is meant to be used by each school to buy textbooks depending on the need.
5. General purpose fund: the money is collected from pupils and it is used at the school to buy teaching and learning materials, for example materials for science classes.

The study, however, found that the CDSSs studied are experiencing serious financial problems and this is affecting the teaching and learning process in schools.

Table 17 shows the amount of money collected by each CDSS studied in each category as discussed above in 2003 academic year, for three terms.

**Table 17: School finances and Government funding (MK+)**

CDSS	Government Subvention	Development Fund	General Purpose Fund	Textbook Revolving Fund *	Tuition Fees
Ar	-	15, 680	6, 500	12, 000	69, 000
Bsu	-	16, 100	7, 650	(No data)	89, 000
Cr	-	18, 600	9, 300	13, 750	93, 000
Dr	-	16, 800	8, 400	15, 000	84, 000
Er	-	24, 750	8, 000	15, 000	82, 500
Fsu	-	21, 900	13, 150	(No data)	131, 500
Gr	-	27, 750	18, 800	31, 250	227, 650
Hsu	-	49, 800	39, 150	80, 000	395, 000

+ MK 109 is equivalent to 1US\$

\* Textbook revolving fund is paid once the whole academic year

The government is supposed to provide finances to CDSSs through the Division Office, but it has been discovered in this study that this is not being done or implemented. The problem is not with the government, but the money is lost in transit and this is at the Division Office. The office is not transferring government subvention to schools and this is affecting the teaching and learning process in schools. All the head teachers argued that the Division Office does not give them money for the running of the schools (see table 17: government subvention). According to the head teachers, what the Division normally does is to provide the schools with duplicating papers, duplicating ink, and other materials for the administration of end of term tests only. However, as pointed out already (see section 4.5), the whole process concerning the production of test papers is done at the Division Office. This means that the materials are not physically given to head teachers, but the Division Office keeps them. Head teachers experience a lot of problems and most of the times school closes before pupils finish writing end of term assessment tests. As a result, monitoring of pupils' progress becomes a problem.

Due to low enrolment in schools and coupled with severe poverty, pupils fail to pay development project funds and textbook revolving funds as expected of them. As can be seen in table 17, the amount of money collected as development funds is too little in all schools to be used for the construction of a classroom block or even a teacher's house and this explains why schools fail to implement planned development projects. It is also seen that the money collected as textbook revolving fund is not enough to buy textbooks and teaching and learning materials. This also explains why there is an acute shortage of teaching and learning materials.



In such a situation where finances are so scarce, the system cannot produce quality education or quality products that can effectively contribute to the social economic development of the country.

#### 4.12 Distance to school

Distance is another important issue with regard to quality education in CDSSs. Though the selection policy to these schools is based on the local catchment area (MoEST, 2001c), the study has found that some pupils walk or travel long distances to their respective schools. This consumes a lot of time that can be positively used for learning or private studying. Tables 18a and 18b show the number of pupils against the distance they cover in the CDSSs studied.

**Table 18a: Distance to school in rural CDSS**

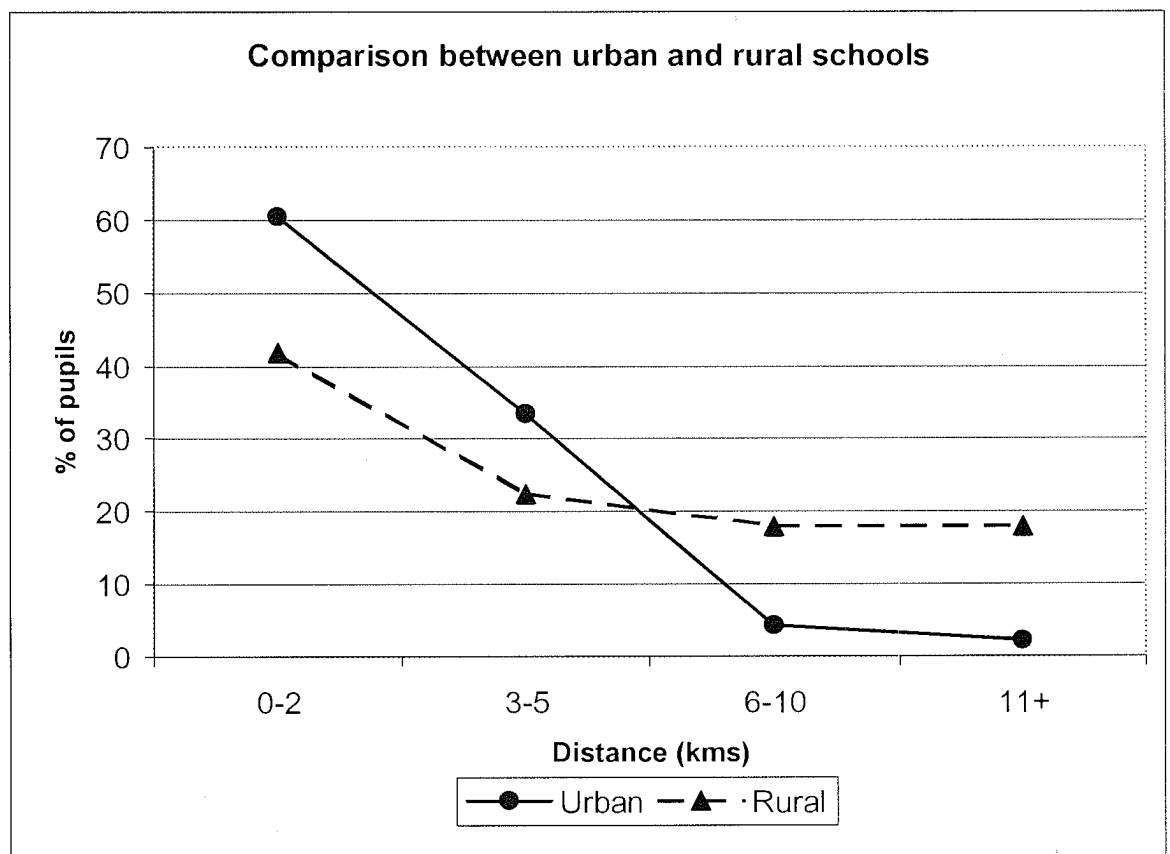
CDSS	Distance in Kms against number of pupils				Total respondents
	0-2	3-5	6-10	11+	
Ar	10	3	2	1	16
Cr	6	-	2	2	10
Dr	3	4	1	4	12
Er	6	3	2	2	13
Gr	3	5	5	3	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>41.8</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 18b: Distance to school in Semi-urban CDSSs**

CDSS	Distance in Kms against number of pupils				Total respondents
	0-2	3-5	6-10	11+	
Bsu	9	6	1	-	16
Fsu	12	3	1	-	16
Hsu	8	7	-	1	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>60.4</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: the distance in both tables is one way only

Table 18a shows that only 41.8 percent of pupils in rural CDSSs cover a short distance of about 0-2 kilometers compared to 60.4 percent of pupils in semi-urban CDSSs who cover the same distance as shown in table 18b. Furthermore, table 18a shows that there are more pupils who cover long distances in rural CDSSs, while table 18b shows that there are few pupils who cover long distances semi-urban CDSSs. The figure below illustrates this comparison.



