AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP IN FACILITATING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL MALAWI

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Sosten Sylvester Joseph Chinkonda hereby declare that this dissertation is a product of my own work and that where I have incorporated words or ideas of others, these have to the best of my knowledge been referenced properly. This dissertation is the first of its kind in my scholarly work and it has never been submitted to any other University.

SIGNED:......................................................DATE..........................................................
ABSTRACT

The study was carried out to assess the extent to which the intervention of traditional leaders is effective in mobilising support for community development projects and to examine the perceptions that communities have about the role of the traditional leaders in development projects. The study has been guided by the critique of neo-liberalism which exposes the negative effects of implementing the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in Third World countries.

The literature that has been reviewed has looked at the historical and political background of the role of chiefs and other traditional leaders in order to assess the nature of participation that is promoted through their involvement in development projects. An overview of the neo-liberal prescription and its critique has been made in order to expose the effects of the oil embargo of 1973 and the debt crisis of the 1980s on the economies of Third World countries in general and Malawi in particular.

On the basis of evidence which has been gathered through a survey and focus group discussion, the study has found that the intervention of traditional leaders is very effective in mobilising communities for development projects. It has further been established that communities have high regard for their traditional leaders and that they perceive them as crucial role players in the conception and implementation of development projects. The study has however established that traditional leaders use unorthodox means such as threats of punishment to solicit the cooperation of the community members which in essence is counterproductive to the participatory approach to development.

Key words: traditional leaders, development project, power, participation, social capital, Neo-liberalism, Debt crisis, Structural Adjustment Programme, rational choice
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DEDICATION

In memory of my daughter, Gloria who passed away during the period of this study and it is dedicated to my wife, Monica and my children, Chuma, Allan and Tiyamike for their unwavering support and perseverance during my absence.
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ACRONYMS

ECA: Economic Commission for Africa
IMF: International Monetary Fund
LDF: Local Development Fund
MASAF: Malawi Social Action Fund
MPS: Mont Pelerin Society formed in 1947 in France
NEC: National Economic Council
SAP: Structural Adjustment Programme
UNECA: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
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1.1 INTRODUCTION
The study seeks to explore the concept of participation in development to determine the effectiveness of traditional leaders in mobilising community support for development projects. The reconfiguration of power relations between the capitalist countries and the developing countries on one hand, and between the state and the traditional mode of governance on the other, will be analysed. Of particular interest is the role played by the traditional leaders in the construction of school buildings and teachers’ houses with resources from the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF hereafter) and the recently christened Local Development Fund (LDF). This will be achieved by assessing the roles that the traditional leaders in the area under study played during the initiation and implementation of the projects, and by analysing the perceptions that the communities have with regard to these roles.

The study was conducted in the area of traditional authority Tsabango in a rural part of Lilongwe district in Malawi. The area was selected because it benefitted from projects that were implemented under the MASAF/LDC ‘community driven’ initiatives. MASAF/LDC projects have been financed by the World Bank since 1996 under its social fund portfolio in order to provide the much needed shock absorbers to communities that were adversely affected by the unintended effects of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) and economic liberalisation (Vajja and White, 2008:1147). The area of traditional authority Tsabango lies to the south east of Lilongwe district, the capital city of Malawi in the central region of the country.

The area is largely populated by the Chewa speaking group which is an offshoot of the Maravi kingdom, a Bantu speaking group which originated from the Zaire-Congo region and occupied a large part of present day Malawi, and parts of present day Zambia and Mozambique in the 15th Century AD (Kandawire, 1977:1). The Chewa group is a matrilineal society whereby succession to the chieftainship is passed on to the heir from the female line. However, the Chewa speaking kingdom disintegrated
by the 18th century and “groups of people who were once united under one leader formed independent chiefdoms” (Kandawire, 1977:2) of which Tsabango Chieftaincy is one. In general terms, the traditional authority (Chief) is required by law to work under the general direction of the government appointed District commissioner to administer the area under his or her jurisdiction according to the customs and culture of the community, as long as these elements are not in conflict with the laws of the country (Chiefs Act of 1967, Laws of Malawi). The study has adopted two of the 1984 International Labour Organisation Survey definitions in which “participation is considered [as] a voluntary contribution by the people to one or another of the public programmes [which] are supposed to contribute to national development but the people are not expected to take part in shaping the programme or criticising its content” (Oakley and Marsden cited in Bergdall, 1993:2). The other definition adopted views participation “…as organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in a given social situation, on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control” (Oakley and Marsden cited in Bergdall, 1993:2-3). By using the above definitions, the study would like to underscore the importance of involving communities in decision making processes during implementation of development projects. When people are empowered to take control of the development process, they no longer depend on external stimulus or force to drive them towards the desired goals. It is hoped that by working with these definitions, the mystery surrounding the nature of participation that is spearheaded by traditional leaders will be unravelled. Throughout the study, the effectiveness of the intervention by traditional leaders shall mean their ability to solicit cooperation from the community without using force or other punitive measures such as denial of services or payment of fines in case of non-cooperation by members of the community. The traditional leaders shall mean persons who are in charge of their communities by virtue of their inherited positions and who govern according to their customs. Community development shall mean the process of uplifting the social and economic wellbeing of a given community and community development projects shall refer to those activities that are undertaken to improve the social and economic conditions of the given community.
1.2 HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND

In Malawi, there are fifteen major ethnic groups of people who are administered by the traditional system of governance, which dates back to the pre-colonial times. The traditional leaders of various ethnic groups are organised in a hierarchical order of command, which starts with the village headmen/women at the lowest level, then the Group village headmen/women, Sub-Traditional Authority (STA), Traditional Authority (TA), Senior Traditional Authority and the Paramount Chief at the apex. The British colonial government adopted a policy of indirect rule and used the traditional leaders to extend its authority and powers over the territory (Keulder, 1998:219-221). The traditional leaders worked with the District Commissioners to administer the population. After independence, the powers of the chiefs were trimmed through the enactment of the 1967 Chiefs Act although the chiefs were still expected to work in partnership with the District Commissioners. (Vajja and White, 2008:1156; Muriaas, 2009:32,34). The traditional authorities wielded unlimited powers over their subjects under the one party autocratic regime and they were used by the state to coerce people to take part in self help development projects and contribute gifts in kind such as cattle, goats and even chicken as gratitude to the then head of state. Some of the traditional leaders were using the state apparatus to extract the contributions from their subjects for their own selfish ends and part of the contributions ended up being shared among the leaders and the party zealots.

Malawi adopted a multiparty system of government in 1993 after a referendum, and the multiparty general elections, which ushered in a new government were held in May, 1994 (Chiweza cited in Muriaas, 2009:37). The new government obtained a loan from the World Bank to implement the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) development projects which were specifically aimed at empowering the communities through their inclusion in the implementation process. In other words, the projects that were to be financed under the Malawi Social Action Funds were to be community driven and had to involve the beneficiary communities during initiation and implementation (Tembo, 2003:13-14). The immediate challenge for the government therefore was how to mobilise community support for the development programme from the grassroots without evoking memories of the past autocratic regime. Given the high levels of illiteracy among the majority of the beneficiary communities, the
government had an uphill task to convince the populace about the importance of their participation in the development projects without recourse to unorthodox means of gaining compliance such as the use of force. In the wake of this dilemma, traditional authorities appeared on the scene as a solution because they are regarded as the only legitimate instrument that can be used by the state to mobilise support for development projects without arousing ill feelings from the communities. This thinking is in line with current view of the World Bank which “emphasise community and social cohesion as the foundation of development...and in Africa this has prompted the promotion of traditional authorities as agents of development because chiefs and elders are assumed to embody communal norms” (Grischow, 2008:64)

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM
Granted that the role of chiefs in mobilising community support for self-help projects in the past was carried out in an environment that was intimidating and therefore not conducive to effective participation, the study will make an assessment of the role of traditional leadership in mobilising community support for development projects to determine the effectiveness of their intervention. The study will also highlight the perceptions that the communities have with regard to the role of traditional leaders in community projects. The study seeks to unmask the role of the traditional leaders to determine the nature of people’s participation in community development projects. To generate its findings, the research has been guided by the following research questions and objectives:

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION
1. To what extent is the intervention of traditional leaders effective in mobilising support for development projects?
2. What perceptions do communities have about the role of traditional leaders in development projects?

1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
1. To determine the effectiveness of using chiefs and other traditional leaders in mobilising support for development projects.
2. To examine community perceptions about the role of traditional leaders in mobilising support for development projects.

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To determine the nature of participation that is facilitated by the local leadership, the study will adopt a critique of neo-liberalism to analyse the policy prescription of the International Finance Institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These institutions formed the basis for defining the parameters of the role of state in the economies of the developing countries in the 1980s and 1990s. The main argument is that contrary to the principles of individual freedom, good governance and accountability which are associated with neo-liberalism, the government of Malawi can be seen to use chiefs to mobilise communities as a gimmick to conceal its coercive power in the implementation process. Faced with cash flow problems as a result of implementing the Structural Adjustment Programmes in the 1980s and early 1990s, the state co-opted traditional leaders to mobilise support for its development programmes under the disguise of a participatory approach to development in order to augment its limited financial resources. At this moment, a brief exposition of neo-liberalism as a concept will be in order. The effects of implementing neo-liberal prescriptions in developing countries and Malawi in particular will follow.

Neo-liberalism is a paradigm in which economic relations are governed by individual freedom to accumulate wealth by engaging in enterprises with little or minimal interference from the state in the sphere of public life. It is generally believed that by acting independently, the market can efficiently allocate goods and services that can maximise individual benefits and enjoyment. Although the origin of this concept can be traced to the formation of Mont Pelerin Society (MPS) in 1947 in France (Turner, 2007:74), neo-liberalism became a dominant discourse in the 1980s and 1990s (Ruckert, 2006:43). According to Harvey, (2006:145)

“neo-liberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices which proposes that human well being can best be advanced by the maximisation of entrepreneurial freedoms within a framework characterised by private property rights, individual liberty, free market and free trade”.
This ideology came to be known as the Washington Consensus because of the implicit agreement among the United States Treasury, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) all of which are headquartered in Washington DC (Pender cited in Ruckert, 2006:42).

The role of the state under this ideological perspective is like that of a police officer in the sense that it is expected to maintain the institutional framework by ensuring security for the markets by way of providing the police and the military, as well as legal arrangements (Harvey, 2006:145). Among other things the neo-liberal policy prescription includes

“...key aspects such as minimal government intervention and the elimination of government subsidies, trade liberalisation, fiscal and monetary austerity, freeing of interest rates, privatisation of state owned businesses, well defined property rights and independent central banks” (Ruckert, 2006:43).

From the foregoing, it is apparent that the proponents of neo-liberalism advocate for a limited role of the state, which in essence deprives it of the potential to bolster its legitimacy on the populace by failing to provide for the needs of its citizens.

In this study, it will be demonstrated that the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) rendered the government ineffective in the provision of social services and infrastructure. To cover up this deficiency, the government decided to draft the traditional leaders into the development programmes in order to canvas support for its development agenda. Having been deprived of resources to provide for its citizens, the traditional leaders were viewed as allies in the mobilisation of grass root support for community projects. The traditional leaders were drafted to augment the limited financial capacity of the state to provide for its citizenry. For a long time, the institution of traditional leadership has been associated with anti-democratic practices such as forceful levying of tax and collaborating with colonial and neo-colonial governments which mistreated people. In view of these shortfalls, it will be argued that the incorporation of the traditional leaders in the development agenda was a gimmick that was employed by the state to conceal its coercive power. How the traditional leaders reinvented themselves to embrace the neo-liberal project remains to be seen in the light of their troubled history. (ECA, 2007:4).
1.7 RESEARCH METHODS
To capture relevant data relating to the role of the traditional leadership in community development and people's perception of the role of traditional leaders in development, the study used both quantitative and qualitative data. On the basis of systematic sampling of households from the village registers where every household at nth interval was selected from the population, questionnaires were administered to a selected sample of community members in the study area to capture data on the role of traditional leaders in mobilising community support for development projects. The survey also assisted in capturing information about the community perceptions of the role that is played by the traditional leaders (Hofstee, 2006:132-136; McNeil, 1960:11-39).

