

An Investigation of Primary School-Based Governance in a Decentralised Education System

Mercy Chitanda; Richard Nyirongo, PhD; Nertha Kate Semphere (PhD)

University of Malawi, Malawi

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.808033>

Received: 12 July 2024; Accepted: 19 July 2024; Published: 29 August 2024

ABSTRACT

Countries that adopt decentralisation policy expect that implementation of the policy will lead to achievement of the policy objectives. Malawi adopted the policy with the aim of promoting good governance which entails transparency, accountability and participation among other objectives. This article presents findings of the study that aimed to assess primary schools-based governance in primary schools in Lilongwe district. The study took the form of mixed methods approach in which both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed. The respondents included primary school stakeholders who were sampled purposively. Data from the two methods were collected and analysed sequentially and the findings were integrated during interpretation phase. Results revealed that there were indicators of good governance in both primary schools. All stakeholders were involved in decision making and actively participated in school-related activities. However, learners were usually involved in the implementation phase only due to the long-standing belief that children cannot speak for themselves. Despite low learners' involvement in decision making, the results provided evidence to conclude that transferring powers from the central government to the local governments promotes good governance.

Key words: accountability, decentralisation, participation, transparency,

INTRODUCTION

Decentralisation of governments is one of the reforms gaining ground in Africa. Many countries have embraced decentralisation over the past ten years. A number of governments are creating local governments and transferring to them responsibilities, powers and resources. One major argument in favour of decentralisation is that it facilitates participation of people in decision making by bringing the state closer to the local communities (Maclean, 2003). As part of the process of consolidating democracy and as a strategy for realising the country's developmental goal of poverty reduction, the Malawi government expressed its desire to decentralise political and administrative authority to district levels soon after the introduction of Multi-party democracy. The government then directed a review of the local government system that was in place (Chiweza, 1998). As a result of this review the government in 1996 came up with a National Decentralisation Policy which was approved by the cabinet in 1998. According to Mphande (2010), the Malawi government adopted it as an effective way of handing over power to the people and triggering poverty reduction, efficient resource allocation and accountability. With the decentralisation policy in place, various line ministries, including Ministry of Education (MoE), had to determine which functions in the management of the sub-sectors identified in the decentralisation policy could be handled better by the districts and how this transfer of responsibility to the districts should be organised.

International Development Agencies (IDAs) such as the World Bank (WB), the United Nations Development Programs (UNDP), and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) also support the idea of good governance in a decentralised system. World Bank (2003) indicates that although most African countries have attempted to adopt education decentralisation policy, only few have devolved the delivery of education to regional governments, local government and community boards. A review of "recent policy and practice for education decentralisation in Africa" by Winkler (2003) reveals that while African countries perform relatively well in terms of informal or formal parental participation, and designing financial transfers to schools and local governments they have challenges in terms of clearly assigning roles and responsibilities to local governments and in providing the

mechanisms and information required for accountability. Winkler further observes that while decentralisation may improve the efficiency of Ministry of education decentralisation, it often does very little to increase community participation, enhance parental voice and improve accountability.

Statement of the Problem

Decentralisation is identified by many as a critical factor contributing to good governance. One major argument in favour of decentralisation is that it facilitates participation of people at grassroots levels in decision making. The participation of people in the governing process makes local authority accountable to the local people for delivering services and development (Blair, 2000; Sirker & Cosic, 2007). At the same time, the jobs of the authorities become transparent to the local people (Manowong & Ogunlana, 2006; World Bank, 2002b).

Malawi is one of the African countries that decentralised its education system. One of the issues highlighted by Winkler, (2003) in the review of policy and practice for education decentralisation in Africa was that Africa does very little to increase community participation, enhance parental voice and improve accountability. Available literature on studies conducted in the primary education in Malawi on decentralisation focused on monitoring systems of teaching and learning (Saiwa, 2008). Little is known about what primary schools in Malawi are doing in order to promote good governance. Hence the intention for carrying out this study was to assess what primary school stakeholders do to ensure that transparency, accountability and local participation are practised as schools implement decentralisation policy.

