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Determining the Effectiveness of Retention Strategies for Female Teachers in Rural Primary Schools: The Case of Chikwawa

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at determining the effectiveness of Gender policy 50/50, ODL programs, Rural Allowances and Three-Year Bonding System as strategies put by Malawi government to retain female teachers in rural public primary schools. The study took place from May to August 2018 in the four zones namely Konzere, Msenjere, Kakoma and Kalambo in Chikwawa district. The total population of the study was 2010 while the sample size was 141. It involved the Teachers, Primary Education Advisors, District Education Manager of Chikwawa district, and Director of Planning in the Ministry of education headquarters. Data was collected using questionnaire, interviews and review of documents. The analysis has been done using Nvivo and content analysis. The study finds that Gender policy 50/50 campaign, Open Distance Learning (ODL) programs, Rural Allowances and Three-Year Bonding System have not achieved their objectives to retain in particular female teachers in the rural areas. Factors such as lack of basic needs (good houses, electricity, good water, hospital, banks, road and communication network), lack of funds for gender sensitization, low rural allowances, issues of following husband and corruption among some of the school authorities that employ ODL candidates from the cities who permit female teachers to move into town before bonding period ends, contributed to non-achievement of the retention strategies' objectives. The findings are of great importance to Malawi government so that it can apply the theories of Maslow - hierarchy of needs and Job Embeddedness theory by Mitchell for the female teachers to be retained in the rural areas and become role models to the girls who are struggling to finish school.

INTRODUCTION

The Malawi Government through the ministry of Education put in place policies such as Gender policy 50/50 campaign, ODL programs, Rural Allowances, Three year Bonding System among others as retention strategies for teachers to work and stay in the rural areas. But until now according to UNIRIN (2002) and UNICEF's report, Statistics done by Directorate of Education Planning, through Education Management Information System (2017), the HRM returns/reports dated January, 2017 to Chikwawa DEM, the retention of primary school teachers in the rural areas especially female teachers is a challenge. Therefore, this study aimed at determining the effectiveness of the retention strategies for female teachers working in rural public primary schools in Malawi, the case of Chikwawa district. To achieve this, the study looked at the extent to which each of the retention strategy's objectives were achieved, factors that contributed to the achievement or non-achievement of objectives of each retention strategy and challenges the Ministry of Education faces in implementing each of the retention strategies.

Problem Statement/Purpose of The Study

In many African countries, teachers prefer to teach in

urban areas, (Akyeampong and Lewin, 2002:346). As a result, rural schools may be left with empty posts, or have longer delays in filling posts. Even if positions are filled, rural schools may have fewer qualified teachers, if the better qualified teachers have a greater choice of jobs. Sometimes the rural schools have less experienced teachers, as the more experienced teachers find ways to move to the more desired schools, (Aidan Mulkeen, 2005). In sub-Saharan Africa, less than half of primary school teachers and only a quarter of secondary school teachers are women, and enrolment figures for girls are low. One common policy prescription is to increase the number of women teachers, especially in the many countries where teaching remains a predominantly male profession, (Haugen, C.S., Klees, S.J., Stromquist, N.P. *et al.* Int Rev Educ, 2014).

In Malawi the ideas of Haugen et al (2014) was implemented already years back such that Teacher Training Colleges are enrolling nearly 70% women and 30% men in order to increase the number of women teachers to go into rural areas and work as teachers. Malawi government produced a policy that any teacher or nurse or clinician or medical assistant trained either through public or private institutions must first of all serve in the village (rural areas) for not less than 3 years (quoted in the ETTC hand

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book 2014). Teachers sign these bonds as they start their training. Despite signing a bond, in Malawi the problem of retaining teachers and in particular female teachers in rural schools is still big. After completing their training especially female teachers, according to reports, they find their way out of the rural areas and leave the rural areas in desperate need of teachers, (Akyeampong and Lewin, 2002:346). According to the HRM returns/reports dated January, 2017 to Chikwawa DEM, it is evident that a full rural primary public school is managed by 4 qualified male teachers and one female teacher with an enrolment number of 934 pupils giving a Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) of 187 against the recommended PTR of 1: 60, (Chikwawa Primary school enrolment summary report for January, 2017). This does not mean that Ministry of education has not employed enough teachers. The challenge is not on the number of teachers that are employed by the ministry of education, rather is a challenge of retaining these teachers, especially female teachers to work in rural public primary schools despite policies that have been put in place as strategies to keep female teachers in schools. Research done in Malawi, according to UNIRIN (2002) and UNICEF's report, reveals that schools in Malawi have had fewer female teachers which is a threat to the education quality of a girl. However, on one hand, social role relationship that exists between a male and a female has been scrutinized by researchers as among the inherent nature and characteristics of teachers to leave teaching. Although, women were and are more likely than men to enter teaching as a number of studies have documented Guarino *et al.* (2004), numerous studies such as Adams; Allred and Smith, Grissmer and Hudson; Gritz and Theobald; Kirby; Stinebrickner; and Rees as cited by Guarino *et al.* (2004) on which teachers either male or female leave teaching most, have been conducted since 1980's and 1990's. In these numerous studies, women were found to have the highest attrition rates than men. Thus, family-related reasons, such as maternity or marriage, seem to be the most forecasters of teacher attrition.

To address the above challenges, governments like Malawi, came up with a number of retention strategies for female teachers for example Gender policy 50/50, Open Distance Learning (ODL) programs, Rural allowances, and Three-Year Bonding System. Therefore, this study aimed at determining the effectiveness of the retention strategies for female teachers to work in the rural public primary schools in Malawi- the case of Chikwawa district.

Main Objective

The main objective of the study was to determine the effectiveness of retention strategies for female teachers working in rural public primary schools.

Specific Objectives

The study intended to specifically:

- Examine the extent to which each of the retention strategy's objectives were achieved.
- Assess the factors that contributed to the achievement

or non-achievement of objectives of each retention strategy.

- Analyse challenges the Ministry of Education face in implementing each of the retention strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study determines the effectiveness of the retention strategies for female teacher working in rural schools in Malawi, the case of Chikwawa district. But let it be known that Theoretical framework on teacher retention strategies for female teachers working in rural public schools in developing countries is scarce. However certain psychological theories like Maslow's theory, Job Embeddedness theory, as introduced by Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, and Erez (2001), can offer relevant applications to the retention challenges in the developing countries like Malawi. Therefore, this section starts by defining key words like retention, strategies, female teachers, rural areas and rural public schools. Secondly it looks at Maslow's theory and Job Embeddedness theory by Mitchell et al. Thirdly it reveals the magnitude of the retention problem. Fourthly it shows the extent to which each of the retention strategies objectives has been achieved. Fifth it assesses the factors that contributed to the achievement or non-achievement of objectives of each retention strategies. Sixth analyses challenge the Ministry of Education faces in implementing each of the retention strategies.

Definitions

Retention is an effort by a business to maintain a working environment which supports current staff in remaining with the company. Many employee retention policies are aimed at addressing the various needs of employees to enhance their job satisfaction and reduce the substantial costs involved in hiring and training new staff, (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/employee-retention.html>).

Strategies are planned ways of doing something, or plan designed to achieve a particular long term aim. Female teachers in this context are women teachers that have been trained by both Government and Private Teacher Training Colleges but all have been employed by the Government to teach in the rural areas. Rural areas, in this context are areas that do not have electricity or shopping malls or those far from tar roads of which mobility of a teacher and others is a challenge. A rural public school in this context is defined as 'a government school that operates in a rural district and that has few staff members for example 3-6 permanent teachers and teaching groups, (Laukkanen *et al.* 1986, 9; Yrinsuuri 1990, 1; Kalaoja 1990, 7).

Maslow Theory

Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs suggest that individuals must fulfil their lower-order needs (basic needs such as housing and water, safety, belonging, and esteem) before moving to fulfil the higher-order need for self-actualization. In the context of teaching, self-

actualization can be understood as personal achievement, a key component of teacher attraction and retention. As basic needs often go neglected in the developing world, Maslow's theory is pertinent to an investigation of teacher retention in developing countries. While the fulfilment of basic needs is important to lay the foundation for teachers to desire to improve their professional behaviour and personal achievement, other theories indicate that satisfaction of basic needs in and of itself functions as a mere extrinsic, or external incentive. According to Benabou and Tirole (2000), extrinsic incentives are only weak reinforcers to attract and retain someone in the short run and negative reinforcers in the long run. Chapman et. al. (1993) argued that incentives are related to teacher job satisfaction, but not to teacher classroom practices. Thus, it appears that while teachers need housing, food, safety, belonging, etc. in order to be professionally attracted, the provision of these needs past a baseline requirement is not a sustainable driver of teacher retention. Instead, teachers need support that encourages their intrinsic, or internal motivation such as achievement, recognition, and career development. The relationship between, and relative effectiveness of, extrinsic versus intrinsic incentives is an important issue for teacher retention in the developing world where material resources to attract teachers through extrinsic means are often very scarce to begin with. Specific goals, teacher voice, and self-efficacy may be a further source of intrinsic motivation for teachers.

Job Embeddedness Theory

Job embeddedness refers to a relatively new construct that examines an individual's: Links to other people, teams, and groups. Perceptions of their fit with the job, organization, and community. Beliefs about what they would have to sacrifice if they left their jobs. Job embeddedness is defined as the on-the-job and off-the-job factors associated with individual links, fit, and sacrifice (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001:8-9).

Moreover, recent studies have shown that "86% of employers experience difficulty attracting new employees and 58% experience difficulty retaining their employees" (Ramlall, 2003:63). Job embeddedness theory (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, & Erez, 2001), an innovative and emerging research construct, offers a method of discovering why people stay in an organization. Understanding the relationships between job embeddedness and retention within the teachers in the Ministry of Education could assist administrators in formalizing policies and procedures which capitalize on the organizations strengths.