Triangulation was incorporated within the response category, and by using purposeful sampling, a focus group discussion was conducted with seven members of the community to have an in-depth understanding of the views of the communities with regard to their perception about the role of the traditional leaders, and their participation in the development activities. The focus group discussion was conducted with a small group in order to have a healthy debate and avoid “groupthink” which is normally associated with large groups. According to Terre Blanche, et al. (2006:304) the number of participants for most focus groups ranges from 6 to 12 people. The proceedings of the focus group discussion were audio recorded and transcribed to ensure the accuracy of the data. A note pad was also used to establish an audit trail of the semi-structured interview with the focus group (Terre Blanche, et al. (2006:49, 85,133-135).

1.8 DATA ANALYSIS
Data that was obtained through the questionnaires was coded and processed by a computer to obtain a simple statistical description of the findings in terms of total scores by each subject on every item, distribution of the items and the emerging trend in their relationship. The content of the text that was generated from the focus group discussion was analysed critically to determine themes and categories of issues that later formed the basis for the interpretation of the findings (Terre Blanche, et al. (2006:193.322-326).
1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY
The findings of this empirical research will provide insight into the dynamics that are at play when people participate in development activities. An understanding of the role of traditional leaders in development could prove useful in the formulation of various development interventions which are aimed at community empowerment. It is hoped that the study might offer insights considered useful in understanding the nature of community participation when traditional leaders are incorporated to spearhead the development process. The insights gleaned from this report could be useful to planners and policy makers in the design and implementation of development projects.

1.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
Traditional leaders play a crucial role in the development of areas under their jurisdiction. It is important to understand the nature of their authority in order to appreciate the dynamics of community participation in development projects. Be that as it may, the need for a large scale survey which can cover the entire country could help to unravel some cultural variations. This study was limited to an area which is predominantly occupied by the Chewa ethnic group and matrilineal by descent. Being a mosaic, Malawi is inhabited by various ethnic groups some of which are patrilineal by descent. The availability of financial resources and time limited the scope of the study as it would not be feasible to work with a sample that could be extrapolated from a large population.

1.11 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT
The research report is organised into five chapters. Chapter one provides an introduction to the research problem, questions and objectives as well as the conceptual framework that guided the study. The methods adopted to gather data and procedures for data analysis as well as the significance of the study have been highlighted. Chapter two provides the literature review. As such it discusses the arguments that have been advanced on the subject, as well as existing gaps in the literature. In particular, the discussion focuses on the role of traditional leaders and
their involvement in the development process. Specific attention is paid to the concept of participation and its association with the institution of traditional leadership. Chapter three considers the methodology and the research design and highlight the steps that were taken in field work preparation to collect data, the research tools that were used and the procedures for data analysis. Chapter four presents the data from the survey and the focus group discussion (FGD) and highlights the themes that emerge from the discussion. An exposition of the results of the survey and the selected narrative of the focus group discussion has also been made to contextualise the findings. Chapter five concludes this report and provides the answers to the research questions.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION
Traditional leaders play a vital role in the management of affairs in local communities in Africa. The main argument in this study is that the use of traditional leaders in mobilising support for community projects in Malawi is a gimmick that is deployed by the government to reinforce a neo-liberal agenda on people. The incorporation of traditional leaders in the development agenda of the state conceals the coercive power of the state under the disguise of community empowerment. The rhetoric of community empowerment and involvement rationalises the disempowering effects of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) on the lives of ordinary people as will be seen below. This chapter explores the institution of traditional leadership, discusses community participation in development and provides details for the policy framework within which the institution of traditional leadership operates in Malawi. It also highlights barriers to effective rural participation which draws attention to the constraints faced by a newly elected government in Malawi in providing services to the people. The oil embargo of 1973, the resultant debt crisis of 1980s and the subsequent imposition of the Structural Adjustment Programmes on Third World countries by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund will be described to put the effects of the stabilisation policies on Malawi’s economy in perspective. A critique of neo-liberal prescriptions will be made before concluding the discussion with a description of the process for implementing MASAF/LDC projects with a particular focus on the role of traditional leaders.

2.2 A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP
The institution of traditional leadership continues to show its resilience and relevance following the collapse of social reforms and market led interventions in many African states (ECA, 2007: X). In their analysis, the Economic Commission for Africa (Southern Africa) acknowledges that “the pre-colonial societies were governed by social relations which were based on family and kinship ties and the distribution of economic resources went along the line of communalism” (ECA,2007:17). The workshop on ‘Harnessing Local Governance in Southern Africa’ which took place in South Africa in 2007 realised the importance of the traditional leadership and
recommended concrete measures that would strengthen the institution. This is an important step as this initiative would help the institution to grasp the intricacies of development needs for the rural communities.

The need for decentralisation of political power to lower levels has, in turn necessitated the reintegration of the institution of traditional leadership in public service delivery mechanisms. The “judicial, administrative and religious powers wielded by the traditional leaders were curtailed” (ECA, 2007: IX) during the colonial and post colonial projects but this did not prevent them from enjoying the legitimacy and loyalty from members of their communities. It is for this reason that the Conference on “Strengthening Local Governance in Southern Africa” (ECA, 2007:X) recommended, inter alia, that there should be “capacity building and strengthening of the institution, information and knowledge sharing and boosting of good governance”(ECA,2007:X). The inclusion of good governance as one of the strategies for strengthening the institution strikes a similar cord with the neo-liberal prescription of the World Bank and the IMF where recipients of its funding are required to demonstrate that principles of good governance, such as transparency and accountability are respected and upheld. Similarly, at this workshop, delegates agreed to enhance the principles of good governance in the institution by promoting “participation, Information, accountability, and political neutrality of the traditional leadership” (ECA, 2007: XII).

From the foregoing, promotion of good governance among the traditional leaders is viewed by some scholars such as Ntsebeza, Mamdani, Walker and others as a ploy for the institution to reinvent itself because of the prevailing socio-political and economic circumstances. According to these scholars, the current democratic environment is at variance with the traditional mode of governance because the traditional leadership is not democratic in all its manifestations.

For instance, Mahmood Mamdani (cited in Cook, 2005:126) has argued that South African progression to democracy had been subverted because the tribal authorities who were established by the minority government continued to exercise absolute authority over the people in the rural areas. He posits that the “South African transition to democracy is incomplete as long as part of the population continue to
live as ‘subjects’ rather than full ‘citizens’ of the state” (ibid). While the scholarly work of Mamdani is illuminating, the question of ways and means of wiping out the institution of traditional leadership remains unresolved. The entrenchment of traditional authority in the rural hinterland is such that no one can simply wish it away without incurring social and political costs. It is pragmatic for the modern state to co-exist with the institution to maintain the presence of the state in areas where tentacles of its power are apparently missing.

Furthermore, critics of the institution of traditional leadership argue that the hierarchical nature of the institution makes it difficult and indeed impossible for community members to discuss matters on an equal footing with those that occupy a privileged position in the echelon of the society (LiPuma and Koelbe, 2009:201-223). Community members of different social status have needs which may be different. It is difficult to harmonise their interests and the voice of poor people which often get submerged into the dominant discourse of the powerful members of the society. Participation is an inclusive process and

“...participatory action, by its very nature, requires the decisions made and means adopted for their execution to be collective decisions; but this does not mean that the status of a leader in a participatory process is insignificant. Quite to the contrary, leadership is required [to act] in a facilitative function” (Sanchez, 2004:20-21)

The critics of traditional leadership feel that the institution is incompatible with the modern democratic dispensation because it lacks transparency, accountability and deprives the people of their democratic right to choose their leaders. Succession to leadership is based on hereditary lines and traditional leaders are simply imposed on the people. According to this school, the institution of traditional leadership belongs to antiquity and it should be abolished in order to reclaim rights for subjects in the rural areas. This school of thought maintains that it is inconceivable to expect participatory democratic values from an institution whose survival is heavily dependent on the of autocratic management of the communities (Ntsebeza, 1999:9-16; ECA,2007:4). It is this thinking and the questioning of the democratic credentials of the traditional institutions that have motivated this study and it is hoped that the nature of people’s
participation in community projects would be appreciated by examining the roles of the traditional leaders.

On the other hand, scholars like Mokgoro and others have argued that the institution of traditional leadership is inherently democratic and that the affairs of the community are conducted in a democratic way, although different to the liberal representative democracy. He justifies the hierarchical structure of the institution as one way of establishing order and stability. Mokgoro further argues that the democratic ideals of the institution of traditional leadership are manifested in their method of decision making where emphasis is placed on deliberation which is aimed at reaching consensus acceptable to all (Mokgoro cited in ECA, 2007:3). However, Mokgoro does not highlight the composition of members that are involved in the deliberative decision making process and the place of those whose voice is likely to be submerged by the ideas of prominent members of the societies such as councillors, wealthy individuals and relatives of the traditional leaders. This argument does not consider the interests of people whose voice may be submerged by the privileged in society. Those groups perceived to lack power such as women, poor people and vulnerable members such as children and people with disabilities, are often, it seems, disadvantaged by the institution of traditional leadership.

Furthermore, Mokgoro extends his argument by contending that hereditary choice of leadership for the institution is provided with mechanisms for checks and balances whereby the exercise of power by the traditional leaders is only done through the councils of men and probably with a few women to avoid excesses of a leader (Mokgoro cited in ECA, 2007:3). This argument does not solve the problem of people’s right to choose their leader and to question the unpopular decisions that may be made by the traditional leaders, even though the decisions could be made through the councils.

Similarly, Nkosi Holomisa is of the view that the institution of traditional leadership should be preserved to safeguard the interests of the rural communities. According to him, “the institution of traditional leadership can only be irrelevant when all Africans decide to abandon or discard their identity, customs and languages”
(Holomisa, 2009:36). This is the view that is widely shared by most traditional leaders in Africa as they all strive to prop up their seemingly waning legitimacy amid growing resentment from the liberalists who regard the existence of the institution as a perpetuation of authoritarian rule that was left over by the colonial and post colonial one party governments in Africa. Since ignoring one’s culture can only be done at one’s peril, Holomisa appears to presuppose that Africans will have to accommodate the traditional leaders to guarantee their socio-economic and political development. In Africa the idea of consensus building takes precedence over the majority vote and it is in this respect that the notion of democracy as understood in a liberal context is inapplicable to the traditional African communities. However, the question still remains as to how are the people selected to take part in the decision making process and in whose interest do they engage in the so called deliberative democracy. According to the rational choice theory, people will only engage themselves in a participatory arrangement if they perceive that they would get individual benefits accruing from the exercise (cf. Ryan, et al. 2005:287-313). So it is inconceivable to imagine that the self interested individuals who are involved in a deliberative decision making process would include the aspirations of those that are excluded from the process if those aspirations are at variance with their perceived interests.

An exposition of the role of traditional leadership in the development process is therefore important to unpack the nature of its power over the communities and determine its compatibility with the neo-liberal principles of individual freedom and liberty. This is particularly important because of the importance that is attached to the significance of involving chiefs in the implementation of development projects. In South Africa, for example development agencies depend on chiefs to ensure successful outcomes of various development interventions (Ntsebeza cited in Kewana, 2009:95).

2.3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE AND TRADITIONAL LEADERS

The relationship between the state and the institution of traditional leadership has been adversarial and cordial depending on the prevailing circumstances. The state has relied on the traditional leaders to champion its development agenda by using them as agents of change. By using their power and influence, traditional leaders
have mobilised the local communities to participate in development programmes initiated by the government. In Malawi, the colonial government had wanted to neutralise the powers of the traditional leaders but they realised the futility of the exercise. The government therefore began to empower the chiefs by among other things enacting the District Administration (Ordinance) Act of 1912 (Chiweza cited, in Muriaas, 2009:34). The Act gave the traditional leaders power to “collect tax, maintain law and order, report village deaths and construct roads” (Chiweza cited in Muriaas, ibid). By collaborating with government in the collection of tax, the traditional leaders were brought into direct conflict with the demands of their people who saw them as traitors. The imposition of tax on the people by the colonial government was regarded as an unwarranted intrusion of the state into the people’s welfare. Many Africans resented the payment of tax and by cooperating with the colonial government, The traditional leaders alienated themselves from their own people.

Traditional leaders have played a significant role in the socio-economic development of many African countries because the majority of Africans still pay their allegiance to the authority of traditional leaders. For instance, “in South Africa and Malawi, traditional authorities have played a continuous role in local governance since pre-colonial times, thereby legitimising authoritarian governments prior to the political liberalisation in the 1990s” (Muriaas, 2009:29).

