A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF DECENTRALISATION AS A MEANS OF ENHANCING RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN MALAWI: A CASE STUDY OF SALIMA DISTRICT COUNCIL

by

Lusizi Franlin Nhlane

“Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Magister Artium in Development Studies (Course Work) in Faculty of Business & Economic Sciences at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.”

On

29th November, 2013

Supervisor: Dr. Fawzy Basardien
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF DECENTRALISATION AS A MEANS OF ENHANCING RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN MALAWI: A CASE STUDY OF SALIMA DISTRICT COUNCIL

L.F. NHLANE
DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE

NAME: Lusizi Franklin Nhlane

STUDENT NUMBER: s212255673

QUALIFICATION: Magister Artium in Development Studies (Course Work)

TITLE OF PROJECT: A critical analysis of decentralisation as a means of enhancing rural development in Malawi: a case study of Salima District Council

DECLARATION:
In accordance with Rule G4.6.3, I hereby declare that the above-mentioned treatise/dissertation/thesis is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification.

SIGNATURE: 

DATE: 29th November, 2013
Faculty of Business & Economic Sciences

Managing tomorrow

Student Name: Lusizi Franklin Nhlane
Student Number: S212255673

Module Code: EDS510

Research Title: A critical analysis of decentralisation as a means of enhancing rural development in Malawi: a case study of Salima District Council

Supervisor Name: Dr. Fawzy Basardien

Date submitted: 29th November 2013
DECLARATION
I declare that the research report is my original work. All work from other sources have been indicated and acknowledged.

Signature

Date: 29\textsuperscript{th} November, 2013
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Dr Fawzy Basardien, the lecturer, for his constructive criticisms tendered as she read through the research proposal. I also appreciate his hard working spirit which I admire and wish to emulate in order to improve my academic performance.

My sincere appreciation goes to lecturers and administrative staff in the Department of Development studies for their tireless support from the time of development of the research proposal to the writing of the final report.

Finally, I am grateful Directors, Sector Heads, DEC members and all people of Salima for providing necessary information for my dissertation. In the same vein, I would also like to thank Officials from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural development for allowing me to conduct the research on decentralisation as well as providing progress on decentralisation in Malawi.
ABSTRACT
This study sought to find out the extent to which decentralisation has brought about development in the rural areas in Malawi, specifically focusing on Salima District Council. It sought the views from the local communities themselves and government officials at district level on decentralisation in relation to rural development. Although the study used both qualitative and quantitative approaches, it was predominantly qualitative. As such, it used mixed methods of data collection, which included in-depth interviews, direct observations, questionnaires, focus group discussions (FGDs) and documentary search. Qualitative data was developed into themes and concepts and was subsequently interpreted in a trustworthy manner so as to reflect the true meaning of the data. In other words, explanations were attached to each theme or concept in an attempt to give the meaning of the data.

The study found out that decentralisation is effective in terms of rural development such that local people are able to demand for services of their choice from local governments but the main challenge or constraint is availability of financial resources to cater for all the demanded public services. Other major barriers to rural development include capacity deficiencies at district and grassroots level and tensions among key stakeholders competing to maximize their role in local governments. Basing on these findings, and financial resources being the major barrier to rural development, the study recommends that Government should make sure that enough financial resources are released and channelled to district councils to cater for the needs of the communities. The study also recommends that councils should strive to generate more local revenues to cope up with the demand from the communities. And finally, the study recommends that Government should recognize local governments as entities on which is bestowed a huge responsibility of improving socio-economic conditions of the rural areas where 87% of the population lives, therefore provision of resources and enabling legislation to enhance rural development should be the primary focus. Of course, these recommendations should be understood within the context of the studied district. Otherwise there is potential for different and expanded recommendations if one replicated the study to cover the entire country.
TABLE OF CONTENTS
DECLARATION............................................................................................................................. ii  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ................................................................................................................ iii  
ABSTRACT........................................................................................................................................ iv  
TABLE OF CONTENTS .................................................................................................................... v  
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES.................................................................................................... ix  
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS .............................................................................. x  
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT...................................................................... 1  
1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY .................................................................................................... 1  
1.3 Rationale/purpose of the study......................................................................................................... 1  
1.3.1 At global level.................................................................................................................... 2  
1.3.2 At regional level................................................................................................................ 2  
1.3.3 At national level................................................................................................................ 2  
1.4. Decentralised local government structures in Malawi .............................................................. 3  
1.4.1 District Council.................................................................................................................. 3  
1.4.2 District Executive Committee............................................................................................ 4  
1.4.3 Area Development Committee (ADC)............................................................................ 4  
1.4.4 Area Executive Committee (AEC).................................................................................. 5  
1.4.5 Village Development Committee .................................................................................... 5  
1.5 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM ........................................................................................................ 6  
1.5.1 Research questions............................................................................................................. 7  
1.6 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES .................................................................................... 7  
1.7 SCOPE AND SCALE OF THE RESEARCH .............................................................................. 8  
1.8.2 TYPES AND FORMS OF DECENTRALISATION ................................................................. 9  
1.8.3 Decentralisation and rural development ........................................................................... 10  
1.8.4 Participation in development ......................................................................................... 10  
1.9 METHODOLOGY ..................................................................................................................... 11  
1.9.2 Sample design and selection criteria.................................................................................. 11  
1.9.3 Ethical considerations........................................................................................................ 11  
1.9.5 Data collection methods .................................................................................................. 12
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .......................................................................................... 14

2.1 INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................. 14

2.2 DECENTRALISATION IN RELATION TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT ........................................... 14

2.3 TYPES AND FORMS OF DECENTRALISATION .................................................................... 14

2.3.1 Devolution (Political decentralisation) ............................................................. 15

2.3.2 Deconcentration (Administrative decentralisation) ............................................... 15

2.3.3 Fiscal decentralisation ......................................................................................... 15

2.4 Decentralisation and rural development ............................................................................ 17

2.5 PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT ............................................................................... 18

2.5.1 Rationale for decentralisation (participation) in development ................................ 19

2.5.2 Benefits and costs of participation and decentralisation in development ............... 19

2.6 Challenges of decentralisation in relation to development in Africa .............................. 20

2.6.1 Inadequate resources ......................................................................................... 21

2.6.2 Weak institutional capacity ............................................................................. 21

2.6.3 Inadequate mechanisms of accounting, auditing and accountability ................. 21

2.6.4 Limited availability of information, participation and civil society ...................... 21

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH METHODS .................................................. 23

3.1 Methodology ...................................................................................................................... 23

3.2 Scope and scale of the study ............................................................................................ 23

3.3 Research design .............................................................................................................. 23

3.4 Research Problem .......................................................................................................... 24

3.5 Sample design and selection criteria ............................................................................. 25

3.6 Data collection methods .................................................................................................. 25

3.6.1 Interviews .............................................................................................................. 26

3.6.2 Questionnaires ........................................................................................................ 26

3.6.3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) ......................................................................... 26

3.6.4 Documentary Search .............................................................................................. 27

3.7 Data Analysis .................................................................................................................... 27

3.8 Ethical considerations ..................................................................................................... 27
3.9 Validity and reliability of data.................................................................................................27
3.10 Strengths and limitations of the study..................................................................................27

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS...........................................................................................29
4.1 Introduction .............................................................................................................................29
4.2 People’s knowledge on general issues of decentralisation in Salima District ....................29
4.3 Effectiveness of decentralisation in respect of rural development in Salima District ........30
  4.3.1 Projects implemented after decentralisation policy was in place .................................31
  4.3.2 Local peoples’ participation in project planning ............................................................32
  4.3.3 Organizational set up of the district administration ......................................................32
  4.3.4 Personnel Changes .........................................................................................................33
  4.3.5 Changes in the approach to development ....................................................................33
  4.3.6 Communication and Coordination ..............................................................................34
4.4 Use and Involvement of Decentralisation structures in planning for development in Salima ........................................................................................................................................34
  4.4.1 Existence of the District Council ..................................................................................35
  4.4.2 Existence of District Executive Committee (DEC) ......................................................36
  4.4.3 Existence of Area Development Committees (ADCs) ...............................................37
  4.4.4 Existence of Area Executive Committees (AECs) .......................................................37
  4.4.5 Existence of Village Development Committees (VDCs) ............................................37
4.5 Challenges of Decentralisation as a way of advancing Rural Development in Salima ....37
  4.5.1 Inadequate Financial Resources ..................................................................................38
  4.5.2 Delays in the Project Approval Process .......................................................................39
  4.5.3 Heavy Workload at the Council ..................................................................................39
  4.5.4 Politicisation of Development .....................................................................................39
  4.5.5 Lack of Training ..........................................................................................................39
  4.5.6 Absence of Elected Members .....................................................................................40
  4.5.7 Predetermined projects from Central Government and Donors ..................................40
  4.5.8 Resistance to change .................................................................................................40
  4.5.9 Hunger and Shortage of Food .....................................................................................40
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1: Number of people interviewed………………………………………..25

Table 2: Knowledge of communities and district staff on decentralisation………………………………………………….………………27

Table 3: Positive effects of decentralisation in development of rural areas………………………………………………………………………………29

Table 4: Use and involvement of decentralised structures in planning for development...........................................................................................………..33

Table 5: Reasons for decentralisation being ineffective in development of rural areas……………………………………………………………………36

Figure 1: Institutional framework for District Local Government structure…………………………………………………………………………….5
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADC  Area Development Committee
AEC  Area Executive Committee
CDF  Constituency Development Fund
DAT  District Advisory Team
DC   District Commissioner
DCF  District Consultative Forum
DEC  District Executive Committee
DPD  Director of Planning and Development
DPW  Director of Public Works
FGDs Focus Group Discussions
FISP Farm Input Subsidy Programme
GDP  Gross Domestic Product
IPC  Internal Procurement Committee
LDF  Local Development Fund
MASAF Social Action Fund
NGO  Non-Governmental Organisation
NSO  National Statistical Office
PHC  Population and Housing Census
PIC  Project Implementation Committee
RD   Rural Development
TA   Traditional Authority
UNDP United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
USD  United States Dollar
VDC  Village Development Committee
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY
Democratic decentralisation reforms in Malawi were introduced in the wake of democratic changes that took place in 1994. The new constitution introduced multiparty democracy after thirty years of autocratic rule under the leadership of Dr. Hastings Banda, the first president of the republic of Malawi. Malawi adopted the liberal democratic constitution in 1995 which among other things guaranteed a full range of; civil, cultural, political, social and economic rights, democracy, good governance and rule of law. It opened way for democratic decentralisation by setting down powers and functions of the democratically elected local government as expressed in section 146 of the constitution of the republic of Malawi (GoM 1995). The draft National Decentralisation policy (NDP) of 1996 was effectively adopted in October, 1998. This was followed by the enactment of the Local Government Act in December 1998, which came to effect in March, 1999. The National Decentralisation Policy and the Local Government Act were promul gated to concretise fundamental ideas embodied in the 1994 constitution. The policy reform efforts culminated into the inauguration of District Assemblies in November 2000; however, the Local Government Amendment Act of 2010 changed the name to District Councils (GoM, 2010). At present the country has 34 councils including three Cities and two municipalities. Cities and Municipalities are recognised as district in their own rights. The first Local Government elections were held in 2000; however, there have been no local elections since the expiry of the first term of councillors in 2004.

The Government of Malawi adopted the devolution type of decentralisation. It is however, imperative to mention that the process of decentralisation was triggered by a World Bank (WB) assessment report of 1987/88 which concluded that the fight to eradicate poverty in Malawi could not be won without direct involvement of people in the development process (Mbeye 2003). Decentralisation heralds permissive and enabling atmosphere for communities to effectively realise their full potential for dignified and fulfilling lives, as it is not only institutionalised but legally underpinned form of participatory development (Chikulo 1998; Chinsinga 2005). Decentralisation is argued on both political grounds – as strengthening democracy accountability and participation by bringing government ‘closer’ to citizens – and economic grounds, those of enhancing efficiency and effectiveness of public service provision and in this sense decentralisation is seen by many agencies as effective (GoM, 2005).