Links

Links are defined as "discernible connections between people and institutions" (Mitchell, *et al.*, 2001, p. 8) and are separated into two factors: organization links and community links. The more links to the workplace or community, in theory, the more highly embedded

individuals will become. Links can be social, psychological, or financial and associated with age, marital status, number of children and their ages, years of service, hobbies, church or religious-related activities, and/or membership in community or professional organizations. The authors acknowledge that the relative importance of each of the previously mentioned factors could differ by population. And there are inherent pressures to stay at one's present work. These pressures can come from family members, team members at work, or other people at work (Maertz, Stevens, Campion, & Fernandez, 1996). Alternatively, the lack of marital or parental responsibilities or the failure to develop meaningful work relationships could indicate that employees are less likely to stay with their present work situation.

Fit

Fit is defined as an "employee's perceived compatibility or comfort with an organization and with his/her environment", (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001:9) and also splits into two factors: fit organization and fit community. The closer one's personal views, values, and goals are aligned with those of the organization and/or community cultures, the "higher the likelihood that an employee will feel professionally and personally embedded" (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001:9). Tangible examples of organizational fit include "job knowledge, skills and abilities" (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001:9). Factors related to how individuals fit within the community include items such as weather, available and convenient access to outdoor activities and entertainment, community culture, and individuals (neighbours and non-work friends) who share similar political and religious views. It is important to note that how individuals perceive their fit within the community can be inversely related to how they perceive their fit within the organization. For example, an individual may love the community, but dislike working for the organization.

Sacrifice

Sacrifice is the third domain of job embeddedness. In the study, sacrifice refers to the "material" and "psychological" benefits that an employee would lose at any given time if he or she chose to leave the organization. Similar to the previous domains of embeddedness, sacrifice is separated into two factors: sacrifice organization and sacrifice community. The greater the sacrifice, the more difficult the decision to leave will be (Shaw, Delery, Jenkins, & Gupta, 1998).

Organizational sacrifices might include the loss of health and retirement benefits, sports tickets, co-worker relationships, educational benefits, advancement opportunities, convenience and proximity to the work location, and perhaps even a loss of security due to downsizing. Community sacrifices are usually only an issue only if relocation is required with a new position. In many cases, an individual's loss of community can represent too great a sacrifice, and thus the employee is embedded. Other examples of community sacrifice,

including the length of time and improvements in one's home or the ability to sell a home, convenience and proximity to the local amenities, community safety, and leadership positions in the community, often represent losses workers are unwilling to bear, even though links to the organization might be minimal.

In the absence of such motivating factors mentioned above it is believed that teachers can hardly be retained in rural areas. Studies by different researchers suggested the following reasons why teachers are hardly retained in the rural areas: One of the concerns about working in rural areas is that the quality of life may not be good enough. Teachers have expressed concerns about the quality of accommodation, (Akyeampong and Stephens, 2002:269-270), the classroom facilities, the school resources and access to leisure activities, (Towse *et al.*, 2002:645). Health concerns are a second major issue. Teachers may perceive that living in rural areas involves a greater risk of diseases, (Akyeampong and Stephens, 2002:269-270), and less access to healthcare, (Towse *et al.*, 2002:645). Teachers may also see rural areas as offering fewer opportunities for professional advancement. Urban areas offer easier access to further education, (Hedges, 2000). In addition, teachers in rural areas are less likely to have opportunities to engage other developmental activities, or in national consultation or representative organisations. Teachers in rural areas may even find it more difficult to secure their entitlements from regional educational administrations, sometimes to the extent of having to put up with obstacles or corruption by officials. In rural areas, the lack of medical facilities has made rural postings even less attractive to teachers, (Smith and Mc Donagh, 2003:35).

How Big Is The Retention Problem?

The retention of teachers is not simply a matter of teacher quality, it is also a concern of social justice in education provision, particularly the equitable distribution of teachers. Ironically, schools where teachers are most needed are often the ones that teachers actively avoid, such as schools in remote, rural, poor, conflict-and violence-affected, and ethnic minority areas (UNESCO 2014).

Research found out that, the problem to retain teachers vary from country to country. Some countries may face particular threats to teacher retention while other countries face different or no threats. For example, Michaelowa (2002) finds that in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Madagascar, and Senegal; more than 50% of fifth grade teachers seem to prefer teaching to any other place, and over 40% like their schools and do not want to change, indicating that teacher retention may not be so bad in those countries. Ethiopia, on the other hand, exhibits nearly all of the causes and symptoms of low teacher retention and attraction, as reported by the SCO and from a VSO report (How Much is a Good Teacher Worth? A Report on the Motivation and Morale of Teachers in Ethiopia n.d.).

Across the Global the retention of teachers, particularly

female teachers, in remote and rural schools is a problem, (Horner *et al.* 2015). A shortage in teacher supply or uneven deployment results in high pupil to teacher ratios (PTR) with consequences for the quality of pupils' participation, (Cooper & Alvarado 2006). In the public sector, at all levels of schooling there are far more male teachers as compared to female teachers especially in rural areas, (Durrani *et al.* 2017). In Pakistan the study shows that in Punjab, Sindh and Islamabad, the capital city, have a higher proportion of females. The regions with lower proportion of female teachers - FATA (28%), Balochistan (37%) and KP (42%) - are also the ones with wide gender gaps in educational participation rates, (NEMIS-AEPAM 2015). Elsewhere, Ali (2011:46) maintains that in Sindh 'at middle school level in rural areas the male teachers are almost 3.5 times more than female teachers, while in urban areas the number of female teachers is almost double [the number of] male teachers.

In Southern part of Africa the challenge of retaining female teachers is also a huge problem for example in Mozambique and Lesotho, 80% of female teachers teach in urban areas while only 20% teach and stay in rural areas, (Akyeampong and Lewin, 2002:346). The table 1 below shows the percentage of female teachers working in urban areas as compared to rural areas, a sign that retention of female teachers in rural areas is indeed a problem and therefore the strategies put in place must be re-examined and see its effectiveness.

In Malawi according to the Ministry of Education (2004), there was a big problem of teacher movement. In 2004 over 4,000 teachers, or 10% of the teacher population, transferred to another school. Most movement is initiated by the teachers themselves. Teachers who want to move may face long delays, but may eventually get to move where they want. Teachers who have a lot of influence, or who have pressing humanitarian reasons to move (such as marriage or illness), may be able to get redeployment to urban areas. In some cases, teachers have been able to get a transfer, even where there is no vacancy in the school to which they are moving. As a result, some urban schools are significantly over-staffed and teachers have relatively light workloads. As there is constant teacher-initiated movement, and no regular supply of new teachers, there is an oversupply of teachers in the desirable areas, and a shortage in the less desirable areas. In one extreme example, a school in Blantyre has 20 classrooms and 111 teachers, of whom 90 are female. It is acknowledged that the teacher deployment system is not functioning equitably, and teacher pupil ratios vary widely between urban and rural areas. While the rural areas average 77 pupils per teacher, the urban areas have an average of 44. Female teachers are highly over-represented in urban areas, possibly reflecting the ability to transfer on the grounds of husband's location. In urban areas 82% of the teachers are female, compared with only 31% of teachers in rural areas.

The problem of teacher retention in Malawi was fuelled much on the introduction of Free Primary Education as

part of achieving MDG3 'Education For All' globally. 'In 1994, four years after the World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand, Malawi introduced Free Primary Education (FPE) as a step towards achieving universal primary education. The Malawian public eagerly embraced FPE, and for good reason. Eliminating school fees, textbook costs, and uniform requirements would make a basic education within reach of many of Malawi's citizens who had previously been left out of the educational process. However, the strain that FPE put on the existing educational systems had a ripple effect that is still visible today. Following the implementation of FPE nationwide, enrolment increased from 1.9 million to 3.1 million. To maintain a teacher-to-pupil ratio of 1:60, there was a need for 22,797 teachers, 38,742 additional classrooms and 30,444 teacher houses, to say nothing of classroom materials and resources' (Chimombo, 2006). The FPE brought a big challenge not only in areas of infrastructure, learning and teaching resources but also human resources teachers who are the most needed especially in rural areas. According to the National Statistics office it has been observed that 'Malawi government has made provisions that for every 60 children there is a teacher allocated but, in most cases, you will find only one or two teachers sharing about 200 students in one classroom and dividing the subjects between them, (NSO 2014). This gives pressure to a teacher and as a result, to retain a teacher in such working condition becomes a challenge. According to Akyeampong and Lewin, (2002), in Malawi 82% of urban teachers are female, while in the rural, 31% of teachers are females. It is undebatable the fact that teachers are the most important resource at a school.

To What Extent Have The Retention Strategies Objectives Been Achieved

In view of the achievement of the retention strategies globally, Vegas and Umansky (2005), came up with suggested components of an effective system for retaining highly qualified teachers in rural areas especially female teachers: Adequate infrastructure and teaching materials - basic resources; Clarity in what is expected from teachers - what knowledge and skills teachers need to have, what behaviour and performance teachers should exhibit, what results, in terms of student learning, teachers are expected to accomplish; Clear transparent rules for teacher selection and purposeful assignment to schools - how teacher selection and assignment affects teaching and learning; Monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning - what knowledge and skills teachers have, what behaviour and performance teachers exhibit, what students are learning and at what rate they are making progress; Instructional leadership and professional development for supporting teacher professional communities - school administrators as instructional leaders, using information from teacher evaluation to develop professional development opportunities tailored for each teacher and teams of teachers, built in

time for teacher professional development and teacher collaboration; Professional autonomy and authority, (Craig, Kraft and DuPlessis 1997). Ingersoll (1995) says, 'teachers can use their best professional judgment in the classroom, school administrators have professional autonomy to provide teachers with support, in both material and technical resources, school administrators have authority to reward high performing teachers and penalize low-performing teachers'. Effective teacher incentives include adequate relative salaries, higher salaries for better-performing teachers, higher salaries for teachers working in disadvantaged areas, advancement opportunities throughout the teacher's career and recognition for excellent teachers, (Vegas and Umansky 2005).