The recommended distance that a pupil is supposed to cover, though still long, is between 3-5 kilometers (MoEST, 2001c). It should be noted, however, that distance has an impact on the quality of education. If pupils cover long distances to school, they cannot concentrate or actively participate in the teaching and learning process in class because of fatigue. Similarly, when they go back home they cannot practice what they have learnt at school or do an assignment given by their teachers. In such a situation it is difficult for them to master the curriculum content.

The study has also found that long distances that pupils walk or travel force them to engage themselves in self-boarding. For example, 11 pupils (4 girls and 7 boys) at a rural CDSS Gr rent houses around the school. The chairperson of SMC disclosed this during interviews. However, he was quick to comment that “pupils do this under the request of their parents”. Self-boarding was a common phenomenon in DECAs before they were converted to CDSSs, but the system was put to stop when this present policy was announced because many pupils were involved in indiscipline cases such as drug abuse and mini marriages.

One other important issue to take note of is that long distances have an impact on girls' education. According to Maluwa-Banda (2004), long distances discourage girls from going to school and normally parents are reluctant to send them to distant schools for fear of being molested. As a result, many girls drop out of school and this points to poor quality of education. This may explain why there are few girls in the schools studied, especially in rural schools, contrary to what the Ministry of Education, Science & Technology is advocating. On access and equity, it is clearly stated in Policy & Investment Framework that “the goal is to improve the participation of girls and

women...At primary, secondary and tertiary levels the intention is to increase female participation to at least 50% of the ...school enrolment” (MoEST, 2001c, P. 5).

The point that is being emphasized in this section is that distance can have an impact on the quality of education if pupils cover long distances to schools regardless of mode of transport they use as seen in this study.

#### 4.13 Pupils’ performance at national examination

It should be appreciated that the issue of quality is a very complex phenomenon and it is affected by a number of factors as shown in this present study. For example lack of teaching and learning materials can negatively affect the quality of teaching and learning. The situation is made even worse with the presence of unqualified teachers in the system. It is, therefore, believed that what has been presented in this paper has a significant impact on the performance of pupils in the national examinations in CDSSs.

The results of the study, however, have shown that the performance of pupils at national examinations in these CDSSs is quite encouraging if we compare with 1997 and 1998 results. Table 19 shows 2003 MSCE examination results in the CDSSs studied.

**Table 19: 2003 MSCE results in the CDSSs studied**

CDSS	Number entered		Total	Number passed		Total	Percent pass
	Boys	Girls		Boys	Girls		
Ar	17	9	26	4	0	4	15.4
Bsu	39	13	52	10	0	10	19.2
Cr	6	3	9	1	0	1	11.0
Dr	10	9	19	2	1	3	15.9
Er	30	6	36	5	1	6	16.7
Fsu	16	1	17	4	0	4	23.5
Gr	54	12	66	8	1	9	13.6
Hsu	47	22	69	30	11	41	59.4
Total	219	75	294	64	14	78	26.5

The table shows that 26% of students in the CDSSs studied that sat for the 2003 Malawi School Certificate Examinations passed compared to 65% of CSS students that sat for the same examinations. The only problem is that the 26% is spread to both rural and semi-urban CDSSs. However, if we compare this with the performance of students in the same examinations in 1997 and 1998 it is seen that there is an improvement. In 1997, only 8% of DEC students that sat for the Malawi School Certificate Examinations passed compared to 36% of CSS students. In 1998, only 4% of DEC students that sat for the same examinations passed compared to 29% of CSS students. This means that if the factors of quality as discussed in this paper are fully put in place in these CDSSs, the performance of pupils can improve significantly. The point being emphasized here is that very little has been done in these CDSSs with regard to the provision of major basic resources that facilitate effective teaching and learning process.

It is also important to note that the performance of pupils in semi-urban CDSSs is better than the performance of pupils in rural CDSSs. In fact, there is one semi-urban CDSS (CDSS Hsu) whose performance of pupils was good. Thus, 59 percent of the pupils who sat for 2003 national examination at this school passed. It could be there are some reasons that contributed to this unique performance. But according to the head teacher, the good performance of pupils at this school was due to the effort and hard working of teachers. In addition to this, because of the donations that this CDSS is receiving from the church (for example, computers), some relatively intelligent students from other CDSSs around the area are flocking to this school. This may explain why the performance of pupils at this CDSS is good compared to other CDSSs studied.

#### **4.14 Chapter summary:**

This chapter has presented the results of the study that was conducted in Mulanje education district in Shire Highlands Education Division. It has also discussed these results at length. The chapter focused on the following areas: qualification of teachers, teacher-pupil ratio, teaching and learning materials, infrastructure and classroom furniture, school equipment, assessment of pupils, sanitation facilities and water resources, school administration and management, inspection and supervision, community participation, financial resources, distance that pupils cover when going to their respective schools, and performance of pupils in national examinations.

It has been discovered that 92 percent of teachers teaching in the CDSSs studied are under qualified and are not supposed to teach at a secondary school. Although the overall pupil-teacher ratio is below the recommended national figure, this does not have any positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning because the majority of these teachers are under qualified. It was also noted that there are very few qualified teachers in these schools (8 percent), and as such pupil-qualified teacher ratio is high. For example at CDSSs Bsu and Hsu, pupil-qualified teacher ratio is 73:1 and 148:1, respectively. In addition, it was also noted that each teacher is teaching an average of between five and six subjects per day and this has an impact on subject preparation as well as on the teaching and learning process.

The results have also shown that there is an acute shortage teaching and learning materials, and school equipment. Furthermore, there is shortage of classrooms and classroom furniture. Pupils in some CDSSs learn in temporary shelters or in borrowed structures, such as primary school classrooms or churches, as was the case before the

implementation of the policy. This is the situation, for example at CDSS Er where forms 1 and 2 learn in a temporary shelter.

It was also discovered in this chapter that there is evidence of decentralization through community participation in various school activities, though not fully fledged. The concept of community participation is facing many challenges. For example, it takes time for schools and the community to implement development projects because of lack of supporting resources such as finances. Due to severe poverty, parents are reluctant to contribute additional money to schools, and also schools are not getting any financial assistance from the government, thus making implementation of development projects very difficult.

The chapter has also shown that inspection and supervision services, which ensure that quality teaching and learning is taking place in schools, are not being offered as expected due to lack of resources at the Division Office. In many cases inspection and supervision is done when a school has a problem that requires an immediate attention.