1.3 Rationale/purpose of the study
This study is significant as it seeks to assess social, economic and political impact of decentralisation on rural development and livelihoods of communities. The justification for the study is explained at global, regional and national level as detailed below:
1.3.1 At global level
In an effort to achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of eradicating extreme poverty by 2015, many developing countries, including Malawi, are advocating good governance which involves citizen participation in all spheres of development as an important tool for fighting poverty. Since the late 1980s many African, Asian, and Latin American governments launched decentralisation programmes aimed at establishing new framework for self-governance at sub-national and local level (Furtado 2001). By giving local communities decision making powers and authority, it is envisaged that delays are minimised and responsiveness in development or project management is enhanced as decisions are flexible and adjusted to suit circumstances and peoples’ needs on the ground. Decentralisation is also believed to help promote ownership of projects and is regarded as a means of facilitating the even distribution of resources and minimise regional inequalities (Hussein, 2003). Ribot (2002:49), observes that decentralisation helps local population to easily hold accountable their own authorities a thing which enhances efficiency and accountability in the use of public resources. It is therefore not surprising to see many donors pressing for decentralisation process as a way of improving governance in most developing countries. In line with the above, Malawi whose financial budgets are heavily dependent on donor communities need to be seen adhere to donor requirements and demands for good governance.

1.3.2 At regional level
Good governance has not become a global issue for Malawi but also a regional integration issue. The New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) promotes good governance as a basic requirement for peace, sustainable political and economic development for its member states. Malawi as a member of NEPAD entered onto a treaty to promote good governance. In addition, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), of which Malawi is a member, encourages participatory approach to development projects as a way of enhancing ownership and economic sustainability (GoM, 2005). This study is therefore important for Malawi as it is seeking to promote good governance through identification of challenges in implementation of decentralisation policy which encourages participatory approach to development.

1.3.3 At national level
In addition to the Local Government Act of 1998 which provides for empowering of local authorities called districts/town/city councils, chapter XIV, section 146, sub-section 2 of the 1995 Constitution of Malawi provides for creation of local authorities responsible for welfare provision; promotion of democratic institutions and participation; promotion of infrastructure and economic development through formulation and execution of local development plans; and representation to central government of local development plans. In addition, the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (MPRSP), which the government launched in 2002, recognises decentralisation as a strategy for facilitating poverty reduction. The overall goal of MPRSP is to achieve sustainable poverty reduction through socio-economic and political empowerment of the poor. The strategy explicitly declares the philosophy that sees the poor
not as ‘helpless victims but masters of their own destiny’ through socioeconomic and political empowerment of the poor (Chiweza 2011). In this case decentralisation policy is considered as an appropriate strategy because a key feature of the policy is to promote popular participation of the poor in the process of promoting socioeconomic development for the purpose of reducing poverty. The World Bank describes poverty as “Unacceptable human deprivation in terms of economic opportunity, education, health and nutrition as well as lack of empowerment and security” (cited in Stanely, 2003:5).

The Government of Malawi further launched the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) in 2006. The MGDS served as the overarching policy for reducing poverty for the 2006 to 2011 fiscal years and has since been extended to 2015 in line with the Millennium Development Goals. The strategy identifies local authorities as key to achieving national development and good governance goals in Malawi. In this regard, decentralisation through local institution is not only regarded as a vehicle for delivering better socio-economic services to Malawi nation but also as a means of strengthening democratic institutions and participation at local level (Chiweza 2011). It is therefore a requirement to promote decentralisation by creating local authorities capable of enhancing rural development through facilitation of participatory structures such as Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Area Development Committees (ADCs) at community level.

Decentralisation reforms that are properly managed promote good local governance which is important for the country as it has implication on poverty reduction. Good governance refers to open unlighted policy making, a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos acting in furtherance of public goods, rule of law, transparent process and strong civil society participating in public affairs (World Bank, 2001). Governance is about power, relationships and accountability; that is, who has influence, who decides, and how decision makers are held accountable. In line with this thinking, good local governance is an array of organisations and mechanisms or procedures intended to govern local public affairs (Bonfiglioli, 2003).

It is therefore necessary to critically examine how decentralisation is being implemented and point out areas which need to be addressed for improved delivery of socio-economic services as well as transparency and accountability at district level. The findings of the research will guide various stakeholders, including the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) in planning and implementation of its operations and the community as a whole because speedy and smooth implementation of decentralisation would guarantee the rural participation in decision making on developmental issues affecting them in order to improve their living conditions.

1.4. Decentralised local government structures in Malawi

1.4.1 District Council

The Decentralisation policy and Local Government Act of 1998 created 40 local government areas in which local authorities called Councils (city, district and town) were established including Salima District Council. Each local government area is divided into a number of
smaller areas called wards and each ward is represented in the Council by a councillor. Membership of the district council comprises traditional authorities (TAs) and members of parliament (MPs) within the area as *ex officio* but non-voting members, one elected member (councillor) for each ward and five persons to be appointed by the elected members to cater for special interest groups. The council works through various committees and the meeting of all councillors which is supposed to take place once every quarter is known as full Council.

The Local Government Amendment Act of 2010 merged some districts and town councils, resulting in reduction in number of councils in the country to 34. The Act also provides for two wards per constituency. In this case Salima has ten wards. The Act has further changed status of Members of Parliament (MPs) from *ex-officio* to voting members of the full Council (GoM, 2010). The rest of members to the Council have maintained their status.

Malawi is expected to hold tripartite elections which will also usher Ward Councillors into power in May 2014. At present, councils deliberate through chiefs, MPs and the interest groups who form what is known as the District Consultative Forum (DCF) as an administrative arrangement.

The Council is made up of two bodies: an elected body of councillors and an administrative body called Council secretariat. Councillors need to be voted for in local elections every five years but the council secretariat has permanent employees (civil servants) with the DC as the head of the secretariat and the controlling officer of the Council.

### 1.4.2 District Executive Committee

District Executive Committee (DEC) is a technical and advisory arm of the council and the development committees in a local government area and its overall responsibility is implementation of the District Development Plan (DDP) which is a blueprint for all development programmes and projects in a district. DEC Membership consists of the DC as chairman, DPD as secretary, Heads of directorates, representatives of other government institutions, representatives of NGOs, and nominated members.

### 1.4.3 Area Development Committee (ADC)

An ADC represents all Village Development Committees in a Traditional Authority (TA) area of which their primary function is to set priorities, identify and prepare project proposals addressing community needs which cover more than one Village Development Committee (VDC). Membership of the ADC consists of: elected VDC chairpersons and vice chairpersons; representative of religious groups; representatives of youths and women groups in the area; representatives from the community; and chairperson of AEC.
1.4.4 Area Executive Committee (AEC)
An AEC is a representative of all extension workers in the TA area, from government departments or sectors as well as NGOs and this committee is responsible for advising the ADC on all aspects of development for the community within the TA area. They also advise ADCs on project identification and preparation of project proposals for community projects.

1.4.5 Village Development Committee
The VDC is a representative body from a village or a group of villages. VDC is important in the planning system of the Council as it is the committee closest to the citizens and its main functions are to: identify and prioritise community needs as well as preparing project proposals and submitting these to the ADCs; supervise, monitor and evaluate the implementation of development activities in the villages; and initiate self-help activities. They are also responsible for encouraging and bringing together community resources for people’s participation in self-help initiatives while also acting as a bridge of communication between the community and ADC and DEC and vice versa. Below is a structure of the council and its various committees.

Figure 1: Institutional Framework for District Local Government structure

[Diagram of institutional framework with labels]

KEY
DC = District Commissioner
CEO = Chief Executive Officer
ADC = Area Development Committee
AEC = Area Executive Committee
As citizens, decentralisation demands that people take part in the planning process of the Council in their areas in order that the assembly knows the people’s priority area for spending. Once the priority areas are established and funds for the development projects are available, the people need to support the assembly in the implementation of the projects either by contributing some materials and/or labour, or monitoring and supervising the project and report to the assembly (GoM, 2005).

1.5 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM
Decentralisation is considered as a key political administrative strategy that promotes community participation in policy formulation and development planning, facilitates effective coordination and implementation of policies at local level (Hussein, 2003). Ideally, decentralisation is a way of empowering local communities to take charge of development in their local areas which means that local communities must be able to identify needs within their areas and plan for their own development programmes which must be eventually be acted upon by government or other development partners. In addition, Magolowindo et al (2000: 12) believe the objective of decentralisation, among others, relate to pursuance of democracy and efficiency in public service and that the specific objectives of decentralisation include: design of more realistic development programmes and projects which takes into account local potential and constraints; better coordination of activities at various spatial levels though desegregation of planning functions; strengthening local and political institutions and increase of peoples’ participation in local development and governance; and improved mobilisation of human and other resources for

On the other hand, the rhetoric of decentralisation in Malawi does not match the results on the ground. Fourteen years of the implementation of decentralisation policy, reports and observations still show that many rural parts of Salima just like many other districts in Malawi lack basic elements/needs for improvement of life: a lot of rural women walk long distances to fetch safe drinking water; many areas are inaccessible due to poor road networks; schools and health facilities are far apart; many areas also do not have access to safe and portable water; and there is wide concession that rural life which constitutes about 87 percent of Malawi population is below poverty line (NSO, 2009). Such challenges pose as a great threat to the Government of Malawi to attain some of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015 (UN, 2000) such as; eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, and combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. However, it is widely accepted by many scholars that decentralised states are more transparent and react promptly to local wishes and demands because local governments are ‘close to the people’ (Crook & Sverson, 2001; Osmani, 2000). Physical closeness to people not only makes it easier to hold officials liable for their performance, it also facilitates the acquisition of more
accurate information on condition of the status quo of the periphery which can be used for planning and provision of resources.

It is therefore against this background, that this study hypothesises that decentralisation in Malawi has not made enough progress to promote popular participation in local development and good governance because of a number of challenges which include: failure by most government ministries to devolve some of their functions to districts in order to enhance capacity; inactive grass root level structures, which facilitate participation and local development planning, such as Village Development Committee (VDC) and Area Development Committee (ADC); in adequate funding at district level to quickly respond to development needs of communities; prolonged absence of Councillors as the government has not conducted another Local Government Elections since the expiry of the first five year term of councillors in 2005.

1.5.1 Research questions

Some of the questions for the research include:

Are communities and staff in Salima District aware about decentralisation concept and the forms in which it exists?

Has decentralisation programme been effective in the socio-economic development of rural areas in Salima District?

Does Salima district Council use decentralised structures in planning for its development programmes/projects?

What are the challenges of decentralisation system as a means of advancing rural development?

Is the absence of elected members of the council affecting development in the district?

1.6 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the research was to assess the extent to which decentralisation has brought development to grass root level in Malawi and the factors that impede full realisation of decentralisation. The study has also explored opportunities that Malawi Government, particularly Salima District may use decentralisation to improve peoples’ livelihoods in rural areas.

1.6.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the study were:

- To investigate definitions and forms of decentralisation system with particular focus on development in rural areas.
- To assess effectiveness of decentralisation in rural development.
To investigate parameters, of the multifaceted concept of decentralisation, that play a role in that play a role in poverty reduction and indicate how decentralisation promotes poverty reduction.

To assess the extent to which local governments use decentralisation structures in planning for developments in Malawi.

To assess the challenges of decentralisation system as a way of advancing rural development in Malawi.

To make proposals on necessary strategies that can help to improve peoples’ participation in decision making in Salima; thereby, contributing towards improvement of their livelihoods.

1.7 SCOPE AND SCALE OF THE RESEARCH
The study was conducted in Malawi with specific focus on Salima district Council. The study finally focused on people from rural areas of the district, particularly the VDCs, ADCs and Traditional Authorities. District Officials were also targeted because they are the ‘vessel’ through which the decentralisation policy is being implemented at grassroots level by the central government and local governments. At the same time, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, the parent ministry on all decentralisation issues, was targeted to give its stand and opinion on how decentralisation in terms of rural development is performing in the country.

