ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF SERVICE CHARTERS ON SERVICE DELIVERY
IN MALAWI – A CASE OF SOUTHERN REGION WATER BOARD

BY

RASHID FRIDAY NTELELA (201004511)

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE MASTERS DEGREE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND
DEVELOPMENT, UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE, BISHO CAMPUS

SUPERVISOR

PROF. E.O.C IJEOMA

20th January, 2012
DECLARATION

I, Rashid Friday Ntelela, hereby declare that this research thesis is my own original work, that all reference sources have been accurately reported and acknowledged, and that this document has not previously, in its entirety or in part, been submitted to any University in order to obtain an academic qualification.

Rashid Friday Ntelela
20th January, 2012
Table of Contents

DECLARATION.......................................................................................................................... 2

DEDICATION........................................................................................................................... 7

Acknowledgements ................................................................................................................. 8

CHAPTER 1

1.0 Introduction..................................................................................................................... 9

1.1 Statement of the Problem .............................................................................................. 11

1.2 Research Objectives ..................................................................................................... 11

1.3 Significance of the Study ............................................................................................. 11

1.4 Concepts and Terms ..................................................................................................... 12

1.5 Chapter Outline .......................................................................................................... 13

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE IMPACT OF SERVICE CHARTERS ON
SERVICE DELIVERY IN MALAWI ....................................................................................... 15

2.1 Introduction.................................................................................................................. 15

2.2 Conceptual Framework for Public Policy in Public Administration ......................... 15

2.2.1 Nature and place of Public Policy in Public Administration .................................. 15

2.3 Public Policy – making process .................................................................................. 19

2.4 Policy Making Models ................................................................................................. 21

2.5 Policy Implementation ................................................................................................. 22

2.5.1 Communication....................................................................................................... 23

2.5.2 Resources................................................................................................................. 24

2.5.3 Disposition of implementers .................................................................................. 25
4.1 The impact of service charters in the course of providing the service by the Board
........................................................................................................................................43

4.1.1 The views of the Ministry Headquarters Officials in the Service Charters and service
delivery..................................................................................................................................44

4.1.2 The Views of the Chief Executive Officer of Southern Region Water Board in
Service Charters and service delivery ..................................................................................44

4.1.3 The Views of the Chief Executive Officer and the Director of Planning and
Development of Southern Region Water Board on service delivery .................................45

4.1.4 The views of the User Group Committee on the service delivery of the
Charters ..................................................................................................................................46

4.2 Communication challenges which may exist between the Board and the service users
................................................................................................................................................46

4.2.1 The views of the Ministry Headquarters Officials on communication .................49

4.2.2 The User Group Committee views on communication ............................................50

4.2.3 The Views of the Chief Executive Officer and the Director of Planning and
Development of Southern Region Water Board on communication .................................51

4.3 Mechanisms on how the charters can be fully utilized by the service provider and
the service users in order to improve the quality of the service delivery .............................51

4.3.1 The views of the Ministry Headquarters Officials .....................................................52

4.3.2 The views of the Southern Region Water Board Chief Executive Officer and
the Director of Planning and Development on mechanisms .............................................52

4.3.3 The views of the User Group Committee on the mechanisms on improving
the service delivery of the Service Charters ........................................................................53

4.4 Conclusion.......................................................................................................................54

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS........................................................................55

5.0 Introduction.......................................................................................................................55
5.1 Conclusions ............................................................................................................. 55
5.2 Recommendations .................................................................................................. 56
  5.2.1 Institutional Arrangement .................................................................................. 56
  5.2.2 Coordination and Organizational Capacity ...................................................... 57
  5.2.3 Capacity Building for Service Users ................................................................. 57

REFERENCES .............................................................................................................. 59
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late wife Susan Ntelela who joined the Kingdom of God on 28th April, 2011 while I was pursuing this study, and my children: Tinenenji Bernadette; Khama Steven; and Khalidwe Annie for giving me the reason to go.
Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following people for their contribution to the successful completion of this thesis:

- My supervisor, Prof. E.O. Ijeoma, for his time and commitment to my success, for his patience and understanding and for his relevant advice on all aspects of the thesis.

- All members of staff of Department of Public Administration of the University of Fort Hare for their smiles and never ending assistance to me.

- Special thanks go to all the respondents involved in this study, who have supported me from the moment that I interviewed them. Their spirit, their smiles, and their welcoming nature have been very meaningful to me. The ethical requirements under which this project was completed prevent me from naming them, or identifying the Institution for which they work.

- MPA class of 2010 and Fort Hare Malawian community for lifting me up during my time of darkness.

- The Malawi Government, the Chief Secretary to the Government Principal Secretaries, Directors and Staff in the Office of the President and Cabinet for the financial and moral support.

- Thanks to the Almighty for his love, grace and blessings always.
CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION
Malawi is divided into three regions, namely: Southern, Central and Northern regions. Each Region has an independent Water Board owned by Government to supply it with portable water. The Constitution of the Republic of Malawi 1994, Chapter 3, Section 13 recognizes public trust and good governance as some of the fundamental principles of National Policy and thereby promised to introduce measures which will guarantee accountability, transparency, personal integrity and financial probity and which by virtue of their effectiveness will strengthen confidence in public institutions. In order to improve service delivery and fulfill the stated constitutional imperatives, the Malawi Government issued the following statement in 2008, “one of our cardinal agenda is reform aimed at changing the way things are done in the public service so that it becomes more efficient and responsive to the needs of all Malawians. As a Government we realize that no matter how brilliant plans and development agenda can be, they will be frustrated unless major reforms are initiated and implemented to facilitate required changes to support the development process. Major changes are necessary in values, beliefs, norms, attitudes and mindsets to help create an enabling environment for the effective management of reforms across the public service. We need to move away from the business as usual type of attitude and fully account for time that we are paid for from public funds if we are to join the prosperous nations” (National Framework for Public Sector Management Reform, June, 2008).