These strategies as a way of minimizing problems to teacher retention outlined by Vegas and Umansky (2005) is very important because shortage of teachers could lead to issues of social justice such as high Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR), or a lack of female teachers especially in remote areas discourages girls to attend schools. Senior government officers in ELD-GoS (Ethiopia Local Development for Government Schools) confirmed that teacher retention was a problem but made contradictory statements about whether or not the teachers' home-district was taken into account: 'In far-flung areas, we have the challenge of teachers' appointment, especially in case of female teachers. If we get a local teacher, that is our good luck but it's not necessary...When we advertise in the newspapers, and the committee selects, it does not see whether a person belongs to that area or not. Also, it is not binding on the Department that the person from an area should be posted to that area. The policy of the Education Department is to accommodate local people... But in case there are no local people, then people from the surrounding districts are posted there...How can a female teacher go and come to the school...in a village, which is located in a very far-flung area with no hostel for teachers?' (Senior government officer in Ethiopia Local Development for Government Schools).

The above suggests that teacher retention was a problem, especially for female teachers to work in far-remote areas. Consequently, as soon as teachers were appointed to a school that was not of their preference, they applied to be transferred to another school. Bari *et al.* (2013, 108) from Punjab, reported that, 'in effect these teachers are absent from the school as they spend their energy and time in negotiating the bureaucratic process of getting their appointment transferred to other more "attractive schools"'. Indeed, the Senior Minister for Education in Sindh acknowledged the issue of teachers seeking transfers soon after their appointment. He asked teachers for making up their mind to serve for three years at the first place of posting and advised them not to indulge in applying any influence for transfer, (More teachers to be recruited', 2015). According to Halai and Durrani (2011), sometimes transfer of teachers is based on political grounds instead of data-based or needs-based.

In Malawi the retention problem has been addressed by coming up with policies like Gender policy 50/50 campaign, ODL programs, Rural Allowances, Bonding System/rules (Teaching in rural schools for not less than three years before being transferred to an urban school), (MoEST policy handbooks 2004) among others as retention strategies for female teachers to stay and teach in the rural areas. But until now according to UNIRIN (2002) and UNICEF's report, Statistics done by Directorate of Education Planning, through Education Management Information System (2017), and the HRM returns/reports dated January, 2017 to Chikwawa DEM, the retention of primary school teachers in the rural areas especially female teachers is still a challenge. This poses a question on whether government of Malawi through Ministry of Education has been able to retain teachers to work in rural public schools as per the policies put in place. That is why the study has unearthed the effectiveness of the strategies to the retention of teachers especially for female teachers to work and stay in the rural areas.

Challenges The Ministry of Education Faces In Implementing The Strategies That Address Retention Problems

Globally the retention strategies are facing a lot of challenges. Some of the challenges the education officials is facing is to find a workable balance between the two competing needs or goals like Teacher deployment system – where by ensuring instructional quality for having the right mix of well-qualified teachers in each school, and Provision of incentives - where by ensuring that teachers are working in school and community settings that are consistent with their values and interests, (Mulkeen *et al.* 2007).

Teacher Deployment System

The first competing need is 'teacher deployment systems. In Africa according to Aidan Mulkeen, in the African Region World Bank (2005) report, countries deal with the deployment in different ways, as illustrated by the cases of Mozambique, Lesotho and Malawi. In practice, two main systems exist, either deployment by a (i) central authority, or deployment by a (ii) market system, (Lewin, 2000:30). In Mozambique deployment is centrally planned, and it is done at provincial level. In Lesotho there is a market system in operation where schools are free to select their own teachers, and teachers select the schools to which they apply. While in Malawi deployment is controlled centrally. Local authorities just receive what the central government has done for them.

Central Authority of Deployment

In sub-Saharan Africa, centralized deployment has been a long-standing model in many countries, and is widely believed to allow rational deployment and retention of teachers, (Penrose, 1998). Central planning has the advantage of distance from local pressures, and can be more easily made fair and transparent. However, highly

centralized systems are dependent on the quality of information they receive from schools, and tend to suffer from congested decision making and inattention to the individual needs of education staff, (Gottelmann-Duret and Hogan, 1998; Rust and Dalin, 1990). The major weakness of the centralized systems is that they are often undermined in practice by an inability to implement rational deployment. Teachers may circumvent Ministry of Education's posting policy by claiming fictitious health problems, exploiting poor record keeping, and or just failing to take their assigned posting, (Hedges, 2000). Teachers who fail to take up a rural posting present a difficulty for policy makers. If they are later allowed to take up a desirable post, they undermine the posting system. If they are not, then the system loses the resource of a trained teacher. The inability to implement planned deployment has serious consequences. In Ghana, a recent survey of 262 newly trained teachers posted to four rural districts, showed that 115 failed to arrive at their teaching post. This widespread failure to accept rural posts undermines the rational posting system, (Hedges, 2000), and contributes to a lack of conviction among administrators that significant progress can be made in addressing patterns of unbalanced deployment, (Gottelmann-Duret *et al.*, 1998). Many countries have considered decentralizing the teacher hiring process to a local level. In many instances here in Africa, administrators operating at the local level are exposed to the pressure of influential personalities (who knows whom) in local communities, and it is not unusual to see their decisions being biased. Improved systems of 'checks and balances' are needed to ensure countrywide equity, justice and efficiency in teacher deployment which leads to teacher retention, (Gottelmann-Duret, 1998:43).

The Market System

In the market system, teachers are not sent to schools, but apply for posts in specific schools. This system removes the problem of retaining teachers at a local school. In effect, teachers deploy themselves by searching for jobs, hence a high chance for him/her to stay at the school. It gives each school more autonomy in selecting their teachers. Schools are more likely to select teachers who will accept the position and stay there long, and often they recruit local people. However, "market system has its effects. Its effect is that the most desirable teachers (best qualified), tend to get the most desirable jobs in urban areas. In Lesotho the practical effect of the market system is that most schools are able to fill their teaching posts, but that more of the teachers in isolated schools have lower qualifications.

The following are example of different deployment systems in three countries Mozambique Lesotho and Malawi as a way of retaining teachers: In Mozambique according to the Ministry of Education Mozambique, Annual School Survey (2004) teacher deployment as a way of retaining teachers in schools is done at provincial level, and each province trains, recruits and deploys its

own teachers, (Ministry of Education Mozambique, 2004). While in Lesotho have some very mountainous areas where travel is difficult, infrastructure is poor and the climate inhospitable. Given the dispersed population, schools in mountain areas are generally smaller than those in urban areas. Teacher deployment as a way of retaining them is based on local hiring of teachers. The Ministry “grants” teachers to schools in response to school population and budget considerations. Once the school is granted a post, the school management committee can select the teacher. Once the teacher is identified, the papers are sent to the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) for ratification, and ultimate payment of salaries by the government, (Mr. Mofota Phatela, District Resource Teacher, Qacha’s Nek 2005).

In Malawi the recruitment under Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) is done centrally, and the teachers are deployed to schools on the basis of needs. Candidates are not recruited for specific locations, and there no specific recruitment policies to select teachers for rural areas. There has been high demand for places in teacher training, and the entry qualifications have been rising. While under the MIITEP system, the deployment of teachers was done at the point of recruitment. The intention was to deploy teachers to the rural schools where the need was greatest. However, many teachers, particularly female teachers, found reasons to argue that they should not be sent to rural areas. For female teachers, they often made the argument based on marriage, (MoEST 2004).

Provision Of Incentives

The second competing need is the ‘provision of incentives’: Teacher housing is one of the most frequently used incentives to retain teachers into rural areas where suitable housing is not available for rent. The availability of safe housing is particularly important in encouraging female teachers to locate in rural areas. Additional incentives in the form of bonus payments or hardship allowances are often paid. However, as Mulkeen and Chen, (2008) note, the impact of financial incentives is often limited by the scale of the additional payment and poor targeting. To be effective, incentives need to be: (a) significant in scale (i.e. need to be substantial enough to outweigh the social and economic costs for living in an isolated area); (b) carefully targeted in remote schools (i.e. requires a fair system of classifying schools. General classifications of schools may provide bonuses to teachers working in small towns while doing relatively little to increase supply of teachers in the most isolated schools), (c) tied to staff remaining in that hardship post (i.e. if the person leaves the post, then the allowance would discontinue), (Mulkeen and Chen, 2008). In Malawi a good number of teachers get transferred to another school due to lack of housing and poor conditions of other amenities. Catheline M. Moleni and Lexon J C Ndalama (2004) said in their book that, ‘For remote rural schools a lack of adequate housing and poor access to other amenities increases the likelihood of teachers at these schools requesting transfers and makes it

more difficult to deploy and retain replacement teachers.’ (Catheline *et al.*, 2004).

Mechanisms Or Ways To Minimise Problems To Retention of Teachers

Researchers have come up with three ways of minimizing problem to teacher retention as follows (i) Providing Incentives for teachers locating in rural areas – Financially and materially, (Gaynor, 1998:17; Craig, Kraft & Plessis, 1998) (ii) Forced deployment of teachers – eg; through signing a three year bond, (Gottelmann-Duret *et al.*, 1998:39) (iii) Targeted recruitment- eg; through ODL in Malawi {Open Distance Learning} (Craig, Kraft and Plessis, 1998).

Providing Incentives

Providing Incentives for teachers locating in rural areas is another way to retain teachers in the rural areas and can be first in Financial and or secondly in Material form:

Firstly, financial assistance is an incentive that can be given to a teacher working in the rural area. According to the report of the study of the problem of Primary School Teacher attrition with special focus on Early Retirement, Resignation and Abscondment of Teachers from the Teaching Service (2004), it was discovered that incentives is one of the strategies to retain especially female teachers working in rural areas. Indeed, some countries have attempted to make working in rural areas more attractive through the use of incentives. In some cases, these may be financial incentives, in the form of a hardship allowance, travel allowance, or subsidized housing. In other areas the incentives may be non-monetary, including, for example, special study leaves or better training opportunities, (Gaynor, 1998:17; Craig, Kraft & Plessis, 1998). In other countries like Mozambique, there is a system of financial bonuses for teachers who locate in rural areas. Schools are classified into four location categories, ranging from urban schools to the most isolated schools, and teachers are paid a salary bonus depending on the location of the school. Although the bonus payments appear attractive, they are weakened by two factors: First, the payment depends on both location and on teacher qualification. For the teachers with low qualifications (the bulk of primary teachers) there is no bonus at all. For teachers with a mid-level qualification (N3, IMAP qualification), the difference between teaching in a provincial town and a remote school is relatively small (only 14% of salary). Second, teachers who teach two shifts receive a bonus of 60% of their basic salary. Two shift schools are found more frequently in the areas of a high population density, and so teachers in towns and cities are more likely to have the option of additional earnings from this source. As one Director in Teaching explained, even the cost of travel to collect the monthly cheque, and the cost of commodities, especially fuel, could outweigh the value of this bonus. In addition, the hardship allowance is determined by very general classifications of schools. Teachers in remote rural schools in the lowlands do not receive the allowance,

while teachers in towns in mountain districts do.

