



University of  
Massachusetts  
Amherst

## **The Growth of Private Secondary Schools in Malawi: Its Implications on the Registration and Quality Monitoring Systems**

Item Type	openaccess;article
Authors	Mkandawire, Josephine Kondwani
Download date	2026-05-19 03:22:51
Link to Item	<a href="https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/7679">https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/7679</a>

**THE GROWTH OF PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MALAWI:  
ITS IMPLICATIONS ON THE REGISTRATION AND  
QUALITY MONITORING SYSTEMS**

**BY**

**Josephine Kondwani Mkandawire**

**A project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree**

**OF**

**MASTER OF EDUCATION**

**IN**

**EDUCATIONAL POLICY, PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP**

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS**

**CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION**

**AMHERST - FALL - 2002**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am so grateful and at the same time sincerely pay a vote of thanks to my supervisor Professor G. B. Rossman who worked day and night assisting me. She provided great and valuable professional support anytime right from the start to the production of this thesis. Her advice, guidance, support and generosity showed me the way and made me reach this destination. Her encouragement is beyond anything that I can write here as a way of expressing my thanks and gratitude. Her remarks were always very encouraging.

My sincerely thanks also go to Dr Odharo, Mr Kunje of Center for Educational Research and Training (CERT), Mr Phiri (Chancellor College Assistant Librarian) and Mr Mike Merory for taking their precious time to advise me on the other matters pertaining to this research. I am really grateful to each one for their guidance and support.

I would also like to thank Professor D. Evans, Professor M. Bourge, Professor A. Hartwell, Professor G.Urch, Professor R. Sinclair and Professor B. Halsted whom I took their courses. I gained abundant knowledge and at the same time I was exposed to various skills some of which have been used in this research.

I would also like to thank all the participants who spared their time willingly during data collection and focus group discussions.

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Bright, and my three sons, Temwachi, Suzgo and Malumbo.

To Bright, my vote of thanks are beyond mere expression. His encouragement, patience and understanding are just a few of the multitude of traits that really deserve my appreciation. He took over the burden of taking care of our children alone in such away that the gap could not be noticed. This was not easy, therefore, once again he deserves my appreciation and many votes of thanks.

To my three sons, Temwachi, Suzgo and Malumbo, I owe them gratitude for accepting me to pursue further with my studies and always sending me best wishes. They prayed for me without ceasing. I am very grateful for their patience and understanding.

May the Almighty God through Jesus, pour on them showers of blessings.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>ABBREVIATIONS.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>CHAPTER</b>	
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	
Where is Malawi?.....	1
A brief overview of Malawi’s education system.....	3
Definition of terms.....	4
Historical background of the Private Secondary Schools .....	5
<b>2. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK</b>	
Discussion of the research problem.....	9
Purpose of the study.....	11
General Research questions.....	11
Significance of the problem.....	11
Limitations and Delimitations.....	12
<b>3. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</b>	
Perspectives of the study.....	14
The foundational literature to the study.....	18
Registration of private secondary schools.....	18
Problems of the registration process.....	18
Quality monitoring in private secondary schools.....	25
Problems of quality monitoring in private secondary schools.....	27
<b>4. METHODOLOGY</b>	
Design.....	30
Population Sample .....	30
Instrumentation and Data collection procedures.....	30
Data Management.....	34
Data Analysis Procedure.....	34

<b>5. DATA ANALYSIS</b>	
The ‘Growth’ of Private Secondary Schools .....	36
Regulations for opening private secondary school.....	41
Registration Process.....	45
Quality Monitoring .....	54
Problems with Quality Monitoring.....	56
Problems with the Registration Process.....	57
Alternative Strategies to improve Registration Process.....	60
Alternative Strategies to improve Quality Monitoring.....	61
Recommendations.....	62
Conclusion.....	63
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Appendix A. Interview Guide Instrument</b>	
<b>Appendix B. Inspection of Premises Form</b>	

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

MoEST- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

PRISAM - Private Schools Association of Malawi

DANIDA- Danish International Development Assistance

EMAS- Education Methods Advisory Services

DEM- District Education Manager

PIF- Policy and Investment Framework

SEMA-Senior Education Methods Advisor

PEMA-Principal Education Methods Advisor

DEMAs-Director of Education Methods Advisory Section

NED-Northern Education Division

CEED-Central-East Education Division

CWED-Central-West Education Division

SWED-South-West Education Division

SEED-South-East Education Division

SHED-Shire Highlands Education Division

CDSS-Community Day Secondary School

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to understand and describe the current system of registration and quality monitoring in private secondary schools. It was also to explore and come up with the alternative strategies for improving the systems so that they have the desired impact in contributing to quality education.

The population of the study was purposefully selected, composed of 14 participants holding roles such as Proprietors /Head teachers of private secondary schools, District Education Manager, Education Methods Advisors and executive committee member of Private Schools Association of Malawi (PRISAM). In-depth interviews were conducted requiring participants to express the extent to which they are involved and have some knowledge in the registration and quality monitoring of private secondary schools in Lilongwe Education Districts, what they see as problems and how the systems can be improved.