Research Question

What mechanisms have primary schools put in place to ensure transparency, accountability and participation of stakeholders following decentralization policy implementation?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Malawi government adopted the decentralisation policy in 1998 to consolidate democratic governance and to act as a strategy for poverty reduction through efficient use of resources (GoM, 1998; MOE, 2000). The centrepiece of the new policy according to Section 3 of the Local Government Act, was the establishment of the District Assembly with the objective 'to further the constitutional order based on democratic principles, accountability, transparency and participation of people in decision making and development processes' (Malawi, 1998b:). According to Ng'ambi (2010) and Saiwa, (2008), the MoE began the decentralisation of the delivery of educational services in 2005. At the district level, the District Education Manager (DEM) oversees the administration of primary schools and also handles matters of human resources, and teaching and learning materials for the primary schools within their districts.

Reasons for Decentralising Education Functions

There are several reasons that influenced decentralisation of education services. Firstly, education decentralisation increases equity within school systems for student groups and geographical regions that traditionally have been neglected. Further, decentralising education increases accountability and efficiency, increases access to education and improves quality of education (Bernbaum, 2011; Hanson, 1997). It is believed that increased parent and community involvement in governance and service delivery results in quality education because it is the people at grassroots level who make decisions regarding the operations of the school. The government's motivation for decentralising education may be based on one or a combination of these.

Challenges in the Implementation of Educational Decentralisation

USAID (2005) highlights challenges in the implementation of decentralisation policy; For example decentralisation may create doubt as to which level of government or which decision-maker is responsible for what activity. Adding to this, Zobrist & Mc Cormic, (2013), observe that education decentralisation prevents local responsiveness and accountability if decisions are made centrally and executed by non-local officials who do not represent local interests. When this happens it frustrates the whole idea of empowering local people in

decision making.

Narayan (2000) posits that good governance simply means executing a coherent governing plan for the nation based on the interests and priorities of people. The belief that every citizen is entitled to an equal say in the conduct of public affairs is the core of good governance. Participation as one of the elements of good governance is defined in different ways. Blinker hoof (2000) and Wilcox (2000) defined participation as the process through which stakeholders' influence and share control over development initiatives and resources which affect them. Participation is also defined as the active involvement of people or stakeholders in terms of decision making, control and constant access to power and resources in the social, economic, political and cultural processes that affect the people's lives (UNDP, 1993).

A number of benefits of participation to development have been presented by Dulani (2003). First, participation makes it possible for the people and stakeholders to choose development programs and policies which are human centred and therefore relevant to the community needs. Second, participation gives the "voiceless" poor people a voice in the development arena because in the long run it brings about new knowledge to the people about their life and makes them more competent and gain self-esteem. The significance of the above benefits in this study is that when local public choose school programs basing on their needs it brings about greater likelihood of the success of the programs and a sense of ownership because beneficiaries are considered to be assets unlike when programs are externally made. Thus participation empowers the powerless citizens to mobilise themselves and take action on issues that affect their lives.

Bray (1999) gives examples of advanced decentralised education system that underwent devolution type of decentralisation in Switzerland where education system is divided into six divisions each with its own schools, laws and monitoring system. The government plays no role in the decision making process. Bray notes that the structures have given considerable emphasis on school-based supervision and that the school boards were empowered to manage, hire or fire school principals and teachers.

Similarly, Mauritius decentralised education system to strengthen the monitoring systems in primary education. It emphasised the monitoring of teaching and learning which encourages the participation of all stakeholders at the grass roots level. According to Kulporo, et al, (2004) cited in Saiwa (2008), there is evidence that involving stakeholders from the grass roots levels ensures the achievement of the needs of the grass roots level and ownership of schools.

Theoretical Framework

The study is guided by the Public Choice Theory (PCT). This theory was developed by James Buchanan along with Gordon Tullock and Anthony Downs in 1967. The PCT evolved within the economics arena, focusing on people's choice in selecting public services. The theory conceptualises market-like competition in public service delivery where the public are considered as the buyer of the best product (Lamothe & Lamothe 2009). Public choice theorists argue that both public and private monopolistic production of goods and services inherently lead to inefficiency in service delivery management (Ostrom & Ostrom, 1971; Savas, 2002).

The application of strategies outlined in Public Choice Theory induces public institutions to provide cost effective, innovative and locally sustainable products. To pursue this instrumental strategy, public service institutions have undergone more decentralisation and outsourcing of service delivery processes (Savas, 2000). Implementation of this theory, gives advantage to the expected beneficiaries and local people over the officials in public service functions or programmes. Additionally, "Public Choice Theory has also induced participatory implementation and monitoring in local public services, as it facilitate publics' choice" (Dollery, 2003: 86). Therefore, the central element of public participation in Public Choice Theory, matches with the core concept of good governance in the sense that good governance also stresses involvement of people in decision making processes.