The next chapter of this paper will present the conclusion and offer recommendations of the study. It will also suggest alternative areas that may require immediate attention and/or further research.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Chapter overview**

Chapter four of this paper presented research findings of the study that was conducted in Mulanje education district in Shire Highlands Education Division. In addition, the chapter also discussed these results at length with special reference to policy documents from Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and other relevant literature with regard to quality education. This present chapter presents the conclusion of the study and it also offers some general recommendations to the findings. As a reminder, the main purpose of the study was to find out the current condition in Community Day Secondary Schools (formally Distance Education Centers) with regard to quality education since December 1998 when they became fully under the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST). The reform was intended to lift the image of the Distance Education Centers (DECs) in order to narrow the gap between them and Conventional Secondary Schools so that there can be a favorable competition between these two types of secondary schools. It also meant that the MoEST would provide, among other things, properly trained teachers, relevant teaching and learning materials, and finances to these schools. Specifically, the study was trying to answer two main questions and these are:

1. Has the implementation of the new policy (conversion of DECs to CDSSs) ensured improvement of quality of education in the Community Day Secondary Schools in Malawi as expected?



2. What is the quality of education in CDSSs now as a result of the implementation new policy?

The study focused on the following parameters of quality: qualification of teachers, teacher-pupil ratio, teaching and learning materials, infrastructure and physical facilities, school equipment, assessment of pupils, sanitation facilities and water resources, school administration and management, inspection and supervision, community participation, financial resources, distance that pupils cover when going to their respective schools, and performance of pupils in national examinations. The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to present the conclusion of the study and offer general recommendations to the research findings.

## **5.1 Conclusion**

There is no doubt that the new policy on CDSSs had good and positive intentions, thus improving quality of education in these schools, but the present study has found that the implementation of the policy has made very little progress with regard to the issue of quality. It will take some time for CDSSs to produce the expected outputs or results unless adequate resources that play an important role in quality education are fully and strategically put in place. It appears that the announcement of the policy was done in a hurry, possibly because of political reasons, without seriously taking into consideration the issue of resources that could effectively facilitate its implementation. As noted in chapter two of this paper, thus according to Hartwell (1989), before the Botswana Ministry of Education started implementing the policy on Community Junior Secondary Schools (CJSSs), they first all looked at possible areas that could affect the smooth running of the schools. It was noted in this chapter that, among other things, they looked

at teachers' requirements and development, and the criteria for providing school facilities and boarding facilities. But in Malawi, this was not critically done, although there is scanty information indicating that needs assessment or situational analysis was done. If this was done, then the recommendations to the needs assessment were ignored or not fully adopted by the authorities. For example, according to MoEST (1999b), 520 DEC's were converted to CDSSs at once and by then these schools had very few or no resources at all. This entails poor planning and can be described as a "sweeping reform" to the education system, a term used by Haddad (1995, p. 44) when he was describing education policy-planning process in Peru.

Today, five years later, the present study has found that CDSSs in Mulanje education district still lack major basic resources for effective teaching and learning process. Those resources that are available are either not enough and/or of poor quality, and they can not facilitate effective teaching and learning processes that can lead to the attainment of quality education. The following points support this assertion:

1. Although the Ministry of Education has managed to post qualified diploma teachers to these schools, still the majority of teachers are not qualified to teach at a secondary school. According to this present study, 92 percent of teachers currently teaching in the CDSSs studied are not qualified to teach at a secondary school. It was also noted that those very few qualified teachers, 8 percent, who are teaching in these schools are found in semi-urban CDSSs only. In addition, both head teachers and teachers in these schools lack administrative and management skills to enable them perform their duties effectively and efficiently. This, therefore, is affecting the quality of teaching and learning process in CDSSs.

2. Despite the introduction of textbook revolving fund, there is still an acute shortage of teaching and learning resources such as textbooks, teachers' guides, exercise books, and writing materials. Textbook-pupil ratio is still low in these schools. In addition, the ministry is not providing teaching and learning materials and school equipment as promised in the policy document (S.S.T.E.P. Malawi, \_\_\_\_). In fact, the central government through the MoEST is not making use of tuition fees collected from pupils for its intended purpose. As said in chapter four of this paper, tuition fees were supposed to be used by the government to buy teaching and learning materials to be distributed to schools in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
3. The schools have inadequate infrastructure and classroom furniture. As noted, in some CDSSs pupils still learn in temporary shelters or borrowed premises. Some pupils sit on the improvised sitting material, for example woodcuttings and rocks.
4. Inspection and supervision visits to schools are not adequate to support the implementation of the national curriculum. It was noted that visits to these schools are normally made when there is an urgent problem to be sorted out. This is due to lack of resources such as finances and personnel. Shire Highlands Education Division has only two Education Methods Advisors against 22 CDSSs, instead of the recommended six officers. It should also be noted that, in addition to these CDSSs, the Division has five additional Conventional Secondary Schools, making the situation even more complicated.
5. The schools lack finances to assist head teachers and teachers to run these schools effectively. For example, they fail to administer assessment tests regularly,

organize school-based training, and buy teaching and learning materials. It has also been discovered that CDSSs in Mulanje district are not fully benefiting from the government subvention, which is channeled through the Division Office.

6. There is evidence of community participation in all schools through SMCs, but this has little impact as seen from the unfinished development projects in these schools. The majority of people in rural areas live below the poverty line and as such they fail to make some additional monetary contribution towards the implementation of these projects.
7. Although selection to these schools is based on local catchment area, it was noted in this study that many pupils are still walking long distances going to their respective schools. This scenario has brought back the concept of self-boarding which was discouraged by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology because it was encouraging immoral behavior among pupils, and between pupils and teachers.

It should be noted that these are some of the major parameters that determine quality at any education institution.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

The policy on CDSSs was a welcome development because it meant to improve the quality of teaching and learning in these disadvantaged schools. But the policy has not made a big impact due to lack of basic resources. However, all is not lost and some measures can be put into consideration in order to correct this pathetic situation. Below are some of the recommendations:

1. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) must issue a policy to stop the opening of illegal CDSSs so that it can concentrate in improving the already existing ones. In addition, the Malawi Government and the MoEST must involve all stakeholders who are interested in the improvement of quality education in CDSSs if the situation is to be effectively and efficiently corrected. They should come up with strategies and map up the way forward together. This is what Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002, p. 66) describe as “consultative mechanisms”. In consultative mechanisms, according to Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002), “stakeholders are invited to offer their views on a given policy... stakeholders are provided with sufficient opportunities to develop an understanding of the issues to enable their informed involvement.”
2. The MoEST must source funds in order to support Domasi College of Education to train more teachers who are currently teaching in CDSSs through the current distance mode of training, the SSTEP program. Currently, SSTEP program is being funded by CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency). Soon, this will phase out and there is need for the Malawi Government and MoEST to find means and ways of sustaining the program. The government, therefore, must show its political will and commitment if the quality of education is to improve in these schools. It has been shown in the literature review, according to The Global Campaign for Education (2002, p. 2) that “quality education is not a mystery...it can be achieved when government and civil society build strong political commitment to the ideal of good public education for everyone...” Also the Department for International Development (1997, p. 8) comments that

“targets for education can be achieved where there exists enough political will in national governments to make necessary policy and resource commitments, matched by strategic support from the international community.”