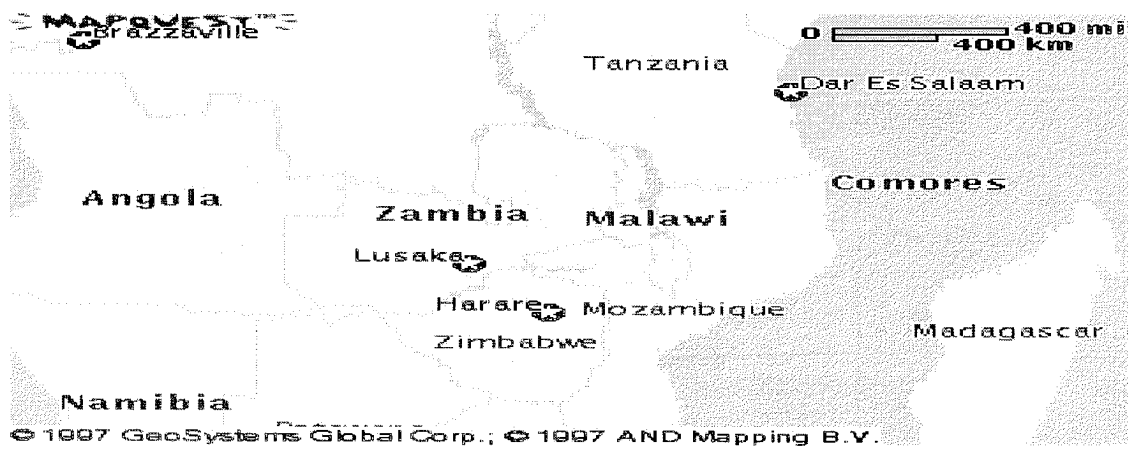
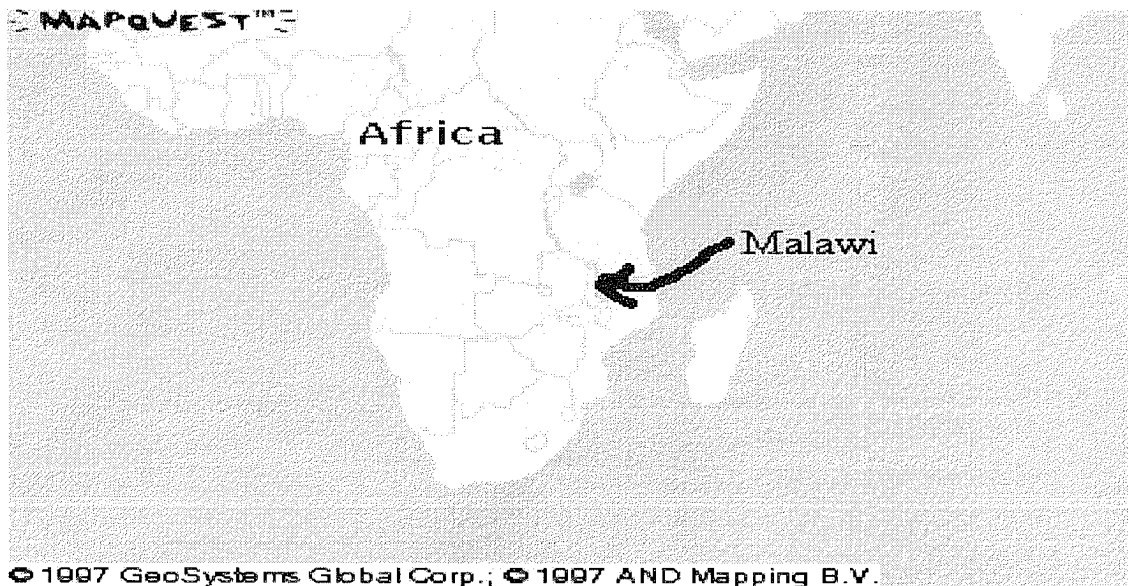
The growth of private schools is viewed as a necessity, assisting the government in providing access to secondary education. Long delays, regulations not well published and reinforced, problems of resources, schools not meeting the standards are some of the problems of registration. Inadequate personnel and transport have been identified as major problems of quality monitoring. Proprietors and head teachers feel that there is lack of follow-up visits to the schools and quality monitoring is not done. Advisors point out that quality monitoring is rarely done but lack of resources is the major problem. Most schools are unregistered because they do not meet the basic minimum requirements. Therefore, increasing human and material resources, publicizing and reinforcing the regulations are some of the alternative strategies that have been suggested.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### *1.1 WHERE IS MALAWI?*

Malawi is a landlocked country in the South-East of Africa. It is bordered by Tanzania to the North, Mozambique to the East, South and South-East, and Zambia to the West. It is 855km long with widths varying from 10km to 250km covering a total area of 118,484square km of which over 24000 square km is fresh water, Lake Malawi.





## ***1.2 A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF MALAWI'S EDUCATION SYSTEM***

Malawi's system of education comprises of 8 years of primary, 4 years of secondary and 4 years of University education. Primary Education is the priority sector since it is the backbone of Basic Education in Malawi. There are about 5000 primary schools offering primary education to about 2.9 million pupils. Secondary school education is offered through Conventional Secondary Schools (CSS), Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS) both of which are government schools, and private secondary schools.

In Malawi, similar to other countries, provision of education services is now a shared responsibility between government and the private sector. The local community is involved to assist the government in the provision of schools. Private schools play a role of complementing government efforts in providing educational services to the nation. One of the major challenges currently facing Malawi's education system is improving access to secondary and tertiary education. Therefore, one of the secondary education policies on improving access in the Policy and Investment Framework (2001) document is to promote the expansion of the private secondary school sector with the purpose of increasing the percentage of private secondary school students. This has led to the growth of private secondary schools which has brought its own implications on the 'Registration' and 'Quality monitoring' systems. This study was conducted for the purpose of understanding, describing and exploring the current system of registration and quality monitoring that is done in private secondary schools and thereafter, propose alternative strategies for improving the system so that they have the desired impact in contributing to quality education in Malawi.

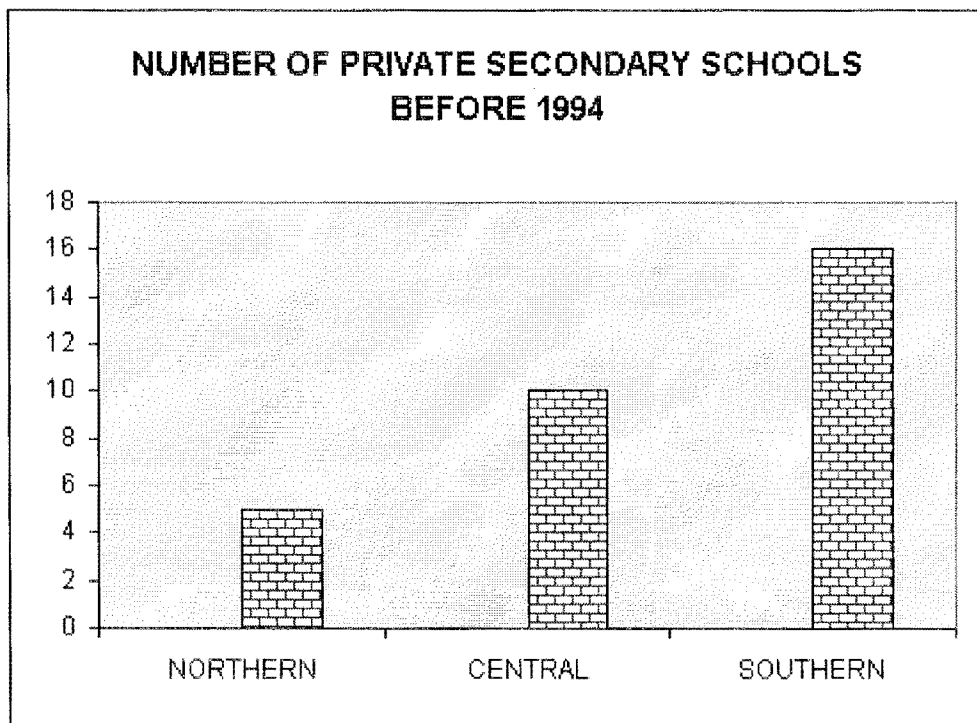
## ***1.2 DEFINITION OF TERMS***

- a). The term ‘Growth’ in this study refers to rapid increase in terms of numbers of private secondary schools.
- b). Registration is referred to as having a record of the details of each private secondary school in terms of its establishment, that is, if it meets the minimum requirements as set by the Ministry of Education, it is granted either a provisional or full license. Therefore ‘Registration’ is regarded as a process that involves registering of private schools to ensure that they provide conducive environment that promotes teaching and learning that leads to the desired quality education.
- c). ‘Quality Monitoring’ refers to the process when Education Methods Advisors from either Education Division office or Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (Headquarters) visit private schools to observe and assess the teaching and learning that goes on in the classroom. At the end of the lesson observed, they discuss with the teacher on strengths and weaknesses of the lesson and also provide professional advice.
- d). Private schools refer to those that are ‘owned’ by either individuals or an association and not government.
- e). Free Primary Education: Is a policy that was introduced in 1994 by His Excellency The President with the aim of achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE), abolition of school fees, uniform requirements and other various forms of school funds.
- f). Advisory section is a wing in the Ministry of Education responsible for monitoring quality of education in the country. The Advisors are based at the District Education

offices, Education Divisions and Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (Headquarters).