As part of the reforms the government introduced Service Charters to act as a contractual obligation between the service provider and users on what will be delivered. These charters are also called Citizen Charters and in South African context they are closer to Batho Pele principles contained in the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, 1997. Southern Region Water Board was one of the first statutory corporations to adopt Service Charters. The Service Charters entails that public services are developed and improved along four main themes: standards, quality, choice and value.
Southern Region Water Board is a statutory body operating in the Southern Region of Malawi. It was established as a body corporate under the Water Works Act 17 of 1995. The Southern Region Water Board is mandated to provide portable water to the residence and institutions of some urban and rural areas of the Southern Region. The Board operates under the guidance of 1994 Malawi National Water Policy. The Policy comprehensively covers areas of water resource management and development, water quality and pollution control, water utilization, disaster management and institutional roles and linkages. The Policy among other issues aims at:

- Achieving sustainable and integrated water resources management and development that make water readily available and equitably accessible by all Malawians in pursuit of their social economic development and for environmental sustenance;
- To ensure water of acceptable quality for all the needs in Malawi;
- Achieving sustainable provision of water supply and sanitation services that are equitable accessible and used by individuals and entrepreneurs for social economic development at affordable cost;
- Promoting efficient and effective utilization, conservation and protection of water resources for sustainable agriculture and irrigation, fisheries, navigation, ecotourism, forestry, hydropower and disaster management and environmental protection;
- Promoting the participation of the private sector in water resources development, management and service delivery;
- Strengthen and building capacity in the water sector; and
- Clarifying the roles of the ministry for water affairs and other stakeholders in water sector (Malawi Government National Water Policy, 1994).

The purpose of this study is to survey the impact of Service Charters on service delivery in Malawi. The unit of analysis will be Southern Region Water Board, which is one of
the utility statutory corporations. The period of interest will be from 2008 when these Charters became operational in some of the institutions including the Board.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the adoption of Service Charters, there is a prevailing discontent with the delivery of water service in all Regions in general and Southern Region in particular. Amongst several complaints, the following are prominent: erratic billing system which sometimes leads to wrong disconnections, delays in new connections after payment of all what is required by customers.

It is against this background that this research poses the following questions: why should there be complaints by service users despite the adoption of Service Charter by Southern Region water Board?

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The key objectives for the study are to:-

(a) Survey the impact of service charters in the course of providing the service by the Board
(b) Explore the communication challenges which may exist between the Board and the service users
(c) Devise mechanisms on how the charters can be fully utilized by the service provider and the service users in order to improve the quality of the service delivery.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The research will influence the management of Southern Region Water Board and the service users to exploit the potential of service charters on improvements of service
delivery. The research will also add value to the body of knowledge on service delivery more especially with regard to service charters.

1.4 CONCEPTS AND TERMS

(a) Public Policy
Public policy can be generally defined as system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action, and funding priorities concerning a given topic promulgated by a governmental entity or its representatives (Kilpatrick, 2011). Public policies are necessary in order to obtain a clear picture of what the policy maker intends doing with society. Clarity in public policy depends to a large degree on the nature of public policy, i.e. demands, decisions, statements, outputs, limitations, evaluation and rationality pertaining to policies and policy consequences. (Hanekom et al, 2001).

(b) Public Administration
Wikipedia (2011) states that Public Administration houses the implementation of Government policy and academic discipline that studies this implementation and that prepares civil servants for this work. As a field of enquiry with a diverse scope its fundamental goal is to advance management and policies so that government can function. Others define public administration as the management of public programmes; translation of politics into the reality that citizens see everyday; and a study of government decision making, the analysis of the policies themselves, the various inputs that have produced them, and the inputs necessary to produce alternative policies. Waldt (2008) concludes that Public Administration is concerned with handling public matters and the management of public institutions in such a way that resources are used efficiently to promote the general welfare of the public.
(c) Good Governance

Good governance means focusing on the organizations purpose on outcomes of citizens and service users. That is by being clear about organization purpose, making sure that users receive a high quality service and making sure that tax payers receive value for their money. Good governance deals with the structures and processes by which an organization is directed controlled and held to account. Good governance provides the means to help an organization achieve its goals and objectives (www.unescap.org/..../governance.htm, 2011).

(d) Service delivery

Public services are those services provided by government (local, provincial or central) to the public. The need for services that no individual can or will pay for, but that benefit all by their presence, is the justification for taxation. Public service delivery is the implementation of those services and making sure they reach those people and places they intended to, (www.unescap.org/..../governance.htm, 2011).

1.5 CHAPTER OUTLINE

CHAPTER ONE – Introduction and Overview

Background and rationale of the study will be highlighted in this chapter which will give an overview of the research environment. It will also present the statement of the problem, the research objectives, hypothesis, and the significance of the study. It will include the issues that would affect the study.

CHAPTER TWO – Literature Review

Chapter two deals with literature review to enable readers have comprehensive idea on Policy formulation and implementation stages, good governance, service delivery and
participation of citizens. It will also discuss the theory underpinning the study that is principal-agent theory.

**CHAPTER THREE – Research Methodology**

The research design and methodology that will be followed in the study will be discussed in detail. This will include the procedures in investigating the problem, the population, the instruments and sampling.

**CHAPTER FOUR – Data Analysis**

The chapter will present a discussion of the data collected. The presentation of the analyzed data will be featured.

**CHAPTER FIVE – Conclusions and Recommendations**

This is the final chapter of the research. It will contain critical conclusions and recommendations drawn from the earlier chapters and suggested implementations of the results. There will also be a section where issues that requires further studies will be pointed out.
CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE IMPACT OF SERVICE CHARTERS ON SERVICE DELIVERY IN MALAWI

2.1 INTRODUCTION
The promotion of the general welfare of the society depends on the policies made by the policy makers, the resources available, whether the policy makers have a clear understanding of societal problems and needs, and the nature of public policy. The policy maker should therefore adopt acceptable models for making policies and for analyzing policies and policy impact. No government can afford to turn a blind eye to the general welfare of the society it represents. Without clearly defined policies the chances of improving the general welfare of society are remote.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC POLICY IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

2.2.1 Nature and place of Public Policy in Public Administration
Public administration houses the implementation of government policy and an academic discipline that studies this implementation and that prepares civil servants for this work. As a "field of inquiry with a diverse scope" its fundamental goal... is to advance management and policies so that government can function.

Denhardt R. and Denhardt J. (2009), state that public administration comprises establishments primarily engaged in activities of a governmental nature, that is, the enactment and judicial interpretation of laws and their pursuant regulations, and the
administration of programs based on them. This includes; Legislative activities, taxation, national defense, public order and safety, immigration services, foreign affairs and international assistance, and the administration of government programs are activities that are purely governmental in nature.