In Malawi the teachers are paid what is called rural hardship allowances. It was to the maximum of K10,000 for everyone who is located in the rural areas. Recently the Malawi government through Ministry of Education has classified the rural areas into three or four areas. Those teaching in cities have no allowances; those teaching in the rural training centre receives K10,000; those teaching along tarmac roads gets K15,000; and those a bit far from the tarmac roads or trading centres receive K20,000; while those in the remotest areas gets K25,000 (Blantyre rural DEM, May 2017).

These cases highlight two general lessons concerning the use of incentives. First, the incentives need to be substantial to outweigh the social and economic costs of living in an isolated area. Second, incentive systems require a fair system of classification of schools. General classifications may provide bonuses to teachers working in small towns, while doing relatively little to increase the teacher supply in the most isolated schools. Finally, incentive schemes can be outweighed by counter-incentives from urban schools.

Secondly material incentives for teachers working in rural areas are a major thing. Such material incentives can be in the form of a good house for a teacher. Where teachers cannot live near the school, they are likely to spend a lot of time traveling, often to the detriment of their school work. Housing is particularly important for female teachers. The EMIS data reveals a strong association between the availability of housing in an area and the presence of female teachers in the school. Similarly in Uganda, a recent study on primary school teachers' attrition considered provision of housing to be a key factor in ensuring teacher retention especially in rural areas. Currently 15% of the School Facilities Grants (SFG. In Malawi the house for a teacher is a challenge. Most of the time you will find one or two good houses at a school. Most of the teachers rent houses from other landlords. Such houses are not well maintained, no private bathrooms and toilets and mostly they are grass roofed houses and very prone to leaking during rainy season.

Forced Deployment

Forced deployment of teachers, like a three-year bond signing, is another way to keep teachers in rural schools at least for a period of time. Gottlemann said that there have been attempts to address the issue retention, by forcing teachers to relocate to rural areas, (Gottlemann-Duret *et al.*, 1998:39). While this strategy has little financial cost, it may damage teacher morale and lead to a high turnover of staff. In South Africa, an effort to force the redeployment of teachers to poorer, rural areas was unsuccessful. South Africa's predominately female teaching force was not mobile enough to respond to school staffing needs. When strongly encouraged to relocate, large numbers of key science and math teachers left teaching, (Garson, 1998). As a consequence, there was a significant drop in the number of school leavers

choosing to apply to teacher training colleges because teaching was seen as an embattled profession, "where one is likely to be redeployed or moved," (Samuel, 2002:408-9). In some countries, such as Zambia, forced relocation to rural areas is sometimes used as a punishment for teachers who misbehave. While this has a certain sense of natural justice, it runs the risk of locating the teachers who have caused trouble in the schools that are furthest from supervision, (VSO, 2002:30). Some countries have used models where deployment to rural areas is related to career progression. Typically, these require that newly trained teachers work for a number of years in a rural area, or that teachers seeking promotion work for a period in a rural area, (Gottlemann-Duret *et al.*, 1998:39). Successful implementation of such systems depends on careful management. Even if successful, this would result in a concentration of the least experienced teachers in the rural areas. There is some evidence that young, newly qualified teachers have more difficulties in rural areas, and achieve poorer results, (Daun, 1997). Despite these difficulties, systems where a defined period in a rural area is required may be an effective strategy for getting qualified teachers in rural schools. Teachers may be more likely to accept a rural post if they see it as temporary, and as a path to a more desirable job.

In Malawi every student teacher must sign a bond which binds a graduate teacher to go into the rural area for not less than three years before seeking for any transfer to urban areas, (ETTC policy hand book 2004). However DEMs are finding challenges when it comes to women. Often time female teachers would want to be transferred quickly on the bases of following husbands, (Blantyre DEM, May 2017). However deployment in one sense is by force through the central office even though soon they will opt for decentralization where DCs will have the powers to hire and fire a teacher.

Targeted Recruitment

Targeted recruitment like ODL program in Malawi is another way of retaining teachers in rural areas. An alternative strategy may be to seek to recruit student teachers from within each region, in the hope that personal history and family connections will entice them to return to teach in their home area after they attain their teacher certification. The presumption is that those individuals will have family roots in these rural areas and be more willing to return and remain in these rural settings, (Craig, Kraft and Plessis, 1998). One of the attractions of this approach is that if teachers become established within their own community, they may gain extra benefits from the proximity of relatives, which may help to ensure long term stability. Working close to ones' extended family may provide some level of financial support and subsidy, (Black, Esanu, Mugambe, Namwadda, Walugembe, 1999). However, some countries in Africa, report that teachers do not want to work in their own village, because there may be too many demands on them from family. Some people from rural areas would

prefer to be in their home district, but not actually in their home village. It should be noted that the assumption that teachers recruited from a rural area would want to return to their own communities has been challenged by a number of researchers, (Rust and Dalin, 1990; Azam, 2001). Educated members of a disadvantaged minority group may view their education as a means of social mobility, and may have no desire to remain in the community once qualified, (Azam, 2001). In Lesotho, for example, it was reported that “it is hard to retain teachers into rural areas, as the conditions are difficult...Young people, even those from rural areas, want to come down from the highlands as soon as they can. Even those who come on study leave, try hard to stay in Maseru”. The targeted recruitment strategy is most frequently used to recruit teachers from specific geographical regions or ethnic-linguistic groups. However, it may also be possible to focus teacher recruitment on teachers from particular socio-economic backgrounds. Hedges (2002:360) raises an interesting possibility in reporting that teachers from poorer backgrounds were more likely to value the relative security of the teaching profession and take up their postings. However, this strategy often involves a trade-off between entry qualifications for rural roots, (Lewin, 2002). If it is necessary to adjust the teacher recruitment system to favour teachers from a particular area, and if the system was a merit based system, then the adjustment entails recruiting teacher of lower quality than before.

In Malawi ODL (Open Distance Program) was introduced as a way to retain teachers in the rural areas. Principal Education Advisors (PEA) together with local authorities were responsible to identify the candidates. According to Blantyre rural DEM, the system started very well but in the long run PEAs and Head teachers were taking candidates who are job seekers in town and recruit them as though they are coming from the village where vacancies are available. Chiefs were heavily bribed. Now the system has lost its direction. These job seekers from town, once they qualify as teachers would come to the DEMs office in tears asking to be redeployed to a semi urban school.

Guided by the theoretical framework and research done by scholars in various places, Malawi seems to still experiencing problems as far as retaining female primary school teachers in rural public school is concerned. In 2004 Blantyre alone 63.9% female teachers got transferred to urban and semi urban schools as compared to 7.7 male based on following husbands. And 10.8% of these female transfers were based on lack of housing and poor school location, (Catherine M. Molen and Lexon J.C Ndalama 2004). Therefore, it is the purpose of this study to determine the effectiveness of the retention strategies for female teachers in rural public schools in Malawi, the case of Blantyre district

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This section presents how the research was conducted. In particular, it spells out study design, study population,

sample and sampling methods, data collection methods, data analysis methods, ethical considerations, study limitations and validity.

Study Design

The study has been for a hybrid - a combination of both qualitative and quantitative approach research. The qualitative research involved the interview and historical documents. These describes routine moments and meanings in the individual lives (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:2). In addition, the qualitative methods focused primarily on the kind of evidence (what people told the researcher, what they did) that enabled the researcher to understand what is going on. While Quantitative methods emphasized objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected by using administered questionnaire to the teachers purposively selected. The interviews were conducted to the Director of Planning in the Ministry of Education, DEM, PEAs and Head teachers.

Study Population

The study involved 2010 (1343 male 667 female) employees in the teaching profession in Chikwawa. In addition, the PEAs, Chikwawa DEM, Director of Planning in the Ministry of Education were also involved. In a sample four zones namely Kakoma zone, Konzere, Chapananga and Msenjere zones were selected. In addition, the available documents in the ministry of education have been reviewed to touch base objectives of each strategy.

Sample Population

From the population of 2010, the study sample of 141 participants have been used as guided by Patton's theory of sample size. According to Patton (1987:163), if the sample population is more than one thousand, then 7% of such population should take part in the study in order to achieve a 95% confidence level for purposes of generalization. The 7% is composed of teachers, Head teachers, PEAs, Coordinating PEAs and DEM who are in the teaching professional. And the administered questionnaire was given to all teachers while interactive interviews were conducted to Head teachers, Primary Education Advisors, the District Education Manager and the Director from the headquarters.

Sampling Method

The study used purposive sampling technique as such the researcher was enabled to use his judgment in selecting cases with specific purpose in mind. There are two justifications that had compelled the researcher to use this technique as supported by Neuman (2007:143). Firstly, purposive sampling is used to select unique cases that are especially deemed informative. Secondly, purposive sampling helps to identify particular cases for in-depth investigation. As directed by the objective of this study, the researcher benefited a lot in using purposive sampling

because there was autonomy to choose a case that was aligned to the purpose of this study. This is also echoed by Berg (2001:32) who argues that researchers who employ purposive sampling use their special knowledge or expertise about some group to select subjects from that presents the target population. The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposive sampling, (Patton 1990:169).

This technique helped the researcher to incorporate all teachers, Head teachers and PEAs in the zones which the study took place. It also includes the DEM and Director of Primary Education in the Ministry of Education that had rich information concerning the study. Thus, purpose sampling was useful in this study as it covered views from the teachers themselves who are in the rural areas.