Within the Public Choice Theory, there are some basic elements or characteristics of good governance. According to Van-Slyke (2003), the Public Choice Theory demonstrates a number of elements. The first element in this theory is the use of local knowledge and resources to get best alternative choices and cost effective services

deliberation. The second element involves reducing the role of the central government in public service delivery. Third element within the theory is influencing local people to make best innovative local institutions. Fourth characteristic is decentralising management functions to the local levels and sharing it with other local stakeholders to provide services according to local people's choice. The fifth element is increasing involvement of civil, private and non-governmental organisations to make the service delivery more efficient and locally sustainable. Lastly, the PCT and reengineering traditional management to make it people focused.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGIES

The study took the case study design "...which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, using multiple sources of evidence" (Robson 1993:148). This is why two primary schools in Lilongwe rural were sampled to unearth school-based governance in primary schools. The study used mixed methods approach due to the nature of the research questions the study sought to address. Purposive sampling was used to draw respondents for inclusion in the study as well as schools because the researcher only targeted those respondents who were informed about or had experiences on the phenomenon investigated to learn the most. Realizing that the rural primary school teachers also include Open and Distance Learning (ODL) student teachers it was recommended not to include ODL student teachers because they were not as much experienced in the teaching profession as the qualified teachers. The community which forms part of the key stakeholders mainly responsible for improving participatory, transparent, and accountable system of governance in the rural schools are local beneficiaries. So this study particularly involved School Management Committee members, Parent-Teacher Association members, teachers and learners who are the main beneficiaries of all programs taking place at the school. A combined data gathering instruments was employed to get rich information on the phenomenon under investigation. Data gathering tools included questionnaire interviews and focus group discussions. The questionnaire was administered to the teachers and interviews to the school head teachers and Parent Teacher Association chairperson. While focus group discussions were conducted with School Management Committee members and learners. Qualitative and quantitative data collection tools were administered concurrently.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Stakeholders' Practices to Ensure Transparency, Accountability and Local Participation as Schools Implement Decentralisation Policy?

The study sought to assess what stakeholders do to ensure that transparency, accountability and local participation are practised as schools implement decentralisation policy. The question was addressed using both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools. Findings show that several mechanisms were employed to ensure transparency and accountability which included involvement of all stakeholders in school activities such as decision making, discipline issues, procurement of school items, monitoring school activities and holding regular school meetings during which community members are informed of any school activities.

Involvement of Stakeholders in Decision Making on Matters Affecting the Schools

Involvement of all stakeholders in decision making on matters affecting the school is the heart of decentralisation. Literature shows that the centrepiece of the decentralisation policy was the establishment of the District Assembly with the objective 'to further the constitutional order based on democratic principles, accountability, transparency and participation of people in decision making and development processes' (GoM, 1998b). Participation according to Dulani (2003), gives the "voiceless" poor people a voice in the development arena because in the long run it brings about new knowledge to the people about their life and makes them more competent and gain self-esteem. Additionally, political decentralisation embedded in democratic ideals allow for public participation in decision making. In this way, peoples' voices are more likely to be heard in policy decisions through governance institutions as set out in development and governance at district and grassroots levels (Mbeye, 1998).

In this study the involvement of stakeholders in school activities was mentioned quite often by most respondents as one way of ensuring transparency and accountability at a primary school. It was noted that stakeholders were

involved in all school affairs such as in decision making during the development of School Improvement Plan (SIP), school projects, procurement of school items and in monitoring teaching and learning. From both schools there was an overall consensus from the teachers that stakeholders were actually involved in school affairs, albeit to a lesser extent. It was clear from the responses obtained from both quantitative and qualitative data that most respondents from both schools appreciated the importance of involving stakeholders in decision making processes as it is one way of developing the school. In particular, question seven of the questionnaire solicited information regarding involvement of teachers in decision making processes.