All of the definitions above describes Public Administration is mostly concerned with handling public matters and the management of public institutions in such a way that resources are used efficiently to promote the general welfare of the public. Public administration consists of the following functions, policy marking, personnel provision, organizing, control, work methods and procedures and financing. Khan (2008) commends that public administration also prepares individuals to serve as managers in the executive arm of local, state, and federal government and that focuses on the systematic study of executive organization and management. Includes instruction in the roles, development, and principles of public administration; the management of public policy; executive-legislative relations; public budgetary processes and financial management; administrative law; public personnel management; professional ethics; and research methods.

With the increasing complexity of public administration and the increase in population, knowledge of adequacy or inadequacies of public policy has become a necessity, and therefore the nature of public policies ought to be considered to determine whether they will indeed have the desired effect.
There are several definitions with regard to the conceptualization of Public Policy. Gerston (2010) defines Public Policy as the combination of basic decisions, commitments, and actions made by those who hold or influence governments' positions of authority. In most instances these arrangements result from interactions among those who demand change, those who make decisions and those who are affected by the policy in question. The linkage between policy makers and policy receivers is vital to understanding the meaning and power of public policy. In a very direct sense, society benefits or suffers because of government activity.

In another definition by Waldt (2008) Public Policy is seen as a series of related decisions taken after liaison with public managers and political office bearers that convert certain needs of the community into objectives to be pursued by public institutions. On the other hand Public Policy is defined as purposeful, goal-oriented action that is taken by government to deal with societal problems. Public policy can be positive, i.e. a decision that creates change, or negative, i.e., a decision not to act. Public policy can deal with a crisis or with long-term objectives. Public policy is made by governmental actors such as the executive branch, the legislative branch, and the courts; and private actors such as interest groups and citizens.

Public policy also implies that government is responsive to its legitimate stakeholders, particularly citizens and voters. However, policies, differ in terms of their scope, complexity, decision environment, range of choices, and decision criteria.
According to Fox, Schwella and Wissink (1991:27-28) the following basic elements of public policy can be identified:

- Public policy is policy developed by government role players, although non-governmental role players, such as interest groups, can also influence the formulation and development of policy.
- Public policy is a purposive or goal oriented action rather than a random one.
- Policy generally consists of a series of decisions taken jointly by politicians and/or officials rather than individual decisions.
- Policy is what government actually do for example protect the environment.

Policies are developed within a context of public opinion, policy history, ideological conflict, budgetary constraints—resulting in bargaining and trade-offs. Many believe that the creation of policy occurs as a rational process in which issues and problems are identified and approached in a very rational sequence, with the ultimate result being the development of the most appropriate policies. Others believe that the process is more incremental, meaning that policymakers make small policy changes and then adjust policies to reflect the knowledge gained from problems in implementation.

Public policy making is first and foremost about determining objectives or societal goals (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2000). These societal goals refer to 'big ticket' issues such as the principles to underpin the conduct of foreign affairs, how to promote internal social cohesion, how best to meet citizens’ needs during major life cycle changes. It follows that public policy has to be effective (achieve its goals) and efficient (do so in a
way that achieves the greatest possible benefit at the least possible cost). Goal setting in public policy needs to be long-term in perspective.

This means starting with a comprehensive understanding of the current environment and defining what society’s needs are in a way that an appropriate policy response can address. It could, for example, involve developing likely ‘futures’ scenarios in which a proposed policy might need to operate. Good public policy also involves attention to process. This includes giving the end users ample opportunity to participate in a variety of ways. It also involves ensuring, for example, that the ‘siló’ effect of departments operating independently of each other is minimised. The opposite of good policy making is an *ad hoc* or short-term policy response to an immediate problem. Poor policy making often results from unintended consequences that a piecemeal approach has not taken into account.

### 2.3 PUBLIC POLICY – MAKING PROCESS

Once governments have been created they must govern; the process of governing concerns the formulation and implementation of public policies. The policy-making process is sequential in most respects. It evolves along the following lines: From the initial issue identification and agenda setting, policies are formulated, and then policies are adopted. Hanekom et.al (2001:25) identifies the following five phases of public policy making:
• Policy demands, which are representative of community needs and which needs some kind of actions on the part of the authority. Here the policy problems are defined and the policy agenda set. It is acknowledged that public problems will only reach the political agenda if they are converted into political ‘issues’. This usually occurs when an interest group demands government action on a problem, or when there is public disagreement over ways in which a problem should be addressed.

• Policy decision, which are decisions made by those in power and which will elicit some form of action pertaining to the needs of the society. At this stage policies are formulated, that is policies are created or changed. It is useful to understand policy formation as a social and political process in order to conceptualize how policies are formulated.

• Policy statements representing the formal articulations of public policy i.e. making public of what the authorities intend doing.

Policy outputs, which is what the authorities actually do and not necessarily what the intentions were as represented in policy statements and this includes the actions and mechanisms whereby policies are brought into practice, that is, where what is written in the legislation or policy document is turned into a reality. In this stage the content of the policy, and its impact on those affected, may be modified substantially, or even negated.
In analysing this stage in the policy-making process, one needs to examine how, when and where particular policies have been implemented.

- Policy outcomes or consequences resulting from steps taken to satisfy policy demands. This is also the final stage in the policy-making process, includes monitoring, analysis, criticism and assessment of existing or proposed policies. This covers the appraisal of their content, their implementation and their effects. Moreover, evaluation is designed to help governments to implement policies in an effective and efficient manner.

Once a decision has been made to do something about the issue, alternative policy solutions need to be compared and a decision needs to be made about what sort of solution will be supported. The resulting policy must be acceptable to both the legislators and the public; this process of building support is called policy legitimation. Once the policy is determined, the implementation process begins. However, few can predict what might go wrong with a new public policy and so the process of policy evaluation is crucial, so that policymakers can determine if the outcome was what they expected.