Malawi is a small landlocked country in sub-Saharan Africa bordering with Tanzania to the north-east, the Peoples’ Republic of Mozambique to the east and south, and the Republic of Zambia to the west and north-west. The country is 118,484 square kilometres, of which Lake Malawi occupies a third. It has a population of 13.1 million. According to 2008 population and housing census about 87 percent reside in rural areas. The rural economy is culture bound, living in communities where writ of customary law remain pervasive (Cross & Kutengule 2001). In the rural society, traditional kinship and chieftaincy structures dictate power relations in society (Poeschke & Chirwa, 1998). In 2013, the country is ranked 171 out of 187 countries on the Human Development Index (UNDP, 2013).

Salima is located 100 kilometres east of the capital City Lilongwe along the lake shore. The district has a population of 230,000 of which 52 percent are female and 48 percent male. The primary occupation of the people is agriculture with only 2 percent engaged in commercial farming and the rest in subsistence. A small percentage of the people along the lakeshore are engaged in fishing activities using paddled canoes. Below is the map of Malawi indicating location of Salima.
1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK/LITERATURE REVIEW

1.8.1 Definition of Decentralisation in relation to rural development

Decentralisation has been assigned many meanings varying across countries, languages, general context, field of research and specific scholars and studies (Dubois & Fattore, 2009). Decentralisation is defined as the process by which central government gradually transfers some of its political power, responsibilities and financial resources to local governments with the view to enhance and improve the livelihoods of the rural poor (GoM, 2005).

1.8.2 TYPES AND FORMS OF DECENTRALISATION

Decentralisation is categorised into three forms as stated by Dubois & Fattore, (2009) which are political, administrative, and fiscal decentralisation as detailed below:
1.8.2.1 Devolution (Political decentralisation)

Devolution refers to a form of political decentralisation which aims to give citizens or their elected representatives more power in public decision making. It is where a local government has an established local council with usually elected members and that the local government to which power is transferred is given ‘a corporate status, autonomy and functions.’ This implies the transferring of real decision making powers and authority to a local jurisdiction with clear geographical boundaries, a legal status, specific functions, mixed sources of financial sources and autonomous personnel whom they can appoint and dismiss (Sharma, 2006).

1.8.2.2 Deconcentration (Administrative decentralisation)

Deconcentration, according to Wallis (1998:122), refers to the administrative decentralisation where officials appointed by the centre are posted to the field (district or province, etc) to act as central government representatives; or in other words, it is the spread of central government functions and staff into the field. These officials vary in the extent to which they freely exercise discretion in the performance of their duties and that the goal of deconcentration is administrative efficiency which is enhanced through the proximity of those existing deconcentrated authority to the location of action.

1.8.2.3 Fiscal decentralisation.

Fiscal decentralisation is evident where local authorities given powers by the central government to raise funds and make decisions about their expenditures on locally generated funds as well as government or donor transfers. If local governments are to carry out decentralisation function effectively they must have an adequate level of revenues –either raised locally or transferred from the central government as well as the authority to make decision about expenditures (Cross and Kutengule, 2001).

1.8.3 Decentralisation and rural development

Rural Development (RD) is a term that can be conceptualized as a process, phenomenon, a strategy and a discipline. As a process, it implies the engagement of individuals, communities and nations in pursuit of their cherished goals overtime; as a phenomenon, RD is the end result of interventions between various physical, technological, economic, socio-cultural and institutional factors. As a strategy, it is designed to improve the economic and socio-well being of a specific group of people, that is, rural poor while as a discipline it is multidisciplinary in nature, representing an intersection of agricultural, social, behavioural, engineering and management success (Singh, 2005).

1.8.4 Participation in development

In the context of development, participation has been defined in various ways reflecting the different objectives and values and sub-contexts in which it operates. Actual definition ranges from contribution of labour by project beneficiaries at one extreme to organized efforts to
increase control over resources and regulative institutions on the part of groups and modernists hitherto excluded from control at other (Stieffel et al, 1994). World Bank (1996) defines participation as a process of through which stakeholders’ influence and share control over their own development initiatives, decisions and resources which affect them.

1.9 METHODOLOGY

This was a descriptive research and adopted a methodology as advised by Leedy & Ormond (2010:187) which involves acquiring information about one or more groups of people, perhaps about their characteristics, opinions, attitudes, or perhaps experiences, by asking them questions and tabulating their answers.

1.9.1 Research design

This was a predominantly qualitative study geared towards the exploration of issues surrounding the decentralisation phenomenon as regards to rural development. As a research strategy, the inquiry has been approached as a case study. The aim is to give a comprehensive understanding on the role of decentralisation in rural development, as a phenomenon of concern not only within Salima District Council but also the whole country in as far as socio-economic development is concerned. In addition, the quantitative approach has been used in the form of descriptive statistics.

1.9.2 Sample design and selection criteria

Purposive Random Sampling and Stratified Randomly Sampling methods were used. Purposively, two ADCs were selected in eight TAs in the district for focus group interviews; that is, the worst and the best in terms of the socio-economic profile respectively. In each of the ADCs, VDCs were selected randomly and in each of the VDCs four executive members comprising of the chairperson, Secretary, treasurer, and one executive member were interviewed.

Stratified Randomly Sampling was used for one to one interviews with district staff (DEC members). The stratum was composed of Heads of departments/sectors at district level and senior extension workers from the field who work as Area Executive Committee to the ADC.

1.9.3 Ethical considerations

It was the objective of this research study that it abides to general ethical issues as in Leedy and Ormrod (2010:101), that it should not subject the population to four categories of ethical issues of protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy, and honesty with professional colleagues..

Prior to the commencement of data collection, the researcher sought permission, in writing, from responsible officers, to conduct the study in the areas/organisations. Permission was also sought from the Ministry of Local Government Headquarters, Traditional Authorities within the district and selected ADCs and VDCs for the interviews.
1.9.4 Role and experience of the researcher
The researcher works in the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) as District Commissioner. He has been at this position in various district councils, including Salima district where he intends to conduct the research, for eleven years. He has close contact with the people he intends to interview and communities where focus group discussions will be done. He has already built trust with these people and may not be suspicious that he would use information given to him maliciously.

1.9.5 Data collection methods
This research had to a greater extent used qualitative methods and to a lesser extent quantitative methods. The reason for this was to obtain a holistic view of the role of decentralisation in rural development and its implication on the socio-economic life of the rural communities. In-depth interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions (FGDs) and documentary search were the main data gathering methods.

1.9.5.1 Interviews
Interviews were conducted with participants. A guide for the in-depth interviews was prepared to facilitate discussions. A group of women and men were interviewed in an attempt to obtain balanced ideas on development issues affecting rural communities from both sexes. The intention was to interview equal numbers of men and women.

1.9.5.2 Questionnaires
Structured questionnaires were prepared for influential members of the rural communities (VDCs and ADCs), donor organisations, staff at district level (DEC members), and Ministry of Local Government. The questionnaires included open-ended questions 'that allow the respondent to reply in his/her own words' (Weiss, 1998).

1.9.5.3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)
This method was used to verify what DEC members and the other participants had said during the interviews. A guide was prepared to focus the discussion on the information the researcher intended to collect. The FGDs were duly recorded on the tape for preservation and analysis.

1.9.5.4 Documentary Search
To come up with a comprehensive study, a number of documents on decentralisation were used. These, among others, include relevant books on decentralisation and rural development and papers by UNDP, website data, research journals, and samples of different free writings.

1.9.6 Data Analysis
Data analysis involves converting a mass of raw data into a coherent account (Weiss 1998; Willy, 2000). This involved: getting a feel of the data; testing validity and liability of the data; and testing the hypothesis developed in the research. The exercise commenced at the
same time with data collection and continued up to the end of the study. In this study both qualitative and quantitative data were analysed.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION
There is a lot of literature available on ‘decentralisation being related to rural development’ although most of the authors have always aligned it to specific countries under study at a particular time. Below are the detailed explanations of decentralisation, types and forms of decentralization, decentralisation and development, and challenges of decentralisation.

2.2 DECENTRALISATION IN RELATION TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT
As already alluded to, decentralisation has been assigned many meanings varying across countries, languages, general context, field of research and specific scholars and studies (Dubois & Fattore, 2009). Decentralisation is defined as the process by which central government gradually transfers some of its political power, responsibilities and financial resources to local governments with the view to enhance and improve the livelihoods of the rural poor (GoM, 2005). Democratic decentralisation is seen as the most typical reform that open up space for deeper and wider participation at local level as it encourages people to participate in politics affecting them, making government accountable through citizen oversight, and control through elections (Chinsinga 2005). This means that decentralisation aims at improving service delivery to the citizens by bringing resources closer to them and giving them the mandate to decide what are the needs of the people in their areas in terms of service delivery and development; thereby, reducing poverty levels in the area and eventually strengthening democracy at grassroots level (GoM, 2005). Jamal (1998) laments that rural areas in most African countries comprise of over 85% of the total population and over 90% of this population live in absolute abject poverty; he further identifies six groups of people as suffering from abject poverty and these are: disadvantaged peasants, including the landless and the pastoralists with inadequate livestock; people who are too handicapped to work by reason of physical or mental disabilities, or by reason of old or tender age; children in need of care or protection, including orphans or displaced children; one –parent families, especially those headed by females, such as divorcees, widows and unmarried mothers; people living in remote areas who lack access to serious and profitable markets, who live in insecure areas and those frequently affected by natural disasters like earthquakes and droughts; and the retrenched people, civil servants with low salaries and urban slum dwellers.
To cater for the six groups mentioned above which suffer from abject poverty, it is imperative that governments have to introduce decentralisation policy and that they have to decentralise some of the following services and activities to the districts/local governments: social rehabilitation, labour matters, population and welfare, street children and orphans, women in development, community development, youth affairs, cultural affairs and district information services and it is believed that these services and activities, if well performed by districts, can improve the socio-economic life of the these people thereby enhancing the development of rural areas (Kisubi, 1999).

2.3 TYPES AND FORMS OF DECENTRALISATION
Decentralisation is categorised into three forms as stated by Dubois & Fattore, (2009) which are political, administrative, and fiscal decentralisation as detailed below:
2.3.1 Devolution (Political decentralisation)

Devolution refers to a form of political decentralisation which aims to give citizens or their elected representatives more power in public decision making. It is where a local government has an established local council with usually elected members and that the local government to which power is transferred is given ‘a corporate status, autonomy and functions.’ This implies the transferring of real decision making powers and authority to a local jurisdiction with clear geographical boundaries, a legal status, specific functions, mixed sources of financial sources and autonomous personnel whom they can appoint and dismiss (Sharma, 2006).

In relation to rural development, devolution is characterized by a high level of local government autonomy and this concept implies that the selection of representatives from electoral constituency allows citizens to know better their political representatives and that the representatives know the desires of their constituents and therefore be able to bring meaningful development programmes to them. Local government being closer to the people are better placed to plan and finance development programmes demanded by the people; however there is need also to assess the capacity of such local governments to provide the required services (Munyoyo, 1999).

2.3.2 Deconcentration (Administrative decentralisation)

Deconcentration, according to Wallis (1998:122), refers to the administrative decentralisation where officials appointed by the centre are posted to the field (district or province, etc) to act as central government representatives; or in other words, it is the spread of central government functions and staff into the field. These officials vary in the extent to which they freely exercise discretion in the performance of their duties and that the goal of deconcentration is administrative efficiency which is enhanced through the proximity of those existing deconcentrated authority to the location of action.

However, most researchers contend that the major problem with the policy of selective decentralisation (deconcentration) is that no clear and systematic guidelines are provided by governments on how the process is to be effected which results into various ministries and departments initiating individual attempts at decentralisation which are generally inconsistent and unrelated. This only succeeds in leading ministries to establish many and competing institutions at local level which severely constrains community participation in the development process (Chinsinga & Dzimadzi, 2001). The policy also sidelines or ignores the involvement of local initiatives in dealing with problems in the rural areas as the process favours top-down approaches and no consultations on what, how and when is their areas’ problems to be dealt with.