In other countries such as Uganda, the power and functions of the traditional authorities were curtailed after gaining independence in 1967. (ibid). Currently, the constitution of Uganda stipulates that “a traditional leader or cultural leader shall not have or exercise any administrative, legislative or executive powers of government or local government” (The Constitution of Uganda,1996,Article 246,Clause 3(f) cited in Muriaas,2009:33). The Constitution further states that “people are not compelled to pay allegiance or contribute to the maintenance of traditional or cultural leaders” (Constitution of Uganda cited in Muriaas, 2009:33). The Constitution of Uganda provides a vivid picture of an instance where the state has flexed its muscles to sideline the traditional authorities in governance. The relationship between the state and the traditional leaders in the scenario of Uganda can best be described as hostile since the traditional leaders are only allowed to function independently of the state.
In Zimbabwe, the institution of traditional leadership was abolished after gaining independence in order to create a unified state by promulgating the Zimbabwean Customary Law and Primary Courts Act in 1981 which removed the judicial powers of the traditional leaders (Mijiga, 1998:11). However, the continued relevance of the traditional leaders in the sphere of public life has compelled the government to empower the traditional leaders by among other things drafting a cultural policy in 1993 which sought to “strengthen the institution with regard to its economic, social, religious and political status” (Mijiga, 1998:12). Furthermore, traditional leaders can now take part in elections as sponsored or independent candidates (ibid).

In Botswana, the powers of the traditional leaders were reduced. However, as Turdoff notes, there is growing evidence that people still pay their allegiance to chiefs rather than the modern district councils (Keulder, 1998: 117). In Namibia,

> “the traditional leaders facilitate the provision of “free community labour for large development projects; and in Botswana, they articulate local needs to development planners....They are also a link between the various development agencies, public and private, and the local communities. ...In short, they [traditional leaders] provide legitimacy and support to centrally initiated policies” (Keulder, 1998:318).

In Malawi, traditional leaders have played a pivotal role during the implementation of Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) projects. Schou (2007:609), notes that

> “chiefs...were particularly successful in identifying projects and developing project proposals in their areas, mobilising their communities to contribute to project implementation and influencing district decision making - either through their mandated role on the district development committee or by intervening in the technical appraisals of project proposals by District Executive Committee”.

In summary, the evidence that has been gathered thus far suggests that the state has co-opted the traditional leaders in order to bolster its political legitimacy and entrench its power in the rural hinterland. However, where the institution of traditional leadership was perceived to be anti-government, the state moved swiftly to curtail the functions of the traditional leaders as the case in Uganda demonstrates.
2.4 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The concept of participation is not new in development discourse and it has generated substantial debate among scholars, development practitioners and policy makers. There was massive disenchantment with the top down approach to development of Third World countries because their poverty levels continued to worsen despite the massive injection of foreign aid and capital. The concept gained its prominence in the 1970’s and the participation of people at the grass root level in the implementation of the projects was considered to be crucial to the attainment of the basic needs such as food, shelter, health and literacy (Nelson and Wright, 1995:186). Makumbe (1996:3) notes that community driven initiatives in Africa are simply instances where bureaucrats manipulate the beneficiary communities to implement preconceived projects which have nothing to do with the felt needs of the communities. In essence, the majority of the people in many African countries have been excluded from the decision making processes on issues that affect their welfare.

Bureaucrats exploit the power relations that exist between the traditional leaders and their ‘subjects’ to move the people towards their predetermined course of action. The exclusion of people in public policy making has had dire consequences for the welfare of the people. This tendency became worse during the epoch of the Structural Adjustment Programmes when many governments were preoccupied with the management of their debt. The meagre economic growth realised through the implementation of stabilisation policies failed to trickle down to make a positive impact on people’s welfare (UNECA cited in Makumbe, 1996:1)

However, it is worth noting that the current literature on community participation in development is concerned with the impact of particular development interventions and pays little attention to the role of various players within the community. For instance, Van Donge notes that “social investment funds provide for social infrastructure such as schools, clinics, water supply, and bridges [which are] disbursed through community involvement and participatory procedures (Van Donge, 2004:347). However, he does not appear to overemphasise the critical role and challenges of the various stakeholders during the conception, initiation and implementation of the projects. The role of the traditional leaders is taken for granted
in his article and the participation of the people is taken rather superficially. Similarly, in their study of the projects funded by the World Bank under the Social Investment Fund in Malawi and Zambia, Vajja and White acknowledge the power and influence of the traditional leadership in MASAF projects in Malawi (Vajja and White, 2008). However, they too do not appear to indicate the entry point for the traditional leadership when the MASAF projects are being conceptualised, initiated and implemented. It is therefore not clear whether the widely accepted entry point for the traditional leadership is indeed appropriate to derive maximum dividends from the participation of the community in the development projects. The role of traditional leadership in mobilising the communities to embark on development projects is taken as a given. It is therefore important to analyse the current role of the traditional leaders in community development to determine the degree of authority and influence that the leaders exert on the members of their communities.

Scholars have questioned the impact of participatory development on the lives of vulnerable community members. They have demonstrated that power relations within the community determine the categories of people who are likely to benefit from participating in development activities. Henkel and Stirrat have analysed “the power relations and conflicts in the community and in some participatory processes” (cited in Miraftab, 2004:244). They argue that by failing to understand the dynamics that prevail in participatory arrangements, the notion of participation has been used to promote undemocratic tendencies in development practice. (ibid)

Other scholars have argued that “participatory processes [are] effective means of inclusionary control and [that they] mask relations of dominance and unjust power” (Cooke & Kothari cited in Miraftab, 2004:244). These arguments build up a strong case for one to question the effectiveness of relying on traditional leaders to mobilise community support for participatory development projects. Traditional leaders already have a privileged position of authority and their invitation to a development meeting is likely to be interpreted in a normal way. In fact, the presence of the traditional leaders can have an effect on the outcomes of meetings because of the paternalistic tendencies of the traditional leaders.
The idea of harmony of interests among the members of the community is taken for granted and presupposes that people are not differentiated in terms of their structures and their needs. This idea of “harmony” should be problematised. The idea that traditional leaders are altruistic is misleading because evidence suggests that traditional leaders sometimes act in their own interest and at the expense of the communities which they serve. For instance, Chief Khombedza of Salima district in Malawi was reportedly arrested for allegedly receiving money from his people in exchange for positions of village headmen and Group village headmen (Daily Times, 2011). The varying interests among community members make it extremely difficult to achieve consensus on development matters since individuals or groups will strive to adopt a programme that suit their interests. Given their battered reputation because of their association with policies of colonial and autocratic governments, the traditional authorities lack legitimacy to champion participatory approaches to development.

Similarly, in his conceptual model, Arnstein (1969) presents an eight rung Ladder of Citizen Participation to highlight the level of citizen involvement in the issues that affect them. The eight rungs are further divided into three broad categories depending on the degree of citizen involvement ranging from “non-participation, degree of tokenism” to the last category of “citizen power” (Arnstein, 1969:217). Arnstein further contends that the concept of participation has turned into rhetoric because what is touted as citizen participation is merely a public relations exercise where the power holders manipulate, inform and consult the under privileged members of the community to create a semblance of participatory democracy (Arnstein, 1969:216-224). Arnstein mentions some of the tactics for manipulating the community members such as the use of technical jargon and cooptation of some vocal members into committees. However, what is not emphasised in this argument are the underhand strategies that the power holders may employ in order to overcome resistance from the non-cooperating individuals. Certainly, if resistance is to be overcome in any given circumstances, the application of a certain amount of force or pressure or manipulation becomes inevitable.
2.5 POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR THE INSTITUTION OF TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP IN MALAWI

2.5.1 Chiefs Act of 1967

The Chiefs Act of 1967 recognises and provides for the institution of traditional leadership in Malawi. Among other things, the Act stipulates the area of jurisdiction for the institution and provides a definition of a village as “a collection of adjacent huts in which reside at least thirty male Malawians aged eighteen years and over” (Laws of Malawi, CAP 22:03). According to the prevailing definition, the gender dimension of considering the residential status of women is silent and it begs a question as to what would happen if thirty female Malawians of the same age range were to reside in a given locality. Be this as it may, the Act further outlines the functions of a chief and offences that may be punishable if one is found guilty of undermining the authority of the traditional leaders. The functions of a chief as outlined in the Act are as follows:

“a) to preserve the public peace

b) to carry out traditional functions of his office under customary law in so far as the discharge of such functions is not contrary to the constitution or any written law and is not repugnant to natural justice or morality

c) to assist in the collection of tax

d) to assist in the general administration of the district in which his area of jurisdiction is situate[d] and for such purpose to carry out such functions as the District Commissioner may require and for any of the purposes mentioned in No. a), c) and d) to carry out and enforce any lawful directions of the District Commissioner” (Laws of Malawi, s7 of the 1967 Chiefs Act)

Section 3, subsection 5 prohibits the traditional authorities from exercising their powers within the cities, municipalities and townships, while section 11 provides for the President of the Republic to remove from office any traditional leader from the rank of a chief and above “by writing under his hand” (Laws of Malawi, Vol IV,CAP 22:03).
2.5.1.1 Offences and Penalties
The Chiefs Act of 1967 outlines offences and punishment that can be meted out if one violates the provisions of the Act and some of the offences are as follows:

(a) Pretending to be a chief or purportedly discharging any of the functions of a chief.

(b) Conspiring against or undermining the power or authority of a chief.

(c) Obstruction or interference with the lawful discharge of the functions of the chief.

(d) "wilfully disobeys any lawful instruction or direction, whether written or verbal," (Laws of Malawi, S 22) of a traditional leader. (Laws of Malawi, Section 22 of the Chiefs Act).

By simply looking at the provisions of this Act, the traditional leaders were given uncontested powers to govern the affairs of the people under their jurisdiction while the state was assured of their upward accountability by placing them under the direct supervision of district Commissioners and having them removed from office, when necessary, by the President. It has been argued that the chiefs used these powers to force people to pay tax and take part in self help projects and in so doing they were effectively being used by the one party autocratic state to act as agents of social control (Chiweza, Chanock cited in Muriaas, 2009:34). Given these overriding powers, the involvement of traditional leaders in mobilising communities is not in sync with the rhetoric of neo-liberalism where individual freedoms and liberties are supposed to be protected by the state. An assessment of their role in development will help to understand the nature of power that chiefs wield over their subjects.

2.5.2 Decentralisation Policy and the Local Government Act
The Constitution of the Republic of Malawi provides for the decentralisation of political authority from the centre to the lower levels of government in order to provide space and the platform for citizen participation in matters that affect people at the local level. To give effect to this constitutional requirement, the government of Malawi formulated the decentralisation policy in 1998 which culminated in the promulgation of the Local Government Act in 1998. According to the Act, the District Assemblies, Town Assemblies and City Assemblies constitute another layer of local government with powers to make decisions regarding the development of their local areas. Chiefs
whose jurisdictions are within the district assemblies are invited to sit in the assemblies as ex officio members with no powers to vote on issues. The traditional leaders still provide the necessary link between their communities and the district during the implementation of development programmes that are agreed upon in the Assemblies (Hussein, 2003:272-280). The traditional leaders act as a bridge between the rural areas and the government authorities. They are expected to articulate the aspirations and needs of their communities to appropriate government authorities at district level for necessary intervention.

2.6 OBSTACLES TO EFFECTIVE RURAL PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

2.6.1 Poverty
Lack of basic necessities to support the livelihoods of the people in Malawi severely hamper initiatives to involve the masses in matters that affect their welfare as most of their time is spent on actions that will ensure their minimum survival. According to the United Nations, 60% of the country’s 13.1 million people live below the poverty threshold (Daily Times Supplement, 2011) and it is plausible to argue that the survival strategies that the people employ take most of their time, leaving little space for them to engage in community development activities. Under such circumstances, it is inconceivable that people will volunteer to sacrifice their labour and time towards activities that are geared towards the realisation of the public good.

2.6.2 High levels of illiteracy
An informed and educated citizenry is an important catalyst for the development of any country because of its ability to grasp and understand issues pertaining to development. The majority of people in the rural areas are illiterate hence their being ill equipped to grasp the importance of their being involved in participatory development activities (Msiska et al.(2008:8), Kishindo,1994:20-21). In fact, it is this perceived weakness on the part of the rural people which is exploited by the bureaucrats and development agencies in order to impose development projects and programmes which have no relevance for the intended beneficiaries. According to Hussein, “the [low] level of education and economic standing of a large number of people... are not conducive to the institutionalisation of democratic ethos” (2003:277) as evidenced by what Sukali pointed out when people failed to comprehend the
importance of their involvement in local government elections, and the role of the councillors after a break of six years after the dissolution of the local councils (cited in Hussein, 2003:277). It should be noted that access to information is a prerequisite for good decision making. People who are illiterate are not able to access information which is crucial to the making of enlightened decisions on developmental matters.