3. Related to the above point, the results of this present study have shown that the very few available qualified teachers that teach in the CDSSs are concentrated in semi-urban schools only. They are reluctant to go to rural areas due to poor teaching conditions. In the words of Wolf et al (1999, p. 44), “teachers with more qualifications don’t want to go to rural areas because they want a house, flush toilets, electricity.” Thus, much as we appreciate the role that SSTEP is playing in training CDSS teachers, conditions of service for teachers teaching in rural CDSSs must be improved as well so that, after finishing their training at Domasi College of Education, they can willingly go back to their respective schools. Among other things, the Malawi Government and the MoEST should try as much as possible to construct good houses and, if possible, improve the salary package for only those teachers teaching in rural CDSSs in a form of allowances or what Murname (1993, p. 132-p. 138) calls “premiums.” Murname says that these premiums can be in a form of hardship or travel allowances.
4. There is a problem of ownership, and the MoEST must sensitize parents and the community as a whole with regard to their role in the management of CDSSs. The community played an important role in the establishment of DECAs, however parents and the community see the new policy on CDSSs as depriving them of their schools. This may explain why parents are reluctant to fully participate in the management of CDSSs. So, the government must conduct sensitization

campaigns in rural areas to educate the community that the change did not mean depriving them of their schools, but that it meant to support them by improving quality education. Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) remind us that participation is the major component of democratization and as such the government in question must come up with proper guidelines on how the community can be involved in policy implementation. Shaeffer (1992, p. 104) also supports this assertion with reference to community participation in primary education in Indonesia. He says that “guidelines and manuals for obtaining community involvement...should be provided by the government”.

5. Since the government is now implementing decentralization policy (Sector Devolution Plans, 2002), MoEST should find means of funding CDSSs directly rather than funding them through the Division Offices. According to the literature review, this is what Wagner (2002) is advocating. Wagner argues that the money channeled through other offices is diverted before it reaches the schools. However, before implementing this, there is need to strengthen the capacity in these schools in order for them to handle large sums of money. It should be noted that there are no qualified accounts personnel in these schools.
6. The MoEST must recruit and train more Education Methods Advisors (EMAs). The EMAs play a vital role with regard to quality education. They have the responsibility to ensure that all subjects on the official national curriculum are properly taught following good and acceptable pedagogical processes. In addition, they offer professional and administrative support to head teachers and teachers.

7. Although selection to CDSSs is based on the principle of local catchment area (MoEST, 2001c) and within the radius of 3-5 kilometers, the distance is just too long to be covered by a student. The ministry must revisit this policy immediately, and if possible collaborate with the local community to provide boarding facilities to those students who are walking long distances. According to the MoEST (2001c), the provision of boarding facilities in CDSSs is supposed to be done by the community. However, it has been noted already in this present study that the majority of people in rural areas are living below the poverty line and are even failing to make monetary contributions to schools for developments projects. It means, therefore, that the community cannot manage to provide boarding facilities to CDSSs alone. So, the ministry must come in to assist in alleviating this problem if quality education is to be achieved in CDSSs. This can be done through cost-sharing approach, thus the community can provide labor by molding bricks and collecting river sand and the ministry can provide other construction materials.
8. As already pointed out, this study was conducted in Mulanje education district and in 8 CDSSs only. Though there is high possibility of applying the findings of the study to the rest of the country, due to the fact that these schools have similar characteristics and problems, another study should be conducted covering the entire country in order to have a broad picture of quality education in CDSSs. Similarly, another study can be conducted to compare CDSSs and CSSs with regard to quality education.



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APPENDIX A

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEAD TEACHERS**

**Introduction:**

The purpose of this study is to find out the quality of education in CDSSs. The information that you are going to give will be valuable. You are free to disclose your name or not. In any case, the information that you are going to give will be kept confidential. Please, respond to each question carefully and honestly. Note that this is not an assessment test and such there is no correct or wrong response. Thank you for taking part in this study.

**Objective 1: To find out the school background.**

1. Location of the school. *(Please tick appropriately)*

Location	Code
Semi-urban	1
Rural	2

2. The year this school was established.

**Objective 2: To find out the general information about teachers.**

3. How many male and female teachers does the school have?

M	<input type="text"/>
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F	<input type="text"/>
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Total

4. Of the above teachers, how many have the following as the highest qualification?

- (a) T2 \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) T3 \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) Diploma in Education \_\_\_\_\_
- (d) Bachelor of Education \_\_\_\_\_
- (e) General Degree plus U.C.E \_\_\_\_\_
- (f) Any other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. For how long has each one of them been teaching?

Teacher's ID Number	Sex	Qualification	Grade	Subject specialization	Subject(s) Currently teaching	Teaching experience (yrs)

**Objective 3: find out the information about school enrolment.**

6. In this academic year, how many boys and girls are there at this school in each class (in each form)?

Class	Boys	Girls	Total
Form 1			
Form 2			
Form 3			
Form 4			
<b>Total</b>			

**Objective 4: To find out more about school management.**

7. In the last two terms, about how many staff meetings did you have per term? (Tick as appropriate)

Response	Code
(a) None	1
(b) Once a term	2
(c) Two times a term	3
(d) More than two times a term	4

8. At this school, is there an agreed upon frequency of administering tests to pupils? (*Tick as appropriate*)

Yes  No

9. If the answer to question '8' above is 'yes' how many times are tests administered at this school? (*Tick as appropriate*)

Response	Code
(a) Once a term	1
(b) Two times a term	2
(c) Three times a term	3
(d) More than three times a term	4

10. Some schools have school management committees (SMCs) whereas others do not have. Does this school have school management committee? If 'yes', answer question 11 and 12. If 'no', jump to question 13. (*Tick as appropriate*)

Yes  No

11. During the last two terms, how often did you convene SMC meetings? (*Tick as appropriate*)

Response	Code
(a) None	1
(b) Once a term	2
(c) Two times a term	3
(d) Three times a term	4
(e) More than three times a term	5

12. What contribution does the SMC make to the running of this school, if any?

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13. Can you explain why there is no SMC at this school?

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14. Apart from interacting with the community through school management committee meetings, what other community activities outside the school are you involved in?