#### 1.4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL

The growth of private secondary schools in Malawi has largely been driven by pressure from the primary education sector soon after the introduction of Free Primary Education in 1994. Before 1994, there were very few private secondary schools, and these were run by a designated board of trustees. According to the Strategic Plan for Private Schools Association of Malawi (2001), private schools have been in operation ever since and some have been running since 1980s. Before 1994 there were 31 private secondary schools in the country and all of them were registered (See figure 1 on page 5 showing the number of secondary schools according to region).



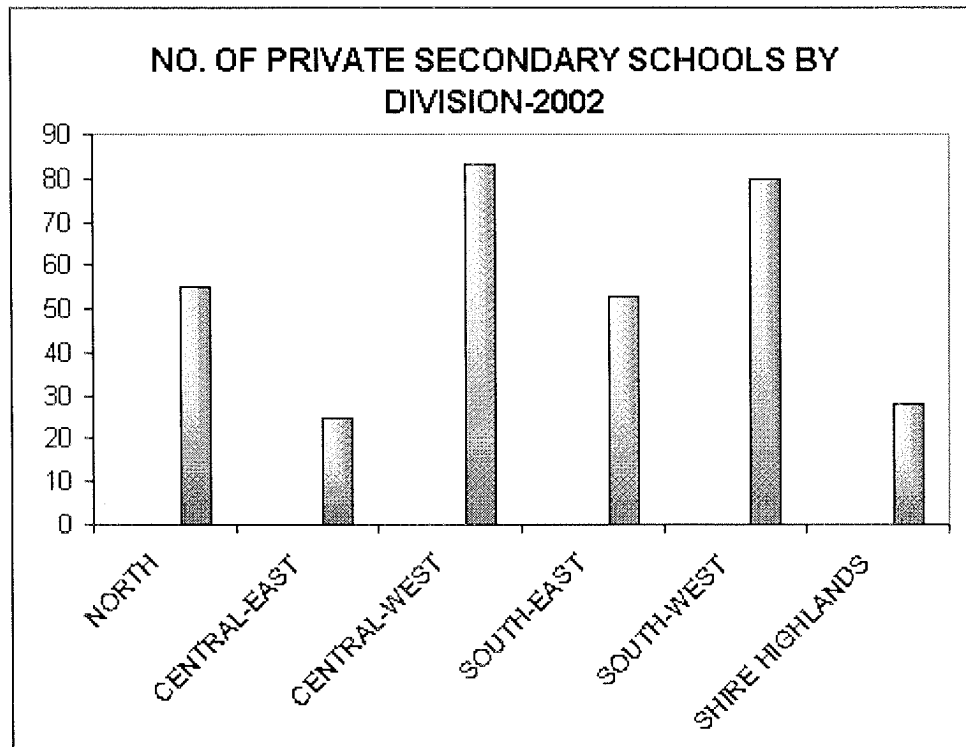
**FIGURE 1: Showing the number of private secondary schools before 1994.**

According to the figures shown, southern region had more private secondary schools, then, followed by the central region and lastly, northern. This was before the introduction of Education Divisions.

Before 1994 there were restrictions on registration and operation of private schools. this limited access to secondary education. There were very few secondary schools, it was very difficult to secure a place at secondary school despite having passed primary school leaving certificate. Only a handful of students were selected and the rest had to either repeat or drop out because of not being selected.

The government realized that the provision of sound education services to the nation has to be a joint responsibility of both parties, that is the government and the private sector. Hence, this led to the birth of 'liberalization of education' policy which meant that individuals or groups of people, the private sector and non-governmental organizations, were free and encouraged to open schools so that they fill the gap that exists between supply and demand for secondary education places. This has resulted into the rapid growth of private secondary schools. People have responded favorably in support of the policy. One of the key secondary education policies under 'Access,' the Policy and Investment Framework (2000) document explicitly states that government shall promote the expansion of the private secondary school sector with the aim of increasing the percentage of private secondary school students from 15 % in 2000 to 25 % by 2012. It was only after liberalization and democratization in 1994 that the private secondary schools have expanded, and it is this current crop of schools that has affected the position of private schools in terms of quality. This is because most of the proprietors want to make profits at the expense of providing quality educational services.

Fortunately, at present the problem of secondary schools places has now been reduced since there are many secondary schools. Research results carried out by CERT in January revealed that there were 324 schools (See Figure 2 on page 7 showing the number of registered and unregistered schools by division).



**FIGURE 2: Showing number of private secondary schools by Education Division as on January,2002.**

According to figure. 2 above, Central-West has a large number of private secondary schools and this is followed by South-West. This is because these are major cities, Lilongwe and Blantyre in these divisions. Many private secondary schools are found in these cities compared to other districts. Central-East division has the least number of private secondary schools.

This rapid growth of private secondary schools has resulted into delays on the registration process and, at the same time, it has affected the quality of education offered in most of the private secondary schools. This is because most of these are unregistered

schools that do not have adequate qualified teachers or teaching and learning materials but they continue providing education services. This means that access to secondary education is being provided at the expense of its quality. However, the private sector is indeed filling a critical gap that exists between the rapidly expanding demand for secondary education places that the government is limited to supply. But the schools are mushrooming almost everyday across the country most of which are not of the expected standards.

Furthermore, the Education Methods Advisors are unable to cope with the number of schools at present, to the extent that it becomes difficult for them to monitor quality in all the schools. Some of the roles of Education Methods Advisors are to visit schools, both public and private, observing and assessing the type of teaching and learning that goes on in the classrooms. They ensure that standard of education offered in schools does not decline. They assist the teachers professionally so that there is always improvement in terms of education offered in schools. They are also supposed to inspect private secondary school premises and ensure that they are conducive to teaching and learning. Therefore, this is what has necessitated the need to conduct this study in order to come up with alternative ways to improve the systems, that is, strengthening the registration and quality monitoring systems.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter discusses the research problems that led to this study topic and explains its purpose and significance. In addition to this, five general research questions that this study is answering are explicitly presented. Limitations and delimitations of the study are also been explained.