2.6.3 Politicisation of development projects

Malawi adopted a multi party democracy following the rejection of the one party system of government in 1993 and this ushered in various political parties which claim their membership from the same communities. The politicisation of development projects by the ruling party elite and functionaries at the local level has meant the systematic alienation of members of other parties. In most cases, this has led to lack of their interest to take part in development activities lest they be seen as enhancing the credibility of their opponents, thereby reducing their chances of being voted into power. The majority of the people have not embraced the ideals of multi party democracy and this is more pronounced during election times as various political players resort to some anti democratic tendencies such as mudslinging and use of violence to scare political opponents. Hussein, 2003:277 notes that citizen participation in affairs that affect them can only take place within an atmosphere where people are tolerant of the views of people from different political backgrounds. Rural communities need to be sensitised about the ideals of democracy to ensure that people of diverse political views and inclinations are united on development matters. Civic education would therefore go a long way in promoting harmony of interests among community members irrespective of their political leanings.

Furthermore, many development projects are highly politicised to an extent that the politicians use the power of incumbency to distribute the projects. Evidence on the ground suggests that many development projects are initiated in areas where the incumbent politicians are assured of getting maximum political support during elections. Consequently, the politicisation of the projects makes it difficult for community members to demand services from the service providers on the basis of rational and objective assessment of the development needs for the communities. This view is echoed by Chief Khwethemule of Thyolo district in Malawi who states that
“It is extremely difficult for traditional leaders to quiz public service providers on development without burning one’s fingers. He [further] explains that this has led his subjects to regard development as a privilege or grace from politicians” (Daily Times, 2011).

This problem is endemic in many developing countries to an extent that people do not demand services from their governments as of right but rather as a privilege.

2.6.4 Excessive bureaucratic direction

Many technocrats hold onto their paternalistic attitude towards the rural people. They are accustomed to dictate what they think would be best for the people rather than implementing what the people feel is best for them. Consequently, the people are not consulted during the initiation of the community projects but are simply invited through the powerful medium of traditional leaders to attend development meetings where they are told about the intended projects. The meetings are organised as a public relations exercise to create a semblance of consultative meetings between the people and the development agency. In extreme cases, the people are not consulted to provide their input into the development needs of their areas and this is amplified by Chief Kadewere of Chiradzulu district in Malawi who states that “…service providers hardly consult on what they intend to do in our areas. We only get news about development [which] is about to take place in our area through the media” (Daily Times, 2011). This tendency denies the affected community the opportunity to acquire the power of agency, with the requisite skills to drive the process from project initiation, implementation and evaluation. In his study, Bergdall outlined some of the factors that hamper effective rural participation and they include but are not limited to

“a strong tradition of centralised planning and administrative[control], centralised authority..., prevalence of an atmosphere of passivity and dependence in communities, limited organisational and managerial skills and exclusion of women in decision making processes [which] is compounded by their lack of access to information and educational opportunities” (Bergdall, 1993:3)

Chinsinga (2003:129) echoes the above sentiments by arguing that lack of institutional framework to support and entrench participatory planning ideals in the
poverty alleviation programmes suggests that there is little commitment on the part of policy makers to involve the grassroots in the process of making decisions on issues that affect their lives. He goes on to state that “the professed commitment to participatory planning [by the bureaucrats] in the development process is a rhetoric that is couched in order to appease the West” (ibid). It is therefore plausible to argue that the genuine participation of people will remain elusive if the development agencies and bureaucrats continue to display their paternalistic attitude towards the rural dwellers when it comes to the execution of development projects as people will continue to regard projects brought in in such a way as ‘government projects’.

The above reasons for non-participation of people in development projects are corroborated by Williams (2003:210) who states that factors that impede genuine participation in South Africa include:

“lack of information and awareness about the participatory process, lack of adequate data base of community organisations resulting in limited number of scheduled meetings, logistical hiccups i.e. transport to and from the public participation venues making it difficult for communities to attend council scheduled meetings and lack of organisation by local communities resulting in their being represented by so called leaders without community consent”.

It has therefore been noted that there is need to have a proper mechanism in place to ensure that pitfalls hampering effective rural participation are eliminated. This will require mass civic education of the rural population to meaningfully reap the fruits of people’s participation in development projects.

2.7 THE OIL EMBARGO OF 1973 AND MALAWI’S ECONOMIC CRISIS
The oil embargo of 1973 by Arabic states following the Israel-Arab conflict and the economic recession of the 1970s forced Western countries to adopt strategies to protect their economies through such measures as trade protectionism (Riddell, 1992:54). This practice entailed the imposition of tax by developed countries on foreign goods to stimulate consumption of their domestic goods. These measures adversely affected economies of Third World countries as the market for their raw materials shrank. There was a sudden reduction in export returns and Third World countries, which had hitherto borrowed at concessional rates from the western
commercial banks, were negatively affected by the sudden turn of events. This development made it extremely difficult for developing countries to service their debts, hence the debt crisis of 1980s which crippled economies of third world countries (Mohan, 2009; Harvey, 2006:148,154).

Faced with the imminent possibility of non payment of loans to creditor nations and banks by the developing nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) swiftly moved in to apply a standardised dosage of structural adjustment policies. These policies were essentially aimed at arresting the economic volatility in borrowing nations to ensure stability at macroeconomic level through target inflation and reductions in budget deficits. Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) are formulated along the principles of free market operations to achieve “prosperity and development” (Mohan, 2009:6). Among other things, Structural Adjustment Programmes for the economy entails removal of “tariff barriers to promote competitive trade, currency devaluation to make exports cheaper, withdrawal of state subsidies to stimulate the market transactions and make people less dependent on state welfare, bureaucratic reforms and downsizing of government, cost recovery mechanisms by way of user fees for provision of public services and the sale of public assets to private entities to shrug off some of the burden from the state” (Mohan, 2006:6)

The collapse of communism in the late 1980s in Eastern Europe accelerated the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in Third World countries at a pace which is unprecedented in economic history of the World. Faced with no viable alternatives and having no-one to lean on in terms of ideological support, Third World countries, including Malawi, grudgingly and unwillingly accepted the IMF stabilisation policy package the implementation of which had far reaching and negative social and economic repercussions on the lives of ordinary people in developing countries (Harvey, 2006; Tsie, 1996:77-78).

Malawi has heavily depended on tobacco as a major of export commodity, and the country witnessed unprecedented economic growth between 1964 and 1979 as a result of favourable international market conditions (Malawi Government cited in
Munthali, 2004:15; Jackson, 1985:1085). However, the world economic recession of the 1980s produced a surprise jab and knock down effect on Malawi’s economy and as the World Bank states, “...[the] trade balance has often been in deficit with the export value of tobacco and tea, the principle export commodities being in decline” (World Bank cited in Munthali, 2004:15). "The rise in international oil prices, the declining levels of exports and as a land locked country, the civil war in Mozambique in the 1970s and 1980s greatly impaired Malawi’s economy and placed it at the mercy of ['the life saving machines'] of the IMF and the World Bank” (Malawi Government cited in Munthali, 2004:15).

2.8 EFFECTS OF THE STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMME IN MALAWI
The debt crisis of 1980s forced the country to accept the IMF mission which devised a package for stabilising the economy of the country. Among other things, the state was ordered to withdraw from the market by withdrawing subsidies on agriculture, education and other key sectors of social life (Chisala cited in Munthali, 2004:15). The impact of these measures was catastrophic as agricultural output fell to an all time low resulting in crop failure of 1984 which resulted in starvation (Ellis, 2007:6-7; Chinsinga, 2008:7; Mohan, 2009:6). Livestock production decreased as farmers were deprived of better extension services for improved animal husbandry practices. Provision of health services was severely hampered following shortage of financial resources to procure essential drugs (Malawi Government cited in Munthali, 2004:15).

There was a noticeable school dropout rate following the hiking of user fees which ejected children of the poor from the system. The social infrastructure was dilapidated following neglect and disrepair and in rural areas the site of abandoned dip tanks and livestock stands out to date as epitomes of social disorder that the implementation of structural adjustment programmes engendered in developing countries. The privatisation of state enterprises in the name of achieving production efficiency led to massive retrenchment of workers who joined their kinfolk in the rural areas who were equally affected by the impact of the SAPs in the agricultural sector (Personal observation).
Politically, the one party hegemonic rule of Dr Kamuzu Banda was challenged both internally and externally and this paved way for the adoption of a multi party form of government in 1994 (NEC cited in Chinsinga, 2008:4). The multiparty government leadership finished off what had remained of the implementation process by selling wholesale what previously belonged to the people as assets of public enterprises. Faced with a challenge of political legitimacy, the new government negotiated a loan with the World Bank to implement a social infrastructure programme which could partly be owned by the people. This is the origin of the Malawi Social Action Fund in Malawi which will be crucial to the analysis of the role of traditional leadership in mobilising support for development projects.

2.9 CRITIQUE OF NEO-LIBERAL ECONOMIC PRESCRIPTIONS

Granted that the neo-liberal prescriptions were predicated on the notions of rule of law, transparency, individual freedom to engage in business as opposed to collectivisation of means of production and accountability of government, it is surprising that in some developing countries such as Malawi traditional leaders were accorded a significant role of facilitating development for their communities. Some scholars, as argued above, regard the institution of traditional leadership to be undemocratic, unaccountable and lacking transparency in its dealings with its ‘subjects’ (Ntsebeza, 1999:9, 16)). The World Bank and its sister institution, the IMF, imposed the Structural Adjustment Programmes to liberalise trade and maximise individual freedom to pursue wealth and happiness in the developing countries. At the same time the freedom of the masses in the rural areas was limited and restricted to achieve a reasonable level of subsistence as their states failed to intervene to remove distortions in the operation of the market (Harvey, 2006). The negative effects of the Structural Adjustment Programmes are aptly summed up by Tsie (1996:80) who argues that “SAPs are inherently anti-people and undemocratic in content [in the sense that] they [were] imposed from above with little internal debate as to their timing, sequencing and intensity”. In general terms, the developing countries experiences social and economic hardships as a result of implementing the Structural Adjustment Programmes.

The strict implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programmes in the 1980s and early 1990s has meant that Western capital in liaison with Third World elites replaced
the domination of the state in public spheres of life. To protect the interests of Western capital, the elites in Third World countries have to control massive discontent from their people. To achieve this end, the Third World elites co-opt certain elements within the socio-political framework to ensure the legitimacy of the government. It is at this juncture that chiefs and other traditional leaders become instrumental in mobilising support for government development programmes and guaranteeing the legitimacy of the political establishment.

Given the cash flow problems that developing countries undergo during the implementation of neo-liberal economic reforms (Riddell, 1992:61), the mobilisation of labour by traditional leaders helps to augment the financial resources and the capabilities of the government, to provide for infrastructure development in the rural hinterland at an affordable cost. This is a neo-liberal economic contradiction in that it advocates for individual liberty to pursue capital accumulation with one hand, while at the same time making veiled rhetoric on the importance of collective action to generate social capital for the implementation of social infrastructure development programmes.

2.10 IMPLEMENTATION OF MASAF PROJECTS AND THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS

The World Bank has been disbursing loans to support community driven development initiatives because of “the social capitalist bias towards community and group cooperation...as the motors for development” (Grischow, 2008: 65). The loans are disbursed under the World Bank portfolio of social investment fund. Originally, the loans were earmarked to ease the problems and the negative effects that are associated with the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in developing countries. With the passage of time, the social investment funds have been used as a means of building capacities of vulnerable communities. This assistance is provided to communities that demonstrate commitment and willingness to initiate and implement development projects to improve their socio-economic status (Vajja and White, 2008:1147). There is consensus in the World Bank that “collective action is important to development because livelihoods are affected by people’s degree of association, belonging and involvement (Bebbington cited in Grischow, 2008: 65). It is generally agreed that by working together towards
developmental objectives, communities can build up the necessary social capital to uplift their status.

The Malawi government has since 1996 benefitted from the World Bank loans which are disbursed under the social investment fund portfolio. The funds are used under the umbrella project of Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) to finance community driven projects such as the construction and rehabilitation of schools, clinics, teachers’ houses and bridges. The disbursement of funds under MASAF was tied to the participatory approach to development and it is dependent on the recipient community’s ability to own the project and participate during the conception, initiation and implementation stages (Vajja and White, 2008: 1147). The participation of the people usually takes the form of contributions in kind such as moulding bricks and collecting sand and stones for construction and rehabilitation of social infrastructure such as clinics and school buildings (Van Donge, 2004:3471).