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15. In the last academic year, how many times did the Education Methods Advisors from the Division Office visit the school? (*Tick as appropriate*)

<b>Response</b>	<b>Code</b>
(a) None	1
(b) Once	2
(c) Two times	3
(d) Three times	4
(e) More three times	5

16. If they visited the school, how did they give feedback of their findings to you?  
(*Choose responses from table B*)

Table A

<b>Number of visits</b>	<b>Response</b>
(a) First visit	
(b) Second visit	
(c) Third visit	
(d) Fourth visit	

Table B

<b>Response</b>	<b>Code</b>
(a) No feedback was given	1
(b) Verbal feedback	2
(c) Written feedback	3
(d) Both verbal & written feedback	4
(e) Other (Specify)	5

17. In general terms do you find the feedback, if any, helpful to the school? *(Tick as appropriate)*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Code</b>
(a) No feedback is given	1
(b) Not helpful	2
(c) Helpful	3
(d) Very helpful	4

18. How would you rate teacher absenteeism at this school? *(Tick as appropriate)*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Code</b>
(a) Non existent	1
(b) Very low	2
(c) Low	3
(d) High	4
(e) Very high	5

19. A school must have well and clearly articulated school rules and regulations to be followed by pupils. Does this school have rules and regulations? *(Tick as appropriate)*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Code</b>
(a) Yes	1
(b) No	2

20. Some schools have development plans to guide them in carrying out development activities in a given period of time. Does this school have a development plan? *(Tick as appropriate)*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Code</b>
(a) Yes	1
(b) No	2

21. If the answer to question '20' above is 'yes', list the development activities that were planned and list those that have been implemented in the last academic year? *(Please be specific)*

Planned activities	Implemented activities
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.

22. If the answer to question '20' above is 'no', can you give reasons why you don't have development plans at this school? *(Be specific please)*

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**Objective 5: To find out the availability of equipment, stationery, textbooks, classroom furniture, school buildings, and other facilities.**

23. Does the school have the following? *(Tick as appropriate)*

Item	Yes	No
1. Computer		
2. Printer		
3. Typewriter		
4. Duplicating machine		
5. Duplicating ink		
6. Duplicating paper		
7. Typewriter stencils		
8. Telephone		
9. Electricity		

24. Textbooks contribute a lot in the teaching and learning process. How many textbooks does each class (each form) have at this school in the following subjects? *(Please fill in the appropriate column)*

Subject area	Form			
	1	2	3	4
(a) Mathematics				
(b) English				
(c) Chichewa				
(d) Physical Science				
(e) Biology				
(f) History				
(g) Geography				
(h) Agriculture				
(I) Art				
(j) Home Economics				
(k) Integrated Science				
(l) Science & Technology				
(m) Life Skills				

25. Could you please provide information on the availability of the following classroom facilities? *(Write the number in the box)*

Facility	Category of people	Number
(a) Desks	Pupils	
	Teachers	
(b) Tables	Pupils	
	Teachers	
(c) Chairs	Pupils	
	Teachers	
(d) Shelves	Pupils	
	Teachers	
(e) Stools	Pupils	
	Teachers	
(f) Benches/Forms	Pupils	
	Teachers	
(g) Wall Chalkboards	Pupils	
(h) Portable Chalkboards	Pupils	

26. Could you please provide information on the following structures? (*Write the number in the box*)

Structure	Number available	
	Permanent	Temporary
(a) Classrooms		
(b) Staff rooms		
(c) Library		
(d) Store rooms		
(e) Workshop rooms		
(f) Laboratories		
(g) Special rooms (e.g. Art)		
(h) Teachers' houses		
Other (specify)		

27. Please indicate the number of toilets available for the teachers and the pupils at this school. (*Tick as appropriate*)

Type of toilet	Teachers		Pupils	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
(a) Flush toilets				
(b) Ventilated pit latrines				
(c) Unventilated pit latrines				
(d) Urinals				

28. Tick as appropriate the quality of toilet facilities available.

Table A: For teachers

Type of toilet	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
(a) Flush toilet				
(b) Ventilated pit latrines				
(c) Unventilated pit latrines				
(d) Urinals				

Table A: For pupils

Type of toilet	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
(a) Flush toilet				
(b) Ventilated pit latrines				
(c) Unventilated pit latrines				
(d) Urinals				

29. Indicate the adequacy of the following facilities at this school. *(Tick as appropriate)*

Facility	Adequate	Inadequate	Not at all
(a) Playground			
(b) Sports equipment			
(c) Agricultural land			
(d) Other (specify)			

30. What is the main source of drinking water for students and members of staff? *(Tick as appropriate)*

Source of drinking water	Code
(a) Piped water	1
(b) Bore hole	2
(c) Protected well	3
(d) Unprotected well	4
(e) Surface water	5

**Objective 6: To find out more about School finances:**

31. On average, during the last academic year, how much money did you collect from each of the following sources? *(Write in the appropriate column)*

Source of funding	Amount (Mk)
(a) Government/Division Office	
(b) Community contributions	
(c) Student fees/Tuition	
(d) Book revolving fund	
(e) Others (Specify)	

32. Is the money adequate to fund the activities of the school? *(Tick as appropriate)*

Response	Code
(a) Not adequate	4
(b) Less than adequate	3
(c) Adequate	2
(d) More than adequate	1

## APPENDIX B

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE TEACHERS

#### Introduction:

The main aim behind this study is to find out the quality of education in CDSSs. The information that you are going to give will be vital and valuable to this study. You are free to disclose your name or not. In any case, the information that you are going to give will be kept confidential. So, respond to each question honestly and carefully. Also note that this is not an examination and as such there is no correct or wrong answer. Thank you for taking part in this study.

**Objective 9a: To find out if teachers participate in School management.**

**Objective 9b: To find out how teachers manage the teaching and learning process.**

1. Staff meetings are very important in the running of any institution/organization, be it a company or a school. In the last academic year, how many times did your head teacher convene staff meetings? *(Tick as appropriate)*

Response	Code
(a) None	1
(b) Once a term	2
(c) Two times a term	3
(d) Three times a term	4
(e) More than three times a term	5

2. In some schools teachers attend staff meetings but are not free to contribute effectively. They are only passive listeners. How free are you in making meaningful contributions during staff meetings at this school? *(Tick as appropriate)*

Response	Code
(a) Not free	1
(b) Free	2
(c) Very free	3





6. Other than reference books, teachers' guides, syllabi and pupils' textbooks, what other important teaching and learning materials does the school have? List them.