#### *2.1 DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM*

In this study, there are two research problems, both of which pertain to management of private secondary schools. The research problems are ‘Registration’ of and ‘Quality Monitoring’ in private secondary schools. The first problem concerning ‘Registration’ of private secondary schools is that most of the private schools open without being registered, although in the Education Act it is clearly stated that no one should open a school without being granted a license. When a private school is not registered, it gives an impression that it does not meet the minimum requirements set by Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Then one wonders why such schools are still in operation as this means that they cannot promote quality education. But there could be other reasons for having so many unregistered private secondary schools. Therefore it is important to find out how the registration is done and what problems affect the process.

There is also lack of follow up visits to the schools once registered. Follow-up visits help to check whether proprietors have made improvements on the shortfalls that were noted during the first visit to the school. Unfortunately, most of these unregistered private secondary schools employ under -qualified teachers who face problems in delivering

content effectively. This concern was also expressed by one of the Ministry of Education officials at a conference held by The British Council and Private Schools Association of Malawi (PRISAM) in 2001. He pointed out that most of these private secondary schools that exist do not have adequate qualified teachers and teaching and learning materials. He added that private schools are not supposed to open unless they are registered. However, this is not the case because most of them still operate despite not being registered.

The second problem concerns 'Quality Monitoring' in private secondary schools. According to Policy and Investment Framework document, the Ministry of Education is supposed to monitor quality of education in all schools whether private or public. However, the extent to which Education Methods Advisors do conduct supervision visits to private schools to monitor its quality is questionable. This is because the number of Advisors in each Education Division is not adequate and the number of secondary schools is increasing everyday. In addition, according to my own experience as an Advisor, private secondary schools were neither or rarely visited for quality monitoring.

It is assumed that education offered in all secondary schools is monitored and that private secondary schools that are in operation are registered. This definitely is not the case. Private schools provide education to Malawian children therefore, it is important that these are monitored to ensure that good quality education standards are maintained in all the schools. Private secondary schools need to be frequently visited for quality monitoring. Therefore, it is important to find out the extent to which Education Methods Advisors monitor quality of education offered and how they conduct registration of private secondary schools. This would allow them to learn the problems that they face so that best alternatives could be explored. This is what necessitated the need to conduct this

study since alternative ways to improve the systems can be forwarded as recommendations to all stakeholders.

## ***2.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY***

The purpose of this study was to understand and describe the current system of registration and quality monitoring done in private secondary schools, and to propose strategies for improving the systems so that they have the desired impact in contributing to quality education in Malawi.

## ***2.3 GENERAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS***

The study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. How is the registration of private secondary schools done?
2. What are the problems of the registration process?
3. How is the quality of education offered in private secondary schools monitored?
4. What are the problems in monitoring the quality of education offered in private secondary schools?
5. What strategies can be put in place to improve the registration and quality monitoring systems?

## ***2.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY***

There has been no research on private secondary schools in Malawi except one that was carried out by Kiernan, et. al. (2000) to explore opportunities for enhancing partnership between the public and private sectors within the secondary education sub-sector. Therefore, findings of this research will stimulate the minds of other researchers who will eventually contribute to the world of learning. In addition, the Ministry of Education may find this study useful by implementing the suggested recommendations

that have been put forward in order to improve the registration and quality monitoring system done in private secondary schools. Hence, this study will also stimulate the minds of policy-makers since it has revealed the strengths and weaknesses of the system. Hence, informed decisions will be made to improve the systems.

### ***2.5 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS:***

The major limitation of this study is that it has drawn samples only from the Central-West Education Division focusing at only Lilongwe education districts namely, Lilongwe Urban, Lilongwe Rural-East and Lilongwe Rural-East. These were chosen because of feasibility and accessibility reasons. In addition, finances were not adequate to cover the whole education division. Therefore, in this case, these results can only be generalized to these districts. However, the results could still be applied to other districts as well. This is because, despite the geographical position of the schools selected, since some are from Lilongwe rural and others from urban, issues that have been discussed in the study may be common to all private schools in the other districts as well. Some issues may be even worse the further one is from the Education Division office and Ministry of education, Science and Technology (Headquarters).

In addition, the sample interviewed was not statistically representative of the population from where they were drawn, they were selected purposefully. This is because of time limitations to conduct the study at a larger scale. Furthermore, the span of this study was too short to be conducted countrywide and the money was not enough to conduct it at a larger scale. Another limitation is that most of the proprietors delegated their headmasters to be interviewed on their behalf hence, some of these did not provide all the required information.

## ***2.6 DELIMITATIONS:***

This study has confined itself to document reviewing, interviewing and focus group discussions. Document reviewing was done at the Ministry of Education headquarters, followed by interviews of the Education Methods Advisory Services officials from the Ministry of Education headquarters, the Central-West Education Division office, the District Education offices for Lilongwe Urban, Lilongwe Rural-East and Lilongwe Rural-West, Private Schools Association (PRISAM) secretariat office, and private schools proprietors of few selected secondary schools from the same education districts. A focus group discussion was held with the same participants interviewed. Out of fourteen, only eleven came. The purpose was to triangulate the information provided for validity purposes.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. DISCUSSION OF RELATED LITERATURE**

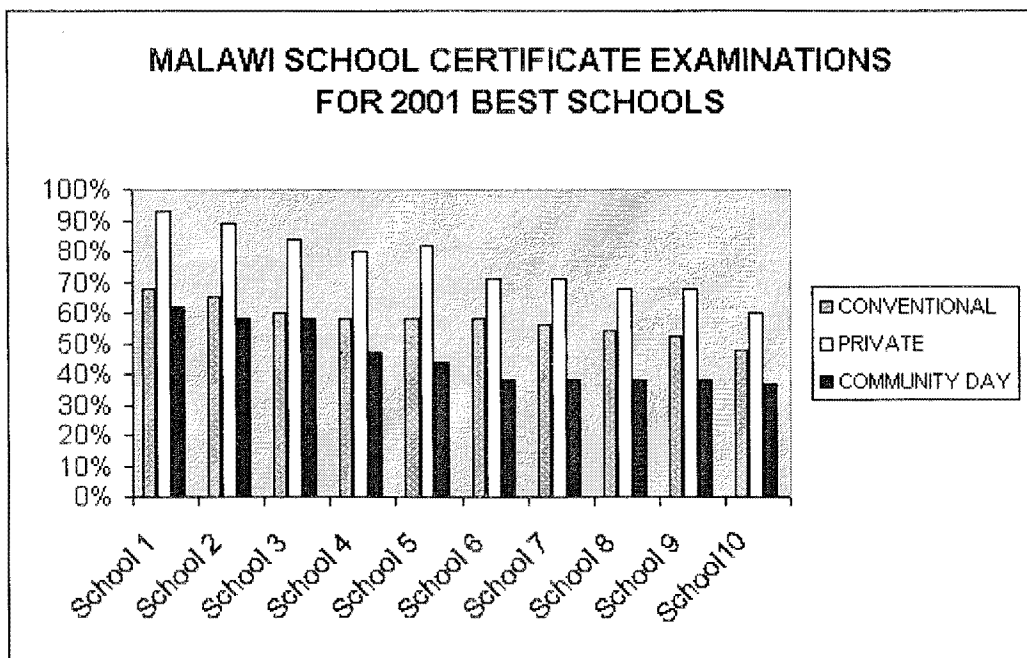
This chapter looks at related literature by discussing the related literature that frames the study. Unfortunately, nothing much has been written on Malawi private secondary schools. The only study available is about the development of private secondary school education in Malawi: ‘Towards a public- private partnership’ (2000). In addition, there are some minutes of a conference held by The British Council and Private Schools Association of Malawi (PRISAM) on ‘Quality and Value in Private School Education in Malawi’ (2001). This conference brought together government, private secondary school proprietors, private secondary school teachers, parents, and top officials from the Ministry of Education in Uganda and in Zimbabwe to look at the issues that impact on quality and value in private schools. The other two major sources that have been referred to are looking at ‘Private and Community Schools in Tanzania (Mainland)’ and ‘The global Education Industry: Lessons from Private Education in Developing Countries.’ Therefore, these developing countries have been used to compare the gap that exists concerning registration and quality monitoring in private secondary schools.