2.4 POLICY MAKING MODELS
Hanekom et al (2001:29) state that there is no universally agreed model for policy – making. However the following models are just an attempt to ensure goal identification, authorization and execution of the policy.
• The classical model which accepts that the different interests represented in government should be taken into account, i.e. that not only legislature should formulate policy, but the contributions of the executive and judiciary to policy making should also be taken into account (Woll 1974:21-33)

• The group theory model, which postulates that people partaking in the political process do so not as individuals but through the interest groups of which they are members (Woll 1974:33-42)

• The liberal democratic model, where the political party assumes a position superior to interest groups and acts as primary force in policy formulation, because the party represents the individual voter (Woll 1974:42-5)

• The elite model, which suggests that small elite groups of skilful individuals act as leaders of a large group of followers (Woll 1974:46-9); and

• The systems model, which focuses on the inputs of a wide range of interrelated forces to the policy-maker who is solely responsible and has the authority to make policies (outputs) binding on society or on a specific community (Woll 1974:49-52)

2.5 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION
Van Meter and Van Horn (1974: 447-8): Policy implementation encompasses those actions by public or private individuals (or groups) that are directed at the achievement of objectives set forth in prior policy decisions. They make a clear distinction between the interrelated concepts of implementation, performance, impact and stress.
Implementation, according to Pressman and Wildavsky (1973: xiii-xv), means to carry out, accomplish, fulfil, produce, complete. According to their seminal book on the subject: Policies imply theories; Policies become programs when, by authoritative action, the initial conditions are created. Implementation, then, is the ability to forge subsequent links in the causal chain so as to obtain the desired result. In this case implementation is the as important as the decision itself i.e. the decision to get the desired outcomes.

Hanekom et al (2001:43) refers policy implementation as the second or effective phase of a policy and has no less importance than policy – making. They further identified the factors that influence the implementation of public policy as communication, resources and disposition of implementers and that each has a bearing on policy implementation.

2.5.1 Communication
Hanekom et al (2001:39) quoting Edwards and Sharkansky (1978:296) state that the first requirement for effective implementation is that those responsible for carrying out a decision must know what they are supposed to do. Orders to implement a policy must be consistence, clear and accurate in specifying the aims of the decision makers. The reference to communication as a factor which influences public policy implementation can be analysed from a three – prolonged view namely,

- Transmission: the absence of a sound communication system and the blockage of information somewhere in the system result in ignorance of decisions and orders;
• Clarity, by which is meant that orders or instructions should not be vague about when or how implementation is to be carried out; vagueness can make changes in policy difficult and can also result in changes far greater than those anticipated;
• Consistency: because there is seldom just one order, implementation orders may be inconsistent as well as vague. Inconsistency and vagueness of orders may even increase commensurate with the multiplication of directives throughout different branches and levels of government (Hanekom 2001:40)

2.5.2 Resources
Lack of resources not only hinders policy-making, it also limits the effective implementation of a policy. No matter how clear the implementation orders are, if the personnel responsible for carrying out policies lack the resources to do an effective job, policymakers will be disappointed in the results (Hanekom 2001:41, 42 quoting Edwards and Sharkansky). Without the resources, the implementation of policy which has been referred to as the effective phase may become to ineffective phase. Moreover policies cannot be declared as being effective in themselves, nor can they be implemented by their mere statement without staff, access to information, and authority. These initial conditions which have to be met can be added to the remaining enabling functions of administration, i.e. financing, organising, control and procedures (Hanekom et al 2001:42).
2.5.3 Disposition of implementers
Hanekom et al (2001: 42) add that the natural tendency of behaviour of public officials is important because not only must they know and have the capability to implement a specific policy, but they must also carry it out if implementation is to proceed effectively. The way in which public officials exercise their discretion will be influenced by how they see the policy in question and how they project its effect on the public’s interest and their personal and organisational interests. It has been suggested by Edwards and Sharkansky as quoted by Hanekom et al (2001: 42) that the disposition of implementers can hamper policies in three ways:

- Selective perception and accepting of instructions if policies are not in line with their own predisposition;
- The ensuing frustration in executing policies with which the do not agree;
- Because implementers feel that they are important links in the implementation stage without whom public policies can never be set into motion, and that they know best about a policy area in question.

2.6 BARRIERS TO RATIONALITY IN POLICY MAKING
Hanekom et al (2001:26) outlines the following as some of the barriers to rationality in policy making:–

- Subjectivity: the personal value preferences of both politicians and administrators may influence their objectivity in deciding on policy matters;
- Sunk costs: expenditure already approved for a specific project is not easily reversed;
• Conflicting consequences of a policy are often in conflict with the unanticipated consequences of that policy;
• Expectations of the future: since policy making is aimed at the future and the future is unknown a certain amount of speculation is involved.

2.7 POLICY AND SERVICE DELIVERY
Kanyane (2010:79) said that public service must be delivered where the communities need them most and delivery must be underpinned by a social agenda. Public institutions need to be transformed to deliver public services within a framework of loftier vision of restoring human dignity and promoting emancipation of human mind and soul. Citizens and users also need to be empowered to take a full part in the cycle of quality, through processes of informed democracy and communication, and through accurate, honest and user-friendly information, and through continued dialogue with service providers as concluded by Gaster and Squires (2003:258). The citizens need to learn about public services and the organizations that deliver them. They need to be supported to challenge and ask questions, and not to fear that services will be taken away from them if they do so. All stakeholders also need to take responsibility for developing the vision and culture, for learning to solve problems, to activate change, to plan and take action, and to learn from each other, continuously and mutually.
2.8 GOOD GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY

It is now acknowledged that there is a link between public service reforms and good governance. A primary element of good governance is ensuring that citizens have a say in how they are governed; that is having in place a democratic framework at both national and local levels and creating space for citizens to have a say on the service they need and the standards of those services. It also entails making service providers accountable for service delivery to the citizens (Kithinji and Mutahaba, 2005:9).

Governance may be defined as the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and a co-operative action may be taken. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interests.” (European Commission, 1995, p. 2).

Governance denotes the use of political authority and exercise of control in a society in relation to the management of its resources for social and economic development. This broad definition encompasses the role of public authorities in establishing the environment in which economic operators function and in determining the distribution of benefits as well as the relationship between the ruler and the ruled.” (OECD, 2003)

Underlying governance is the notion of power, how it is exercised by the individuals or groups concerned, and how it shapes their relationships, decisions and actions. Thus,
governance can be referred to as the processes whereby “elements in a society wield power, authority and influence and enact policies and decisions concerning public life and economic and social development” (Governance Working Group of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences, 1996) and “make important decisions, determine whom they involve in the process and how they render account” (Graham, Amos and Plumptre, 2003).