2.3.3 Fiscal decentralisation
Fiscal decentralisation is evident where local authorities given powers by the central government to raise funds and make decisions about their expenditures on locally generated funds as well as government or donor transfers.

If local governments are to carry out decentralisation function effectively they must have an adequate level of revenues –either raised locally or transferred from the central government as well as the authority to make decision about expenditures. Without finances there is little or no development therefore it is necessary that local governments must have legal mandate to raise funds from fees, charges as well as from central government transfers(Cross and Kutengule,2001).

Greater decentralisation of spending and revenue decisions to the sub-national units can make sure that pro-poor expenditures (such as local infrastructure, health care and education) reflect the preferences, needs and fiscal abilities of different localities. As sub-national and local governments are “closer to the people”, information and transaction costs of service are greatly reduced ( Schneider, 2003).

However, Gunatilaka (2001) argues that the fiscal abilities of different regions to supply such services may vary. For example, poorer regions may typically have greater concentrations of poor people and therefore have fewer resources to provide the necessary services for their poor while the opposite may be true for the rich regions; so development cannot be at equal or the same pace in different regions or places. Secondly, how efficient local governments are in providing public services depends not only on the capacities of the local governments, but also on the extent to which they are accountable and transparent in their activities.

Thirdly, while the general purpose transfer may largely take care of inter-jurisdictional equity, the specific purpose transfer cannot guarantee that intra- or within-jurisdictional equity is ensured. Given the unequal power relations of rural societies, the local elite are usually well placed to capture decision–making about development projects (Bird, 1995). For example, even if a specific-purpose transfer is aimed at increasing irrigation facilities for the poor farmers the facility may be sited in such a way that the lands belonging to the village headman and his family are irrigated first.

However, arguing for rural development Cross and Kutengule (2001) recommends that a form of decentralisation which guarantees the participation of all citizens and consequently, owning their development process should, among other things, include: transfer of real power to local units to reduce the workload on remote and under-resourced central officials; bring political and administrative control over services to the point where they are actually delivered thus improving accountability and effectiveness and promoting people’s feelings of ownership of programmes and projects executed in their areas; free local managers from central constraints and as a long term-goal allow them to develop organizational structures tailored to local circumstances; improve financial accountability and responsibility by establishing a clear link between the payment of local authorities to plan, finance and manage the delivery of services to their constituents; and finally improve the capacity of local authorities to plan, finance and manage the delivery of services to their constituents.
2.4 Decentralisation and rural development

From the foregoing discussions, it is clear that one cannot discuss decentralisation without reference to development at some point and therefore this section explains the link between the two beginnings with definition of development which later progresses into rural development as part of the main theme of the research. The section ends with a highlight of the benefits and cost of decentralisation in development.

Rural Development (RD) is a term that can be conceptualized as a process, phenomenon, a strategy and a discipline. As a process, it implies the engagement of individuals, communities and nations in pursuit of their cherished goals overtime; as a phenomenon, RD is the end result of interventions between various physical, technological, economic, socio-cultural and institutional factors. As a strategy, it is designed to improve the economic and socio-well being of a specific group of people, that is, rural poor while as a discipline it is multidisciplinary in nature, representing an intersection of agricultural, social, behavioral, engineering and management success (Singh, 2005). Thus RD is concerned with development of a strategy to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people -poor rural women and men, to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need. This emphasizes the fact that rural development involves helping the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas to demand and control more of the benefits of development and, therefore, meaningful rural development involves, among others, the development of agriculture and related activities, rural water and health systems, an autonomous local government, rural road network, rural education and an environment friendly system, and rural credit network (Munyonyo, 1999; Singh, 2005). In essence this view emphasizes the change in the structure of opportunities that rural people can avail themselves of, thereby improving their standard of living which include the transformation of socio-economic structures, institutions, relationships and processes in rural areas.

This paper will only focus on basic necessities of life and these include: food, clothes, shelter, basic literacy, primary health care, and security of life and property. The argument here is that when one or all of these are absent or in critically short supply, it can be stated that a condition of “absolute underdevelopment” exists and the provision of these to everybody is the primary responsibility of all economies, whether they are capitalists, socialists or mixed (Singh, 2005). The new economic view of development considers reduction or elimination of poverty, unemployment and inequalities as an important index of development (UNDP 2012). In this case, decline from high to low levels is considered as development in the country.

Rural development is a concern because many countries in Africa including Malawi have been, still continue to be and will remain in the foreseeable future land of village communities and as matter of fact, the village was the basic unit of administration as far back as ancient ages. The predominantly rural character of national economies of countries like Malawi is reflected in the very high proportion of their people living in rural areas (Singh, 2005). With more than 9.7 million people living in rural areas in Malawi (PHC, 2008) and with agriculture -including fishing and forestry, contributing 90% of its gross domestic
product (GDP) at current prices in 2013, no strategy that neglects rural people and agriculture can be successful.

Rural development is laid on integrated community participation which involves including people who benefit from rural development programs and that the concept of community participation calls for people-centred development which emphasizes the need for strengthening institutional and social capacity for greater social control, accountability and self-reliance, high priority placed on the democratisation, the mobilization of local people to manage their own affairs and resources though the government may have a guiding role. Emphasizing the point, Nsibambi (1998) says that the benefit of such type of participation is a more efficient and productive development that is sustainable, independent, equitable, accountable, and rich in local initiatives that strengthen the social-economic base of rural people: the cornerstones of decentralization.

2.5 PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT

In the context of development, participation has been defined in various ways reflecting the different objectives and values and sub-contexts in which it operates. Actual definition ranges from contribution of labour by project beneficiaries at one extreme to organized efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions on the part of groups and modernists hitherto excluded nude control at other (Stieffel et al., 1994). World Bank (1996:3) defines participation as process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, and decisions and resources which affect them. Participation is seen as providing a means through which to enable meaningful involvement of the poor and voiceless in development process, allowing them to exert greater influence and having more control over decisions and institutions that affect their lives. Pretty (1995), distinguishes between several types of participation ranging from passive participation on one hand to self mobilization on other and in between we find participation as information giving, participation by consultation, participation by for material incentives, functional participation and interactive participation.

Development process is fraught with ideological, political, and historical connotations that greatly change its meaning depending on the perspective being discussed. Korten (1990:67) describes development as a process by which members in a society increase their personal and institutions’ capacities to mobilise and manage resources to produce a sustainable and justify distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations. In addition, development must promote economic growth but not at a cost: protection of the environment and consideration of ecological impact of industrialisation and commercialisation; fair and equitable distribution as well as redistribution of goods and services to enable poor people get fairer share of societies’ wealth and participate fully in the economy; and creation of opportunities for everyone to increasingly participate in the political, artistic and other activities of society (Reed, 2008). In this case environment is considered as an integral part of development, since any impact on a person’s environment also influence the state of well being or welfare.
2.5.1 Rationale for decentralisation (participation) in development

Decentralised or participatory development is conventionally represented as emerging out of the recognition of the shortcomings of top-down development approaches. The ineffectiveness of externally imposed and expert-oriented forms of research and planning became increasingly evident in the 1980’s when major donors and development organisations began to adopt decentralised and participatory planning methods. Particularly influential in this trend was the work of Robert Chambers (1983, 1992, 1994 and 1997) which built from an interest in participatory rural development and as advocacy of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) to participatory development more generally. The dimension of different interests in participation viewed as both top–down and bottom-up approaches and different functions served by participation. Top-down interests in participation (centralisation) include legitimatisation, efficiency, sustainability and empowerment while bottom-up interests of participation (decentralisation) include inclusion, leverage, and empowerment (Cooke, 2001).

2.5.2 Benefits and costs of participation and decentralisation in development

The aim of decentralisation and participatory approaches to development is to make people central to development by encouraging beneficiary involvement in the interventions that affect them and over which they previously had limited control or influence; thereby, promoting social learning amongst them (Blackstock et al., 2007). This recognition and support for greater involvement of local peoples’ perspectives, knowledge, priorities and skills presented as alternatives to donor-driven and outsider-led development and has been rapidly and widely adopted by individuals and organizations (Kothari, 2001). Furthermore, decentralisation and participatory approaches to development are justified in terms of sustainability, relevance, empowerment, efficiency, effectiveness and accountability. Efficiency gains always take the form of greater use of local resources and therefore lower the overall costs for a given output while effectiveness gains can take several forms such as better targeting, coverage and identification (and implementation) of more relevant development interventions. Empowerment has been expressed and measured in various ways such as acquisition of new skills and abilities, the building of social capital and strengthening of voice, reduced feelings of dependence and powerlessness. Sustainability has perhaps, commonly been about continuation of project/programme activities beyond the lifetime of the project while accountability has mainly taken the form of greater provision and distribution of information to participants and beneficiaries or consumers or users and citizens (Kothari, 2001). However, many of the said benefits are simply assumed to occur but in practice, there is very little empirical evidence about the actual nature and extent of these benefits and much of that is based on specific projects or programmes. In addition there is even little disaggregated evidence about the impact of participation on different kinds of people and very few attempts have been made to compare and contrast outcomes and impacts of different kinds of decentralisation and participation in rural development.

Cooke and Kothari (2001), note that there have been a number of reviews and critiques of decentralisation and participatory approaches which take two forms; those that focus on
technical limitations of the approach and stress the need for re-examination of the methodological tools used, for example in PRA, and those that pay more attention to the theoretical, political and conceptual limitations of participation and decentralisation. From within the orthodoxy, there is an exposure of the ongoing ‘self critical epistemological awareness; which for Chambers (1997:327) is essential component of participatory ideological and practice and in terms of costs, the most obvious costs include the possibility that increased participation and decentralisation can also lead to increased social conflict (and new forms of exclusion) which in turn can lead to greater improvement and even injury or death.

On the other hand, there is a growing concern that participatory approaches to development in the decentralisation process are not living up to the many claims that are being made. Participation does not take place in a power vacuum: the empowerment of previously marginalised groups may have unexpected and potentially negative interactions with existing power structures (Kothari, 2001). There are always ways in which participation can reinforce existing privileges and group dynamics may discourage minority perspectives from being expressed (Nelson & Write, 1995) creating dysfunctional consensus (Cook, 2001).

Consultation fatigue may develop as stakeholders are increasingly asked to take part in participatory processes that are not well run because they perceive that their involvement gains little capacity to influence decisions that affect them. In this regard, it has been claimed that participatory process can become “talking shops” that create ambiguities and delay decisive action (Vedwan et al., 2008). This can lead to declining levels of engagement and put the credibility of participation at risk.

Despite that there are some notable costs of participatory approaches to development, there is no doubt that these approaches have effectively demonstrated the capacity of men and women from poor communities to participate actively in research, project design and policy analysis. Community development has been enhanced in many developing countries where such approaches have been applied.

2.6 Challenges of decentralisation in relation to development in Africa
Devas 2000 and Rusten, et al (2004), both agree that the scope of effective and accountable decentralised governance varies between countries, depending on historical, economic and political conditions while Cross and Kutengule(2001) argue that the pursuit of decentralization by most of the African political leaders, on the evidence of what has in practice been achieved, has been half hearted which means that much of the activity of reform is often apparent rather than real. The primary difficulty is that the building of political and administrative decentralization has been an extremely induced rather than organically generated process, and as such it faces inherent contradictions; and this is because the inducements for continued efforts are largely provided by donors who control the pipeline supplying aid and all the associated perquisites, rather than by popular pressure for the accountability, or local demands for further subsidiarity in administration(Maliro, 2001)
Performance and accountability of local governments are constrained by a number of factors which, among others, include: limited resources, weak institutional capacity, inadequate
mechanism of accounting and accountability, and limited availability of information (Devas, 2002).

2.6.1 Inadequate resources
Local governments in most countries have limited local taxing powers from which to finance the services assigned to them and as a result, service levels fall far short of what is required (Rustein, et al., 2004). This is because local revenues for local governments are often limited to a few visible but unpopular taxes which are usually difficult and expensive to collect, inequitable in impact and economically distorting and that increased local revenue mobilisation often involves coercive extraction from the poor (Fjeldstad, 2001). As a result many local governments depend heavily on transfers from central government, which are often allocated in inequitable and non-transparent ways and this dependence on the central government or donors undermines the accountability of local governments to the local communities and tax-payers.