Data Collection Methods

This study used both Primary Data and Secondary Data. Primary data was in the form of Administered Questionnaire and Interactive Interview. While Secondary Data was a review of available documents.

The Questionnaire was targeted and administered to 110 primary school teachers to both male and female teachers in the selected rural Primary Schools in Chikwawa district including their PEAs. While HRM, DEM and Director of planning were interviewed. The reason why Questionnaire in general was used is that it is a doubtless one of the primary sources of obtaining data in any research endeavour on top of the following advantages as has been put down by Seliger & Shohamy (1989), Robinson, (1991) Lynch (1996), Nunan (1999), Gillham (2000), Brown (2001), that questionnaires are one of the efficient means of collecting data on a large-scale basis.

- They can be sent simultaneously to a great number of people.
- The inquirer can fairly easily gather data in field sites.
- Respondents anonymity makes them to share information more easily.
- They are a time-efficient way of collecting data from many people.
- They are cost-efficient.

On the other hand, questionnaires have some disadvantages which should be kept in mind whenever they are used as Gillham, (2000) and Brown, (2001) say: 'Sometimes the answers are inaccurate and questionable.

- There is usually low return rate when sent by post or email.
- Ambiguity and unclearness of some questions might lead to inaccurate and unrelated responses.
- Some questions may cause misunderstanding.
- Wording of the questions might affect the respondents' responses.'

Therefore, the best the researcher did when designing a questionnaire, according to Richman, is to ensure that it is "valid, reliable and unambiguous" (Richards & Schmidt, 2002:438). The study also used the Interactive Interview, targeting Director of Planning in the Ministry of Education and District Education Manager and his or her Human Resource Manager, Coordinating PEA, in

the same Chikwawa district. The interactive interview is essential because it caters for areas that need immediate clarification. For example, where the question is or response from either party appeared to be ambiguous, confusing, and vague, as discussed above, there is an instant opportunity to rectify the situation, (Neuman 2007:143). With interactive interview the researcher was able to solicit factors that lead to the effectiveness of retention strategies in the teaching profession.

Available documents within the ministry of education were used in order to get evidence of what had happen on the ground. Such document was obtained from the monthly reports by the PEAs to the DEM, HR reports on personnel movements and from the office of Director of planning in the headquarters of Ministry of Education and in Teacher Training Colleges. The researcher also reviewed other reports from NGOs like VSO, UNIRIN (2002), UNICEF's report and other research findings like Statistics done by Directorate of Education Planning, through Education Management Information System (2017). The use of such documents has been so important because unlike speeches, documents exist independently beyond the writer and beyond the context of its production, (Jary & Jary 1991).

Data Analysis

Since the study is a hybrid of qualitative and quantitative, the Data Analysis done using Nvivo software and content analysis and Statistical software using factor analysis approach. Nvivo is a qualitative data analysis software package that allows users to import, sort and analyse rich text and plain text documents, audio files, spread sheets, databases, digital photos, documents, portable document formats, bibliographical data, web pages and social media data. It does not do the intellectual thinking, rather it helps to organize data. Nvivo is a retrieved, code and theory building tool, (Jones 2007:13). It allows users to replicate all of the abilities of the 'paper and pen' system into the software and much more. The software utilizes rich text which allows integrated emphasis through colour, font and character style, (DeNardo and Levers 2002:8). Once imported, text can continue to be emphasized through the internal rich text editor for the manipulation of colour, font and character style, (Blismas and Dainty 2003:460). While the Statistical software is a quantitative data analysis procedure that uses SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science). In this regard Factor analysis approach was used.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues during the data collections were taken care of. Rights of those involved in the research were observed; permission from the Head teachers PEAs and DEMs were granted before collecting the Data. Participants in the study were accorded total confidentiality by instructing them not to indorse their names on the questionnaire nor any document used. After the collection of data, no name shall be published. The researcher of this study respected

the time that was spent voluntarily to this study.

Limitations

The researcher faced with some limitations to the study like finding the updated figures for a number of female and male teachers in a particular area from the DEMs office. Another limitation was to get those that have moved from villages to urban to explain freely why they chose to move out of rural schools. Those the researcher managed to find explained in short answers 'Follow husband' because that's what she told the DEM for her to be transferred, mean while there are more reasons than just following husbands.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section contains the findings of the study and discussions. In the first place the chapter presents the demographic features of the study area and participants. Secondly it unearths the extent to which the retention strategies - 50:50 campaign for gender equality, ODL program, Rural allowance and Three years bonding – objectives have been achieved as far as retaining female teachers in rural areas is concerned. Thirdly it identifies the factors that contributed to the achievement or non-achievement of objectives of each retention strategies. Fourthly it analyses challenges the Ministry of Education

faces in implementing each of the retention strategies and a conclusion is drawn.

Demographic Features of The Study Area And Participants

Chikwawa is a district in the Southern Region of Malawi. The capital is Chikwawa. The district covers an area of 4,755 km.² and has a population of 434,648. It has 195 primary schools (145 Public, 18 Private and 32 Mission). It has an enrolment of 169,938 (86679 boys and 83,259 girls) as of 2016/17 June in Primary schools. It has 2010 (667 F and 1343 M) Primary school teachers. Below are their qualifications, (Annual Education Statistics, 2017). The study also categorised the 113 participants in the following: Age range, Academic qualification, Profession certificate / position, Years of stay at one working place, and Gender. Firstly, in terms of age the following different ages participated in the study: 28 teachers 18-28 years old participated representing 24.77 %. Of the age between 29-39, 63 participated representing 55.75%. While 19 of the age between 40-50 participated representing 16.81%. Of the age between 51-61 also participated to a tune of 2, representing 2.65% and those above 61, none participated representing 0%. Table 1 below, summarises age range of the participants.

Secondly in terms of Academic qualifications the study

Table 1: Age ranges of the participants

Age range	Frequency	Percentage
18 to 28	28	24.77
29 to 39	63	55.75
40 to 50	19	16.81
51 to 61	3	2.65
	113	99.98
		100%

assumed the highest as being Doctor of Philosophy (PHD) while the lowest being Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE). The study results show that, there is no participant who possessed PHD representing 0%. The study had one at Master's degree representing 0.88%. The study had 2 participants with Bachelor's degree

representing 1.76% and 2 participants with diploma representing 1.76%. A large number of MSCE holders participated representing 95.57%. See Table 2 below for academic qualifications:

Thirdly in terms of professional certificates and positions

Table 2: Academic qualification

Academic qualification	Frequency	Percentage
MSCE	108	95.57
Diploma	2	1.76
Degree	2	1.76
Masters	1	0.88
PHD	0	0
	113	99.98
		100%

participated were as follows: At PT4 were 103 representing 91.15%. While at PT3 were 6 representing 5.3%. At

PT2 there was 1 representing 0.88% participation and at PT1 and P8 none participated. Other positions that

participated were Human Resources Manager at District level, District Education Manager and Director of Planning at the Headquarters each representing a 0.88%.

Table 3 describes it briefly.

The fourth classification is about the length of service at one place: Those who have been in service for 0-3 years

Table 3: Professional Certificates / Position

Professional Certificates / Position	Frequency	Percentage
PT4	103	91.15
PT3	6	5.30
PT2	1	0.88
PT1	0	0
P8	0	0
HMR	1	0.88
DEM	1	0.88
Director	1	0.88
	113	99.98
		100%

were 70 representing 61.94%; and those of 4-7 years of service were 30 representing 26.54%. From 8 and above years of service at one place were 13 representing 11 %. The diagram 1 below shows the number of years participants stayed at one working place.

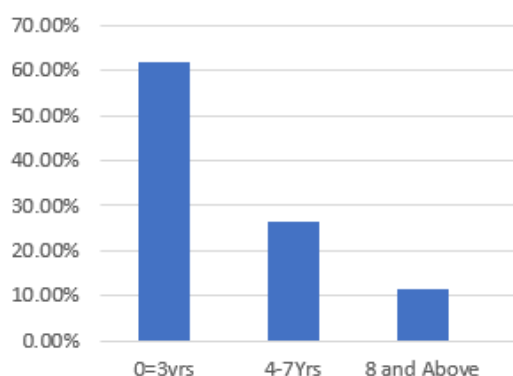


Figure 1: Showing number of years participants stayed at one working place

To What Extent Have The Retention Strategies Objectives Been Achieved?

This section looks at the some of the policies that Malawi Government put in place as strategies to retain teachers in the rural areas on whether they have been achieved or not. Such policies are 50:50 Campaign on Gender equality, ODL program, Rural Allowance, Three years bonding system.

First of all, the researcher wanted to touch base where exactly if given a chance would a primary school teacher both male and female like to be teaching. Is it in the Urban or Rural and Why? In summary it has been discovered that many male teachers would like to be in rural areas for rural allowances as the main reason. One of them said, 'though K10,000 is small it is better than none. It helps us to pay rentals in the villages.' While the majority of women would like to be in towns for the availability of

The fifth classification is about Gender. The study was participated by 24 women representing 21.23%, while 89 men participated representing 78.76% see the diagram 2 below.

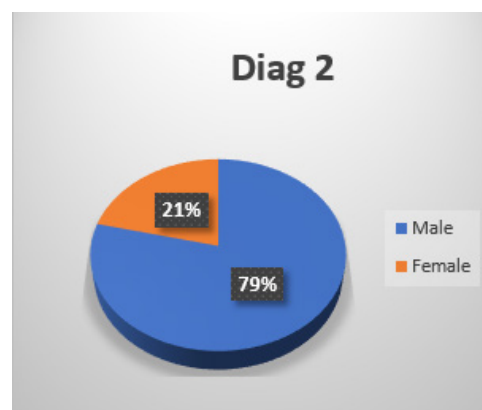


Figure 2: Showing in percentage the number of men versus women participated in the study.

basic needs among others as one says, 'here in the village there is no electricity where you can charge phone or go to hair saloon'. Below is table 4 that shows the frequency between men and women, where they would like to be teaching and their reasons.