The traditional authorities have played a key role in the implementation of MASAF projects and the recently christened LDF projects because of their strategic importance in the society. The government has relied on them to mobilise the communities to contribute towards the implementation of the community projects. The traditional authorities have also been used to mobilise people to attend the consultative meetings which are organised by project and public officials. At these meetings, project steering committees are elected to oversee the logistical and financial aspects of the project on behalf of the entire community. The thinking around the MASAF projects is that involving the traditional authorities augurs well with African culture where “collective action is often connected to traditional cultural fabric [which] binds individuals together in communities (Grischow, 2008:64). The participation of people in community projects is therefore taken for granted as it is widely held that the spirit of communalism is a cultural phenomenon. It is generally assumed that every member in a given community will voluntarily oblige to engage in community initiatives without recourse to overt or covert resistance. It is against this background that an assessment of the roles of the traditional leaders in the participation equation will be made to determine the effectiveness of their intervention in terms of creating a spirit of voluntarism, task completion and ownership of the implemented projects.
2.11 CONCLUSION

In the foregoing review, arguments in favour of involving traditional leaders in the participation process have been discussed. One point that stands out is that the traditional leadership is closer to the people and that its deliberative process of decision making surpasses the neo-liberal ideal of representative democracy. The inclusion of traditional leaders in the development equation is critical to ensure better service delivery by the government. However, this neo-traditionalist argument does not highlight measures that would be instituted to ensure that the voice of the marginalised members of the communities is taken on board. On the other hand, anti-traditionalists argue that the institution of traditional leadership is incompatible with democratic principles because people are shunned from the process of choosing leaders. People are appointed to positions of leadership on the basis of their descent and the institution lacks transparency and accountability as its survival is very much dependent on the continuation of ‘despotic’ tendencies.

It has been argued that the withdrawal of the state from the market because of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) undermined its ability to provide services because it lacked resources. The anti-democratic nature of implementing the SAPs in developing nations required a strong state to rally the people behind the programme. Since the neo-liberal agenda detests the suppression of individual freedom to pursue private initiatives, the use of traditional leaders in mobilising support for community development presented an opportunity for the government to implicitly coerce people under the guise of a participatory approach to development. It is this position that has informed this study and prompted the research with a view of assessing the role of traditional leaders in mobilising support for community development. People’s perception of the role of the traditional leadership will provide pointers to the nature of their power and their importance in the participation equation.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Research design “refers to how a piece of research is planned and carried out [and] this...involves more than one of the research methods or techniques of investigation” (McNeil, 1960:14). On the other hand, methodology is defined as “the theoretical study of the logical basis of research, of collecting data and of interpreting and analysing the findings” (ibid). The study employed both quantitative and qualitative research designs in order to collect data which were analysed to answer the research questions.

“Quantitative research collect data in the form of numbers and use statistical type of data analysis while qualitative research relies on data which is in written form or spoken language or in the form of observations that are recorded in language, and analysed by identifying and categorising themes” (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, ed., 1999:45)

The study used a survey and focus group discussions to collect data. By using quantitative techniques, data obtained through the survey was analysed using an excel spreadsheet in order to transform the data to answer the research questions. Quantitative techniques employ statistics and numbers to transform data into meaningful items. According to Hoepfl,

“quantitative research employ experimental methods and quantitative measures to test hypothetical generalisations [...] “and they also emphasize the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables” (Denzin and Lincoln cited in Golafshani, 2003:597).

Quantitative research adopts a positivist orientation and a scientific approach by assuming that the world is made up of facts that can be observed objectively and be measured (Glesne and Peshkin cited in Golafshani: 2003:598). This type of research is said to be reliable because it is reproducible and that it can stand the test of validity.

On the other hand, data obtained through focus group discussion was analysed using qualitative techniques. Qualitative research means “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of
quantification” (Strauss and Corbin cited in Golafshani, 2003:600). Qualitative researchers immerse themselves in the research and they inevitably become the main instrument of research. Qualitative research is said to be subjective and biased because the researchers are actively involved in the process (ibid). The analysis of data using qualitative techniques starts by identifying themes and their relationship. This is usually employed in qualitative research design because the purpose is to acquire a deeper understanding of the issues under investigation (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, ed., 1999:45, 62). It should be mentioned that tests of reliability and validity of a piece of qualitative research are ascertained by the trustworthiness and dependability of research findings (Golafshani, 2003:600-603).

3.2 SELECTION AND TRAINING OF INTERVIEWERS (RESEARCH ASSISTANTS)
Two research assistants were engaged to assist in the face to face administration of the questionnaires and recording of the proceedings from the focus group discussion. The questionnaires were translated from English to Chichewa (vernacular language) and a third party was requested to translate the Chichewa version of the questionnaire back to English to ascertain the content validity of the questionnaire. One of the assistants was selected because of his background as he is familiar with the cultural aspects of the area under investigation. The other research assistant was drafted because of his previous experience in conducting surveys as he was at one time a census supervisor for a defined zone. The training of the enumerators (assistants) was done in a single day to acquaint them with the purpose and basic ideas of conducting surveys and focus group discussions. After the training, the research assistants were assigned to conduct a simple pilot exercise to survey six households which were similar to those to be surveyed. Having been satisfied with the output, the data collection exercise started in earnest from 13th September, 2011 until it ended on 24th September, 2011 (approximately two weeks).

3.3 FIELDWORK PREPARATION
Permission was sought from the District Commissioner for Lilongwe district to have access to some of the selected villages for the sampled population of fifty respondents in Traditional Authority Tsabango. After getting the authority from the District Commissioner, the entry point to gain access to the respondents was the
village head men (a mfumu in vernacular) who were given a brief about the purpose of the inquiry. After presenting the letter of authority to conduct the survey from the District Commissioner, the Village headmen allowed the team to move about freely and around the villages to survey the sampled households.

3.4 THE STUDY AREA
The study was conducted in the area of Traditional Authority Tsabango in Lilongwe district. The area is located to the south east of Lilongwe and shares boundaries with areas that are within the jurisdiction of Lilongwe City Assembly. Tsabango area is predominantly populated by Chewa speaking people although traces of other tribes can be found in areas which are adjacent to the city boundaries. The main occupation of people in the area is subsistence farming which involves growing of crops such as maize for staple food, soya beans, and vegetables for sale and consumption (Msiska, et al, 2008:8). The off-farm activity that was noted during the survey was brick making and it was apparent that the bricks are sold to city dwellers because of the lorries that made their way to and from the area.

3.5 SURVEY RESEARCH
To capture relevant data relating to the role of the traditional leadership in community development and people's attitude towards participating in development, the study used both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data comprise figures, tables, charts and statistics while qualitative data is not numerical as it consists of text and narratives that can be obtained from the sources. It must be mentioned that quantitative research uses quantitative data and relies on statistical manipulation of data to produce its findings. Positivists regard this as the only way of knowing the truth and, as O'Leary notes, “quantitative research is always described as an objective search for single truths that relies on hypotheses and variables [and that it] is large scale” (2004:99). On the other hand, qualitative research relies on qualitative data which is in the form of text or narratives. This research is however “said to be a subjective, value laden, biased and [an] ad hoc process that accepts multiple realities through the study of a small number of cases” (Cavanaugh et al, Creswell, Neuman cited in O'Leary, 2004:99).
This study has used a combination of both quantitative and qualitative research techniques to ensure that the shortfalls of one method are balanced by the strengths of the other. For example, the essence of obtaining qualitative data lies in the quest for understanding the deeper meanings and inner perspectives that are revealed through the narratives of the respondents. The representativeness of the sample is not important but the steps that are used to access the information are. The establishment of an audit trail is important in qualitative research as it provides means to replicate the study to check its validity. On the other hand, quantitative research such as a survey has some advantages and they range from reproducibility of data that can easily be manipulated statistically to its propensity to produce data that is reliable and representative of a wider population. (McNeil, 1960:39-40). However, it should be noted that quantitative research has disadvantages in the sense that

“the survey creates an artificial environment and there is little guarantee that what respondents will say is a true reflection of issues on the ground. [In addition to this], the interview schedule or questionnaire means that the researcher is setting limits to what respondents can say. [Finally], the survey method finds out what people will say and this may not be the same as what they actually think or do” (ibid).

3.6 SAMPLING

Four villages were selected from a list of nine villages using simple random sampling. These were Chiuzira, Kanyandule, Banje and Dima villages. The list of the villages in the catchment area of the school was provided by the headmaster of Kanyandule Primary School. The study targeted a population that lives within the catchment area of the school because it is affected by developments that take place at the school. The proximity of the school to the study population qualified the households to take part in the survey as it is likely that they benefit from the educational services being provided through the institution. The survey was conducted at a time when the school had just completed building a house for the headmaster using funds from the Local Development Fund (LDF and successor to MASAF). To ensure representativeness of the samples at village level, quota sampling was used whereby a minimum of 12
households per each village and a maximum of 13 households were earmarked to participate in the survey.

On the basis of systematic sampling of households from the village registers where every household at random intervals was selected from the population, questionnaires were administered to a selected sample of fifty (50) community members in the study area. A sample of 50 households was considered to be adequate for this study because the data to be captured would be subjected to simple statistical analysis. O'Leary (2004:104) observes that “the minimum requirements for the sample size are often determined by anticipated level of statistical analysis”. Furthermore, since there was more than one method of collecting data, the findings from the survey would be supported by data obtained through the focus group discussion.

The survey was used to capture data on the role of traditional leaders in mobilising community support for development projects. The survey also assisted in capturing information about the community perceptions of the role that is played by the traditional leaders. The questionnaires were administered with the help of two research assistants after translating the contents in the vernacular language which is mostly used for communication in the area. An effort was made to check the content validity of the questionnaire by requesting a third party to translate the vernacular version of the questionnaire back to English.

The questionnaire was pilot tested among a few people who have similar characteristics with the sampled population from another locality which was not a subject of the study. As expected, the use of survey research in the study helped to poll many respondents because it was easy to capture data on the attitude and perceptions of the people. According to McNeil (1960:39-45) the survey technique of collecting data has many advantages in the sense that it is easy to poll many people in a relatively short period of time. Furthermore, the results are reliable and representative of the sampled population. He further states that the technique minimizes the personal influence of the researcher and guarantees the production of data that can be manipulated statistically (McNeil, 1960:39-45). However, the study realised the limitation of survey research which borders on its unreliability to get the
in-depth views of people’s thoughts and feelings and it is precisely in cognizance of this weakness that the survey was complemented by a qualitative tool of research design by conducting focus group discussion. The participants for the focus group discussion were members of the community who were sampled purposively after conducting an informal scoping of the study communities (Hofstee, 2006:132-136; McNeil, 1960:11-39).

3.7 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION
By triangulating within the response category and using purposeful sampling a focus group discussion was conducted with seven members (4 males and 3 females) of the community. According to Bryman (No date, p 1) “triangulation is the use of more than one approach to the investigation of a research question in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings”. In this study, the survey and focus group discussion were used to overcome the weaknesses that are associated with application of a specific research method. Webb, et al., states that “once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more independent measurement processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation is greatly reduced” (cited in Bryman, no date, p 1). It must however be noted that it is possible for two or more sets to arrive at convergent views which are flawed and not representative of the reality on the ground. There are four forms of triangulation and they include

“data triangulation which entails gathering data through several sampling strategies, investigator triangulation, which refers to the use of more than one researcher...to gather and interpret data, theoretical triangulation, which refers to the use of more than one theoretical position in interpreting data and methodological triangulation, which refers to the use of more than one method of gathering data” (Bryman, no date, p 2).