2.6.2 Weak institutional capacity
Local governments often suffer from weak institutional capacity. Decision-making processes are unsystematic, mechanisms of accountability between officials and elected representatives are inadequate, and there is a shortage of officials with the necessary technical, managerial, and financial skills (Bird, 1995). In most cases, this is often due to the lack of financial resources to attract and retain high caliber staff because salary levels for local government staff in Africa are often a fraction of what people could earn in the private sector and very low wages means that people are preoccupied with searching for other income opportunities, whether corrupt or simply dysfunctional.

2.6.3 Inadequate mechanisms of accounting, auditing and accountability
Accounting, both of officials to elected representatives and of elected local governments to citizens, requires effective systems of accounting and auditing that creates trust in the information about how resources have been used. Elected representatives, never mind the ordinary citizens, are rarely in a position to check the details of the use of resources; yet accounting systems are often extremely weak in local governments and are open to all manner of disputes. Again annual accounts are often finalized long after the end of the financial year while central governments rarely have the capacity to perform comprehensive external audits on all local governments (World Bank, 2001).

2.6.4 Limited availability of information, participation and civil society
Accountability also depends on information being made available to the citizens. Research has shown that most local governments in Africa do not provide sufficient and comprehensive information about how resources are being used to stakeholders. In addition, there is need for a dynamic civil society that is able to engage effectively with local governments on these issues and this is still a rare combination in most countries in Africa (Robot, 2003)
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH METHODS

The aim of the research is to analyse the influence of decentralisation on rural development in Malawi with specific focus on Salima District Council. This chapter presents the research methodology, scope of study, research design, sampling method, data collection instruments, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Methodology

This is a descriptive research and adopts a methodology as advised by Leedy & Ormond (2010:187) which involves acquiring information about one or more groups of people, perhaps about their characteristics, opinions, attitudes, or perhaps experiences, by asking them questions and tabulating their answers.

3.2 Scope and scale of the study

The study has been conducted in the Salima district council which was chosen because of the ever-increasing levels of poverty experienced by many areas in the district in recent times, making it a very suitable area for a case study. It focused on people from rural areas of the district, particularly the VDCs, ADCs and Traditional Authorities. The reason for choosing rural areas is that this is where poverty and the underpinning effects of underdevelopment can easily be noticed. This ranges from lack of clean water or inadequate water points manifested by long queues of women waiting for their turn at one water point and high frequency of water-borne diseases; inadequate or lack of education and health facilities; poor road network and hunger among rural populations.

District staff were targeted because they are the ‘vessel’ through which the decentralisation policy is being implemented at grassroots level by the central government and local governments while to a small extent donor community or organisations will also be targeted to get their feeling on how they perceive the decentralisation process in Malawi.

Lastly, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, the parent ministry on all decentralisation issues, was targeted to give its stand and opinion on how decentralisation in terms of rural development is performing in the country.

3.3 Research design

This was a predominantly qualitative study geared towards the exploration of issues surrounding the decentralisation phenomenon as regards to rural development. According to Creswell (2002: 50) a qualitative research is used to study research problems requiring an exploration and understanding of a central phenomenon. The qualitative approach is appropriate for this study because it is ‘pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experiences of the people’ (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). As a research strategy, the inquiry was approached as a case study. This would give a comprehensive understanding on the role of decentralisation in rural development, as a phenomenon of concern not only within Salima District Council, but also the whole country in as far as socio-economic development is concerned. In addition, the quantitative approach was used in the form of descriptive statistics.
3.4 Research Problem
Decentralisation is considered as a key political administrative strategy that promotes community participation in policy formulation and development planning, facilitates effective coordination and implementation of policies at local level (Hussein, 2003). Ideally, decentralisation is a way of empowering local communities to take charge of development in their local areas which means that local communities must be able to identify needs within their areas and plan for their own development programmes which must be eventually be acted upon by government or other development partners. In addition, Magolowindo et al (2000: 12) believe the objective of decentralisation, among others, relate to pursuance of democracy and efficiency in public service and that the specific objectives of decentralisation include: design of more realistic development programmes and projects which takes into account local potential and constraints; better coordination of activities at various spatial levels through desegregation of planning functions; strengthening local and political institutions and increase of peoples’ participation in local development and governance; and improved mobilisation of human and other resources for

On the other hand, the rhetoric of decentralisation in Malawi does not match the results on the ground. Fourteen years of the implementation of decentralisation policy, reports and observations still show that many rural parts of Salima just like many other districts in Malawi lack basic elements/needs for improvement of life: a lot of rural women walk long distances to fetch safe drinking water; many areas are inaccessible due to poor road networks; schools and health facilities are far apart; many areas also do not have access to safe and portable water; and there is wide concession that rural life which constitutes about 87 percent of Malawi population is below poverty line (NSO, 2009). Such challenges pose as a great threat to the Government of Malawi to attain some of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015 (UN, 2000) such as; eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, and combat HIV/Aids, malaria and other diseases. However, it is widely accepted by many scholars that decentralised states are more transparent and react promptly to local wishes and demands because local governments are ‘close to the people’ (Crook & Sverson, 2001; Osmani, 2000). Physical closeness to people not only makes it easier to hold officials liable for their performance, it also facilitates the acquisition of more accurate information on condition of the status quo of the periphery which can be used for planning and provision of resources.

It is therefore against this background, that this study hypothesises that decentralisation in Malawi has not made enough progress to promote popular participation in local development and good governance because of a number of challenges which include: failure by most government ministries to devolve some of their functions to districts in order to enhance capacity; inactive grass root level structures, which facilitate participation and local development planning, such as Village Development Committee (VDC) and Area Development Committee (ADC); in adequate funding at district level to quickly respond to development needs of communities; prolonged absence of Councillors as the government has not conducted another Local Government Elections since the expiry of the first five year term of councillors in 2005.
3.5 Sample design and selection criteria

A sample is a sub-set of a larger population. Lewis & Thornhill (2003), argue that for all questions where it would be impossible for you to study the whole population, there is need to select a sample. In this case, Purposive Random Sampling and Stratified Randomly Sampling methods were used. Purposively, two ADCs were selected in eight TAs in the district for focus group interviews; that is, the worst and the best in terms of the socio-economic profile respectively. In total 73 interviews were conducted.

In each of the ADCs, VDCs were selected randomly and in each of the VDCs four executive members comprising of the chairperson, Secretary, treasurer, and one executive member were interviewed.

Stratified Randomly Sampling was used for one to one interviews with district staff (DEC members). A total 40 DEC members were interviewed, of which 23 were women. The first stratum was composed of Heads of departments/sectors at district level. The second stratum comprised senior extension workers from the field who work as AEC to the ADC. Below is a table indicating number of people that were interviewed.

**Table 1: number of people interviewed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Participants</th>
<th>Distribution by Sex</th>
<th>Number of People Interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADC members</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VDC members</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC members</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AEC members</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6 Data collection methods

The research uses quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Quantitative research uses an array of quantitative techniques to collect and analyse numerical data. It uses large samples, less probing questions and analyses the interpretation of data by statistical summarisation to make the findings credible. Qualitative research, on the other hand, uses small sample and more probing questions and is very useful to understand phenomenon better (Leedy & Ormond, 2010).

This research had to a greater extent used qualitative methods and to a lesser extent quantitative methods. The reason for this is to obtain a holistic view of the role of
decentralisation in rural development and its implication on the socio-economic life of the rural communities. In-depth interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions (FGDs) and documentary search were the main data gathering methods.

Prior to data collection exercise, a pilot study was conducted in Mzikubola ADC in Mzimba District to pre-test the instruments; especially questionnaires in order to find out if they were giving required information. Refinements were made to the instruments before commencement of actual data collection.

3.6.1 Interviews
In this study, 73 interviews were conducted with participants. A guide for the in-depth interviews was prepared to facilitate discussions. The researcher asked follow up questions where necessary to direct the course of the study. In the process, the researcher identified an average of 9 participants for an in-depth interview comprising of women and men in an attempt to obtain balanced ideas on development issues affecting rural communities from both sexes. These participants were chosen depending on their maturity in answering questions during general interviews.

As an entry point in the world of the decentralisation, the researcher hired two facilitators to assist in identifying and interviewing the VDC and ADC members. The facilitators were officers working within the district council because they are very conversant with issues of decentralisation and very popular with ADCs because of their regular interaction with them.

3.6.2 Questionnaires
Structured questionnaires were prepared for influential members of the rural communities (VDCs and ADCs), staff at district level (DEC members), and Ministry of Local Government. Researcher administered questionnaires to collect information from respondents. This involved hiring of a vehicle to reach the respondents in their respective places to distribute questionnaires and collect them at a later point. The questionnaires included open-ended questions 'that allow the respondent to reply in his/her own words' (Weiss, 1998).

3.6.3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)
This method will be used to verify what DEC members and the other participants had said during the interviews. A guide was prepared to focus the discussion on the information the researcher intended to collect. The researcher, himself, carried out this exercise. The intention was to conduct the FGDs in two homogeneous groups of 6 rural people each in each ADC; one for men only and the other women only. The reason was not only to ensure balanced views from both sexes, but also allow the groups to express certain issues freely without being embarrassed in the presence of members of the opposite sex. The FGDs were duly recorded on the tape for preservation and analysis.
3.6.4 Documentary Search

To come up with a comprehensive study, a number of documents on decentralisation were used. These, among others, include relevant books on decentralisation and rural development and papers by UNDP, website data, research journals, samples of different free writings, etc. This helps to gather information about what other studies have done in a similar field of research. In other words, it helps to provide a theoretical frame of the study. The knowledge gathered from the documents would assist to identify gaps on which this study is based.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis involved converting a mass of raw data into a coherent account (Weiss 1998; Willy, 2000). This involved: getting a feel of the data; testing validity and liability of the data; and testing the hypothesis developed in the research. The exercise commenced at the same time with data collection and continued up to the end of the study. In this study both qualitative and quantitative data were analysed. Qualitative data was analysed using qualitative data analysis technique which involves using a small sample and more probing questions in order to understand the phenomenon. Quantitative data in this study included numbers of people in VDC who had food during lean months of the year, number of houses with corrugated iron sheets, number of schools and health facilities per VDC, road network, number of safe and portable water points, and mode of transport that people use in the area. The SPSS 9.0 version for windows was used in the data analysis process.

3.8 Ethical considerations

It is the objective of this research study that it abides to general ethical issues as in Leedy and Ormrod (2010:101), that it should not subject the population to four categories of ethical issues of protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy, and honesty with professional colleagues..

The researcher therefore, prior to the commencement of data collection, sought permission, in writing, from responsible officers, to conduct the study in the areas/organisations. Permission was also sought from the Ministry of Local Government Headquarters, Traditional Authorities within the district and selected ADCs and VDCs for the interviews.

3.9 Validity and Reliability of data

Data collected has been verified as knowledge of the study through descriptive, interpretive and internal validity. This involved provision of factual accuracy of decentralisation process in Malawi and its impact on rural development with specific focus on Salima District Council as well as giving detailed account of participants’ views on decentralisation and its impact on their livelihood.

Reliability of data has been confirmed through the trustworthiness and dependability of the information gathered by the researcher.

3.10 Strengths and Limitations of the Study
The strength of this study is that the researcher works in the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) as District Commissioner. He has been at this position in various district councils, including Salima district where he conducted the research, for eleven years. He has close contact with the people he interviewed and communities where focus group discussions were conducted. He already built trust with these people and may not be suspicious that he would use information given to him maliciously.