2.8.1 Characteristics of good governance
The set of characteristics underlying good governance are: participation, consensus orientation, strategic vision, responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, transparency, equity and the rule of law (UNDP, 1997; ESCAP, 2009)

i. Participation – All men and women should have a voice in decision-making, either directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their intention. Such broad participation is built on freedom of association and speech, as well as capacities to participate constructively.

ii. Consensus orientation – Good governance mediates differing interests to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interest of the group and, where possible, on policies and procedures.

iii. Responsiveness – Institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders.

iv. Effectiveness and efficiency – Processes and institutions produce results that meet needs while making the best use of resources.
v. **Accountability** – Decision-makers in government, the private sector and civil-society organizations are accountable to the public, as well as to institutional stakeholders. This accountability differs depending on the organizations and whether the decision is internal or external.

vi. **Transparency** – Transparency is built on the free flow of information. Processes, institutions and information are directly accessible to those concerned with them, and enough information is provided to understand and monitor them.

vii. **Equity** – All men and women have opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being.

viii. **Rule of law** – Legal frameworks should be fair and enforced impartially, particularly the laws on human rights.

Overarching these characteristics are the three founding principles of good governance by Schaffer, (2008):

- the promotion of inclusiveness;
- the promotion of accountability.
- the promotion of lawfulness

Strengthening relations with citizens is a sound investment in better policy making and core element of good governance. Good governance allows government to tap new sources of policy-relevant ideas, information and resources when making decisions. It also contributes to building public trust in government raising the quality of democracy.
and strengthening civic capacity. To strengthen the relationship with its citizen in order to promote quality service delivery, O’Toole et al (1984) suggest the following principles that government must ensure:-

- Information has to be complete, reliable, relevant, easy to understand and find;
- Consultation has to have clear goals and rules and has to define the limits of the exercise and governments obligations to account for its use of citizen input; and
- Participation provides sufficient time and flexibility to allow for the emergence of new ideas and proposals by citizens as well as mechanisms of their integration into government policy making process.

O’Toole et al (1984) conclude that for government to promote good governance that will enhance quality of service delivery there has to be access to information and active participation in policy making by fostering greater transparency in policy making; more accountability through public scrutiny and oversight; better quality policy decisions based on a wider range of information sources; and finally higher levels of implementation and compliance given greater public awareness of policies and participation in their design.

### 2.9 SERVICE CHARTERS

A service charter is a short publication that describes the service experience a client can expect from an agency. It allows for an open and transparent approach that all parties understand and can work within. It covers key information about an agency’s service delivery approach and the relationship the client will have with the agency
including: what the agency does; how to contact and communicate with the agency; the
standard of service clients can expect; client's basic rights and responsibilities and how
to provide feedback or make a complaint (Hague S, 2002)

Waldt (2004) further says that citizens’ charters are official frameworks for accessing
and awarding quality in the public sector particularly, but may also be applied by private
companies as part of customer service standards. Charters usually address macro-
quality as a ‘generic system concept which appears to the public service/citizen
relationship’. The essential idea behind charters is to increase the quality of life in
society and to pay more attention to the needs of citizens. The ultimate purpose is to
renew citizen trust not only in public services but in the state. The method is to renew
the ‘social contract’ between the rulers and the ruled, by developing charters (Waldt
2004).

With the Charters, the public service shall serve in accordance with the following
criteria: proximity and accessibility of services, participation, consultation and mediation,
quality effectiveness and efficiency, evaluation of services, transparency and
information, speed and responsiveness, releasing and confidentiality of information.

2.10 THE MALAWI PUBLIC SERVICE CHARTER PROGRAMME
The Malawi Government Service Charter System was institutionalized as tool for
improving delivery in the public service. The formulation of service charter rested on the
government’s theme of (Raising the Bar of Service Excellence) in the service delivery.
The Service Charter System was expected to establish a responsive and accountable
Public Service which will dutifully serve the people based on acceptable standards of
service. It is also expected that Service Charter should assist in transforming the Public Service into a more, productive, professional, results and customer oriented institutions.

The Public Service has the responsibility of providing serviced to steer the economic growth and development of the country and to promote the advancement of people of Malawi. Government therefore, institutionalized a mechanism for monitoring the quality and quantity of services it provides and for obtaining feedback from the public, regarding their level of satisfaction with the services that are provided.

The main objective of introducing the service charter system was to improve performance, transparency, and accountability in the Public Service and hence help the public to demand quality service and to hold public services accountable for their action and inaction.

It was then expected that Customer Service Charter should form the framework upon which public service institution should be assessed on their performance and set the basis of a culture of responsiveness to public demand on expected standards of services. Improvements in customer satisfaction, delivery of service and the engagement of employees were to provide a guide for continuous improvement and raising the bar of excellence in service delivery.

To guide the development of Service Charter the government developed the Malawi Service Charter. It was expected that this Malawi Public Service Charter should guide
the development of charters within all relevant Ministries, Departments and Public Agencies (MDAs).

The charter is based on the African Public Service Charter and is consistent with the provision of the constitution of Malawi, The Malawi Public Service Act and other key government policies and regulations. More specifically it has been designed to respond to the situation in making into account the following:

1. The growing desire to improve service delivery that has necessitated various Public Sector Reforms.
2. The need to put the Output Based Budget and Performance Management Systems into perspective, that encourages public agencies to measure and assess performance; and
3. The need to help internalize the culture of standards service, non-discrimination, participation, responsiveness, transparency and accountability both in the public servants and the citizens.

2.11 CONCLUSION

It is important to understand the policy development process so that as an advocate you can plan the type of input you need in order to have an impact on the final policy. Good policy also needs to be outcome-focused by identifying carefully how the policy will deliver desired changes in the real world. Policy makers also need to ensure that they are inclusive by putting in place policies that take full account of the needs and
experience of all those likely to be affected by them, whether they be individuals or groups, families, businesses or community organisations. Good policy also requires involving those outside government in policy making. This includes consulting with those who are the target of the policy, outside experts, and those who are to implement the policy. Policy decisions also need to be based on a careful appraisal of the benefits any measure seeks to achieve, the costs it entails and the cumulative burden of regulation on those responsible for implementing the policy. Linked to this is also the need for policy makers to improve the way risk is assessed managed and communicated to the wider community. Finally, good public policy is based on learning from experience. Policy making needs to be a continuous, learning process, not as a series of one-off, isolated initiatives. This requires making use of evidence and research about the problems being addressed. It may also involve making more use of pilot schemes to encourage innovation and to test whether proposed options work. It also requires clearly specifying and evaluating independently the objectives of all policies and programmes and making public the lessons of success and failure and acting upon them. Policy evaluation should also involve obtaining feedback from those who implement and deliver policies and services (UK government, 1999:12).