Reasons Why Some Teachers Would Like To Be In Urban Schools

The first and foremost reasons why teachers especially females move away into urbans is because in urban basic needs are available. Such basic needs are good houses, electricity, good water, hospitals, communication network, markets, banks, good transportation. The researcher found that 85% of the participants would like to be in urban areas for the availability of basic needs. This is in line with Maslow's (1943) theory of hierarchy of needs who suggested that individuals must fulfil their lower-order needs first such as housing, water, safety, belonging,

Table 4: Showing percentage of where teachers like to be teaching

Where do teachers like to teach	M	F	Frequency	Percentage
Urban	33	12	45	40.7
Rural	51	6	57	52.03
Both	5	3	8	7.23
	89	21	110	99.96
				100%

Note: The HRM, DEM and Director for planning are not included in the table above.

and esteem, before moving to fulfil the higher-order need for self-actualization, (Maslow, 1943). And Smith and

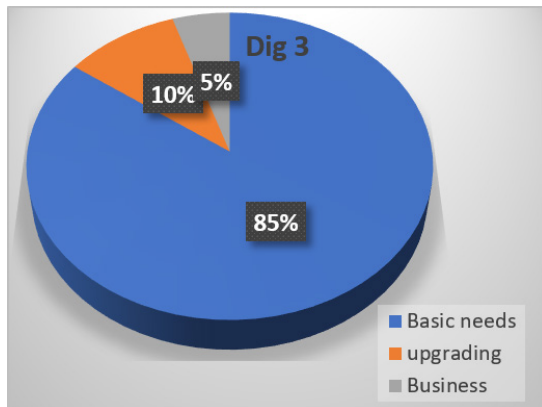


Figure 3: Showing reasons for being in Urban

Mc Donagh (2003) confirm that, ‘in rural areas, the lack of medical facilities has made rural postings even less attractive to teachers, (Smith and Mc Donagh, 2003:35). While 10% of the participants would like to be in urban for upgrading as one teacher said, ‘here in the village there is no college or university where one can do upgrading on the week-end or evening classes. Hedges (200) also discovered that teachers may also see rural areas as offering fewer opportunities for professional advancement. Urban areas offer easier access to further education, (Hedges, 2000). This is in line with Haziels motivation theory that suggest that employees in this case teachers need support that encourage their intrinsic, or internal motivation; such as achievement, recognition, and career development, (Heziel, 2000). The last few teachers -5% of the participants- move into urban for business opportunities to boost up their income levels. One teacher said, ‘here in the rural my wife can’t do any business because most businesses require electricity’.

Reasons Why Some Teachers Would Like To Be In Rural Schools

Much as rural setting is very difficult to live in especially to female teachers, still men have easily adopted to such a village life. 50% of the teachers interviewed have liked the village life because of the rural allowance. As discussed above though the allowance is small – K10,000 - but teachers are able to pay rentals using this money. 40% of them say that life in the village is a simple. One

said in the interview that, in the village you don’t buy water, nor firewood, vegetables are cheap and with two pairs of shirts and trousers one can live without worries. In other words there is no competition in dressing unlike in the urban. While 10% in which the majority are women like to be in rural area because they are married there or they grew up in this village. Five female teachers who were interviewed said that they are found in the village because their husbands work in the area. Some are health workers, some fellow teachers, some are forests guards etc. Therefore to them they don’t have a choice but to adopt the village life and at the same time accept their role as role models to girls.

Despite that a good number of percentage like to teach in rural areas especially men because of rural allowance as the main reason, the researcher has discovered that the majority of female teachers like to be teaching in urban areas. Table 6 above shows that 12 out of 21 female teachers representing 57.14% like to be in urban while 6, representing 28.57% like to be in rural and 3 representing 14.28% says can teach anywhere. The findings further revealed that 80 percent of the female teachers that have liked to be in rural are those that are married in the area while the 20% are singles who grew up and educated in the village. This has a benefit, as suggested by Black et al

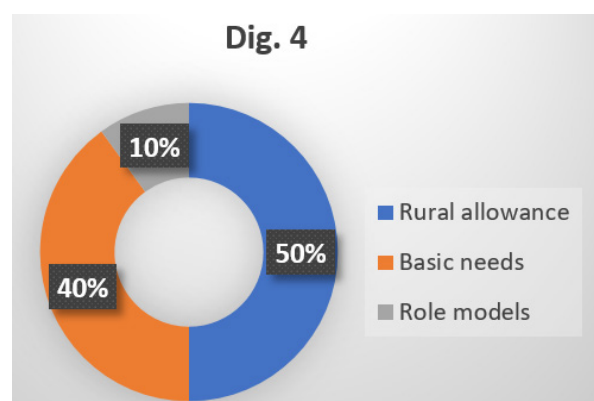


Figure 4: Showing reasons why some teachers like to be in rural schools

(1999), who said, ‘working close to ones’ extended family may provide some level of financial support and subsidy’, (Black, Esanu, Mugambe, Namwanda, Walugembe, 1999). In general, all teachers fight for the provision of basic needs like: Teachers houses, hospitals, good water,

electricity, teaching and learning resources, school blocks, television, good roads, and communication networks, for easy transportation. In the absence of such things most seek refuge into towns or semi urbans.

Without the above basic needs, the researcher has also discovered that teachers are heavily affected as one of the participants puts it, 'It affects my duty because life is very hard and difficult to achieve my goals'. Below are some of the ways teachers are affected:

Firstly, teaching services are not delivered to learners as it should be as the environment is not conducive and most of the times a teacher is disturbed mentally thereby causing some health problem. One teacher said, 'when my wife or child gets sick and I don't know where to get medication, I become mentally disturbed and I don't teach well in class'. Secondly as teachers reside far from schools, it causes tiredness, absenteeism and late coming to school. This has been confirmed by many teachers because where most of them work there are no houses for rentals. Houses are found at a trading centre far from the school. One lady teacher said, 'I come to school Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays because once I get back home after my work at school am finished and I cannot make it for the next day'. Thirdly lack of electricity fails a teacher to prepare. This leads to failure in delivering the lessons as somebody said, 'failing to prepare you are preparing to fail'. In the end it increases absenteeism and eventually drop outs among learners.

Finally, the following are the findings on whether the strategies or policies put by Malawi government have achieved its objectives or not.

50:50 Campaign Gender Equality

Education and gender equality are intertwined: not only is education a critical path to gender equality and women's empowerment, but gender equality and women's empowerment are critical pathways for girls' education, (Ruth Kagia at a World Bank Symposium, 2007). Therefore 50:50 Campaign Gender equality is a tool used to bring equality between men and women in employment, decision making positions etc. For a woman to be equal to a man in employment, decision making positions among others, it is a requirement that women have to be educated. For a society to have an educated woman, governments must focus on the girl child. This girl child can only be motivated to go to school and finish if she has a role model. The closest role model she can have is her teacher.

Much has been done to increase gender equality in education over the past 15 years. National governments and the international community have followed through on promises made in various international forums to increase investments in girls' education. In overall female enrolment at the primary level in low-income countries has accordingly grown from 87 percent in 1990 to 94 percent in 2004, considerably shrinking the gender gap. Therefore, the Malawi government in order to fulfil its promises at international levels, brought in the 50:50

campaign into Teacher Training Colleges so that after the lady teachers have finished their training can go into a rural school and become role models to a girl child who would later be empowered, employed and put in decision making positions. This is in line with UN Millennium Declaration, September 2000 GOALS which among others is to: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability, and develop a global partnership for development among others, (Millennium Development Goals, 2000).

The gender equality is also an approach by Women in development (WID) which highlights among other things, an instrumental approach to girls' education. It harks back to its beginnings in the 1970s when there was a concern to bring women into development planning in order to improve the efficiency of projects and programmes, (Women in Development, 1970). Therefore, through girls and women's participation in formal education which raises literacy rates and their learning about health, nutrition and contraception among other things they could contribute to wider societal and economic development (King and Hill, 1993; World Bank, 1995). Today this has been a big call and general policy prescriptions and directives for girls' and women's rights to education from multilateral agencies and donors (Herz and Sperling, 2004; Lewis and Lockheed, 2006; UNESCO, 2003). Hence a need for a female teacher to stay and teach in the areas where girls and women are found as a role model.

Much as the idea of 50:50 gender equality makes sense, the concerns of individual female teachers in specific contexts are not taken into account (Arnot and Fennell, 2008; Kabeer, 2003; Unterhalter, 2005, 2007). Several recent attempts to assess global progress towards gender equality within educational systems have underlined the importance of context (ASPBAE and UNGEI, 2010; Unterhalter, 2006), and have hence sought to capture the overall environment in a country that can enable or hinder girls' and women's participation, both within and outside schools. An 'enabling environment' is influenced by the resources available, but also the structures and processes that shape the educational experience, including the nature of both social expectations and opportunities in the broader environment.

The researcher also found that the 50:50 gender has not yet achieved its objectives as Wisdom Chingwede, chairperson for the 50/50 campaign management agency looks back and say 'hopes that the 50/50 campaign will be a success this time around taking into account different strategies that will be put in place'. Chingwede's statement shows that the 50:50 campaign has not yet achieved its objective as far retaining a female in school to be a role model to girls and empowering future women in various sectors of the economy is concerned. Table 5 below explains whether the 50:50 has achieved its

objective or not as stated above.

The table above includes the HRM, DEM and Director of Planning.

As per the table 5 above, 77.19% of the participants say 50:50 campaign has not achieved its objectives as far as retaining female teachers in the rural areas is concerned.