The study adopted the methodological triangulation by combining the survey technique with a focus group discussion to gather data for answering the research questions. The focus group discussion (FGD) was guided by semi-structured questions and it was aimed at getting an in-depth understanding of the views of the communities with regard to their perception of the role of the traditional leaders, and their participation in the development activities. The focus group discussion was conducted with a small group of 6 participants who were drawn from the selected
villages under study. The number of participants for the focus group discussion was considered adequate because the purpose for capturing data by using this tool (FGD) was to get the deeper meanings and perceptions that communities attach to the role of traditional leaders. The size of the sample in this regard was of no consequence but the richness of information that was captured. O’Leary (2004:104) observes that the studies that are dependent on qualitative data strive to show “...the ‘ralativeness’of any sample (even single case) to a broader context”. The proceedings of the focus group discussion were captured by an audio tape and then transcribed verbatim to capture the discussion in its totality. A note book was used to record what transpired during the discussion with a view of establishing an audit trail of the proceedings (Terre Blanche, et al. 2006:49, 85,133-135). The focus group discussion was conducted in a church building which was made available by the leading congregants of the area. The discussion was anchored by a research assistant who was chosen because he was conversant with the culture and language of the area. The student’s role was to monitor progress of the focus group discussion and provide clarification and guidance on issues which required intervention.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS
Data that was obtained through the questionnaires was coded and processed by a computer to come up with a simple statistical description of the findings in terms of total scores by each subject on every item, distribution of the items and the emerging trend in their relationship. Categorical responses provided by interviewees were first coded and then keyed into SPSS version 18.0 software for generation of aggregates. Aggregated output was initially in a form of frequency tables for answers to each question. These were then exported to Microsoft Excel where not only were the frequency tables reorganized but also charts were drawn to depict pictorial presentations of the distribution of various responses. The content of the text that was generated from the focus group discussion was analysed critically to determine themes and category of issues that later formed the basis for the interpretation of the findings (Terre Blanche, et al. (2006:193.322-326).
3.9 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED
The data collection exercise was delayed because of the prevailing socio-political climate which made it difficult to collect the data according to the predetermined schedule. There were civil protests and demonstrations in major cities of Malawi which caused tension in the countryside. The confrontation between the government and the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) was such that the student and his assistants could easily be mistaken as agents of either party and this could affect the quality of the data to be collected. To safeguard the team from any danger that might have arisen from the exercise, it became imperative to wait for an opportune moment to commence the data collection exercise.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS
Clearance from the District Commissioner for Lilongwe was sought to conduct the research in the area. The consent of the participants was solicited by requesting the participants to indicate their willingness to participate voluntarily in the survey and focus group discussion. An initiative was taken to inform the participants about the purpose of the interview and the importance of their participation to the findings that would be generated by the research. The participants remained anonymous as no names were used in the data collection instruments, and strict confidentiality of the proceedings was upheld. Participants taking part in the focus group discussion were requested to treat the group with confidentiality to protect the members from any negative effect that their participation would entail.

3.11 CONCLUSION
In summary, the study has been conducted using a combination of quantitative and qualitative research techniques. The survey was used to collect information about the role of traditional leaders in mobilising support for community development projects. Data collected through the questionnaires was also used to measure the community perceptions about the role which traditional leaders play in the development process. In this study, it has been argued that quantitative research methods are reliable in terms of objectivity and detachment of the researcher and the researched. However, it has been observed that this method does not provide for a deeper understanding of issues under investigation. Respondents are programmatically expected to give answers to predefined parameters of the questions. To offset this limitation, the study
also used qualitative data that was collected by conducting a focus group discussion with a few members of the community to get an inside view of the issues under investigation. The envisaged ethical matters were considered in the study by seeking permission from the District Commissioner for Lilongwe before embarking on a data collection exercise. The respondents remained anonymous throughout the investigation to protect them from any harm that might have arisen because of their participation in the study. The respondents were asked to give their consent before the interview and they were assured that the proceedings would not be disclosed anywhere apart from the institution for which they were intended.
CHAPTER 4
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION
The study was conducted in rural Malawi with a view to determining the extent to which the intervention of traditional leaders is effective in mobilising community support for development projects. In addition, the study wanted to measure the perceptions that communities have with regard to the role of traditional leaders in development projects. This chapter presents the results that have been inferred from the evidence that was gathered:

Demographic analysis of the sampled population

The questionnaires were administered to a population sample of 50 respondents who were randomly selected from the four villages of Banje, Chiuzira, Kanyandule and Dima villages.

Age of questionnaire respondents

The majority of the respondents were aged between 18 and 25 years, representing 40% and this was followed by those who were aged above 35 years, accounting for 36%. The least number of respondents were aged between 26 and 35 years, representing 24%. The findings suggest that the majority of the respondents were generally young and that they were in the economically active age bracket. This outcome reflects a general population trend of the area in particular and Malawi in general since the youth comprise a great proportion of the country’s population (NSO, 2008:14). Table 4.1 below shows the frequency distribution of the age of the respondents.

Table 4.1: Frequency distribution of age group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 35</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sex of questionnaire respondents
Males dominated the sample with a percentage contribution of 56% while females accounted for 44%. The lower percentage of the females in the sample was largely a result of the introvert behaviour that was depicted among females that were approached. In many cases, the females offered their male partners to participate in the survey. As already discussed above, the questionnaires were administered by males and it seems plausible to suspect that the inclusion of a female interviewer could have made a difference to the response rate for females. In summary, the frequency distribution of gender among the respondents is at variance with the general population trend of the area in particular and Malawi in general. According to the 2008 National census, females account for 51% of the entire population of Malawi (NSO, 2008:2)

Figure 4.1 below depicts the distribution of gender among the questionnaire respondents.

![Distribution of gender](image)

**Figure 4.1:** Distribution of gender

Marital status of questionnaire respondents
The findings suggest that married people dominated the sampled population as they accounted for 70%, followed by those who were single (24%) and the least were widowed as they only accounted for a scant 6%. This result resonates well with the culture of the area in the sense that everyone who is perceived to have come of age is expected to marry. In most cases, the youth marry when they are in their late teens and twenties. Table 4.2 below demonstrates the distribution of the marital status among the respondents.

**Table 4.2: Frequency distribution of marital status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Analysis of the institution of traditional leadership**

The respondents were asked some questions in order to probe into the significance of the institution of traditional leadership. The questions were aimed at gauging the attitude and feelings of the respondents towards traditional leaders. The majority of the respondents had the perception that traditional leaders were important in their lives (94%). A scant 6% of the respondents expressed views which were contrary to the perception of the majority. Similarly, in the focus group discussion, participants were asked to highlight the duties of traditional leaders. The question was posed in order to make an inference of the people’s perception of the institution of traditional leadership. The discussion revealed that traditional leaders are held in high esteem by their people. For example, the participants in the focus group discussion responded as such:

“leaders are responsible for leading people in the village and if it’s development, he should inform his or her people and tell them to take part”.

Another participant indicated that:

“Traditional leaders are responsible for settling disputes among his or her people”
The foregoing findings suggest that traditional leaders are important in people’s lives because of the roles which they play in their communities. Figure 4.2 below depicts the distribution of the respondents’ perception of traditional leaders.

![Bar chart showing the distribution of respondents' perception of the importance of a traditional leader.](image)

**Figure 4.2: Distribution of respondents' perception of the importance of a traditional leader**

**Duties of traditional leaders (current)**

Table 4.3 below shows responses to a multiple response question in which respondents were asked to list the current duties of traditional leaders. The table reveals that the majority of respondents indicated that leading people in development work was the most fundamental role of traditional leaders (68.0% of the respondents), followed by settling family disputes (48.0%). The least important roles of traditional leaders were allocating land (24.0%) and conducting funeral services (6.0%). The responses are corroborated by the proceedings of the focus group discussion where the participants indicated that the traditional leaders have a duty of leading his people in development work and settling disputes. For example, the participants in the focus group discussion responded as such:
“leaders are responsible for leading people in the village and if it’s development, he should inform his or her people and tell them to take part”.

Another participant indicated that:

“Traditional leader are responsible for settling disputes among his or her people”

Table 4.3: Current duties of traditional leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leading people in development work</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>68.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settling family disputes</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulating conduct of people</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settling land disputes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocating land</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funerals/other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expected duties of traditional leaders

Table 4.4 shows responses to a multiple response question in which respondents were asked about their perception of the role of traditional leaders. As the table indicates, the majority of respondents perceived “leading people in development work” and “settling family disputes” as the two most important roles of traditional leaders, accounting for 80.0% and 56.0% of the total, respectively. However, respondents perceived settling land disputes (38.0%), allocating land (38.0%) and regulating the conduct of people (36.0%) as the three least important roles of traditional leaders. This question was asked to compare the people’s feelings towards the performance of their traditional leaders as indicated in Table 4.3 against their expectations as indicated in Table 4.4. Judging from the responses, there were minimal variations in the outcome suggesting that people are satisfied with the current roles of the traditional leaders. People accept the status quo and have no reason to upset the tables. This could also imply that people in the rural areas are so conservative to an extent that they calculate their steps before taking risks.
With regard to the perceptions that communities have about the role of traditional leaders in development programmes, the study has established that communities perceive their traditional leaders as being crucial in the implementation of development projects.

**Table 4.4: Frequency distribution of respondents’ perception of the role of traditional leaders (expected duties)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leading people in development work</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settling family disputes</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>56.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settling land disputes</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocating land</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulating conduct of people</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Performance of traditional leaders**

Figure 4.3 shows results to a question respondents were asked to answer relating to the performance of their traditional leaders. In particular, they were asked to rate the traditional leaders’ performance. Out of 50 respondents, most of them rated the performance of traditional leaders in stated duties as very good (72.0% of the total). This was distantly followed by those who rated them as bad (12.0%) and good (10.0%). The presence of individuals who rated the performance of traditional leaders as bad indicates that there is a constituency that is not pleased with the performance of their own traditional leaders. However, this category of individuals suffers in silence as it does not have an appropriate platform to express their dissatisfaction. Evidence from the focus group discussion suggests that it is extremely difficult for community members to seek redress whenever they feel that the traditional leader had conducted himself or herself in an improper manner. It has further been seen that community members are not allowed to express their opinions while the project is ongoing to avoid igniting conflicts which would derail the implementation of the project. For example, one participant in the focus group discussion responded as such:
“If the chief (traditional leader) is wrong, we refer the matter to village elders or his/her fellow chiefs. It is difficult for the youth to take the chief to task face to face”.

Another participant indicated that:

“Those responsible for selecting the leaders sit down and provide counsel to the traditional leader”.

The participants however unanimously agreed that elders of the village or fellow leaders are the only individuals who can approach a traditional leader when members of the community feel that a leader has conducted himself or herself in an improper manner.

Lack of proper channels for expressing grievances makes it extremely difficult for members of the community to express their dissatisfaction with the performance of their leaders. Although the majority of the respondents were pleased with the performance of their traditional leaders and therefore happy with the method of choosing their leaders, the selection process appears to be less democratic as it is only a privilege of a few elderly women from the royal family. The fact that the majority of the respondents stated that they had confidence in the outcome of the selection process means that rural communities are conservative and that they try as much as possible to maintain the status quo.

It can be argued that the traditional leaders appear to be unaccountable for their actions to the majority of the community members because the process of electing them to positions of leadership is less consultative and less democratic as it only involves people from the ruling family. In other words, the position of traditional leadership is hereditary in that only individuals from the ruling lineage are eligible to become leaders. According to Kiondo (1997:20), “in non-democratic forms of government citizens are subjects, ruled by rulers never elected by them and therefore non-accountable to them”. Kiondo further states that “when citizens neither participate in nor protest against their government, there is a danger that they will become subjects rather than participants thereby rendering the whole process of governance non-democratic” (Kiondo, 1997:21)
Figure 4.3: Distribution of rating performance of traditional leaders in stated duties

Conception of school construction project

Table 4.5 shows an almost balanced distribution of conception of the Kanyandule school construction project. This project was implemented after the concerned communities had shown commitment to own the project. The commitment of the communities was shown by their undertaking to contribute towards the implementation of the project by moulding bricks and providing sand for the construction of the school. These findings suggest that there are many role players during the initiation and implementation of development projects. In many cases, Members of Parliament in Malawi portray themselves as agents of development and a link between their constituents and the government. Furthermore, front line officers such as field workers, teachers and community workers act as prime movers in the initiation and implementation of development projects. The results below indicate that total percentages for the head teacher and other government officials (13%) surpass...
that of the members of parliament (12%) and the traditional leaders (11%). This finding could mean that sometimes prime movers play a crucial role of convincing the traditional leaders to mobilise support for the implementation of development programmes.

Table 4.5: Frequency distribution of conception of the school construction project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We were told by our MP</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We were asked to do it by our traditional leaders</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Headmaster approached our traditional leaders</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People did it to reduce problems faced by children</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government officials asked us to help</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Who sets time for community development work?**

Figure 4.4 shows that an overwhelming 70.0% of the respondents interviewed indicated that the chief was the one who decided on the time for participating in development work. Only 30.0% were of the view that the people decided on the time. The importance of traditional leaders appears to cut across all facets of people’s lives as evidenced by their role in determining the appropriate time for community work.