#### ***3.1 MALAWI PERSPECTIVES OF THE STUDY:***

In Malawi, there are some private schools that operate illegally since they are not registered. It is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to ensure that private secondary schools are registered and that they adhere to the minimum standards set. One of the PRISAM executive members, a proprietor of a reputable private secondary school, expressed her concern during the conference held by British Council and PRISAM

(2001) on the expansion of the private sector. She noted that this has taken place without government control or financial support, hence, the extremely negative results. She further expressed her worries over mushrooming of private schools saying that it is done almost everyday and yet most of them do not meet the required standards. She continued to say that most of these private schools are providing an ineffective teaching and learning environment.

Although this maybe true for most of the private secondary schools, there are a few that are exceptional since they provide an effective and conducive environment and hence, they produce good results compared to some of the public secondary schools (See Figure 3 on page 15 showing the MSCE (2001) results for the best ten schools).



**FIGURE 3: Showing Malawi School Certificate Examinations results for 2001 for the few selected best ten schools from each category, namely, Conventional (government), Private and Community Day Secondary schools.**

According to this bar chart, Private secondary are leading in terms of pass percentage, followed by Conventional and lastly, Community Day Secondary schools. This means that there are some

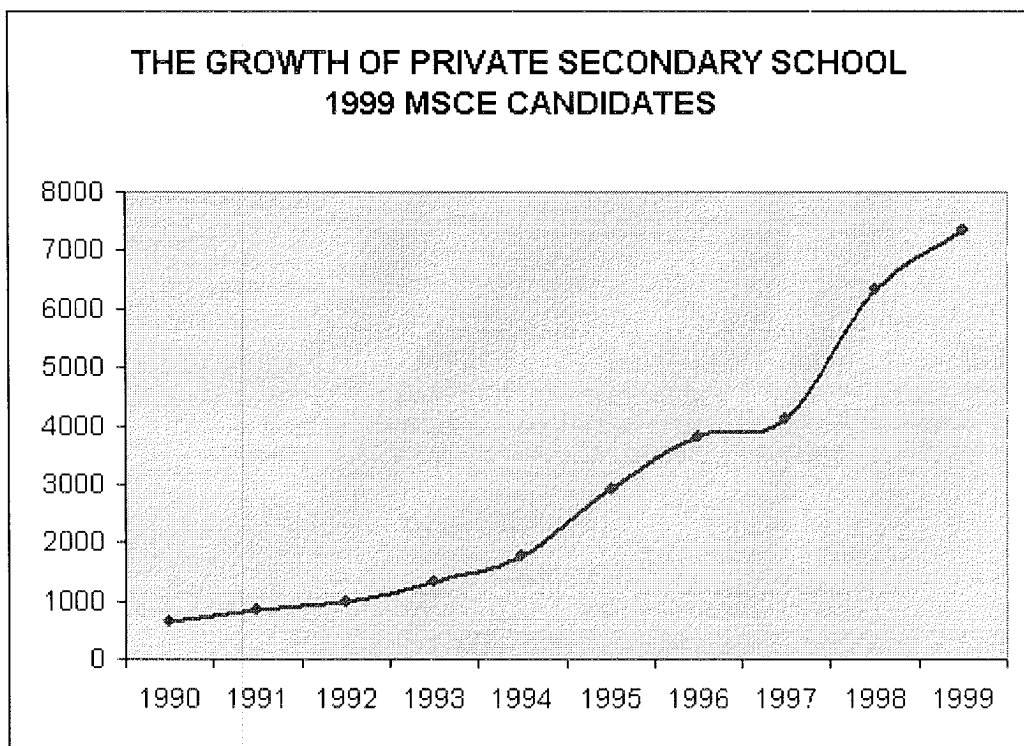
private schools which are producing better results compared to conventional (government) and community day secondary schools. More than half (60%) of these private schools are among those which were already in operation before 1994. Out of the best four private schools, three are mission schools. They were grant-aided schools but are now completely private.

At the same conference, one of the Ministry of Education officials also pointed out in his speech that 50% of the private secondary schools are not registered. Worse still, they employ unqualified teachers and fail to provide teaching and learning materials (The British Council and PRISAM conference 2001). This affects the quality of education that is offered, hence, the need to monitor quality of education offered in private secondary schools as well. In addition, one of the parents from the Parent Teacher Association of a prominent private secondary school representing parents at the conference also said:

*While parents are grateful to the government for allowing private schools to be established, we think not enough is done to protect consumers. Licenses are granted with no regard for standards. Quality is not monitored.* (The British Council and PRISAM conference 2001p.15).

The outcry of the students, parents, PRISAM and the Ministry of Education as well is that there are many private secondary schools which are in operation but most of them do not have the basic minimum requirements such as qualified teachers, textbooks. There is a lot of evidence showing that private secondary schools are growing. Many people seem to notice the growth and they talk about it in public places, newspapers, and meetings. During documentary review, it was found out that the number of Malawi School Certificate Examination candidates in private secondary schools is also growing since 1990. However, the increase was high from 1994 (See the Figure 4 on page 17 showing the growth from 1990 to 1999). The contribution of these private secondary schools towards the provision of education is high and cannot be ignored. But there is still need that they adhere to rules and

regulations since these are necessary for quality control to ensure that education provided is of good quality. This can be done through inspection visits to the schools for registration and follow-up visits to ensure that they maintain good standards. Apart from this, there is need to conduct advisory visits to private schools in order to monitor the quality of education offered. In addition professional advice is provided and this will improve teaching and learning in the classrooms.