On the other hand, limitations to the study cannot be overlooked since participation to the study was not compulsory and those who did not want to participate might be the ones who could have given crucial information.
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction
The study sought to find out the extent to which decentralisation has brought about development to local communities in rural areas in Malawi specifically focusing on Salima District Council. It sought to find out from the local communities who comprised of chiefs, ADC and VDC members what they know about decentralisation in relation to development and to what extent they are involved in addressing their own problems/needs in their areas. The study also aimed to know from the communities what has changed in their areas since the introduction of the new decentralisation policy. To the district staff, the main focus of the study was to find out whether decentralisation has created a conducive environment for service delivery to the communities in terms of institutional capacity; support from central government and the communities themselves; and the perceived constraints or challenges of decentralisation as a way of advancing rural development. The study also sought to find out the perception of the Ministry of Local Government on decentralisation process in Malawi, Salima Council in particular. Details of the findings area presented and discussed below.

4.2 People’s knowledge on general issues of decentralisation in Salima District
The study in this section sought to find out, from the District staff (DEC members) and Community members comprising of ADC and VDC members, the extent to which they have knowledge about decentralisation including its definitions, processes and other general issues. This was important because effective participation in anything depends on the level of knowledge one has on the subject. The question was targeted to 40 DEC members and 73 members of the community and presented in table 1 below are the findings of the study.

Table 2: knowledge of communities and district staff on decentralisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of interest</th>
<th>DEC Members</th>
<th>Community members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communities know decentralisation &amp; its process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC members Know decentralisation &amp; its process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of knowledge of decentralisation &amp; its process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralisation encourages demand for projects by</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
communities | Not sure | 0 | 0 | 12 | 17
---|---|---|---|---|---
Decentralisation encourages transparency & accountability | Yes | 36 | 90 | 14 | 21
No | 0 | 0 | 12 | 16
Not sure | 4 | 10 | 47 | 63
Decisions are made by local communities & Government implement them | Yes | 36 | 90 | 62 | 84
No | 1 | 2.5 | 8 | 11
Not sure | 3 | 7.5 | 3 | 5

Note: Each item was assessed on its own not in relation with other rest hence totals

Table 1 suggests Government officials(80%) at District level and the Communities(83%) agree that most of the people in Salima District have knowledge regarding decentralisation processes in development. Even during focus group discussions, the majority of people showed that they are aware of decentralisation which was popularly referred to as *mphamvu ku wanthu* or literally “power to the people” and they mentioned it repeatedly used in all developmental meetings with communities by DEC members, stakeholders or development partners in the district where communities sometimes spell out their needs and choose projects that can address these needs. It was also mentioned in certain areas that some members have actually been formally trained in decentralisation process and its aspects. However, the study revealed that the level of knowledge varies from one area to the other and consequently, the level of development is higher in areas where communities are fully aware of and use decentralisation as development tool.

All government officials; that is, DEC members(100%) indicated that they know decentralisation and demonstrated fairly appreciable levels of knowledge of decentralization perceiving it as devolution of power at central government to the district level and beyond. This is an important aspect because as UNDP (2004:16) put it: “local governments have and should be fully aware of their role as facilitator, catalyst, adviser and broker of knowledge and resources that could effectively function as change agents in the communities” and as such DEC must understand the process from planning to the implementation of the projects.

4.3 Effectiveness of decentralisation in respect of rural development in Salima District

This section aimed at finding out from 40 DEC members and 73 community members as to whether decentralisation has been effective in bringing about improvement in the socio-economic life of the rural people. In the communities the question was assessed through the projects communities have witnessed within the period of the new decentralisation policy compared to the period before the policy. It was also assessed by the extent to which local people participate in development planning for their areas. To the district government officials the question further assessed the changes brought about by decentralisation that create an environment conducive for the assembly to deliver quality services to the communities at grass root level. The findings of the study are presented in table 3 below followed by a brief discussion of some of the issues.

Table 3: Positive effects of decentralisation in development of rural areas
N = 40 (DEC Members); (73 Community members)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria of assessment</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>DEC Members</th>
<th>Community members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Projects demanded by communities have tremendously increased</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%age</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects implemented e.g. Schools, Roads, Bridges, Health centres, and CBOs in communities have increased.</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%age</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in development planning i.e. needs assessment, project prioritisation &amp; selection, implementation</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%age</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in organisational set-up at district level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in Personnel at district level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in approaches to development; that is, bottom up approach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination, communication &amp; meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.1 Projects implemented after decentralisation policy was in place

Table 2 suggests that communities (79.4%) appreciate that decentralisation has created a lot of demand for development projects in the rural areas and the majority of them (67.1%) appreciate that government through decentralisation has been able to assist them with more projects than before. For instance, during Focus Group Discussions in Chitala VDC which is in Khombedza ADC, people said: “during MASAF, we requested for two roads, ten boreholes, a Community Day Secondary School (CDSS), and many more; and during LDF and CDF, we requested for maternity wing at our Khombedza health centre, maize mill and many more. Although Government has not been able to give us all that we requested, most of the
facilities are now in place and we are waiting for the remaining ones”. It was also stated that “our duty now is to properly use and maintain the facilities; however we also want more boreholes where we can get safe drinking water” which also suggests that local people become more responsible for development programmes implemented from their own requests because the element of ownership in the projects is enhanced.

4.3.2 Local peoples’ participation in project planning

Table 2 suggests that the majority of communities (86.3%) and DEC members (92.5%) agreed that people are involved in project planning in Salima as one of the requirements of decentralisation. In this case, project planning encompasses four stages beginning with the process of needs assessment. The needs assessment yields a range of possible projects which are then selected and prioritized. The prioritised projects are then planned and designed for implementation and the actual implementation of the selected projects constitutes the last stage of project planning and in general projects mentioned by communities in the VDCs and ADCs where the study took place show that most grass root development projects implemented after the onset of the decentralisation policy and institutional reforms were identified through meetings initiated by VDCs and ADCs which has given communities an opportunity to think through their own development needs, albeit the political interference. Chisinga and Dzimadzi (2001:64) argue that if people are involved in all these stages, project management which refers to the care of the completed project to ensure sustainability of the project becomes easy as the communities have been empowered by the whole process to mastermind their own development needs.

4.3.3 Organizational set up of the district administration

The major change observed here was the merging of the offices of the DC and the Local Authority to form Salima District Council and the creation and revitalization of the subsidiary committees namely: ADC, AEC, and VDC at area level and village level respectively of which on average the DEC members(62.5%) observed that it was a very good move as part of change process in decentralisation because the resources in the Council are poured together and allocation would be where they are most needed there by helping to address the most pressing issues in the council.

During in-depth interviews, DEC members (12.5%) alluded to the fact that when councillors were in place, the set-up was complete and people at grassroots level were well represented in the Council and participation at grassroots level was enhanced because the traditional top-down approach to development had been superseded by the bottom-up approach to development facilitated by the decentralized structures of VDC, ADC, AEC, DEC, and District Council. DEC members (62.5%) observed that, even in the absence of councillors, members of the local community participate in development activities in that they are able to present their problems to the chiefs and MPs who bring these problems to the district. This suggests that people are able choose projects they think can address their needs or genuinely felt problems which means that when implemented these projects are well maintained by the people themselves as they have a very strong sense of ownership.
Cross and Kutengule (2001) say this set up is necessary for DEC to be well focused on its mandate, namely, to provide technical advice on the development activities within the district, the advantage of this being that the viability of a project is established well before implementation commences. This arrangement also means that ADCs and VDCs have since been strengthened following the creation of the AECs which comprise frontline staff from sectoral authorities which not only improves coordination in project identification but also minimizes project and service duplication at community level.

4.3.4 Personnel Changes

In the interviews with DEC members, the majority of them {(52.5%) + (37.5%)} applauded decentralisation and revealed that sixteen sectors have devolved to the District Council making them to be directly under the supervision of the District Commissioner who is now the Controlling Officer at the district level.. In this case, it can also be said that the coming of devolved sectors to the Assembly has created “a bond that ensures unity of purpose on service delivery to the people at grassroots level” and communities can be assured of efficiency in terms of service delivery.

However some DEC members expressed concern that, despite the District Commissioner being the Controlling Officer, parent ministries still have the power to hire, promote and fire. This has promoted dual reporting within the decentralisation set up as most officers from devolved sectors still get orders from their parent ministries.

4.3.5 Changes in the approach to development

Table 2 suggests that DEC members (25% + 62.5%) and community members (76.7%) agree that projects which address people’s needs come from VDCs and ADCs. This indicates that DEC, AEC and some ADC and VDC members clearly understand that one of the major tenets of decentralization was the shift in approach to development from top-down to bottom-up approach in the administration of grassroots development activities. For instance, the DPD indicated, “my office is always full of requests of projects to address people’s needs from the ADCs and we fail to address them mainly because of limited resources”. For example, it was pointed out that, during project appraisals, the DEC gets to know the decisions at the community level, how much is the project expected to cost and other relevant information and that during implementation, communities take charge of the process through the formation of the PICs and audit committees which monitor the projects and take care of the finances for the particular project. In relation to finances, the Director of Finance (DOF) said “We give cheques to the project committees and they open an account for each project with banks of their choice. Our duty is to monitor and provide technical backstopping – this is true with Local Development Fund (LDF) projects as well as the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) projects.”
4.3.6 Communication and Coordination

All DEC members (100%) and community members (89%) indicated that decentralization has brought about increased collaboration both at district and village levels. Probably this is because sectors and departments have to communicate with the District Commissioner’s office and vice versa and with the communities through various forums; communities have to collaborate within themselves through ADC and VDC meetings to bring up projects that can address their needs which are eventually submitted to the District Council. During in-depth interviews, the members also reported that they now meet more frequently to share ideas and experiences on rural development than was the case before the decentralization initiative and because of this DEC functions such as project appraisals are done with utmost expertise.

However, it was reported that there is a certain degree of lack of coordination among organizations in facilitating the implementation of grassroots development initiatives as a result there is duplication of projects at the community level and this is the case with central government which often times implements projects at community level without consulting the people at that level, let alone the District Commissioner’s office. Participants also reported that the problem of coordination is also of great concern to some donors who are said to circumvent the local decentralized and planning frame work, and that their competing interests and different implementation policies have undermined the Council’s policies. For example, while the Council does not allow payment of allowances to development committees at community level, some of the NGOs such as World Vision International and Malawi Carer pay them. In general, such practices only serve to compromise community members’ participation in the Council’s projects because they get monetary benefits, as such, sustainability of these organizations’ projects after completion becomes a challenge.

4.4 Use and Involvement of Decentralisation structures in planning for development in Salima.

It was in the interest of this study to find out from 40 DEC members, 73 community members as to whether Salima District Council as a local government has decentralization structures like the District Council, DEC, ADC, AEC and VDC in place and functional. This was necessary in order to find out whether the tenets of decentralization are really working to the expected standards in the district and table 3 below is a summary of the responses from the participants.
Table 4: Use and involvement of decentralised structures in planning for development

N = 40 (DEC Members); (73 Community members)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Existence &amp; role played</th>
<th>DEC Members</th>
<th>Community members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%age</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Council</td>
<td>Is in place</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>25 34.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Various committees check on council secretariat</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approves projects to be implemented</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>24 32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC</td>
<td>Is in place</td>
<td>40 100</td>
<td>70 95.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provides technical advice to District Council/DCF on projects to be implemented</td>
<td>32 80</td>
<td>42 57.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consults communities on project planning</td>
<td>34 85</td>
<td>49 67.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADCs</td>
<td>Are in place</td>
<td>40 100</td>
<td>73 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proposes projects to address community needs</td>
<td>40 100</td>
<td>73 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participates in project planning with DEC</td>
<td>34 85</td>
<td>58 79.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AECs</td>
<td>Are in place</td>
<td>27 67.5</td>
<td>44 60.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advise ADCs on development aspects</td>
<td>10 25</td>
<td>10 13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VDCs</td>
<td>Are in place</td>
<td>40 100</td>
<td>73 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitate development planning &amp; implementation at community level</td>
<td>25 62.5</td>
<td>43 58.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are consulted by DEC and ADCs on development issue</td>
<td>28 70</td>
<td>17 23.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.1 Existence of the District Council

All DEC members (100%) and the majority of the community members (65.7%) indicated the District Council does not exist because councillors are not in place. It was mentioned that government dissolved councils because their mandate of office had expired in March, 2005 and since then there has been no local government elections in the country. Since that time the District Council has been replaced by the DCF comprising of chiefs, Members of Parliament, and representatives of interest groups who perform some of the duties of Councillors especially approving projects to be implemented at grass root level and probably this is the structure that 34.3% of the community members referred to when they said the District Councils exist.