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7. Does your school organize school-based in-service training programs? (*Tick as appropriate*)

<b>Response</b>	<b>Code</b>
(a) Yes	1
(b) No	2

8. If the answer to question '7' above is 'yes', in the last academic year, how many times did the school organize school based in-service training programs? (*Tick as appropriate*)

<b>Response</b>	<b>Code</b>
(a) None	1
(b) Once	2
(c) Two times	3
(d) Three times	4
(e) More than three times	5

9. If the answer to question '7' above is 'no', can you give reasons why you don't organize school based in-service training programs? (*Be specific please*)

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10. In some schools teachers are observed while they are teaching. Do the head teacher, deputy head teacher, and head of department observe your teaching on a regular basis? *(Tick as appropriate)*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
(a) Head teacher		
(b) Deputy head teacher		
(c) Head of department		
(d) None of the above		

11. In the last academic year, about how many times per term did each of the supervisors in question (10) above observe your teaching? *(Tick as appropriate)*

<b>Supervisor</b>	<b>Responses</b>				
	<b>None</b>	<b>Once/term</b>	<b>2x/term</b>	<b>3x/term</b>	<b>4x/term</b>
(a) Head teacher					
(b) D/head teacher					
(c) Head of department					

12. What procedures were followed after your immediate supervisor observed your teaching? *(Choose the appropriate response from table B)*

Table A

<b>Supervisor</b>	<b>Number of observations</b>			
	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>
(a) Head teacher				
(b) D/head teacher				
(c) Head of department				

Table B

<b>Response</b>	<b>Code</b>
(a) No discussion	1
(b) Discussions were done	2
(c) Written report	3
(d) Discussions & written report	4

13. In the last academic year, how often did the Education Methods Advisors from the Education Division Office observe your teaching? *(Tick as appropriate)*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Code</b>
(a) None	1
(b) At least once a term	2
(c) At least twice a term	3
(d) At least three times a term	4

14. What procedures were followed after the Education Methods Advisors observed your teaching? *(Choose the appropriate response from table B)*

Table A

<b>Number of visits</b>	<b>Response</b>
(a) First visit	
(b) Second visit	
(c) Third visit	
(d) Fourth visit	

Table B

<b>Response</b>	<b>Code</b>
(a) No feedback	1
(b) Verbal feedback	2
(c) Written feedback	3
(d) Verbal & written feedback	4

15. What type of professional support do you get from your fellow teachers at this school? *(Tick as appropriate)*

<b>Type of professional support</b>	<b>Code</b>
(a) None	1
(b) Subject group discussion	2
(c) Classroom observation	3
(d) Others (specify)	4

## APPENDIX C

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE PUPILS

#### Introduction:

The purpose of this study is to find out the quality of education in CDSSs. The information that you are going to give will be very helpful in this study. You are free to disclose your name or not. In any case, your information will be kept confidential. Also take note that this is not an examination and as such there is no right or wrong answer. So, respond to each question honestly and carefully. Thank you very much for participating in this study.

#### *Objective 10: To find out more about teaching and learning process.*

1. The availability of textbooks at a school is very important and they make teaching and learning easy. Does each pupil at this school have a textbook in each of the following subjects? (*Tick as appropriate*)

Subject	Yes	No
(a) Mathematics		
(b) English		
(c) Physical Science		
(d) Geography		
(e) Agriculture		
(f) Biology		
(g) Chichewa		
(I) History		
(J) Art		
(k) Integrated Science		
(l) Science & Tech		
(m) Life Skills		

2. Tests help to internalize concepts learned in class. In the last two terms, how often were you given assessment tests in the following subjects? *(Tick as appropriate)*

Subject	Frequency per term				
	None	Once	2X	3 X	More than 3X
(a) Mathematics					
(b) English					
(c) Physical Science					
(d) Geography					
(e) Agriculture					
(f) Biology					
(g) Chichewa					
(I) History					
(J) Art					
(k) Integrated Science					
(l) Science & Tech					
(m) Life Skills					

3. Some subjects such as Mathematics, English, Physical Science, Biology and Chichewa require that you be given assignments at least after every lesson. Are you given assignments after every lesson as expected of the subject teachers? *(Tick as appropriate)*

Subject	Responses	
	Yes	No
(a) Biology		
(b) Chichewa		
(c) English		
(d) Mathematics		
(e) Physical Science		

4. If the answer to question (3) is 'yes' how long does it take for the teachers to correct your work? *(Tick as appropriate)*

Subject	Responses			
	A day	2 days	3 days	More than 3 days
(a) Biology				
(b) Chichewa				
(c) English				
(d) Mathematics				
(e) Physical Science				

5. Refer to question (4) on page 2. After correcting the work, how long does it take for the teacher to give you feedback? *(Tick as appropriate)*

Subject	Responses				
	No feedback	A day	2 days	3 days	More than 3 days
(a) Biology					
(b) Chichewa					
(c) English					
(d) Mathematics					
(e) Physical Science					

6. In some schools pupils learn few periods per day compared to what is on the school timetable. On average, how many periods do you actually learn per day at this school? *(Write in the box)*

7. Teachers are supposed to be present at the school for the full school day. During this period they are supposed to teach and assist pupils who have difficulties in some areas. Do your teachers at this school spend every school day working and assisting you in areas of difficulty? *(Tick as appropriate)*

Response	Code
(a) Never	1
(b) Sometimes	2
(c) Very often	3

8. How do you rate the style of teaching of your teachers? *(Tick as appropriate)*

Response	Code
(a) Very poor	1
(b) Poor	2
(c) Good	3
(d) Very good	4

9. How far away, in kilometers, is this CDSS from your home? *(Write in the box)*

10. During the last academic year, how long did it take for you to travel from your home to the school? (*Tick the appropriate option*)

<b>Response</b>	<b>Code</b>
(a) Less than 10 minutes	1
(b) Between 20 and 30 minutes	2
(c) More than 30 minutes	3

11. In the last academic year, what was your mode of transportation from home to school? (*Tick as appropriate*)

<b>Response</b>	<b>Code</b>
(a) Walking	1
(b) Bicycle	2
(c) Car	3
(d) Bus	4
(e) Other means (specify)	5

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE SMC

**Introduction:**

The purpose of this study is to find out the quality of education in CDSSs. The information that you are going to give will be valuable. It is not necessary for you to disclose your name. In any case, the information that you are going to give will be kept confidential. Please respond to each question carefully and honestly. Note that there is no right or wrong answer. Thank you for your participation in this study.

**Objective 8: To find out if the community participate in School management.**

1. Do you conduct meetings with members of staff at this school? *(Tick as appropriate)*

Response	Code
(a) Yes	1
(b) No	2

2. If the answer to question (1) is 'yes', how often do you have these meetings per term? *(Tick as appropriate)*

Response	Code
(a) Once a term	1
(b) Twice a term	2
(c) Three times a term	3
(d) Four times a term	4

3. If the answer to question (1) is 'no', can you give reasons why these meetings do not take place? *(Be specific please)*

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4. In some schools parents contribute money, materials or sometimes are involved in development work at the school. Do parents make any contribution to the school? (*Tick as appropriate*)

<b>Response</b>	<b>Code</b>
(a) Yes	1
(b) No	2

5. If the answer to question (4) above is 'yes', what contribution do parents and the community make to this school? (*Please be specific*)

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6. If the answer to question (4) above is 'no', can you give reasons why parents and the community do not contribute anything to the school? (*Please be specific*)

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7. Pupils' discipline at any school is very vital if meaningful teaching and learning is to take place. As parents around this school, what role do you play in maintaining good discipline at this school? (*Please be specific*)

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8. Apart from normal school management committee meetings, some schools in conjunction with parents organize what is called annual open day. Some people call it speech and prize day or consultation day. All parents are invited to attend such a meeting. For the past three years, has the school ever organized such a meeting? (*Tick as appropriate*)

<b>Response</b>	<b>Code</b>
(a) Yes	1
(b) No	2

9. If the answer to question (8) above is 'yes', have you found such gatherings (meetings) helpful? *(Tick as appropriate)*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Code</b>
(a) Yes	1
(b) No	2

10. If the answer to question (9) above is 'yes', can you give reasons why such gatherings are helpful? *(Please be specific)*

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APPENDIX E

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE EDUCATION METHODS ADVISORS**

**Introduction:**

The purpose of this study is to find out the quality of education in CDSSs. The information that you are going to give will be vital and valuable. You are free to disclose your name or not. In any case, the information you will give will be kept confidential. Note that this is not an assessment test and as such there is no right and wrong answer. So, respond to each question carefully and honestly. Thank you for taking part in this study.