The role of people in setting the appropriate time for community work is significantly acknowledged by the respondents. This implies that there could be some consultations and collaboration between the traditional leaders and their “subjects” although the traditional leaders may retain the right to make a final decision. The aura of authority that is enjoyed by the traditional leaders is such that members of the communities would not object to their preconceived ideas. The traditional leaders appear to enjoy a monopoly of making decisions which cannot be subjected to questioning.
Measures for eliciting cooperation of members of the communities

Table 4.6 below shows responses to a multiple response question in which respondents were asked to highlight measures that are put in place to ensure that every one attends to development work. Some 70.0% of the total indicated that people are fined for not attending while 16.0% said that people are not allowed to use the services provided through the facility. The services include community boreholes and in some extreme cases, children of those who default to make contributions towards the projects may be returned from attending classes until their guardians commit themselves. The lowest percentages involved those that indicated that there was no punishment for those failing to attend (2.0%) and people not being allowed to attend funeral services (2.0%). It is however apparent from the evidence thus far that the use of traditional leaders in the mobilization of community support is counterproductive to participatory approaches to development. The study has found that the cooperation of people to embark in development activities is ensured through unorthodox means which range from payment of fines, denial of social services to eviction from the village. It has been noted that the majority of the respondents felt that people could not participate in development in the absence of punishments.
meaning that the punishment is the reliable means of gaining cooperation from the otherwise disinterested community.

**Table 4.6: Frequency distribution of measures put in place to ensure that everyone attends to development work**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People are fined</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are reprimanded by the Chief</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are not allowed to use the services</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are chased out of the village</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are not allowed to attend funerals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief intimidates those resisting to participate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No punishment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Politeness in communication)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Importance of punishments in eliciting cooperation of individuals**

Figure 4.5 reveals that punishment is, from the traditional leaders’ perspective, a good tool for ensuring that people make a contribution towards projects as evidenced by over 90.0% of the respondents interviewed. This suggests that people would not make a contribution towards projects in the absence of punishments. About 8.0% were of the view that, irrespective of punishment, people would still make a contribution towards community projects.

The frequency distribution of people participating in community development projects in the absence of punishments indicates that it is inconceivable for people to comply
with the instructions voluntarily. The punishments or threats of punishment are the surest means of guaranteeing people’s participation in development work. The use of force, implied or actual, is therefore not a democratic way of eliciting support for development projects. According to Swanepoel and De Beer (2006:28), “participation does not mean involvement. When we involve people in projects, we allow them in, under certain conditions, to take part in a prescribed way”.

It can be argued that the use of chiefs and other traditional leaders gives development agencies an opportunity to incorporate beneficiary communities into the project by force which is implied by the people’s perception of the involvement of the traditional leaders. Van Dyke and Poppe (2006:537) have asserted that

“power is often considered as social power, which is a possibility to affect others, even if these others would resist such influence attempts....Targets comply because they are dependent on the power holder for outcomes, such as money, avoidance of punishment, information or task support”.

Evidence from the findings suggests that traditional leaders have the capacity to mete out punishment to those who will not or cannot comply with their directives. The involvement of people in development projects under the stewardship of the traditional leaders is simply cooption as it does not provide an opportunity or a platform for empowering the people. It is at best a subtle form of a top down approach to development. This opinion is further supported by Schou (2007:610), who, in his study of Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) projects in Malawi observed that the relationship between communities and chiefs was at times “characterised more by forced cooperation than by collaboration to promote development”.

Furthermore, Kishindo, 2003:386) corroborates the above sentiments by stating that

“there is an implicit and often explicit element of coercion in the execution of community projects [because] once the village authorities have endorsed a project, it becomes a duty for all members of the village to participate, whether or not they have been consulted”.

Above all, the importance of traditional leaders is accentuated by the remarks of a gender activist, Emma Kaliya of the Non-Governmental Organisation Gender
Coordination Network (NGOGCN) who notes that “when traditional leaders speak, due to their influence in the society, subjects easily listen to them” (Daily Times, 2011). Why the traditional leaders are obeyed by the members of the community is what has been addressed by this study for it has been seen that the traditional leaders have both legitimate and coercive powers which can be brought to bear in case of non-compliance to their directives. It is therefore not surprising nowadays that most development agencies regard the traditional leaders as entry points whenever they want to introduce development projects in the rural areas.

It is apparent that traditional leaders take advantage of their privileged positions in the society to mobilise people to participate in development activities. In other words, traditional leaders compel members of their communities to take part in various development programmes. Going by the operational definition of participation adopted by this study, the people who are co-opted into the development projects create a semblance of an empowered community while they are in fact not in control of the situation in which they find themselves.

The findings of this study are in concord with the results that were found by Pauline Rose (2003) in her study on the participatory arrangements that were put in place in school construction projects that benefitted from Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF). According to the findings of Rose’s study, the participation of the people in the projects was mediated by school committees which relied heavily on traditional leaders to get the necessary contributions from the members of the communities. She summed up her argument by saying that participation which was mediated by the school committees and the traditional leaders was “pseudo-participation” (Rose, 2003:47) because members of the communities were not part and parcel of the decision making apparatus. The people were simply expected to make contributions which in most cases amounted to the collection of sand or moulding of bricks for the construction of the school buildings or teachers’ houses (Rose, 2003:47-64). It can therefore be argued that traditional leaders are effective in mobilising people for development projects even if the involvement of the communities comes at the expense of robbing the people of their decision making power.
The involvement of traditional leaders in community projects has a disempowering effect on the people in the sense that people are obliged to comply with orders coming from the traditional leaders because of fear of reprisals. Rose further argues that the mediated participation is characterised by the tendency of the mediators to demand contributions from the participants (Rose, 2003:47). From the foregoing, it can be seen that mediated participation is counterproductive to a participatory approach to development because it sidelines the crucial players in community development and deprives the beneficiary communities of necessary skills for generating social capital for future development undertakings.

The use of traditional leaders to promote community involvement in development is a ploy to conceal the top down approach to development. This tendency has now become a second nature of bureaucrats and to some extent Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) which are preoccupied with reaching predetermined targets, completion schedules and deadlines. In most cases, funders of various development programmes are the culprits because of their rigidity and lack of flexibility on how predetermined targets will be negotiated and achieved during the implementation of the projects. Faced with no viable alternatives, development agencies, be they Non-Governmental Organisations or government agencies resort to fast track the process by ‘taking over’ from the communities and assuming control of the situation. In essence, the move is counterproductive to the sustainability of the initiatives for community development. Development projects should enable communities to discover their capabilities for addressing their own needs long after the phasing out of the projects.

In summary, punishment is viewed as the most reliable means of gaining cooperation from members of the communities to participate in development activities. In a democratic dispensation, it is possible for some wayward individuals to misunderstand issues of individual freedom, duties and individual responsibilities. The punishment is a useful mechanism for ensuring that individual members fulfil their duties and responsibilities towards their communities. The above finding suggests that people would not volunteer to embark on community work in the absence of punishments.
Figure 4.5: Distribution of respondent's perception of people making contribution towards project in the absence of punishments

People’s involvement in the choice of a site

Table 4.7 below shows that there was an almost balanced distribution between those who indicated that people are involved in choosing a site for constructing a school (52.0% of the total) and those who indicated otherwise (48.0%).

Table 4.7: Frequency distribution of people’s involvement in choosing a site for constructing a school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8 below reveals that traditional leaders play a significant role in choosing sites for school construction projects as perceived by about 58.0% of the 50 respondents interviewed. About 28.0% were of the opinion that people themselves
are the ones who chose sites, followed by those who indicated that project officials (10.0%) and head teacher (4.0%) take a lead in the choice of sites for school construction projects. The role of prime movers is again evident in choice of a site for the construction of a school building. This is indicated by 7 respondents (representing 14%) who explained that the head teacher and the project officials played a crucial role in the choice of a site. It seems plausible to argue that prime movers can sometimes play a decisive role during the initiation and implementation of development projects. Prime movers have influence on the traditional leaders in particular and the communities in general because of the specialised nature of their work.

Table 4.8: Frequency distribution of those who chose the present site for construction of the school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head teacher</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional leaders</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>58.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People themselves</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project officials</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, close scrutiny of Tables 4.6 and 4.7 reveals a contradiction in terms of consistency of responses. When asked about people’s involvement in the choice of a site, the majority of the respondents (26) representing 52% indicated that the people took part in the decision making process for the choice of school site. Surprisingly, when the same respondents were asked to mention the people that chose the present site for Kanyandule Primary school, the majority of the respondents (58%) shifted to the opposite end and said that it was the traditional leaders who were responsible for the choice of the present school site. This contradiction confirms the fact that traditional leaders play a pivotal role in the development process as evidenced by their conspicuous roles during project initiation, choice of site and implementation stage. The contradiction in the responses can therefore be attributed to self censorship of respondents as the follow up question was posed as a reality check and respondents were called upon to face the reality.
The findings suggest that traditional leaders play a crucial role in garnering support as evidenced by the majority of the respondents who felt that traditional leaders play a role of encouraging people to take part in development activities. This is further supported by the findings which show that an overwhelming 90% of the respondents felt that no one could participate in development activities if no threats of punishment existed. In terms of project completion, the intervention of traditional leaders is effective in mobilising support for development.

However, the intervention of the traditional leaders is not effective if the participatory approach to development is taken into account because the respondents felt that people do not volunteer to participate in development work out of free will. The people volunteer out of fear of reprisals. It can safely be concluded that the continued involvement of traditional leaders in the conception and implementation of community development programmes is a veiled strategy that is aimed at coercing people to participate in the implementation of various development programmes.

The findings demonstrate that the traditional leaders will continue to reinvent themselves and become relevant in the implementation of neo-liberal economic policies. The traditional leaders are used by the post colonial government in Malawi to coerce people to participate in development work by forcing them to contribute labour and other items in kind. As Nyirenda (Daily Times, 2011) notes,

“traditional leaders helped in the collection of tax and...they were basically fronting the colonial administration in the villages. They were basically local weapons of colonialism. [After independence in 1964], traditional chiefs ...remained the same; tools of oppression against their own people. They turned into lieutenants of the MCP’s autocracy in the villages; helping in the enforcement of the notorious MCP membership cards and presiding over kangaroo traditional courts”.

According to this view, “traditional power is therefore totally misplaced in a democracy. Ruling parties have manipulated chiefs to their advantage and they have been used as a strategic asset” (Daily Times, 2011). Similarly, the new multi-party
governments continue to shrewdly draft traditional leaders to gain support for implementation of development programmes such as the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) projects and the recently christened Local Development Fund (LDF) projects.

The participants in the focus group discussion provided almost similar responses with minimal variations as they all agreed that traditional leaders are elected by the elders of the village especially those from the ruling family. Others explained that it is the elderly women from the ruling family that have the mandate to choose a leader for the village. When asked about the role of community members in the selection of a leader, it was noted that only women from the ruling family have a chance to participate in the selection process. In fact, in some cases women are eligible to assume the position of a traditional leader. With regard to the process of choosing traditional leaders, another participant responded that people are not given an opportunity to participate in the election of their leaders. For instance, the participant indicated that:

“Leaders are chosen by elderly women from the family of the ruling clan”.

This finding resonates well with the cultural background of the area where the research was conducted as it is a matrilineal society whereby authority is vested in women to provide the genealogy for traditional leadership. It is not strange to note that women play a crucial role in the selection of a traditional leader. The participants further agreed that they were contented with the method for choosing their leaders because they felt that the elders of the villages take the character and ability of potential candidates into account. For example a participant responded as such:

“We are satisfied because people responsible for selecting the leaders look and probe into the character of potential candidates”

This finding demonstrates that the method for choosing the traditional leaders is less democratic as it does not reflect the views of the majority and it can therefore be argued that such an arrangement can lead to abuse of power by traditional leaders as they are not accountable to the majority of the community members for their actions. It is apparent that the institution of traditional leadership does not lend itself
easily to public scrutiny and that is why it is important to put necessary mechanisms in place to ensure that the voice of the voiceless is reflected in the aspirations of the rural communities. One way of empowering the poor members of the communities would be that of incorporating them in the development committees where they are not only members but are given strategic positions to guide the implementation of the projects. The majority of the respondents approve of the traditional leaders and yet they are elected undemocratically. This point underscores the fact that western liberal democracy is quite different from the African way of practising it. In the African communities, people are conservative and accustomed to the paternalism of their traditional leaders. By extension, the findings of this study could help to explain the rationale for the adoption of one party autocratic rule in many African states soon after they had gained independence from their colonial masters in the 1960s.