During in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions with communities, members (65.7%) expressed concern that they are not well represented at council level because of the
absence of Councillors. “We don’t often see the chief or our MP because they are far away from us but a councillor was always in contact with us, therefore able to get our needs to the Council. He could work with us in some projects and he was always amongst us in all development activities.” This shows that the absence of councillors means that certain functions are not being performed. For instance, DEC members lamented that, for five years now, the local authority has not been able to make by-laws for good governance in the district because the DCF which works in place of the District Council has no legal mandate to do so. This is detrimental to the assembly because, in terms of local revenue generation, it means that vendors, tenants and business people who defaults payments of fees, ground rents, and other charges cannot be penalised or sued resulting in low revenue generation by the council.

Almost all the donors i.e. UNDP, MGDDP, etc, who were interviewed said that the absence of the councillors is of great concern to them because issues of transparency and accountability on the use of the resources in the council are compromised. This is because, while councillors were able to follow issues with the secretariat through the different committees like finance, development, health, agriculture, and works, the DCF of the chiefs and MPs do not have such committees in place to the effect that they only get reports on issues from the council secretariat during consultative meetings without probing into specific issues.

4.4.2 Existence of District Executive Committee (DEC)

All the DEC members (100%) indicated that DEC exists and that they meet once every month for normal DEC meetings where among others, they discuss issues including project proposals from the communities through either ADCs or directly from VDCs with several adhoc meetings looking at specific emergent issues. In-depth interviews also indicated that DEC formed District Advisory Teams (DATs) that are responsible for ADCs and they make an effort to attend ADC meetings and monitor /supervise projects in their ADCs concerned. In addition, 67.1% of the community members indicated that DEC members really come for appraisals for projects in their areas but they complained that the projects being implemented are not usually the same as communities requested; rather they are predetermined already by the DEC. For instance, in the past three years more teachers houses have been built because communities were told to prepare to do so. A further probe from the DEC members indicated this was already predetermined by the donors through Central Government.

However, the DEC members lamented on two issues. Firstly that the district has too many requests from the communities but the resource envelope is too small to meet even one-fifth of the requests and in essence this means that communities lose hope in the DEC as most of their requests are not honoured and therefore become frustrated. Secondly the on-going projects seem to receive little support in terms of material contributions from the communities who requested for them leaving doubts as to whether their requests were genuine.
4.4.3 Existence of Area Development Committees (ADCs)
All the participants in this interview (100% in both cases) agreed that ADCs exist in all Traditional Authorities (TAs). They also agreed that the ADCs are active in most of the TAs because their monthly meetings are monitored by DEC members but the sticky issue was on effective discussions during meetings. Of all the ADCs visited and interviewed, only one ADC of TA Kambwiri showed they were recently trained in issues of decentralisation while most of them only know the word “decentralisation” and not what is fully involved because they have not been trained for them to effectively contribute in the decentralisation process. This has resulted in most of the members being “free riders” during meetings so that discussions are dominated by a few able members.

However, most of ADCs agreed that the council involves them in each stage of project development from planning to launching and implementation.

4.4.4 Existence of Area Executive Committees (AECs)
Government officials and community members interviewed (67.5% and 60.3%) said that AECs exist but have made insignificant contributions to development process in the council because of lack or inadequate support from the District Council and as such, only the chairperson is active because he is able to attend ADC meetings regularly as secretary of the committee. This was expressed in almost all the ADCs except in TA Kambwiri. This therefore, suggests that development proposals from communities are not properly screened at the lower level hence may contribute to delays in the approval process.

4.4.5 Existence of Village Development Committees (VDCs)
The study revealed that while the ADCs were somehow active, most VDCs were inactive. There were sentiments like “Ife kuno timakumana kukakhala makuponon ogulira fetereza otsihipa mtengo kapena ndchito ya ma MK300 ya mthandizi kapena kukabwera chitukuko.” (Here we meet when there are programmes like FISP, Public Works Programme where we get MK300 per day and when there is a project within our area). It was also only in TA Kambwiri where the VDCs have been trained and there are able to articulate issues no wonder people there boast of boreholes in every village, beautiful schools and health centres while some VDCs do not know how the projects come in their area.

This means that, in general, the structure is there as a fulfilment of the policy but efficiency and effectiveness may not be there, yet they are the people are beneficiaries of the end product putting the sustainability at stake.

4.5 Challenges of Decentralisation as a way of advancing Rural Development in Salima
The study sought to find out from the DEC members, local community members, and ministry officials the reasons for decentralisation has not been effective in the development of local communities in Salima. This was an open ended question to 40 DEC members, 73 community members. Table 4 below gives a summary of the responses from the participants
Table 5: Reasons for decentralisation being ineffective in development of rural areas in Salima

N = 40 (DEC Members); (73 Community members)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>DEC Members</th>
<th>%age</th>
<th>Community members</th>
<th>%age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of financial resources</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>94.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delays in project approval</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy workload at the council</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicisation of development</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of training</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>94.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of elected members of the council</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>94.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predetermined projects from central government and donors</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance to change by central government</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunger and food shortage</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>79.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption by some members of staff</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 suggests that the major reasons for the slow pace of decentralisation in enhancing rural development are: inadequate financial resources, inordinate delays in project approval process, heavy workload at the Council, politicisation of development projects, lack of training, predetermined projects from the central government, resistance to change, absence of elected members, lack of feedback to and from communities, the downside of the target inputs, hunger/food shortage.

4.5.1 Inadequate Financial Resources

Table 4 suggests that, from DEC members (98%) and communities (94.5%), one of the major reasons for the slow progress of development in rural areas is lack of financial resources to implement all the viable requested projects by communities. They said that the council cannot afford to honour all the requests at once because the resource base is very small. The council relies on the central government for project funds because it is not able to generate enough local revenue to provide adequate services to the communities. Communities themselves indicated that when they follow up on the projects proposals with the DPD’s office, they are told that their proposals were appraised and approved but there is no money for implementation. This agrees with Rustein at el (2004) that local governments in most countries have limited local resource base from which to finance the services assigned to them and as a result, services fall far short of what is required. This in turn frustrates the whole objective of decentralisation.
4.5.2 Delays in the Project Approval Process

The responses in table 4 from the DEC members (5%) and communities (42%) suggest that most of the areas are underdeveloped because there are inordinate time lags between project identification by the communities and implementation by the assembly. Communities observed that it takes 3 to 4 years for a project that has been identified to be implemented and while the delays were attributed to funding uncertainties, the study feels that this has discredited the merits of decentralization in the sense that both DEC members and communities are demoralized. Communities said that they used to mobilize local resources like bricks, stones and sand just after identifying a project and before its approval but now they wait until it is approved and funds are identified because their mobilized local resources used to waste away or get destroyed. This suggests that if decentralisation is to bear fruits, then communities need quick approval of their projects and feedback from the Council.

4.5.3 Heavy Workload at the Council

DEC members (75%) in table 4 indicated that their workload had increased substantially since all the problems from the community are channelled to the District Council. The result is that there is always high likelihood that some projects would be overlooked or even forgotten altogether and that this is one of the main reasons why project proposals take a long time before being approved by the Council. DEC members lamented that there are a lot of activities that require their involvement or the services. “Some of us have resorted to working on our office issues, during the evening because during the day we are busy with project supervisions in the fields or attending to day to day project related issues from MPs and communities,” the DPW was quoted as saying.

4.5.4 Politicisation of Development

The study also revealed that the tendency to politicize development has contributed to the inequitable distribution of projects in the district. DEC members (10%) and communities (43.2%) highly singled the implementation of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) projects where the MPs have more power to decide and allocate projects within their constituency. In most cases the MP tends to allocate more projects to areas perceived to be his/her stronghold in terms of support more especially where he comes from. This leaves people in the other areas feeling helpless, worthless and frustrated.

The respondents indicated that, in extreme cases even projects that are not feasible get implemented are authorised under instructions from strong political figures. Given the power such individuals wield and in the absence of the agreed formula for equitably distributing projects, it means that nobody would dare stand on their way and as a consequence, projects are unevenly distributed in the district making some pockets of people get demoralized.

4.5.5 Lack of Training

Both DEC members (85%) and communities (94.5%) agree that lack of training on how to operate in the decentralization system especially at the lower levels of the ADC and VDC is another barrier to development within the rural areas. This was said to be quite pronounced mainly in 7 out of 8 TAs. This means that people do not know what to do and who should do
what and as a result the Council may not be able to give meaningful advice, where necessary, to the ADCs and VDCs; hence, it becomes difficult for communities to fully participate in development project planning for their areas.

4.5.6 Absence of Elected Members
The study revealed that the main concern of the communities (50.7%) on the development of their areas was the absence of the councillors. The continued absence of councillors since the dissolution of the previous councils in 2005 poses a threat to decentralisation and democracy because people are not well represented Council. This means the council is operating at half mast since it cannot perform all its functions. At the same time, issues of transparency and accountability are compromised because there is no one to regularly check on the operations of the council secretariat.

4.5.7 Predetermined projects from Central Government and Donors
While appreciating the district council is being assisted with project funds from the Central Government and Donors for service provision to the communities, DEC members (35%) observed that these funds come with attachments in respect of the projects to be done instead of leaving the choice of the projects to the discretion of the council. For instance, members cited the LDF Projects where Central Government in collaboration with donors predetermined that the council has to build teachers’ houses; this leaves the council with little choice on the range of projects implemented in the district despite the many requests for different types of projects presented to the council by communities creating a big disparity in terms of sector development in the communities and overriding priorities of the communities.

4.5.8 Resistance to change
Over (42%) of the DEC members observed that another challenge of decentralisation in respect of rural development was that some line ministries are not supportive of the decentralization policy and institutional reforms for fear of losing power and their jobs. One area that was cited was that the power to hire, promote and fire district staff rests in the hands of the line ministries which means that although the District Commissioner is a controlling officer at district level, there is no way he can effectively control staff.

4.5.9 Hunger and Shortage of Food
Both community members (79.4%) and DEC members (37.5%) mentioned that the general scarcity of food and the resultant hunger has contributed to the failure of development projects in some areas because the affected families are reluctant to participate in project activities. It was said that some people literally lived with one meal per day and even then did not know where the next meal would come from. As a result, it becomes very difficult for chiefs, ADCs and VDCs to mobilize hungry people to carry out strenuous development work like fetching sand, water and moulding or carrying bricks to the project site.
4.5.10 Corruption by some members of staff
The issue of corruption came out from the DEC members (20%) who said that most of the members of the Internal Procurement Committee are very corrupt. It was said that when projects are tendered they collude with suppliers who give them “commissions” for them to win the bids. It is very possible that if these suppliers in turn supply substandard materials, no one queries them because of the “kickbacks.” This has resulted in provision of sub-standards projects which obviously do not last long.

4.6 Views from the Ministry of Local government and Rural Development
Only two people from the ministry, in the Rural Development section responded to the questionnaire and they indicated that the ministry is satisfied with the rate at which development is taking place in rural areas. They cited the construction of 1,500 classrooms and 2000 teachers’ houses in two years from LDF, the construction of roads by government and donor partners, among others. As part of support to Local Governments, they pointed out that districts are now getting funds straight from the Treasury and that funding is regular compared to 10 years ago and there are more qualified officers at district than before.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSION

The aim of the study was to critically evaluate and assess Decentralisation as a means of advancing development to local communities in Malawi with focus on Salima District Council. In order to narrow and focus the research aim, the research paper posed four questions to which the author attempted to provide answers. The research utilized mainly qualitative methodology where semi-structured interviews were conducted using questionnaire guide to collect data from the field as well as written information on the research prior to participation of respondents. (See appendices A to E)

Are communities and district staff aware about the decentralisation and the forms in which it exists?