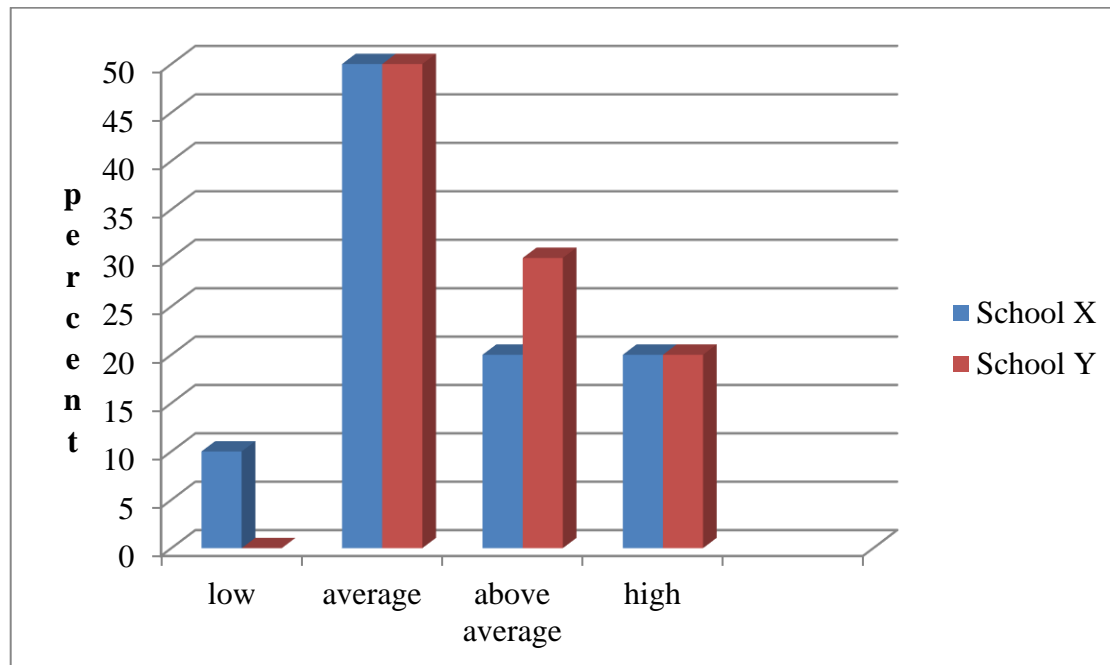


Figure 1: Extent to which teachers are involved in decision making processes

From the figure 20% of the teachers from either school indicated that there was high level of involvement of teachers. It was further noted that apart from teachers, other stakeholders also participated in decision making processes concerning school affairs. For example, the head teacher for school X strongly stressed the importance of involving all stakeholders in school affairs. She had this to say:

Most of the projects that take place at the school are not decided by the head teacher and teachers alone. As you know that teachers come and go, decisions on what to be done are made by all stake holders. The School Management Committee and Parent Teacher Association are involved in decision making processes when developing school improvement plan.

School grants that the schools received for school improvement from the government had also enhanced the participation of local people at school level in that parents, teachers and members of several committees get involved in deciding how to use the school grant. The head teachers from both schools concurred that all stakeholders took part in decision making processes. When the schools received School Improvement Grant (SIG) from the government, all stakeholders including chiefs and parents were called for a meeting to inform them how much the school had received. Together they identified school needs and prioritized them according to amount given made allocations based on National Education Sector Plan (NESP) goal of increasing equitable access to education, the second being improving quality and relevance and the third being improving governance and management.

During the interview with the head teachers and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) chairperson, all showed their understanding of the importance of involvement of all stakeholders in decision making processes and they felt it was their responsibility to lead in steering and getting direction of the school right through their active involvement. Since teachers get transferred from one school to another unlike with community members, involvement of all stakeholders in decision making processes enhances sustainability and continuity of school programs since all members are made aware of what was to take place at the schools.

According to both quantitative and qualitative data, not all stakeholders are involved in making decisions in school affairs. Contrary to what head teachers and Parent Teacher Association chairperson explained, the study revealed that learners from both schools are left out when it comes to decision making processes in most cases. In both focus group discussions with learners, when the question “do you participate in the decision making processes of the school” was posed, all the learners unanimously responded that they were not involved in decision making processes. While learners were very much concerned about their lack of involvement in decision making processes, it was felt to be of less important by some members of the School Management Committee (SMC) involving learners in decision making processes. In focus group discussions, SMC members from both schools X and Y plainly stated as they agreed that learners could not make informed decisions and were hence represented by their parents. They explained:

Mwana ndi mwana salankhula, amalankhula ndi makolo ake ndipo ayenera kukhala chete pa maso pa akulu akulu” /children do not speak. They are represented by their parents and children are supposed to be quite in the presence of adults or parents.