The frequency distribution for the conception of the school project (Table 4.8) indicates that people had a say in the choice of a site and this is reflected by 28% of the respondents (14 people) who said that they wanted to build the school to alleviate the problems that were being faced by the school going children. A considerable number of respondents (22%) still indicated that the traditional leaders played an important role in the conception of the school project meaning that although people had a chance of conceiving the project, the traditional leaders still retained a say in the conception and implementation of the project. The result confirms the earlier position whereby the traditional leaders are viewed as individuals who should lead people in development work. For instance, a participant indicated that:

“[Traditional leaders have a role of] leading people, and in the case of development work, he/she should inform the people so that they can take part in the activities”.

Another participant stated that:

“A traditional leader settles disputes among his subjects”.

When asked to discuss if the people are given an opportunity to voice out their difference of opinion on how the project is being implemented, the participants provided varied answers, with women stating in categorical terms that people are not
allowed to express their views for fear of igniting conflicts which would derail the implementation process. For example, one participant explained that:

“People are not given an opportunity to express their opinion and people remain quite to avoid conflicts while the project is ongoing”.

Others explained that people appreciate what is going on in the implementation of the project.

Another participant indicated that:

“If things are going on well, people are given an opportunity to express their gratitude and sometimes they express their satisfaction on how the project is being implemented”.

When asked to mention a crucial player in the initiation and implementation of development projects, a participant stated that:

“Traditional leaders should lead because he is the first recipient of development activities”.

The findings suggest that traditional leaders have a crucial role of encouraging their people to take part in development activities. The traditional leaders act as a link between his/her people and development agencies. The front line officers from government came second with religious leaders coming at a distant last position in terms of their role in mobilising people to take part in development work.

**CONCLUSION**

The overall picture presented by the findings show that the intervention of traditional leaders is effective in mobilising support for community development projects. It has also been appreciated that communities have high regard for their traditional leaders and that they perceive them as being crucial to the initiation and implementation of development projects. The outcome of the focus group discussion confirms the results from the survey which found that traditional leaders have a crucial role of leading their subjects in development work. It has been established that the intervention of traditional leaders is effective in mobilising support for community projects as it accounts for the success in project completion.
The survey and the focus group discussion have established that traditional leaders play a vital role of encouraging people to take part in development activities because of their privileged positions in the communities. The chiefs (traditional leaders) have the power to commandeer respect from their people because of their authority as they have powers to mete out punishment to community members who fail to comply with their orders. The study further shows that the use of traditional leaders in mobilising support for community development projects does not engender elements of participatory approach to development since cooperation from the people is solicited through the perceived threats of punishment such as the payment of fines or denial of services to those who do not comply with the orders from the traditional leaders.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

The study which was conducted to find out the extent to which traditional leaders are effective in mobilising people for development projects has shown interesting results as indicated in the discussion below:

It has been established that traditional leaders command respect from the people and this makes them good agents to spearhead development activities. It has been demonstrated that traditional leaders enjoy unquestionable loyalty from their subjects because their positions are hereditary as they are accountable to the minority of the members of the community. The traditional leaders have powers to mete out punishments that can have negative effects on people’s lives. According to Raven, “coercive power stems from the ability of the agent to mediate influence...and [for] coercive power to be effective, the higher power person must maintain surveillance over the low power person” (cited in Collins and Ashmore, 1970:24). In this study, it has been noted that traditional leaders have powers to banish people from villages if they fail to comply with their orders.

On the other hand, it has been argued that the use of traditional leaders in development work is counterproductive to the participatory approach to development because people participate in the development activities for fear of reprisals. People do not take part in development activities because of their free will but rather because they want to avoid harsh punishments such as payment of fines and eviction from the villages.

Furthermore, this study has demonstrated that traditional leaders are perceived as crucial role players in the development process hence their continued relevance in the socio-economic spheres of people's lives. They are regarded as a link between the people and the development agencies. It has been shown that traditional leaders will continue to be relevant and important in the implementation of development projects and it is for this reason that a deliberate policy should be put in place to train the leaders so that they are abreast with developments that are taking place around the world.
In summary, **chapter 1** introduced the area of study and set the agenda for investigation. The operational definition of terms crucial to the study was provided. The historical and political background of the topic under investigation was exposed to appreciate the context in which the study was carried out. The research problem was highlighted and it has been explained that the study was aimed at making an assessment of the role of traditional leaders in mobilising community support for development, and to find out the perceptions that communities have with regard to the role of traditional leaders in development projects. It has been demonstrated that traditional leaders are effective in the mobilisation of community support for development activities.

The research questions and objectives have been weighed against the evidence that was gathered through a survey and focus group discussions which were conducted in Malawi by the researcher. The study has been underpinned by the critique of neo-liberal economic prescription which advocates for a limited role of the state in the public spheres of life which in essence undermines the capability of the state to provide for its citizens. Faced with limited resources to provide for its citizens, the state continues to co-opt the traditional leaders to augment its power and to implicitly force people to take part in development activities. Having been cash strapped because of donor conditionality, the state uses the traditional leaders to carry out development activities with minimum cost by relying on contributions from the people, which are made available through enforcement of the people by the leaders.

**Chapter 2** surveyed literature relating to the topic under investigation. The literature highlighted the role of traditional leaders and explored the concept of participation to uncover the nature of participation that is promoted by the traditional leaders. The relationship between the state and the institution of traditional leadership has been explored by examining the existing arrangements in selected African countries. It has been noted that the traditional leaders facilitate the implementation of government initiated projects, thereby providing political legitimacy for the government. However, the traditional leaders have been sidelined by the state when their actions have been perceived to be anti-government. The literature also exposed the neo-liberal prescription and its critique to understand its effect on Third World countries in general and Malawi in particular. The study has shown that traditional leaders play a
significant role and affect people’s lives through their partnership with government and other development agencies in the provision of services to the people. In this chapter, factors that prevent people from actively participating in development work have been underscored. The Chiefs Act of 1967 which gave uncontested powers to the chiefs has been exposed and it has been argued that the traditional leaders used this as a weapon for commandeering unquestionable loyalty from their subjects.

Chapter 3 discussed the field work preparation and the sampling technique that was used to conduct the survey. It has been stated that questionnaires were used to find out the extent to which intervention by traditional leaders is effective in mobilising support for development projects. The survey was also used to measure the perceptions that communities have with regard to the roles of their traditional leaders in development projects. It has further been elaborated that the researcher triangulated within the response category and conducted focus group discussions with some members of the communities in order to have an in-depth view of the topic under discussion. The data that were captured were coded and analysed to produce a simple statistical description of the findings. The content of the text that was generated through the focus group discussion was analysed and classified according to the emerging themes.

Chapter 4 presented the data and analysed the findings after carefully examining the data. On the basis of available evidence, the study has established that traditional leaders play a crucial role in development and that they are effective in mobilising support for community development. The results of the survey have been demonstrated graphically to show the magnitude of various responses. The study has also shown that communities perceive traditional leaders as crucial role players in the implementation of development projects. The study has however shown that the traditional leaders are only effective in mobilising community support for development in terms of project contributions and completion. However, the continued involvement of traditional leaders in development projects has been seen to be counterproductive to the participatory approach to development. People take part in development because they are afraid of negative repercussions from the leaders. It has been seen that cooperation on development issues is solicited by relying on unorthodox means such as threats of punishment to create a semblance of
people centred development. The significance of these findings points to the need to understand the often misunderstood dynamics at play in “participatory” community projects when they are being initiated and implemented. The insights offered by this study could be considered useful to prepare and design development projects that address the real needs of the people in the rural areas.
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APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR A SURVEY ON THE ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS IN FOSTERING DEVELOPMENT IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

I am a student at the University of Fort Hare. I am studying towards a Masters in Social Science (Rural Development). I am conducting research as part of my studies. Your responses to the questions are going to be treated with confidentiality and solely be used for purposes of academics and not otherwise.

1. Age (yrs) (optional) 18 - 25 □ 26 - 35 □ above 35 □
2. Gender Male □ Female □
3. Marital status
   Single □ Married □ Widow/Widower □
4. In your opinion, do you think that a traditional leader is important to your life as a resident of this village?
   1. YES □
   2. NO □
   3. Not sure □
5. What are the current duties of traditional leaders in your area?
   1. Settling family disputes
   2. Settling land disputes
   3. Leading people in development work
   4. Allocating land
5. Regulating conduct of people in his area

6. Other (Specify).................................................................................................................................

6. In your view, what should be the role of traditional leaders?

1. Settling family disputes

2. Settling land disputes

3. Leading people in development work

4. Allocating land

5. Regulating good conduct of people in his area

6. All of the above

7. How do you rate the performance of your traditional leader in the above stated duties?

1. Satisfactory

2. Good

3. Bad

4. Very good

5. Not satisfactory

8. How was the project for construction of the school conceived?

1. We were told by our MP

2. We were asked to do it by our traditional leaders

3. The head master approached our traditional leader

4. The people decided to do it to reduce problems faced by our children

5. Government officials came to tell us to help in the construction of the School
9. Who decides on the time for participating in development work?
   1. Chief
   2. People themselves
   3. NGO officials
   4. Government officials

10. What is the agreed time for carrying out development work?
   1. Morning hours
   2. Afternoon hours
   3. One day per week
   4. Other time/Specify

11. In your opinion, what could be the best time for carrying out development work?
   1. Morning hours
   2. Afternoon hours
   3. One day per week
   4. Other time/please specify

12. Why do you think that the time you have mentioned would be good for carrying out development work?

   ........................................................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................................................

13. What methods are used by the traditional to invite people to carry out development work?
   1. Oral communication by a messenger of a chief
   2. Village meetings
3. Other forums (Churches, Mosques, etc)

14. What measures are put in place to ensure that everyone attends to development work?
   1. People are fined if they do not take part in development work
   2. People are reprimanded by the chief
   3. People are not allowed to use the services provided through the facility.
   4. Other/please specify

15. If the punishments were not there, do you think people could make contributions towards the project?
   1. YES
   2. NO

16. Do people in the village have any say in the way a site is chosen to construct or build schools?
   1. YES
   2. NO

17. Who chose the present site for the construction of the school?
   1. Head teacher
   2. Traditional leaders
   3. People themselves
   4. Project officials.

18. Why do you think this site was chosen to construct the school?
   1. The place is centrally located to cater for all villages
   2. The place is near the road.
3. The place is easily accessible by all people in the village

4. Other/Please specify

5. Do not know

This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you for sparing your time to take part in this survey.
APPENDIX 2: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

SEMISTRUCTURED QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

1. IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS TO DEVELOPMENT WORK

Why is it important to contribute labour or something in kind to the construction of school blocks or sinking of boreholes?

2. PEOPLE’S PERCEPTION OF THE INSTITUTION OF TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP

i. How are the traditional leaders elected to their positions?

ii. Are people given an opportunity to participate in the selection process?

iii. Are you happy with the way the traditional leaders are elected into their position?

iv. To err is human. What happens when members of the community feels that their leader has conducted himself or herself in an improper manner?

3. PEOPLE PERCEPTION OF THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS IN FACILITATING COMMUNITY PROJECTS.

i. What do you think are duties for traditional leaders in the village?

ii. What are their roles in the choice of project, choice of site for the project, implementation and maintenance after the completion?

iii. How are members of the project steering committee selected?

iv. What is the relationship between the project steering committee and the traditional leaders?

v. In groups, it is inevitable to disagree or to have conflicting ideas against each other once in a while. Are people given an opportunity to voice out their difference of opinion on how the project is being implemented?
vi. How do people express their differences with the views that are strongly held by their traditional leaders?

4. In order of importance, who should play a role of encouraging people to take part in development work? Please give reasons for your ranking?

   i. NGOs

   ii. Traditional leaders

   iii. Religious leaders

   iv. Head teachers/Community development officers/Field Assistants

THANK YOU FOR SPARING YOUR TIME
APPENDIX 3: MAP OF MALAWI
APPENDIX 4: PERMISSION FROM THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER FOR LILONGWE

LILONGWE DISTRICT ASSEMBLY

DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS, P.O. BOX 93, LILONGWE

All communications to be addressed to:
The District Commissioner

TEL: +265 1 756 110/759 730
FAX: +265 1 756 110
REF No.

DATE: 2nd August, 2011

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

PERMISSION TO SURVEY

The bearer Mr Sosten Sylvester Joseph Chinkonda would like to make a research within your community.

This office has granted him permission to survey.

P. Kalilombe
DISTRICT COMMISSIONER