Some of the reasons are as follows: Firstly, boys are more educated than girls. Therefore, female don't meet the qualifications or requirements for them to be trained in Teacher Training colleges to be in the rural to be role models. Secondly there are fewer female teachers in rural areas while many are moving –transferred into urbans for a number of reasons like following husbands, lack of

Table 5: Showing the achievement and non-achievement of objectives of the 50:50 gender equality

Has the Objec-tives been achieved or not?	Frequency	Percentage
(a) 50:50 gender equality		
Achieved	22	11.29
Not achieved	87	77.19
Neutral	4	3.5
	113	99.998
		100%

security, lack of good facilities and differences in cultures among others. For example, at one of the schools, two female teachers were deployed in September 2017. When the researcher reached at this particular school in May 2018, he found only one female teacher but she was also making a lot of noise wanting to be transferred. Therefore if female teachers shun away from rural schools, how can girls be educated and empowered in development, hence 50:50 gender equality cannot take place and its campaign does not retain the female teachers in the rural areas unless basic things are addressed such as ‘accommodation, classroom facilities, school resources and access to leisure activities, (Akyeampong and Stephens, 2002:269-270; Towse *et al.*, 2002:645)’.

However, the researcher found out that 11.29% of teachers are in favour that the 50:50 gender policy has achieved its policy by looking at a small number of female teachers and one female PEA found in the area. While 3.5% remained neutral.

ODL (Open and Distance Learning) Program

The Open Distance Learning program is the program that started some years ago in 1994 when Dr. Muluzi then a state president for Malawi introduced a Free Primary Education. However, the strain that FPE put on the existing educational systems had a ripple effect that is still visible today. Following the implementation of FPE nationwide, enrolment increased from 1.9 million to 3.1 million. To maintain a teacher-to-pupil ratio of 1:60, there was a need for 22,797 teachers, 38,742 additional classrooms and 30,444 teacher houses, to say nothing of classroom materials and resources’, (Chimombo, 2006). As the intake expanded, so the need for more teachers. Therefore, those with good qualifications, fit for a teacher were invited to start teaching under the supervision of the mentors at the school. During holidays such teachers were going for a training. It is a more or less like on job training. As years pass by and donors pulling out, the program was facing a lot of challenges in terms of its continuity. In the past five years we have had ODL 1,2,3,4

and 5. As of now the program has stopped again due to lack of funding.

Despite the challenges, the researcher found that the program has been a successful one. Below is a diagram 5 that shows the opinion of the participants on this ODL program as far as retaining teachers in the rural areas is concerned. See dig 5.

As per the findings shown in the diagram 5 above, this program has really boosted the number of teachers in the rural areas. This is evidenced by 67% of the participants, who confirmed that the objectives of this policy has been achieved such that - Many teachers have been recruited; Shortage of teachers in some rural areas has been minimized; The suffering has been eased when a teacher teaches far from his home area; The trained candidates are employed and vacancies filled; Both male and female teachers are recruited. All this was to try to ease pressure from a teacher. Because according to the National Statistics Office it has been discovered that one

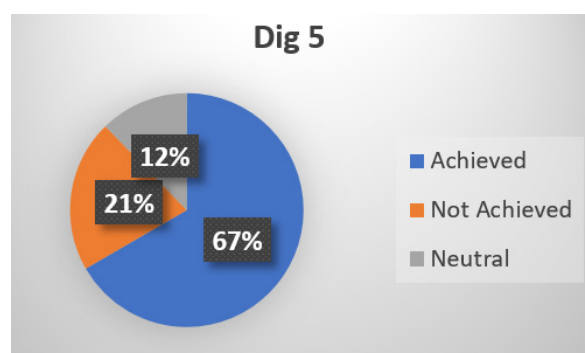


Figure 5: Showing how ODL has achieved its objectives

teacher or two shares a class of 200 or more learners, (NSO, 2014).

But on the other hand, a section of 21.05% participants sees to it as a failed program as they shared with the researcher their reasons why they see in that way. They say, ‘it’s because - Few teachers were trained; No special

treatment or security for female teachers; Some are still working away from home; Corruption and shitting; Does not meet the need of a teacher; Because the program stopped and did not continue; Government does not allow teachers to continue with education / upgrading; Government of Malawi takes time to employ teachers. In such conditions it is hard to retain teachers especially female in the name of ODL program. Without a teacher there is no school. This is in line with what Olson and Craig said, 'the working conditions and the whole school culture of every school is shaped by teachers and pupils, (Olson & Craig 2001).

Rural Allowance

In the case of this study, the researcher has discovered that the rural allowance is the greatest tool among male teachers that has helped most of them to continue staying in the rural areas. While few female teachers though they are also receiving the rural allowances but the main reason why they are found in the rural areas is that they are married there, or they grew up there and were trained through ODL program. Otherwise, the rural allowance does not attract the female teachers as

Annual Education statistics report shows that 'the gender gap gets wider when we aggregate the data by location (urban and rural areas). Although the sub-sector has a lot of interventions in teacher deployment and provision of financial incentives (rural allowance), the number of female teachers in rural areas has remained low' (Annual education statistics, 2017). Below are the evidences concluded by findings of the research done at National level showing how low the number of female teachers is in the rural schools despite the Rural Allowances. See table 6 below.

However 47.36% participants of this study have saluted the rural allowance for achieving its objectives in the way that: It makes or encourages or attracts teachers to be in the rural areas; It has improved lives; Number of female teachers has increased a bit; Salary is high; The allowance is used as transport to the bank. One of the respondents had this to say, '...the Rural Allowance has achieved its objectives though the allowance is not enough however its introduction proved to many teachers that the Government still recognizes them as teachers despite working in rural areas. The allowance act as a reward for those working in rural areas for their loyalty

Table 6: Primary School Teachers Gender Parity Index Trend 2013-2017

	National			Rural			Urban		
Year	Male	Female	GPI	Male	Female	GPI	Male	Female	GPI
2013	35324	23745	0.67	32959	17489	0.53	2365	6256	2.6
2014	35267	24974	0.71	32976	18761	0.57	2291	6213	2.7
2015	37390	27032	0.72	35437	21468	0.61	1953	5564	2.8
2016	38453	27475	0.71	38864	23864	0.62	2631	6091	2.3
2017	40619	30542	0.75	38543	24549	0.64	2076	5993	2.9

(Annual Education Statistics, 2017)

and passionate...'

On the other hand 38.59% of participants of which the majority are female teachers believe that the Rural allowance has not achieved its objectives for the following reasons: The amount is small compare to distance to the bank and other facilities; Schools are still understaffed here in rural areas; Allowances are not paid on time and there is no security for female teachers. One of the participants had this to say:

'....Rural allowance has not achieved its objectives for life in the rural is hard because some of the basic needs are not available as a result some do move from rural to urban. The allowance itself cannot be compared with the way some live in rural areas for instance some move long distances to draw water, to maize mill, charge phones, to saloon, do you think one can keep on living in such areas.....?'

While 14.03% of the respondent did not show whether the rural allowance has achieved its objectives on not. See dig 6 below.

Three Year Bonding System

Three-year bonding has been a policy in the Malawi Government especially in teaching profession, to serve in the village for not less than three years after one has

finished his/her teacher training. This policy came in after seeing that teachers are shunning away from the rural areas. Though the motive behind was good, but both male and female teachers have seen it as being cruel to them and is as if one has been put into prison citing issues like where to get a husband for the singles; husbands cannot stay alone for the married and where to get necessities like – good houses, water, electricity, communication network,

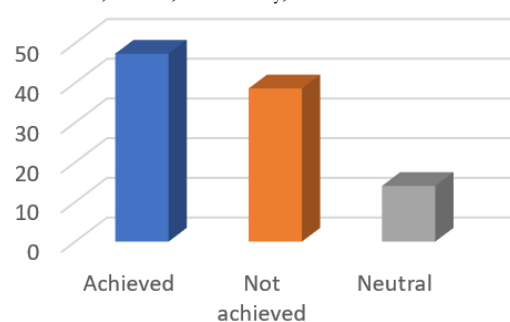


Figure 6: Showing how rural allowance has achieved roads to ease transport – and upgrading themselves among others. One female teacher put it in this way, '....

a three-year bonding is a compulsory and does not meet the needs of a married woman who wants to follow a husband.....’

As for men they feel the policy only applies to them and not to females, having seen that not many finishes their three years in the rural as one of the male participants said, ‘.... the three-year bonding policy has achieved its objective to male teachers only and not to female teachers. Male teachers are treated cruel and forced to remain in the rural even after the bond while female teachers have a chance of having transferred even before bond ends.....’. Many teachers in the rural areas especially in Chikwawa have been lamenting on the issue of transfers that most of the time teachers are transferred to their preferences based on ‘who knows whom in the hierarchy’. According to Halai and Durrani (2011), sometimes transfer of teachers is based on political grounds instead of data-based or

needs-based, (Halai and Durrani, 2011)

The table 9 below, reveals how the participants of this research feel about a three-year bonding if either it has achieved or not its objective to retain female teachers in the rural areas.

Looking at the table above, we can see that 64.91% of the participants feel strongly that the three-year bonding has not achieved its goals. For example, the Head teacher for Therere School under Msenjere Zone confirmed this by citing that at Therere School two female teachers of IPTE 9 were deployed to Therere Primary School in the 2017/18 academic year. When the researcher visited the school, one female teacher had already left and her fellow female teacher who had remained at the school is always at the head teacher’s door asking to be transferred for a number of reasons like, her son gets sick often in the area, there is no network for communications and no

Table 6: Showing how three-year bonding has achieved its objectives

Has the Objectives been achieved or not?	Frequency	Percentage
(d). Three Yrs Bonding		
Achieved	28	24.56
Not achieved	73	64.91
Neutral	12	10.05
	113	99.52
		100%

electricity etc.

This contributed to the non-achievements of the three-year bonding system. Some of the reasons why three-year bonding system has not achieved its objective as far as retaining female teachers is concerned are as follows - Female teachers always give excuses like following husbands and sickness; There are no basic necessities in schools such as good houses, electricity, good water, social network communications, good roads and market. Therefore, in most cases where the above reasons do not hold water teachers corrupt the authorities to move out before completing the bond period to look for the availability of such basic needs as mentioned above. It is believed that some authorities are playing a role in making this bond not to work. One of the participants emphasized this by saying,

‘....a three-year bonding has not achieved because the initiative is not handled in an equally manner. Some of course stay for the agreed period, some don’t, based on the relations they do have with those officials.....’