Engaging service users and citizens in policy making and the design and delivery of services is not new, but it is being seen increasingly as a key to good governance. As a result, there has been a plethora of new programmes and initiatives designed to ensure greater public participation because it offers a range of potential benefits but also entail formidable challenges. There are a lot of experiences that can be tapped from across a
range of services and different national settings. It is important that policy makers, politicians and public service managers draw upon this growing body of evidence in developing their own organizations approaches to public engagement
CHAPTER 3

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design
The study was conducted in the interpretive paradigm, based on the understanding that interpretive paradigm involves qualitative approach and this helped in assessing the service charters against service delivery in utility statutory corporation. The study adopts a qualitative research approach whose purpose is to understand the social phenomena from the respondents and participants’ perspective (Macmillan and Schumacher, 2006: 26).

3.1.1 Qualitative Research
Qualitative research applies to non-quantitative methods and techniques in collecting and analyzing data. It is non-numerical. It uses words. The purpose is to get the picture, the meaning, the feeling. It tries to get and describe the situation which is experienced by the respondents. It uses theories and methods of school such as phenomenology or intellectualism.

Additionally, it seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours, and social contexts of particular populations.
3.1.2 Advantages of Qualitative Method

Qualitative research method is known for its flexibility in nature. In qualitative research, the researcher becomes the research instrument, meaning that he/she becomes immersed in the research project (McMillan and Schumacher 2006:26).

It provides information about the “human” side of an issue – that is, the often contradictory behaviours, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals. Qualitative methods are also effective in identifying intangible factors, such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, ethnicity, and religion, whose role in the research issue may not be readily apparent.

3.1.3 Disadvantages of Qualitative Method

Some of the disadvantages of qualitative research by include:

- It is more difficult to determine the validity and reliability of linguistic data
- It is harder to determine the extent of influence the researcher had over the result (e.g. through researcher bias). That is there is more subjectivity involved in analyzing the data
- Data overload – open ended questions can sometimes create lots of data which can take a long time to analyze.
It is clear that the qualitative approach befits this study after analyzing the disadvantages and advantages. The advantages are more fitting and they outweigh the disadvantages.

### 3.2 CASE STUDY

The study used the case study approach because it is designed to bring out the details from the viewpoint of participants by using multiple sources of data (MacMillan and Schumacher, 2006: 316). Yin (1994:123) observes that case studies are detailed investigations of individuals, groups, institutions or other social units. The researcher conducting a case study attempts to analyze the variables relevant to the subject under study.

The study used the Southern Region Water Board as a unit of analysis. The choice of this utility institution is based on the fact that it was one of the very first statutory cooperation that adopted service charters in the country but that the quality of their services has been under a microscope because of some perceived shortcomings by other stakeholders.

### 3.3 Data collection instrument

The study used in-depth interview and focus group instrument.
3.3.1 In-depth interviews
According to Len Tiu Wright, (1996) in-depth interviewing aims at understanding the beneficiaries' view of a program, their terminology and judgments. Their goal is to explore in depth a respondent’s point of view, experiences, feelings, and perspectives. It is also a method of gathering information from individuals about their behaviour, opinions, feelings, and experiences.

The in-depth interview aims to gain access to, and an understanding of, activities and events which cannot derive from observation directly by the researcher (Minichiello et al. 1995). As such, in-depth interviewing is suitable when the researcher wants to gain a view of what social reality is from the informant’s perspective. Because it is believed here that social reality exists as meaningful interaction between individuals that can be studied through understanding others' point of view, interpretations and meanings, in-depth interviewing is an appropriate technique to gain access to the individual’s words and interpretations (Minichiello et al. 1995).

3.3.2 Focus group
Focus group discussions is one of the most commonly used qualitative research techniques. They are effective in eliciting data on the cultural norms of a group and in generating broad overviews of issues of concern to the cultural groups or subgroups represented. They allow a small group of people to come together and share their views, under the guidance of the researcher. The sharing acts as a ‘brainstorming’
session, generating a wide range of views and reactions. Focus groups can vary by the objectives of the group, and the composition of the group (Minichiello et al. 1995).

3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING OF THE STUDY
MacMillan and Schumacher (2006: 126) describe a sample as the collective, group of subjects or participants from whom the data is collected. Sampling involves the drawing of the subject from the population for data collection. The study will adopt a purposive sampling which uses the researcher’s judgment as to which groups of people are rich in the information to be tested to illustrate the research question.

Data was collected at three levels related to policy direction, implementation and the regulation and monitoring of service delivery in the country. As such, the study’s target group was as follows:

- Senior managers at Southern Region Water Board at Director level.
- Planning officers at the Ministry of Water and Irrigation which is the line ministry to which the water boards belong.
- Senior officers at the Public Sector Rationalization Unit in the Office of the President and Cabinet which is the overall office responsible for reforms in the Malawi Public Institutions.

On the part of the service users, the study targeted the following:

- Institutional users,
- The business community,
- Non-governmental organisations and;
• Household users.

The researcher conducted interviews with management teams of the mentioned institutions and questionnaires were administered to household service users.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

The data was aggregated according to work places of respondents and categorized in a way that reflects the sum total of the views expressed on matters related to service delivery. McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 417) argue that the data to be analysed has to pass through inductive analysis which involves data coding, data categorizing and interpretation before providing an explanation that makes sense.

The data of this research will be analysed using grounded theory. According to Merriam (1998:77), grounded theory involves grouping data into segments and categories which are compared to derive similarities and differences. The analysis seeks to establish pattern in the data and any relationship development emerging from such patterns builds on into a theory grounded in the data.

3.6 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The area of focus for this research was Zomba District which is one of the districts in the Southern Region of Malawi which is covered by Southern Regional water Board. Malawi has a total of 28 districts with a population of 13 million people. Zomba district has a population of 360,000 people (Malawi National Statistics Office, 2008).
The shortcoming which was envisaged was as follows: since among the target group is a group of strategic managers, the researcher feared that not all members of this group may find time to give an interview or fill the questionnaire due to tight schedule of their activities.

To overcome this shortcoming, the researcher booked the interview and also delivered the questionnaires in person, well in advance. The researcher also obtained a letter of support from the Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC) which is an overseer of all the public institutions, requesting them to cooperate and support the study.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION
The researcher endeavoured to adhere and uphold all issues pertaining to ethics during this study. To that end the researcher respected the confidentiality and dignity of the respondents. An informed consent was obtained from the respondents to ensure their respect during the study. The researcher also desisted from engaging in any form of data fabrication and plagiarism.
CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the analyzed research data in relation to the research objectives that were mentioned in chapter one. This chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section will survey the impact of service charters in the course of providing the service by the board. The second section will explore the communication challenges which may exist between the Board and the service users. The third section to devise mechanisms on how the charters can be fully utilized by the service provider and the service users in order to improve the quality of the service delivery.