**FIGURE 4: Showing the growth of private secondary school Malawi School Certificate of Education candidates from 1990 to 1999.**

According to this graph, there was a steady increase in the number of students from 1990 to 1996. Thereafter, there was high increase up to 1999, especially from 1997. This implies that there are many students that enroll in private secondary schools. It also means that there are many private secondary schools which are being opened almost every year.

### ***3.2 THE FOUNDATIONAL LITERATURE TO THE STUDY:***

The foundational literature to this study has been discussed according to the areas of the research questions. These areas mainly focus on registration of private secondary schools, problems of the registration process, monitoring quality of education offered in private secondary schools, problems of monitoring quality of education offered in private secondary schools and recommendations that have been put forward to improve the registration and quality monitoring of private secondary schools.

#### ***3.2.1. REGISTRATION OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS:***

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology issues guidelines concerning the establishment of private institutions. The registration of private secondary schools is done by Education Methods Advisors based at the Ministry of Education headquarters and in Education Divisions. The process starts from the Education Divisions and ends at the Ministry of Education headquarters where licenses are issued. These six education divisions are Northern, Central-East, Central-West, South- East, South- West, and Shire Highlands. When someone wants to open a private school, he/she gets an application forms from the division. They fill the forms and send them to the Education Divisional Manager together with their plans of the school. Once the application forms reach the division, they are sent to the Advisory section for action. Then, Advisors plan when to go and inspect the premises. When time comes and everything is set in terms of transport, they go to inspect the premises. If they find that the place is suitable, the owner is advised right on the spot to start constructing the school. However, before the school is opened, the proprietors have to seek an approval from the division office once again. The advisors

have to go and inspect the school. If the school has all the necessary requirements, the proprietor is given permission to open the school right on the spot. When the advisors go back to the office, a report is written and sent to the Ministry of Education headquarters for a license (Interview responses from EMAS section officers).

At the Ministry of Education, the Principal Education Methods Advisor, who is also a desk officer for private secondary schools, files all the reports waiting for the private secondary schools committee to meet. When the number of reports has increased, the desk officer calls for the meeting where they go through the reports and decide on which schools to be granted licenses and what type. The decision that they make depends on what has been written on the report about the school. Thereafter, the desk officer deploys a memorandum to the Honorable Minister who approves or disapproves. It is only after the approval by the Honorable Minister that the schools are given licenses. The registrar of schools, who is also one of the committee members of private secondary school committee based at the Ministry of Education headquarters, is informed about the approval and he issues the licenses accordingly. The desk officer writes letters to both proprietors, that is, those that have been granted licenses and those that have not made it, informing them the shortfalls where they need to improve. They are also told to re-apply again through their education divisions.

Chedial, Kirumba and Sekwao (2000) explicitly state that in Tanzania, registration takes three steps and these are: to submit an application; to be approved and to start building the school. Main conditions for operation of non-government (private) schools have been stipulated as follows:

- a. *The owner must be approved by the Honorable Minister of Education that he/she can operate a private school before he/she opens it.*

- b. *The manager of the school must also be approved by the Commissioner for Education before being employed by the owner.*
- c. *All persons employed to teach must be registered as teachers.*
- d. *All the persons employed in the school to teach secular subjects must be registered as teachers and possess certificates or licenses certifying their qualification.*
- e. *The curriculum must follow a syllabus approved by the Commissioner for Education.*
- f. *All the school buildings must be suitable and sufficient for the purpose and satisfy the public health authorities.*
- g. *The commissioner must approve the level of school fees charged.*
- h. *The class size must not exceed 45 pupils for primary schools and 40 students for secondary schools.*
- i. *The school should have a school board or committee.*
- j. *The school must be registered under the Education Act No. 25 of 1978, amended in 1995.*

The application forms are made through District and Regional Education officers to the Commissioner, unlike in Malawi where application forms are made only through Education Division offices also previously called regional offices. According to Chiedal et al. (2000), in Tanzania, private schools do not receive subventions or any material support from the state. However, they are supported through the following once the Principal Secretary has approved:

- a. *There is tax exemption from income tax.*
- b. *Textbooks and learning materials, syllabi are provided.*
- c. *School inspection, it is conducted by the same Ministry of Education officers.*
- d. *There is provision of in-service teacher training.*

In the case of Malawi, it is only registered private secondary schools that are provided with syllabi. In addition, they share textbooks and other teaching and learning materials when they are at their cluster meetings where they help each other in professional issues. Some of the activities that are done during cluster meetings are sharing of best practices on teaching and learning methodologies and handling of challenging topics.

Chifonyise (2001) points out that in Zimbabwe, 94% of primary schools and 87% of secondary schools are owned and run by missions, church organizations, boards of trustees, commercial companies, and urban and rural district councils. She further states that most of the private schools are registered, therefore, eligible for certain benefits from the government and, at the same time required to maintain certain standards. There are very few schools that are not registered and these can be said to be completely private since they do not receive any assistance from the government. Otherwise for the registered schools, the government funds the salaries of all teachers and administrators.

Looking at what Chifonyise is saying, it means that in Zimbabwe they also have some unregistered schools. It seems registering a school is just a matter of choice since one can still operate even if his/her school is not registered. The school becomes solely in his /her own hands since such schools are not provided with any type of subsidy from the government as she says, "The school becomes completely private." But such type of schools, still have to meet the minimum standards. This means that apart from offering many benefits to registered private schools, government also exerts control. Head teachers are appointed through a government system, which considers seniority, ability, education and training. Similarly, in Malawi most private and government secondary schools use the same MSCE curriculum but they are free to use their own except that it has to be approved by the Ministry.

In Argentina, Tooley (1999) also points out that there is a mandatory curriculum. He also puts down some of the private schools regulatory requirements in the province of Buenos Aires, which he says covers the largest population. He says that a private school must ask permission for authorization from the provincial government with regard to so

many things some of which are: The name of the institution; Staff movements; The limit of students per class; Time schedules has to be the same as government schools and any change must be authorized by the Ministry; Only books and texts approved by the provincial Ministry of Education have to be used. Any professor doing a scientific experiment must register it in a specific register. There is mandatory national curriculum and this restricts the ability of private schools to compete through the content of the curriculum or methodology of education. There is also provisional registration and accreditation of private education institutions with a threat of withdrawal recognition of education delivered. They are granted a provisional accreditation at the beginning of the process and final accreditation is given after a final evaluation of its performance. If this accreditation is denied, all education given in the meantime is not recognized and this makes it difficult to attract students at the start of operations. There is Teacher's, Statute that regulates the labor contract for all teachers both at the public and private sector. This grants all teachers stability as long as the teacher maintains good conduct.