***Objective 7: To find out more about the inspection and supervision visits.***

1. How many Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs) are there in Shire Highlands Education Division?

2. One of the services that the Education system is supposed to provide is the monitoring of quality in schools. How often are you supposed to visit each school per academic year? *(Tick as appropriate)*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Code</b>
(a) Once a year	1
(b) Twice a year	2
(c) Three times a year	3
(d) Four times a year	4

3. In the last academic year, on average, how many times did you actually visit each CDSS in this Education Division? *(Write in the appropriate column and use additional paper if required)*

Name of CDSS	Number of visits
(a)	
(b)	
(c)	
(d)	
(e)	
(f)	
(g)	
(h)	

4. How do you give feedback of your findings to the schools visited? *(Write the name of CDSS and tick the appropriate response. Use additional paper if required)*

Name of CDSS	Response				
	No feedback	Verbal	Written	Verbal & Written	Other (please specify)
(a)					
(b)					
(c)					
(d)					
(e)					
(f)					
(g)					
(h)					

5. From professional point of view, after giving feedback to the schools, there is need to make follow ups in order to find out if the recommendations contained in the reports are being implemented. Do you usually make follow-ups to the schools after giving them feedback? *(Tick as appropriate)*

Response	Code
(a) Yes	1
(b) No	2

6. If the answer to question (5) is 'yes', do you see any change in the weak areas you point out in your reports? *(Tick as appropriate)*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Code</b>
(a) Yes	1
(b) No	2

7. If the answer to question (5) is 'no', can you give reason(s) for failing to make follow-ups to the visited schools? *(Please be specific)*

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8. In general, what problems do you experience in carrying out your duties as the Education Methods Advisor? *(Please be specific)*

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APPENDIX F

**Appendix F1: Number of textbooks against enrolment in each form at CDSS Ar**

Subject area	Number of textbooks against enrolment in each form			
	Form 1 (48)*	Form 2 (49)	Form 3 (18)	Form 4 (20)
Mathematics	9	11	7	6
English language	11	3	6	9
English literature	-	7	-	3
Chichewa	13	15	9	11
Biology	7	2	7	9
History	15	9	8	5
Geography	18	21	4	6
Agriculture	-	10	6	14
Home Economics	5	7	3	6
Integrated Science	-	-	-	-
Science & Tech	-	-	-	-
Life Skills	-	-	-	-

\* Note: Figures in brackets represent enrolment in that form

**Appendix F2: Number of textbooks against enrolment in each form at CDSS Cr**

Subject area	Number of textbooks against enrolment in each form			
	Form 1 (40)*	Form 2 (32)	Form 3 (20)	Form 4 (2)
Mathematics	7	3	4	1
English Language	3	5	6	2
English Literature	-	-	3	2
Bible Knowledge	-	-	-	2
Chichewa	3	4	5	2
Chichewa Mabuku	-	-	4	5
Biology	-	4	1	2
History	5	6	-	15
Geography	2	1	7	11
Social Studies	1	2	1	-
Agriculture	2	2	-	3
Integrated Science	2	1	-	-
Science & Tech	-	-	3	1
Life Skills	-	-	9	9
Social & Dev.	-	-	5	1

\* Note: Figures in brackets represent enrolment in that form

**Appendix F3: Number of textbooks against enrolment in each form at CDSS Dr**

Subject area	Number of textbooks against enrolment in each form			
	Form 1 (43)*	Form 2 (26)	Form 3 (8)	Form 4 (10)
Mathematics	12	7	3	2
English Language	6	8	5	4
English Literature	-	-	-	-
R&M Education	5	8	-	-
Bible Knowledge	-	-	-	-
Chichewa	-	-	-	-
Biology	2	2	5	3
History	8	11	2	2
Geography	11	-	4	4
Social Studies	1	2	6	3
Agriculture	9	12	1	2
Integrated Science	7	5	7	1
Life Skills	-	-	-	-
Social & Dev.	-	-	-	-
Business Studies	-	-	1	1

\* Note: Figures in brackets represent enrolment in that form

**Appendix F4: Number of textbooks against enrolment in each form at CDSS Er**

Subject area	Number of textbooks against enrolment in each form			
	Form 1 (59)	Form 2 (27)	Form 3 (17)	Form 4 (14)
Mathematics	1	1	3	1
English Language	1	1	3	1
English Literature	-	3	-	6
Bible Knowledge	1	1	5	2
Chichewa	8	3	6	2
Biology	-	-	2	2
Geography	2	2	2	2
Social Studies	1	1	-	-
Agriculture	-	-	2	1
Integrate Science	2	1	-	-
Social & Dev.	-	-	2	1

\* Note: Figures in brackets represent enrolment in that form

**Appendix F5: Number of textbooks against enrolment in each form at CDSS Gr**

Subject area	Number of textbooks against enrolment in each form			
	Form 1 (69)*	Form 2 (70)	Form3 (58)	Form 4 (25)
Mathematics	13	15	7	8
English Language	17	14	15	11
English Literature	-	1	2	3
Bible Knowledge	-	-	4	11
Chichewa	15	11	12	7
Physical Science	11	9	-	-
Biology	3	3	5	5
History	-	9	6	7
Geography	9	3	4	4
Social Studies	2	3	7	3
Agriculture	7	6	7	3
Integrated Science	4	5	-	-
Life Skills	-	-	5	6
Social & Dev.	-	-	-	-
R&M Education	9	10	-	-

\* Note: Figures in brackets represent enrolment in that form

**Appendix F6: Number of textbooks against enrolment in each form at CDSS Bsu**

Subject area	Number of textbooks against enrolment in each form			
	Form 1 (95)*	Form 2 (99)	Form 3 (65)	Form 4 (33)
Mathematics	1	1	1	1
English Language	2	14	15	13
English Literature	-	6	-	9
Bible Knowledge	-	-	-	20
Physical Science	-	-	-	-
Biology	2	1	-	5
History	4	5	2	15
Geography	-	-	1	1
Social Studies	1	1	-	-
Agriculture	1	1	1	1
Social & Dev	-	-	11	-
Business Studies	-	-	1	-
Commerce	-	-	1	-