4.1 The impact of service charters in the course of providing the service by the Board

The public sector in Malawi is being reformed in order to achieve efficiency, effectiveness and economy in resource use which in turn will enhance the quality of service delivery. Overall the reforms are being carried out in order to align with the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy and Millennium Development Goals. Water and sanitation being one of the pillars of the MGDS the reforms in the water sector are aimed at increasing the water quality. These Service Charters spell out the obligations which will be carried out by the service provider during the engagement with the users.
The charters provide a framework within which users concerns are taken into consideration.

4.1.1 The views of the Ministry Headquarters Officials in the Service Charters and service delivery

The views of the Ministry officials are that the public service is striving to improve service delivery and forge closer relationships with its clients. This is done through its policy and commitments to consistently and reliably provide accessible and sustainable public services that meet and exceed the quality of its clients.

In addition to the above some officials had this to say:

“The Charters are designed in a way that they are closer to the people so that they can be accessible especially those dealing with the basic services and in this case SRWB is one of the them because it is providing water and sanitation services to the citizens of this country”

4.1.2 The Views of the Chief Executive Officer of Southern Region Water Board in Service Charters and service delivery

There was encouragement and support in the formation of the Service Charters since it was viewed that the delivery of water and sanitation will be easier, meaning that the service delivery will be improved and the end users will be satisfied with their products.
The Chief Executive Officer stated that the reforms aims at rising efficiency and effectiveness which in turn increase service access and quality in fulfillment of the water and sanitation pillar of Malawi Growth and Development Strategy. The service charter engages the end users who are the ultimate judges in terms whether the reforms are producing positive results.

If service delivery is unsatisfactory Service Charter provides an opportunity to the users to hold the Board to see who is accountable.

4.1.3 The Views of the Chief Executive Officer and the Director of Planning and Development of Southern Region Water Board on service delivery

The main focus at the Board is the functional approach where human resource are assigned to a project with due regard to their specific skills so that the service delivered should be up to date, effective and efficient. It was discussed that the Board always aim at providing the services that meets the customer specification and at the same time meeting the needs of the users.

In ensuring the above, the Board always aim at researching on the ways of improving their services and use modern equipment that are to the standard of helping the Board delivering what is expected of them. The Board also makes sure that there is continuous contact with the end users so that they should get information on the services they provide if it is meeting their needs and expectations.
4.1.4 The view of the User Group Committee on the service delivery of the Charters

The User Group said that there are some improvements in the service delivery as opposed to when there was no service charter. This is in terms of accessing clean and treated water in some parts of the Southern Region. This helps in prevention of some water borne diseases that are spread due to lack of clean and portable water. It was also found that there is total implementation of what was spelled out in the service charters.

The Group added that there is also proper training on how to use the resources for those doesn’t know how to use tapped water because as soon as the committee members are elected, a training workshop is conducted to equip them with necessary skills and then the knowledge is transferred to the remaining end users.

4.2. Communication challenges which may exist between the Board and the Service users

A service charter must be prepared through consultation with stakeholders, customers and staff at most all level. The Public Service Charter was designed to improve service delivery and forge closer relationship with its clients. It is the Public Service Policy and Commitment to consistently and reliable provide accessible and sustainable public service that meet and exceed the quality expectations of our clients. The public service was also designed to strive to provide services that are consistent with acceptable
international standards. Public institution will define the specific standards in their charters.

The Public Service Charter system requires that each public service organization should know its internal customers and agree upon the standard of products and services to be delivered in line with professional standards and the overall public service regulations. The standards should be communicated to all staff within each ministry, department, agency or local government, as they ultimately affect the final institutional product and services.

In addition, the Malawi Public Service Charter (2009) stipulates that in enhancing communication with the service users the following points have to be considered:

i. **Proximity and Accessibility of Service**

   The public service shall be organised along functional and decentralised lines designed to bring public service management closer to the people and provide them with appropriate and accessible basic service.

   Accessibility shall also be enhanced by application of appropriate information and communication technologies (e-government)
ii. Participation and Consultation

The government shall ensure that individuals, the public and all stakeholders are consulted in arriving at solution or recommendation aimed at addressing their respective needs.

The government shall ensure mechanisms of participation and consultation involving the public, and all other stakeholders are effectively put in place.

iii. Speed and Responsiveness

The public service shall be delivered in a timely manner. Time limit must be established by regulations and communicated to the public. Evidence of unusually long delays shall be subjected to investigation.

iv. Reliability and Confidentiality of Information Concerning Citizens

With the exception of administrative department such as the police and judiciary who may be authorised by law, no files kept by the Public Service shall contain information that would violate personal privacy, individual freedoms or human rights without the express authorisation of the individual concerned.

Any person who can prove his/her identity shall have the right to be informed about any personal information concerning him/her, and to challenge and have such information removed or corrected.
v. **Client Orientation**

In delivering service, the Public Service shall ensure that all clients are treated with courtesy and respect. Members of the public service shall attend to clients with promptness and shall listen and make every effort to find solutions to clients needs.

vi. **Redress and Remedial Action**

The Public Service shall ensure the availability of mechanisms for redress, where clients have not received services according to guaranteed standards. The public service shall acknowledge and apologies when it fails in delivering services according to standards, and strive to rectify the mistake promptly.

4.2.1 **The views of the Ministry Headquarters Officials on communication**

The developments of the Customer Service Charter were in consultation with members of staff and stakeholders and staff at most all level and it was aimed at meeting the end user expectations, the preparation must also be based on the existing legislation, policies, strategic plans,.

So far, there is lack of clear understanding of the roles of the users and the service providers. The Ministry Officials believes that the more the engagement with the end users the better is the understanding. Some officials said this:-
“There is always a problem in accepting a new thing or change in the world and its not only here in Malawi. There are a lot of misconceptions and fears that the end users may have and you cannot rule them out. What is needed is close contact, interaction and training to bring the understanding in the end users”.

The Ministry has put in place some mechanisms to ensure that there has to be contact and dialogue with the end users. If there is a communication breakdown it is possible that the implementation and proper use of the service cannot be effective.