Argentina, although Tooley puts it in the group of developing countries, cannot be compared with Malawi and Tanzania. All these countries are at different levels of their development. However, one thing that they have in common is the idea of setting up regulations for private schools. That is, they all have regulation in place as regards to registration of private schools. The whole purpose is to ensure that the schools provide conducive environments for effective teaching and learning so that quality of education does not decline and at the same time abide by laws of the government.

### ***3.2.2. PROBLEMS THAT EXIST IN THE REGISTRATION PROCESS OF PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS***

On problems that exist in registration of private schools, Tooley (1999) notices that there is a huge potential market for private education in most developing countries at all levels because most people are dissatisfied with the existing public schools or inadequate provision in rural areas. However, he points out that the biggest stumbling block for private education in many countries is the regulatory environment. He points out that although regulations may be intended to protect consumers and maintain standards, they often act to inhibit and, in some cases, stifle needed educational opportunities, which the private sector could otherwise provide.

In Tanzania, the past prohibition of private education also led to limited access to secondary education and this created a market in Kenya and Uganda for Tanzanian children. It is said that their parents were paying 18 billion Tanzanian Shillings (1US\$ = 800TSH) per annum for their children in secondary boarding schools in Kenya and Uganda (Chedial et. al.2000 p. ).

In Malawi there are many unregistered secondary schools most of which the Ministry of Education is not aware. Non-registration of private schools might be due to ignorance of the procedures, that is, some proprietors may not be aware that they have to register their schools. At the same time there may be some proprietors who are well aware of the procedures but they just do not register their schools deliberately knowing very well that their schools do not meet the minimum requirements.

Other reasons for having so many unregistered schools could be partly due to the length of time it takes for a license to be granted due to bureaucratic principles that are

followed. Registration process starts at the Education Division office and ends at the Ministry of Education headquarters (Interview response-MoEST 2002).

In Tanzania (Mainland), the government has tight regulations over private and community schools. For example, to be employed at private school, a teacher should have a working permit and be registered by the Ministry of Education. The registration of a private school takes three steps: to submit an application, to be approved, and to start building the school. Other guidelines concern operation, approval of owner, manager and registration of the school. Hence, the proprietors also complain that the registration process is so long to the extent that some schools continue operating despite not being registered. The approval of the school owner and manager is said to be a long process since applications have to pass through district and regional authorities before they reach the Ministry. Apart from these registration delays, there are also irregularities concerning school fees, curriculum, class sizes, teacher qualifications and school management (Chediell, et. al. 2000 p. ).

In addition, private schools in Tanzania do not receive subventions or any material support from the state. However, unlike in Malawi, proprietors may request from the Ministry and receive tax-exemption from income tax, textbooks and learning materials, school inspection and in-service teacher training, if the Permanent Secretary approves their requests. Proprietors pay school registration fee (Chediell, et. al. 2000). Here in Malawi, there is no fee charged for registration. However, at times the owner of the school is asked to provide transport and lunch allowances for the Advisors who will go and inspect his school (Ministry official-Education Division interview response 2002). In

this case there is also need to charge penalty fees to those who just open schools without first being granted permission.

### **3.2.3 *QUALITY MONITORING IN PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS***

Private secondary schools differ from each other and sometimes the diversity becomes so large. This wide diversity that exists in the quality of private secondary schools in Malawi necessitates that there should be a monitoring mechanism to ensure that quality education is offered in these schools. In support, Tooley (1999) also points out that if education companies are expanding, and especially if they are doing this through franchising, then quality control becomes a key concern. He goes on saying that in South Africa they have a specialized department, the National Support Office, headed by the National Director of Studies and a team of full time administrators for quality control for the Educor (Damelin) private schools.

In Malawi, the Education Methods Advisory Services of the Ministry of Education is responsible for monitoring quality in all schools whether private or public. However with this rapid growth of private secondary schools, it is becoming difficult for the Advisors to inspect and supervise all the schools. The whole purpose of monitoring quality is to ensure that the expected quality standards are maintained. The type of quality monitoring done in private secondary schools is mostly that of inspecting school premises for registration. However, it is clear from the outcry in the national newspapers that the current level of performance of the secondary system, that is, both private and public, is unsatisfactory and unacceptable to the majority of the population ( Chimaliro 2001). However, Chaponda (2001) states that from an economic view, private schools play a role of complementing government efforts in providing educational services to the nation

and therefore, should be encouraged but under stronger regulations. This is also clearly stated in the 'Regulations for opening a private schools,' it is written:

*The role of the private sector shall be that of complimenting government efforts in providing this essential service to the nation as opposed to indulgence in a purely commercial enterprise with maximization of profits as priority. (MoEST-Regulations for opening private)*

According to the study that was carried out, the visits made to some of the private secondary schools showed that little learning was taking place and the schools lacked physical facilities such as science laboratories (Kiernan, 2000). In support, the Strategic Plan for PRISAM (2001) stipulates the following as some of the major findings from the Situational Analysis on private schools:

- a. Many private schools are not registered with the Ministry of Education as well as PRISAM.*
- b. Many Schools do not have appropriate infrastructure such as classrooms, offices, laboratories, library, playfields, toilets to run the schools.*
- c. There is lack of facilities for effective delivery of lessons such as textbooks.*
- d. Private Schools owners are very much business minded aiming at profits and not providing best education services.*
- e. Unqualified teachers with no education certificates are used in most private schools since they are easy to employ. (Strategic Plan for Private Schools Association of Malawi, 2001)*

Therefore, it is very important that inspection be carried out to ensure that the schools create an environment conducive to teaching and learning. In addition, supervision visits have to be conducted in private schools as well to ensure that there is professional delivery of quality education. However, there are some private schools that have good operation standards that can act as a basis for other schools. In Uganda quality monitoring in private secondary schools is done jointly by the Kampala District Private Educational Institutions Association and Kampala Education Department officials Muwonge (2001). Similarly in Zimbabwe, Chifonyise (2001) states that all schools are

subject to ministry inspection visits and students are required to follow a national curriculum and to take centrally designed and administered examinations at certain stages in their schools. In Tanzania, the office of Chief Inspector of Schools at Ministry of Education headquarters is the one responsible for monitoring quality of education in both public and private schools. In addition, 200 Tanzanian shillings is collected from each student by the Ministry of Education for quality monitoring, in addition to the school registration fee that the proprietors pay (Chedié, et. al. 2000) but in Malawi there is no fee charged.

#### ***3.2.4. PROBLEMS THAT EXIST IN QUALITY MONITORING OF PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS***

In Malawi, the major problems concerning quality monitoring are inadequate Advisory personnel, inadequate financial resources and transport problems due to either shortage or lack of transport. All the six Education Divisions have each one vehicle for the Advisory section but this is not enough because other sections which do not have vehicles also use the same vehicle for official duties. Therefore, even when they plan to visit the school, which is far away, they do not go because they may not have the means.