Here respondents perceived that children mostly rely on decisions made by other people. Less or no involvement of learners in school affairs is a great concern to most of the learners. In both schools, learners were usually involved in the implementation phase of decisions made by other stakeholders. When learners were asked to explain what they thought were the reasons for not getting involved in decision making, one learner from school Y suggested:

“Mwina popeza ndife achichepere anthu amaganiza kuti palibe cha nzeru chomwe tinganene”/Maybe, because we are young people think there is nothing wise we can contribute.

While another learner from school X commented:

Timadabwa anthu akamatipangira ziganizo osatifunsa zomwe eni akefe tikuzisowa, mwachitsanzo sukulu imakhonza kugula madesk pomwe ife tikusowa mabuku owerenga./ We wonder that people make decisions for us without consulting us what we need. For example a school buys desks when we require text books.

In a similar manner another learner from school X expressed his worry that despite being beneficiaries of all school programs their views cannot be accounted for. She pointed out that although they were young they also could contribute towards the development of the school. Perhaps learners’ responses show that there was awareness on the part of the learners to exercise their power to make decisions in the respect of decentralisation policy despite being left out in the decision process. These sentiments from the learners cut across all the schools that participated in the study.

Questionnaire results and focus group discussions conducted with SMC members revealed that indeed all stakeholders were involved in decision making processes except learners who were mostly involved rather in the implementation phase of decisions made by other groups of stakeholders. Since decentralisation policy aims at empowering local people, local people are supposed to be given opportunities to make decisions concerning school affairs. Different from the findings above, Dulani (2003) made an observation that participation of people makes it possible for people to choose development programs and policies which are human centered and therefore relevant to community needs. In case of decisions made at primary school level, although other stakeholders held the opinion that learners would not make wise decisions, inclusion of learners in decision making processes is of paramount importance in the sense that the learners would choose programs that are relevant to their needs besides having the right to do so.

Genuine participation according to Rose (2003), involves collecting and analysing school information, defining school priorities, assessing available resources, deciding on and planning school programs, designing strategies to implement these programs, actual implementation, monitoring progress and evaluating results and impacts at the school. On the other hand, Rose describes ‘pseudo participation’ as participation where SMC and PTA were merely informed of already made decisions about school improvement actions to take so that the community’s role was simply to provide the resources. The level of participation in this case is unsustainable as it surrounded on information giving and taking orders.

Provision of Information

For people to know what is happening at the schools they must be informed. Providing the community members with information is an element of good governance. Apart from calling people for meetings, information tools like notice boards were used to communicate to people of any school programs. In a similar manner when something was bought by the procurement committee, the committee produced cash sale receipts that were shown to all stakeholders during meetings and the committee kept records that were made available when needed by authorities or concerned members. Further, it was reported that items purchased were also shown to all people during the meeting before being used to assure the larger community that the school funds were accounted for to avoid unnecessary suspicions.

One of the SMC members from school X pointed out:

Sukulu imasonyeza ndondomeko ya zochitika zonse panja pa ofesi ya mphunzitsi wamkulu pa tsiku la msonkhano ndi makolo kuti aliyense akhale ndi mwayi odziwerengera yekha zochitika za pa sukulu pano./ The school displays a record of events on the notice board outside the head teacher’s office on the day the school holds the meeting with the community so that everybody can have a chance of reading out what developments are taking place at the school.

In agreement to what transpired during the focus group discussion with the SMC members, the head teacher for school X in an interview explained that records and cash sale receipts of all things bought by the procurement committee were kept by the school and were shown to all stakeholders during meetings. The records were also made available anytime when needed by someone. Similarly the PTA chairperson for school Y highlighted that to ensure transparency, items bought together with cash sale receipts were shown to all stakeholders before they were used as they did with the money schools received from government for School Improvement Plans (SIP).

As far as provision of information was concerned, most of the respondents were of the view that it was very important to provide stakeholders and the larger school community with information as regards to the cost of services because such information allows for efficient, effective and quality tracking of expenditures. Questionnaire for teachers solicited information on the extent to which school activities were well known to all stakeholders. Teachers came up with different views as illustrated below (figure 2).