4.2.2 The User Group Committee views on communication

The users believe that it is the undertaking of the Board to involve its citizens in their quest to provide a quality service. On their part the citizens conduct periodic committee meetings and biannual plenary meetings with all the users and all the pertinent issues raised are presented and discussed at the joint meeting between the Water Board and the user committee.

During these joint meetings concerns from users and the Board are tabled and discussed. This joint meeting seeks to reach conclusions which are mutually raised. The Board contacts are the committee before a new project is embarked and when there are concerns objections are raised.
In summary, the Public Service Charter needs to help in establishing new relationship between the public service and its environment in order to meet citizens’ expectations, development and adapt to the profound changes taking place in this new millennium.

4.2.3 The Views of the Chief Executive Officer and the Director of Planning and Development of Southern Region Water Board on communication

The Chief Executive Officer states that there is citizen’s consultation at each and every projects stage undertaken by the Board. There is a Joint Standing Committee which comprise of Board members of staff and user group committee which scrutinize and incorporate the outcome of citizen’s participation. Another way of ensuring communication is by regular meeting and formation of joint committees. The Chief Executive Officer added that there is an effective communication right from project planning up to administrative closure. Citizen’s consultation and participation is encouraged and incorporated at each and every level.

4.3 Mechanisms on how the charters can be fully utilized by the service provider and the service users in order to improve the quality of the service delivery

The service charter spelled out the obligations which will be carried out by the service provider during the engagement with the users. The charter provides a framework within which users concerns are taken into consideration.
4.3.1 The views of the Ministry Headquarters Officials

The Ministry officials said that all the Project Implementation Units in all the Water Boarders have Monitoring and Evaluation Sections. Since these are new concepts but so far positive changes are being noticed. It was also stated that capacity building measures and awareness campaigns are carried out continuously.

Low levels of civil rights knowledge by most members of the general public may pose a challenge which may in turn prevent the users from maximizing the benefit of the service charters but the officials said that funds are set aside for capacity building in the implementation institution.

4.3.2 The views of the Chief Executive Officer and the Director of Planning and Development on improvement mechanisms

Through consultative meetings, it is believed that the challenges can be identified and incorporated into a project can be addressed. The staff said that members of the general public in their respective communities elect their leaders so that they can easily understand them and this was seen as the best way of involving the users. Seminar and workshops are also conducted to accord the committee members knowledge of what the service charter are their obligations and the obligations of the Board. We conduct quarterly joint meeting.
The main challenge is the capacity levels of the users as far as the charters are concerned. While the success story is that user group committee has now been established in all the communities. This ensures consultative approach.

4.3.3 **The views of the User Group Committee on the mechanisms on improving the service delivery of the Service Charters**

The User group felt that there is a need and a strong desire for the committee to solicit the support of the traditional leaders to enhance the engagement with the members of the general public. This is so because some people within the community are not appreciating the benefits of the Service Charters. This is so because the other members who are using the service had these complaints; the water tariffs which are on the higher side and unreliable billing system which end up giving wrong bills to the users.

If the above problems are addressed the Service Charter will have more beneficiaries and will not have less problems in delivering its service to the communities of the Southern Region.
4.4 Conclusion

This Service Charter presents the commitment to continually improve public services to meet the needs and also determines how there can be interaction between the government who are the service providers and the citizen.

The Service Charter System is expected to establish a responsive and accountable Public Service which will dutifully serve the people based on acceptable standards of services. It is expected that Service charter, to be called Customer Service Charter will assist in transforming the Public Service into a more, productive, professional, results and customer oriented institutions. An effective service charter system should entail effective mechanisms for enforcing compliance and ensuring accountability of service providers in complying with service standards. This, therefore, requires that these mechanisms be in built within the service charter system during the service charter formulation process.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION
The main essence of this chapter is to summarize the major aspects pertaining to the Assessment of the Impact of Service Charters on service delivery in Malawi with specific reference to Southern Region Water Board and come up with conclusions. Secondly, this Chapter gives recommendations based on the field findings within the broader context of the linkages between service charters and service delivery.

5.1 CONCLUSIONS
It was observed that the process of institutionalising a service charter system is generally being implemented in the Malawi Public Service. This thrust has been born out of realisation that business as usual approach to service delivery in the public service can no longer be sustained. The unsustainability arises out of two main reasons: The increasing awareness of the citizens of their rights thereby demanding better services in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, timeliness, equity, distributive justice, transparency and accountability; and, the realization by Government that the resources for service delivery are increasingly becoming limited. However, some implementation challenges in areas of institutional arrangement, coordination and capacity building have been noted.
While it was found that there is a definite national policy decision to implement the service charter programme in the public service the institutional linkage between national and departmental levels are weak. The coordination and organizational capacity of the programme within the institution was also weak mainly because the implementation process was perceived to be the exclusive function of the Task Force within the institution as opposed to the involvement of all members of staff. Capacity building in terms of the processes of service charters with specific regard to citizens or user rights was conducted only to the members of the user group committees but this did not trickle down to the members of general public making the majority of the service users largely unaware of their rights in terms of service charters with regard to service delivery.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS
This part of the chapter advances recommendations based on the critical analysis of issues which emerged out of the study.

5.2.1 Institutional Arrangement
Institutional arrangement in terms of implementation process, the researcher recommends the following:

i. A central office at national level should provide leadership for the design and implementation of service charters by;:

- Issuing up to date guidelines
- Providing technical support to implementing institutions; and
• Monitoring and evaluating the implementing process

ii. Heads of Public Service institutions should take responsibility for;

• The design and dissemination of service charters for their respective offices;
• Implementation and performance reporting; and
• Putting in place a mechanism for performance improvement based on the feedback from the service users.

iii. Service users will be expected to monitor and provide feedback on the design and implementation of service charters.

iv. All public service organizations comply with the requirements of developing and implementing service charters.

5.2.2 Coordination and Organizational Capacity
Service charter performance should both individually and institutionally be linked to capacity building initiatives to ensure that service standards are integrated into training and professional education of officials and professionals within the institution. Institutions should ensure that service charters standards are integrated into staff and institutional performance assessment process.

5.2.3. Capacity Building for Service Users
A deliberate effort should be made to impart knowledge to the service users on their rights in terms of;
i. Right to receive services without discrimination,

ii. Right to receive information on the nature, priorities and performance of service delivery;

iii. Right to receive a reason if services are delayed or denied;

iv. Right to appeal if services are denied; and Right to lodge a complaint about malpractice by public officials.
REFERENCES