The other reason why teachers feel the three-year bonding has failed is because teachers are forced to be at one place for over three years and yet schools are still under staffed. While 64.91%, ruled out that there is no achievement to the program, others about 24.56% see to it that something has been achieved as a result, most teachers are posted to rural schools. Secondly the three-year bonding has helped to keep teachers in rural areas and increases number of teachers in rural schools.

Factors That Have Contributed To The Achievement Or Non-Achievement of The Objectives of The Retention Strategies

To every success or failure, achievement or non-achievement there must be factors contributing towards the cause. Therefore in this section, factors that contributed to the achievement and non-achievement of the objectives to the following strategies: 50:50 campaign gender equality, ODL program, Rural Allowance and Three-year bonding are discussed below.

Achieving Factors

Out of four policies 50:50 campaign, ODL program, Rural allowance and Three-year bonding put by Malawi government as strategies to retain female teachers, none has achieved its objective from the angle of retaining female teachers. But in general, and specifically to male teachers only two have achieved its objectives. These are ODL program, and Rural Allowance. The following are their achieving factors

ODL (Open and Distance Learning) Program

The first factor that has contributed to the achievement is the establishment of Gender network organization which has contributed much to sensitize and encourage organizations, companies and government agencies to consider gender equality when employing workers. Therefore, ODL program was not exceptional. Few

female teachers were employed through this program and are role models to girls. Secondly is the decentralization program which has made ODL program to take place in rural areas. As a result, a small percentage as far as retention of female teachers is concerned has been achieved. Those employed under this program 80% were from within the area of need. The third factor is that government of Malawi has put Gender as a Ministry on it's on. This has and is really helping both male and female to understand what gender equality is all about. As all stake holders play a part in this exercise many girls are finishing school. In so doing girls are able to compete with boys when it comes to qualifications in employment as teachers.

Rural Allowance

The fact that a rural teacher's salary is a bit higher than a teacher from urban is a great factor to its achievement of retaining teachers in the rural areas especially male teachers. Secondly as Malawi government continues to support rural teachers through rural allowance, teachers are encouraged to stay in rural areas. This is in line with what Vegas and Umansky said 'higher salaries for teachers working in disadvantaged areas encourages them to stay and work in such areas, (Vegas and Umansky 2005).'

Non-Achieving Factors

Out of four policies, 50:50 campaign, ODL program, Rural allowance and Three-year bonding put by Malawi government as strategies to retain female teachers, two of them have not achieved its objectives to neither male nor female teachers as far as retaining a teacher in rural areas is concerned. These are 50:50 Campaign for gender equality and three-year bonding system.

50:50 Campaign – Gender Equality

The researcher found out that the following factors have contributed to the failing of this program especially to the rural masses including female teachers. These are inadequate trainings; inadequate empowerment activities; lack of resources that will help to empower women; shortage of social facilities; issues of following husbands; low education levels among females; lack of exposure – for example one day Kamuzu Banda, former president of the Republic of Malawi said, 'learning is not only getting into class, travelling and visiting can also make one learn a lot, (Kamuzu Banda, 1985).

Other reasons are low promotion of teachers; non-participation of males in the gender meetings, less of sensitization programs, and cultural practices among others. As such 'teachers are absent from the school as they spend their energy and time in negotiating the bureaucratic process of getting their appointment transferred to other more attractive.

Three-Year Bonding

The researcher found of that; lack of effective communications is one of the factors that contributed

to the failure of the three-year bonding strategy. For example, one participant said, '...some teachers are moving out of the area without the consent of the DEM....' Another factor is that female teachers prefer urban areas to rural areas for basic needs like good houses, electricity, hospital, and road and communication network. On top of this infrastructure and sanitation at a school - good infrastructure and proper sanitary facilities are vital tools in improving the retention of female teachers as suggested by Vegas and Umansky (2005).

Other factors are issues of cultural practices and following husband. Though this is not a policy as per the Director of Planning in Education, it has become a nom that females should follow husbands. 'Many husbands have secured a job in towns, therefore if all female teachers follow husbands then there will be no one in the rural schools to be role models', said the Director of Planning in the Ministry of Education. Female teachers that are still in rural schools are those that are either widows or they are married to a fellow civil servant within the area. Corruption at every level is another factor this is making the policies to be non-effective as some authorities deliberately by pass the rules of the game for example one teacher said, '.....bonding only works for those who do not have relatives of high position...'.

Obstacles Or Challenges That The Ministry of Education Faces In Implementing Each of The Retention Strategies?

The researcher through the office of the PEA, DEM and Director of Planning unearthed some of the challenges the Ministry of Education faces on each of the following: 50:50 Gender equality campaign, ODL program, Rural Allowance and Three year bonding strategies.

50/50 Gender Equality Campaign

The researcher firstly found that lack of resources and advocacy though there is Gender Network as an organization promoting gender equality in this country is one of the challenges. This is contrary to Jean Kalilani, Minister of gender then, who was a guest of honour at the 20th anniversary of Gender Network organization who announced that the organization has done a lot sensitizing and campaigning for gender equality among females and males, (MBC news 27.10.2018). But still, there is a big gap when it comes to teaching profession in the rural areas. The majority of teachers are male teachers. The few female teachers that are there can hardly compete with men in terms of experiences.

Therefore, it becomes hard for such females to be appointed into decision making positions. There is a need for more resources so that advocacy can reach as far as into typical rural areas. Secondly is the shortage of female qualified personnel to fill the vacancies in the rural schools. The Director of Planning in the Ministry of Education said, 'as most women vacate from the rural schools, it becomes unease for the young girls to proceed with their education. As a result, rural areas still remain

with uneducated females.’ Therefore, any position arising in the community eg Member of Parliament or Councillor becomes hard for girls/females to compete because they are not well educated. Thirdly is lack of funding to facilitate the program as the ministry depend on funds from outside the country. ‘There are few numbers of employed female teachers by the government that lead to unequal implementation’, said the Director of planning refereeing to the ODL program which has been stopped due to lack of funding. Fourthly is less girls pursuing teaching professional.

According to the director of planning in the ministry of education, he says they have tried as much as possible to recruit as many female teachers as possible, but in the end, you find that few are qualifying the rest are not. Then those few when they are sent to rural schools they are also running away. This is also bringing down the number of educated girls in the rural schools as there are no role models. Fifthly is high rate of drop outs from girls at primary or secondary. There is a high rate of drop out for girls especially in standard 4 and 5. Girls reach adolescence age in these classes; therefore, they feel they are now grown-ups and can get married. ‘It is at this age when they do not see any woman who has proceeded with her education and is self- independent. What they believe is that a girl is supported by a man when she gets married,’ said a head teacher of Kakoma primary school in Kakoma zone Chapananga area. Sixth is lack of participation in terms of female and the community at large. The community through their chiefs should be encouraging the couples to treat their boys and girls equally in their homes. In most cases young boys and girls are treated differently in homes as a result girls grow up with a spirit of saying ‘I cannot do this but a male can do this’ says a teacher at Masanduko school, Konzere zone in Chikwawa district. Last is Gender bias. Many men still underrate female said the PEA for Nsenjere zone.

ODL Programs

Some of the obstacles the ministry faces on the ODL program are as follows: ‘Luck of funds to recruit female teachers only since donors have stopped funding the program. As a result, the government fails to meet the need out there’, said DEM for Chikwawa district. The other challenge is corruption and bribery as ‘PEAs invite their relatives to come into their area to be recruited under the program’, said one the Head teachers. In the end such teachers plead with the authorities to transfer them. Lack of educated girls in the area is another block as a result men are dominating the opportunities given to them.

Rural Allowances

Rural allowance is given to a teacher as hardship allowance. However, the Ministry of Education according to the Director of Planning faces obstacles as they implement the program as follows: Firstly, most teachers are complaining that the allowance is not enough as compared to the rural hardship; secondly it has become unease for the ministry

to measure which ones are in the rural and which ones are in urban or semi urban. Until now the ministry has not come up with categories of rural areas. As such those in the remotest areas are suffering much compared to those along tarmac or main roads or near a trading centre.

Three-Year Bonding System

Three-year bonding system in this context means that a teacher is not allowed to move out of the rural area unless s/he serves for not less than three years. The system started when the ministry discovered that many especially female teachers do not stay longer in the rural areas. This policy does not go without challenges. Below are some of the challenges the participants of this research revealed: First is about issues of following husbands. Many would run away from rural areas in the name of following husbands. Secondly is about the issue of basic needs such as a good house, electricity, good water, communication network among others, (Maslow,1943). Thirdly cross culture deployment -many are deployed in a place which has a different culture, language and norms. This becomes hard for a lady teacher to coup up with the situation, (Vegas and Umansky 2005). Fourthly is about corruption where some top officials are corrupted to allow teachers who have not completed three years to be transferred to urban areas, lamented one of the head teachers agreeing with Halaiaand Durrani the fact that some get transfers based on political grounds, (Halai and Durrani, 2011).

Summary of the Study

The study was done in order to find out if the policies or strategies put by Malawi government like 50:50 Campaign gender equality, ODL program, Rural allowance and Three-year bonding are effective enough to retain female teachers in the rural schools. Effectiveness in this case means if the objectives of the policies have been achieved in the area of retaining female teachers in the rural areas. The findings are clear that the policies have not achieved their objectives as far as retaining a female teacher in rural areas is concerned.

Hence the study recommends that Government should improve the quality of basic social services in the rural areas eg markets, roads, electricity, hospitals and good teachers houses, safe water etc in line with the Maslows theory of hierarchy of needs, (Maslow 1943). Female should be rewarded for accepting to be in the rural area. Abolish the policy of following husband. Teaching vacancies should be filled by the female villagers themselves

Finally, any person to be recruited as a teacher in an area, they should be recommended by the local authorities themselves.

Future Research Areas

Based on the findings of this study, there is need to research further on two things. First and foremost, to find out on the work performance of a female teacher who has moved from rural to urban as there are so many female teachers in towns compared to men. Some of

these female teachers would be absent for a week going to Republic of South Africa buying and selling clothes. The Second research would be, to make a comparison on the work performance between a female teacher working in the rural area and the one working in urban areas bearing in mind that both have differences in terms of availability of resources and their work hardships.

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