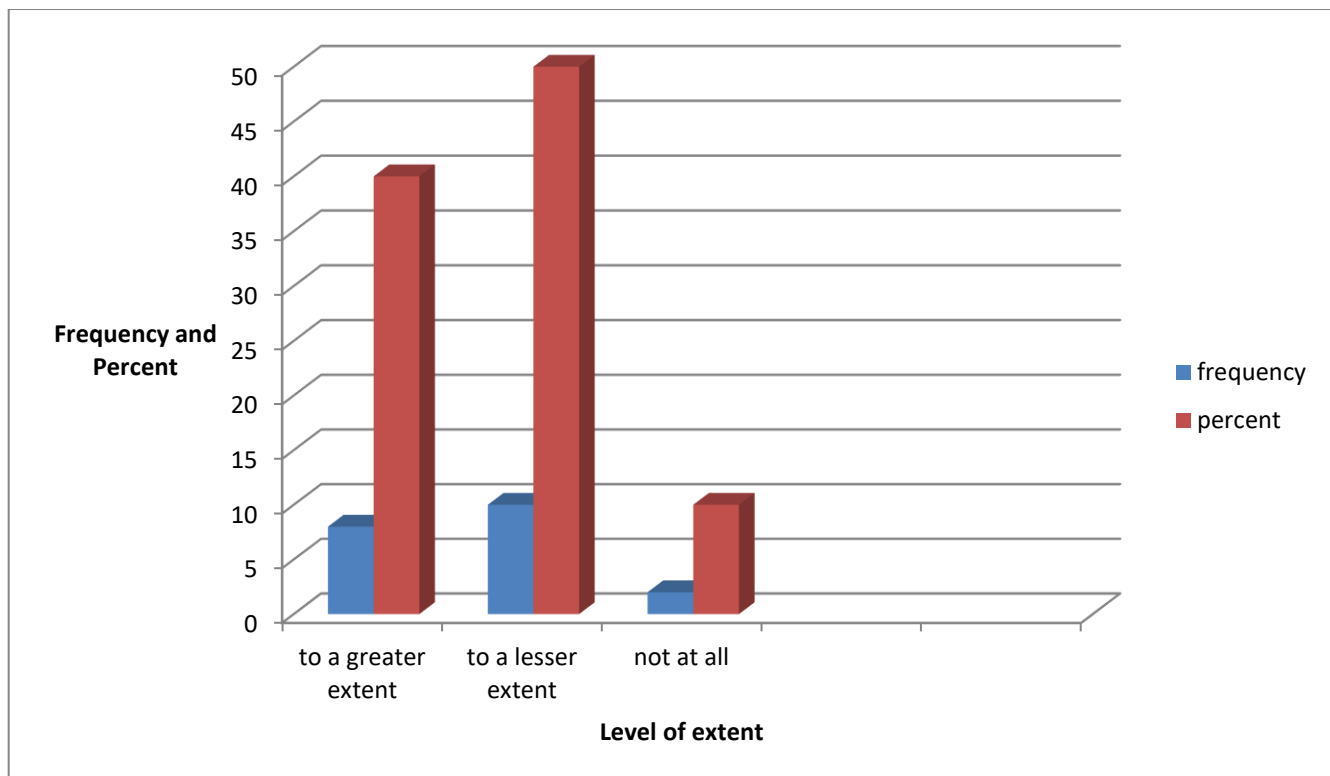


Figure 2: The extent to which transparency and accountability are ensured

The figure shows that 100% of the respondents provided answers to the question, of which 50% indicated that activities were made known to all stakeholders but to a lesser extent, 40% responded to a greater extent while only 10% observed that stakeholders were not made aware of activities taking place at the schools.

The findings from both schools indicated that people at grass roots levels were made aware of all school development programs albeit to varying extent. Information regarding financial resources was provided to stakeholders through school meetings and by displaying the information on school notice boards to ensure that every member had access to information regarding school programs. In case of low turn up to meetings; and also to cater for those people who could not avail themselves at the school premises, community leaders like chiefs were requested to disseminate information to community members in their respective villages.