\* Note: Figures in brackets represent enrolment in that form



**Appendix F7: Number of textbooks against enrolment in each form at CDSS Hsu**

Subject area	Number of textbooks against enrolment in each form			
	Form 1 (133)*	Form 2 (144)	Form 3 (88)	Form 4 (81)
Mathematics	17	23	20	7
English	21	18	16	12
Bible Knowledge	-	-	-	20
Chichewa	19	22	21	11
Physical Science	11	12	15	10
Biology	5	14	11	6
History	4	17	17	14
Geography	15	20	13	15
Social Studies	8	19	19	10
Agriculture	8	20	4	3
Integrated Science	19	16	12	9
Life Skills	-	-	-	-
Social & Dev	-	-	-	-
R & M Education	-	-	-	-

\* Note: Figures in brackets represent enrolment in that form

**Appendix F8: Number of textbooks against enrolment in each form at CDSS Fsu**

Subject area	Number of textbooks against enrolment in each form			
	Form 1 (44)*	Form 2 (48)	Form 3 (31)	Form 4 (16)
Mathematics	44	42	39	34
English Language	110	114	41	14
Bible Knowledge	3	3	-	-
Chichewa	287	289	128	119
Physical Science	2	-	-	-
Biology	103	118	7	6
History	99	88	12	12
Geography	125	114	11	11
Social Studies	7	6	-	-
Agriculture	11	8	11	12
Integrated Science	11	10	-	-
Life Skills	-	-	5	5
Social & Dev	-	-	10	1
Business Studies	8	8	2	2

\* Note: Figures in brackets represent enrolment in that form

APPENDIX G

**Appendix G1: Availability of syllabuses**

Subject	CDSS							
	Ar	Bsu	Cr	Dr	Er	Fsu	Gr	Hsu
Agriculture	*	*			*			
Bible Knowledge								*
Biology	*	*			*	*	*	*
Business Studies							*	
Chichewa Grammar						*		*
Chichewa Literature						*		*
English Language		*	*		*	*	*	*
English Literature		*	*		*	*	*	*
Geography		*		*			*	
History		*						
Mathematics				*	*			*
Physical Education							*	
Physical Science								
Social & Dev. Studies	*							*
Science & Technology	*							*

**Appendix G2: Availability of teachers' guides**

Subject	CDSS							
	Ar	Bsu	Cr	Dr	Er	Fsu	Gr	Hsu
Agriculture		*		*	*			
Bible Knowledge	*					*		
Biology	*						*	*
Business Studies			*				*	
Chichewa Grammar		*		*		*		
Chichewa Literature								
English Language		*	*	*	*	*		*
English Literature			*		*			
Geography								
History							*	*
Life Skills				*			*	
Mathematics				*				*
Physical Education							*	*
Physical Science								
Social & Dev. Studies	*			*				
Science & Technology	*					*		*

\* Denotes availability of syllabus and teachers' guide

APPENDIX H

**PERMISSION LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR  
SECONDARY EDUCATION SECTION**

**FROM: UMASS-UPIC-ADA PROJECT, UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI,  
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE, FACULTY OF EDUCATION,  
P.O. BOX 756, ZOMBA.**

**TO: THE DIRECTOR,  
SECONDARY EDUCATION SECTION,  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY,  
P/BAG 328, LILONGWE.**

**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN COMMUNITY DAY  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MULANJE DISTRICT IN SHIRE HIGHLANDS  
EDUCATION DIVISION.**

I am a Master of Education student in Policy, Planning and Leadership at the University of Massachusetts, USA, and currently in Malawi to conduct a research for my thesis. My area of interest is on the quality of education in Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs). This is a project that is being supported by Ministry of Education, Science & Technology and USAID-Malawi.

The purpose of this letter, therefore, is to ask for your permission to use CDSSs in Mulanje district for my study.

If you have any questions you can contact me on 01466361/01466322 or contact the Senior Technical Advisor, Dr K. Ndlovu, on 01527331 or 08309424.

Your quick response on this issue will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

**HENRY GWEDE.**

April 2004

APPENDIX I

**PERMISSION LETTER TO  
THE EDUCATION DIVISION MANAGER**

**FROM : UMASS – UPIC – ADA PROJECT, UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI,  
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE, FACULTY OF EDUCATION,  
P.O. BOX 756, ZOMBA.**

**TO : THE EDUCATION DIVISION MANAGER,  
SHIRE HIGHLANDS EDUCATION DIVISION, P/BAG 7, MULANJE.**

**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN COMMUNITY DAY  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MULANJE DISTRICT.**

I am a Master of Education student in Policy, Planning and Leadership at the University of Massachusetts, USA, and currently in Malawi to conduct a research for my thesis. My area of interest is on the quality of education in Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs). This is a project that is being supported by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and USAID-Malawi.

The purpose of this letter, therefore, is to ask for your permission to use CDSSs in Mulanje district for my study.

If you have any questions you can contact me on 01466361/01466322 or contact the Senior Technical Advisor, Dr Ndlovu, on 01527331 or 08309474.

Your quick response will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

**HENRY GWEDE.**

April 2004

APPENDIX J

**A LETTER TO THE EDUCATION METHODS ADVISORS  
SHIRE HIGHLANDS EDUCATION DIVISION**

**FROM: UMASS-UPIC-ADA PROJECT, UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI,  
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE, FACULTY OF EDUCATION,  
P.O. BOX 756, ZOMBA.**

**TO: THE ADVISORY SECTION,  
SHIRE HIGHLANDS EDUCATION DIVISION,  
P/BAG 7, MULANJE.**

**RE: PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.**

I am a Master of Education student in Policy, Planning and Leadership at the University of Massachusetts, USA, and currently in Malawi to conduct a research for my thesis. My area of interest is on the quality of education in Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs). This is a project that is being supported by Ministry of Education, Science & Technology and USAID-Malawi.

The purpose of this letter, therefore, is to request you to participate in the study.

If you have any questions you can contact me on 01466361/01466322 or contact the Senior Technical Advisor, Dr K. Ndlovu, on 01527331 or 08309424.

Your quick response on this issue will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

**HENRY GWEDE.**

April 2004

APPENDIX K

**A LETTER TO THE HEAD TEACHER**

**FROM : UMASS – UPIC – ADA PROJECT, UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI,  
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE, FACULTY OF EDUCATION,  
P.O. BOX 756, ZOMBA.**

**TO : THE HEAD TEACHER,**

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**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL**

I am a Master of Education student in Policy, Planning, and Leadership at the University of Massachusetts, USA, and currently in Malawi to conduct a research for my thesis. My area of interest is on the quality of Education in Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs). The project is being supported by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and USAID-Malawi.

The purpose of this letter is to request you to participate in the study. Your school will be visited on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ for preliminary discussions and other logistics.

Selected teachers, pupils, and members of school management committee will also be asked to participate in the study.

If you have any questions you can contact me on 01466361/01466322.

Your participation in the study will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

**HENRY GWEDE.**

April 2004