The study established that, in general, people are aware of decentralisation but such knowledge varies from community to community and at various levels within the district. The district staff (DEC members) know more details of decentralisation than the communities in the rural areas for the obvious reasons such as exposure through interactions and the many trainings that some of them have gone through. With this, DEC members demonstrated that they are well conversant with the tenets of decentralisation which was important because they are vessels of decentralization as it moves down to grassroots levels where the effects of development or underdevelopment are mostly felt. However the study has also established that community members have little knowledge about decentralisation except for retired officers who worked in government and other sectors; and some who attained a little formal education. This is detrimental to development in rural areas because most people in rural areas are not aware of the procedure for accessing development projects.

Is decentralisation effective in the socio-economic development of rural areas in Salima district?

From the projects that communities mentioned as having been brought in their areas after the onset of the decentralisation programme, the study has established that decentralisation is very effective in terms of bringing development to rural areas. The study concluded that decentralisation brought changes in terms of collaboration and coordination among all the departments and sectors creating a conducive environment at district level that ensures the channelling of resources to the communities with concerted effort which in turn has created high potential and probability for quality service delivery in rural areas. The study has also established that ADCs and VDCs are not performing to the expected standards because most of them have not been trained in decentralisation.

Does Salima District Council use decentralisation structures in planning for its development programmes/projects?

At all levels, over 50% of participants in the study agreed that the involvement of the people that are affected by the decision is very crucial in project development and implementation. All VDCs, ADCs and DEC agreed that they are involved in planning for development in
various communities in the district despite the fact that some VDCs have not been formally trained in issues of decentralisation and development. The conclusion of the study is that as much as there are pockets of the communities who do not fully understand decentralisation, the Council has been able to use the structures through various means in planning for development in their areas; hence, decentralisation structures are effectively used in the district.

**What are the challenges of decentralisation system as a means of advancing rural development in Salima district?**

The theoretical framework argues that decentralisation empowers local governments to be autonomous in making decisions in running the affairs of the area under their jurisdiction but this is only possible where all factors avail themselves. The study has concluded that the impinging factors for decentralisation to fulfil the dreams of its proponents in the districts are largely lack of financial resources and attitudes of various players and stakeholders in development of the district. It has also concluded that as far as these factors are not addressed, improvement of the socio-economic life of the people in rural areas is a nightmare.

**5.2 Recommendations**

Having looked at the problems that decentralisation is facing in bringing about rural development this study recommends that Government and councils should consider strategies that can address the issues especially those highlighted in 4.4. Firstly the issue of financial resources has to be critically dealt with if decentralisation is to be meaningful in the local governments and if people are to access the services to the expected standards. To address this issue government should make sure that enough funds are released and channelled to district councils so that they are able to cater for all viable needs presented by local communities. In this regard government should also make sure that funds released do not have predetermined projects so that councils are able to use the funds for real priority needs of the communities which even include training of VDCs and ADCs on issues of decentralisation in order for communities to effectively contribute to the development of their areas.

It is also the recommendation of this study that, apart from Government, the local councils should come up with creative strategies in the generation of local revenues to cater for various services to their communities because if they always look up to central government for funding then it is as good as having no local governments and decentralisation. With enough funding to the local government, issues of delayed project approval processes, politicisation of development projects and lack of training to communities would be greatly minimised. Government should ensure that designated funds like CDF are channelled to different areas through the chiefs or ward councilors in order to reduce the effects project politicisation.

On the issue of the absence of the elected members of the Council, the study recommends that Government should make sure that tripartite elections, which include election of Councillors, are indeed conducted in May, 2014 as scheduled and thereafter government
must ensure that local government elections are regularly conducted. This is so because without councillors local governments are like companies without board members and the people in the local governments are not well presented in the assembly. Government should also make sure that a lot of civic education regarding the importance of councillors in local development is conducted, prior to tripartite elections, to avoid voter apathy as there has been a long period without them.

On resistance to change, the study recommends that there must be proper legislation put in place to force all line ministries to devolve all district level related functions to the district council so that no one at district level worries about their line ministries in the performance of their duties. This will ensure harmony and synergy in the efforts of the district in terms of service delivery to the local communities. The study also recommends that all devolved sectors should be reporting to the District Commissioner on all matters to avoid dual reporting and that there should be one recruitment and disciplinary agent for the councils; that is, Local Authority Service Commission (LASCOM).

On corruption, the study recommends that membership of the IPC must comprise of high level of staff such as directors and that a special evaluation committee should be constituted, which excludes IPC members, to evaluate tenders during tendering process in order to stop IPC members from conniving with clients. On hunger and food shortage, Government should continue and increase beneficiaries of FISP which is already making a very big impact on the common man in the village.
References


Divas, N. 2002. *Issues of Fiscal Decentralisation: Ensuring Resources Reach the (Poor at) the Point of Service Delivery*. Paper presented at a workshop on improving Service Delivery in Developing countries, Eynsham Hall. November 24-30


APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ADC, VDC AND OTHER INFLUENCIAL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY

This questionnaire will help collect information on the knowledge of decentralisation, their participation or involvement in issues of governance and local development planning for their areas and their views on the effectiveness of the decentralisation policy in terms of development in their areas.

Disclaimer: This information is collected for a research project undertaken to fulfil the requirements of Masters Degree in Development Studies at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University by Lusizi Nhlane.

Please take your time to read and then respond to the questions or statements accordingly.

1. Name (optional)

___________________________________________________________________________

Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

2. Village ________________________________________________________________

3. T/A _________________________________________________________________

4. District ______________________________________________________________

5. Position in Society _____________________________________________________

6. How long have you been in this area _______________________________________

7. What do you think has changed since you came into this area in terms of development in transport, education, health, provision of safe drinking water, and food security?

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________
8. How did these things you mentioned come about?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

9. Do you have any knowledge of decentralisation?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Tick which one is true about the statement below

10. Knowledge of communities and district staff in decentralisation.

a) Communities are aware of decentralisation and its processes.

Yes [ ] No [ ]

b) DEC members are aware of decentralisation and its processes

Yes [ ] No [ ]

c) Level of decentralisation and its processes

[ ] Excellent

50
d) Decentralisation encourages transparency and accountability

Yes_____ No______

e) Decentralisation encourages demand for development projects by communities

______ Yes
______ No
______ Not sure

f) Decisions are made by local communities and government implements them.

_____ Yes
_____ No
_____ some

11. Positive changes brought about by decentralisation in respect of the development of rural areas

a) Projects demanded by communities have tremendously increased

______Increased
______Same
______ Decreased
______ Not sure

b) Projects implemented e.g schools, roads, bridges, health centres, and CBOs in communities have increased.
c) Participation of people in development planning i.e. needs assessment, Project prioritization & selection, implementation

- [ ] Increased
- [ ] Same
- [ ] Decreased
- [ ] Not sure

d) Changes in Organizational set up at district level

- [ ] Excellent
- [ ] Very Good
- [ ] Good
- [ ] Satisfactory
- [ ] Unsatisfactory
- [ ] Not sure

e) Change in personnel at district level

- [ ] Excellent
- [ ] Very good
- [ ] Good
- [ ] Satisfactory
- [ ] Unsatisfactory
f) Change in style of management i.e. Bottom-up approach

_____ Excellent

_____ Very good

_____ Good

_____ Satisfactory

_____ Unsatisfactory

g) Coordinating, Communicating & Meetings

_______ Increased

_______ Same

_______ Decreased

a) Do you think decentralisation is effective in terms of development in your area?

Yes ☐ No ☐

a) If yes, why?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

b) If no, why?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

___________________
c) Are you involved in planning for development projects/programmes in your area?

Yes □  No □

d) If yes, how?  If no why?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________


e) In your opinion, are ADCs and VDCs effective in planning for developments in area?

Yes □  No □

f) If yes, how?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________


g) If no, why?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

h) How do you assess the effectiveness of the link between VDC, ADC, and the DEC and finally the Council?
i) In your opinion, what would be the best instruments of development in your area?

Thank you for taking your time to answer the questions

Appendix B: Questionnaire for District Executive Committee Members (Heads of sectors, Departments, NGOs and Private Sectors)

This questionnaire has been prepared for the participation of staff at District Level who are the vessels of service provision to communities and intends to get information on how they view and perceive Decentralization as a way of enhancing rural Development.

Disclaimer: This interview guide has been prepared for no purposes other than a research project undertaken to fulfil the requirements of Masters Degree in Development Studies at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University by Lusizi Franklin Nhlane.

Thank you for accepting to answer these questions

1. Name (optional)

2. Sex: Male [ ] Female [ ]
3. Departmental/Organisation for which you work________________________________________________________

4. How long have you been in Salima?________________________________________

5. Do you have any knowledge of decentralisation?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

6. If yes, from whom and how?___________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________

7. If no, why?___________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________

8. Do you think decentralisation is effective in terms of socio-economic development of the rural areas in this district?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

9. If yes, how?___________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________________
10. If no, why?

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

11. (i) In your opinion have the District Executive Committee (DEC), Area Development Committees (ADCs), and Village Development Committees (VDCs) been effective in the development of the rural areas of the district?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

(ii) If yes, how? If no, why?

a) DEC

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

b) ADC

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________
13  (i) In your opinion, are there any problems or constraints in using decentralisation system as a way of promoting development of rural areas in the district?

   Yes ☐    No ☐

(ii) If yes, mention at least three constraints to decentralisation system with regard to rural development in the district:

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

14  (i) In your opinion, what could be done to improve decentralisation system as a way of enhancing rural development in Salima?
Thank you very much for taking your time.

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE TO OFFICIALS AT THE MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

This study will help to collect information from Ministry Officials on their perception about the performance of Assemblies in terms of bringing development in rural areas.

Disclaimer: This interview guide has been prepared for no purposes other than a research project undertaken to fulfil the requirements of Masters Degree in Development Studies at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University by Lusizi Franklin Nhlane.

Thank you for accepting to answer the questions

1. Name (optional)

2. Sex: Male [ ] Female [ ]

3. Position

4. How long have you worked for the Ministry?
   Less than a year [ ] more than a year [ ]

5. What do you think has been the Ministry’s role in the decentralisation process?
6. (a) Do you think decentralisation is linked to the improvement of socio-economic life of the rural areas in Malawi?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

(b) If yes, how? If no, why?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

7. Is the ministry satisfied with the performance of local governments in terms of rural development in Malawi?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

8. If yes, why? If no, why?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
Once again, thank you very much Sir for assisting with the answers and taking you time to answer them.

APPENDIX D: GUIDE FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

1. What do you understand by Decentralisation?

2. What types of Decentralisation do you know and which one is Malawi?

3. How has Decentralisation helped in terms of rural development and how effective has it been in the district?

4. To what extent are Decentralisation structures used and involved in the district planning system in Salima and how effective are they?

5. What do you think are the challenges of Decentralisation in relation to rural development in Salima?
APPENDIX E: WRITTEN INFORMATION PRIOR TO PARTICIPATION

Salima District Council,
Private Bag 15,
Salima.

14th September, 2013.

Dear Sir/Madam,

REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH

I am currently registered with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University for a Masters Degree in Development studies. Part of the fulfilment of the degree involves a research study. I will be conducting a research on decentralisation as a means of enhancing rural development in Malawi: a case of Salima District Council.

It is vital to involve Area Development Committees (ADCs), Village Development Committees (VDCs), and other influential members of the community in Salima. Therefore, your participation is of utmost importance to the study. I would appreciate if you could spare some time to participate in this study. Participation in this study is voluntary and involves no feasible risks or harm.

Please take your time to read and then respond to the questions or statements accordingly. If you need more clarity on the questions about the study, do not hesitate to call me (Mr Lusizi Franklin Nhlane) on +265 888 864 604.

I am looking forward to your participation.

Yours Faithfully,

Lusizi Franklin Nhlane.

I…………………………….willingly agree to participate in the study, which has been explained to me by Mr. Lusizi Franklin Nhlane.

…………………………………                             ………………………

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE         DATE