These findings align with the observations by Bray (1999) and Brinker hoof (2002) who explicate that authorities in decentralised education systems need to communicate what they are supposed to do and the results of the work because information sharing is basic in democratic governance as it enhances transparency and accountability in which people become responsible for their actions and decisions (Matcheza & Kunaka, 2001; Maipose, 2000). On the other hand, Holm (2000) and Manor (1999) claim that people are more careful in the way they use public resources when they know that they will be accountable hence avoid mismanaging the resources and abusing their offices.

A study by Waheduzzaman (2010) conducted in Bangladesh revealed that information was not disclosed to people at lower levels for safety. In most cases, failure to disclose information to stakeholders is a sign of misappropriation of funds. These findings are different from those revealed in this study as the present in the present study there were clear indications that information sharing with stakeholders existed.

In conclusion, it can be argued that both primary schools ensured that all stakeholders were transparent and accountable enough on school issues to a certain extent considering that both schools put appropriate mechanisms in place for successful implementation of decentralisation thereby ensuring good governance. Inclusion of most of the groups of stakeholders in decision making processes in matters affecting the schools and provision of information of school development programs were some of the mechanisms schools put in place to promote good governance at the primary school level. This agrees with what Hope Sr., (2009), Hye, (2000) and Sobhan, (2000) who elucidate that when good governance is established in a society, people get an opportunity to be involved in local affairs hence a sense of ownership is developed amongst all groups of stakeholders.

The findings of this study have consistently reflected the theoretical framework that underpinned the conduct of the study in the following ways: The two schools used local knowledge and resources to get best alternative choices and cost-effective services. Secondly, through using stakeholders like school committees, the role of the central government in public service delivery was reduced. Thirdly, by involving local stakeholders, management functions were decentralised to the local levels to provide services according to local people's choice. These three characteristics are tenets of the Public Choice theory.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study set out to explore what stakeholders' do in ensuring transparency, accountability and participation of local people in a decentralised education system. Drawing on available evidence from focus group discussions, interviews and questionnaire, both schools under study shared similarities in employing mechanisms that helped foster good governance to a certain extent. Stakeholders were not only involved in decision making processes but were also provided with information concerning school development programs. This implies that the devolution form of decentralisation that allows participation of people at the grass roots level to take part in decision making processes is practised in both schools.

However, in most cases learners are excluded in decision making processes and are usually involved in the implementation phase only due to the long standing belief that children cannot speak for themselves. Good governance at primary school level is what is seen to be close to all stakeholders and is expected to improve welfare of the learners who are the expected beneficiaries of all school actions. If one party is left behind on the

running of school affairs, interests and priorities of that party may not be taken on board and hence welfare of that party cannot be improved.

The findings of the study therefore, have implications that learners, who are the expected beneficiaries of all school actions, should be involved in decision making processes on school affairs for them to effectively participate in the implementation of school programs. The belief that every citizen is entitled to an equal say in the conduct of public affairs is the heart of good governance. It is recommended that school leaders involve learners in decision making on matters affecting the school because if learners feel involved they have opportunities to learn, develop and make real decisions. All in all, school leaders from both schools see the importance of engaging stakeholders in school affairs.

REFERENCE

1. Alam, S. (2006). Code mixing in Bangladesh: A case study of Non-Governmental white collar service holders and professionals. *Asian affairs*, 2(4), 45-51.
2. As-saber, S., Hossain, K. & Srivastava, A. (2007). Technology, society and e-Government: in search of an Eclectic Framework. *An International Journal*, 4(2), 30-41.
3. Bernbaum, M. (2011). Lessons learnt in education decentralization: A guide to education project design implementation and evaluation on experiences from projects in Egypt, Georgia, Mali and Malawi. Retrieved 29 December, 2015, from: www.epdc.org/sites/default/files/documents/EQUIP2%2520LL%2520Decentralization%2520AAR.pdf.
4. Blair, H. (2000). Participation and accountability at the periphery: Democratic local governance in six countries. *World development*, 28(1), 21-39
5. Blinkerhoof, D.W. (2002). Managing policy reform: Concepts and tools for decision makes in developing and transitioning countries. Kumari: Kumarian Press, Inc.
6. Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3 (2). Retrieved 15 December, 2015, from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>.
7. Bray, M. (1999). Comparative Education: Dialectic of the global and local: Control of education issues and tensions in centralisation and decentralisation. Paris: IIEP.
8. Chiweza, A. L. (1998). Is the Centre Willing to Share Power? The Role of Local Government in a Democracy. Zomba: University of Malawi.
9. Dulani, B. (2003). The status of decentralisation in Malawi. Zomba: Chancellor College. Retrieved 13 December, 2015, from: <http://community.eldis.org/.59ee456C/The Status of Decentralization in Malawi.pdf>
10. Government of Malawi (1998a). Malawi Decentralisation Policy. Lilongwe: Ministry of Local Government.
11. Holm, J. D. (2000). Curbing corruption through democratic accountability: Lessons from Botswana. In K.R. Hope & B. Chikulo (Eds.), *Corruption and development in Africa*, pp. 51-9. Great Britain: MacMillan Press Limited.
12. Hope Sr., K. R. (2009). Capacity development for good governance in developing countries: Some lessons from the field. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 32(8), 728 - 40.
13. Hye, H. A. (2000). Good governance: A social contract for millennium. In H.A. Hye (Ed.), *Governance: South Asian Perspectives*, 45-53. Dhaka: The University Press Limited.
14. Maclean, M. (2003). Developing a Research Agenda on gender dimensions of Decentralisation. UK: IDRC.
15. Maipose, G. S. (2000). Aid abuse and mismanagement in Africa. Problems of accountability, transparency and ethical leadership. In K.R. Hope & B. Chikulo (Eds.), *Corruption and Development in Africa*, pp. 45-52. Great Britain: MacMillan Press Limited.
16. Government of Malawi (1998b). Local Government Act. Lilongwe: Ministry of Local Government.
17. Manor, J. (1999). *The Political Economy for democratic decentralisation*. New York: World Bank.
18. Manowong, E. & Ogunlana, S. O. (2006). Public hearings in Thailand's infrastructure projects: Effective participations? *Engineering, construction and architectural management*, 13(4), 343-63.
19. Matcheza, P. & Kunaka, C. (2001). *Measuring corruption in Southern Africa*. Zimbabwe: Craft Photo Litho Limited.

20. Ministry of Education. (2000). The Education methods advisory services division: Some policy issues document. Lilongwe: MOE.
21. Mphande, C.T. (2010). Transparency and accountability in the implementation of education projects: The experience of three village communities in Lilongwe. Zomba: Chancellor College.
22. Nampota, D. & Beckmann, J. (2011). Review on sector devolution in education. Zomba: University of Malawi.
23. Narayan, D. (2000). Voices of the poor: Can anyone hear us? New York: Oxford University Press.
24. Ng'ambi, F. (2010). Malawi effective delivery of public education services, Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR). Johannesburg: Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa.
25. Nyiri, Z. (n.d). Decentralisation and good governance: Ten years of Hungarian experience. Mansfield: University of Connecticut.
26. Rose, P. (2003). Community participation in school policy and practice in Malawi: Balancing local knowledge, National policy and international agency priorities. *Compare: A Journal of Comperative Education*, 12(3), 30-38.
27. Saiwa, C. (2008). Exploring the challenges of monitoring systems of teaching and learning in primary schools in Malawi: The Context of the decentralised education system. Zomba: Chancellor College.
28. Sirker, K., & Cosic, S. (2007). Empowering the marginalized: Case studies of social accountability initiatives in Asia. Washington DC: World Bank Institute.
29. Sobhan, R. (2000). Governance and local government system. In H.A. Hye (Ed.), *Governance-South Asian perspectives*, pp. 23-9. Dhaka: The University Press Limited.
30. United Nations Development Program (1993). *Human Development Report*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
31. USAID, (2005). Educational quality in developing world. Retrieved 08 December, 2015 from: http://usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnadf052.pdf.
32. Wadehuzzaman, Z. (2010). People's participation for good governance: A Study of rural development programs in Bangladesh. Washington D.C: Victoria University.
33. Wilcox, D. (2000). *The guide to effective participation*. Brighton: Delta Press.
34. Winkler, D. R. (2003). *Understanding decentralisation*. Washington, D.C.: USAID
35. World Bank, (2003). *Decentralising Indonesia: A Regional Public Expenditure Review Overview Report*. Nairobi, Kenya: East Asia Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Unit.
36. Zobrist B. & Mc Cormic P. (2013). A preliminary assessment of decentralisation in education experiences in Mou State and Yangon Region. Retrieved 01 December, 2015, from <http://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/ A Preliminary assessment of decentralisation in Education.pdf>.