In addition they also need subsistence allowances for their upkeep and accommodation if they are visiting schools that are very far away from their duty stations because they will have to spend some nights. Sometimes these funds are not adequate and have to wait for another funding, hoping that it will be enough for all the activities planned in that month. Most of the inspection visits paid to private secondary schools are for registration purposes and not much is done for monitoring quality as expressed by the Advisors from MoEST and Education Division Offices during interviews.

Another problem of quality monitoring that exists is lack of communication between the stakeholders. One of the issues noted during the interviews is that most of the proprietors do not know that Advisors from the Ministry of Education could come to their private secondary schools for supervision. They think that they only come to inspect the schools for registration purposes. This is because quality of education offered in private secondary schools is not monitored. Therefore nothing much has been publicized to the general public concerning quality monitoring of private secondary schools. If the proprietors were told, they would use their vehicles and make necessary arrangements to drive them to their schools. Some proprietors have come up with their own mechanism for monitoring the delivery of education for their schools. Although this is a good idea since it promotes school-based supervision, the people asked to do the job need to be exposed to at least some training so that they are able to do it accordingly. Therefore the Ministry of Education might not be sure of its effectiveness if the personnel used have not been trained or oriented. At the same time the Ministry is not aware of the tools that they use.

In summary, many countries set conditions and procedures for the establishment and registration of private schools, for example, school buildings and size of classrooms, teachers qualifications, curriculum to be used. The purpose is to ensure that the schools provide conducive teaching and learning environment which will promote quality education. However, the extent to which they comply to these regulations varies from one country to another. In some countries such as Tanzania, Zimbabwe and in Buenos Aires, there are tight regulations and they are strictly followed. The process of registration tends to be long because of the hierarchy. In Tanzania, proprietors pay registration and

inspection fee but in others there is no charge. In most countries, the Ministry of Education does the quality monitoring in order to ensure that the expected quality standards are maintained. In Malawi and Tanzania the major problems concerning quality monitoring is inadequate personnel and resources.

The next chapter is a brief discussion of the research methodology and the methods of data analysis used.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this section of the study, the design and overall methodological approach used are described. The decisions made are justified using the methodological literature. The population of interest; sample and its size; data collection procedures are also discussed.

#### ***1.1 OVERALL APPROACH AND RATIONALE:***

The overall methodological approach that has been used in this study is a mixture of qualitative and quantitative approach. Therefore, a mixed approach has been used. The purpose is to have a balance of narrative and numerical reporting so that it does not become monotonous during presentation. This was chosen because use of mixed approach enlarges the scope of the analysis. However, the dominant approach used is qualitative because I wanted to gather as much meaningful information as I could. I had an interest in the process of registration and how quality is monitored in private secondary schools in Malawi. I was aware that the rapid growth of the private secondary schools in Malawi might have some implications on the registration and quality monitoring systems. Therefore, I wanted to get an in depth understanding of how the systems work and why it is done in that manner, then, finally come up with strategies that would improve the systems.

#### ***4.2 SAMPLE:***

The sample in this study was purposefully selected from various areas of education, including Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (Headquarters); Education

Division (Central-West); Lilongwe District Education Offices namely: Lilongwe District Education Office (Urban); Lilongwe District Education Office (Rural-East) and Lilongwe District Education Office (Rural-West); Private Schools Association of Malawi (Secretariat) and Proprietors of some private secondary schools in the education districts selected.

There were 14 participants in total, one from the Ministry of Education headquarters, one from Education Division Office, 3 from Lilongwe Education District Offices; one from each district; one from PRISAM; two proprietors of private secondary schools from Lilongwe Education District (Rural-West); two from Lilongwe Education District (Rural- East) and four from Lilongwe Education district (Urban). Originally, the intention was to have eight proprietors as respondents and not the head teachers but due to different reasons most of them opted that their head teachers be the ones to be interviewed. This resulted into having interviewed only four proprietors and the other four were head teachers. This affected the research findings because there were some head teachers who could not provide answers to some of the questions. They had to go and ask the proprietor and that meant going back to them again. Out of the four proprietors, one of them is the proprietor, and at the same time, the head teacher of the school.

These educators were purposefully selected because they are involved in the registration and quality monitoring of private secondary schools in one way or another. The two from the Ministry of Education headquarters and Education Division Office are both from the Education Methods Advisory Section (EMAS). One of the responsibilities of this section is to monitor quality of education in all schools whether private or

government. In addition, they also inspect private schools for registration. The three District Education Managers from each Lilongwe education district were selected because they are the overseers of the education matters in their districts and proprietors who want to open schools seek advice from them. Sometimes they are invited to go and see the school premises even before the construction. Proprietors are the owners of the private schools and they are the ones who apply and process the registration of their schools. Since registration takes long, they assign their head teachers to do some follow-ups until their schools get registered and in certain cases it is the head teacher who does everything on behalf of the proprietor.

In addition, in this sample population, every individual contributes and has a role to play in the registration and quality monitoring of the private secondary schools. The sites were also purposefully selected because of their proximity in order to minimize costs since funds were not adequate to cover a wider area, for example, the whole Education Division (Central-West). In addition, accessibility of the site was also considered, trying to cover both, rural and urban settings. There were eight private secondary schools in total that is, four from urban and four from rural education district. Apart from inadequate funds, time was also a limiting factor to increase sample size. Therefore, this sample size was so small that it cannot be generalized since it was targeted because of its convenience sake.

#### ***4.3 INSTRUMENTATION AND DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES***

Data collection methods that were used in this study comprised both primary and secondary methods. The first method used was documentary review whereby adequate information on the registration and quality monitoring systems was gathered. Some of

these documents were files concerning ‘Registration of private secondary schools,’ ‘Private Schools Association of Malawi (PRISAM),’ and some correspondences on private secondary schools. In addition to the files, application forms available concerning registration of private schools, minimum requirements for establishing private secondary schools, minutes of the conferences held by PRISAM, MoEST, DANIDA and The British Council, reports from the six Education Divisions on inspection of private secondary school premises, Memorandum to the Honorable Minister asking for registration of private secondary schools approval, reports on supervision visits to private secondary schools and lists of schools that have either been granted licenses or not. Then, arrangements were made with the participants for interviews, whereby letters of booking an appointment were hand delivered to the participants. In the letters, they were asked to indicate whether they were willing to participate or not, and if they were willing they had to indicate date and time. Confirmation of the bookings was done on phone. All the participants seemed very interested and willing to participate.

Thereafter, face-to-face in-depth interviews with 14 participants drawn from various areas of education were conducted to gather information on current practices concerning registration and quality monitoring in private secondary schools. These were an open-ended interviews whereby the respondents were allowed to talk freely and at a length on the research questions asked, further questions were developed depending on the responses. Question interview guide consisted of six sections: (a) registration of private secondary schools, (b) problems with the registration process, (c) monitoring quality of education offered in private secondary schools, (d) problems with monitoring quality, (e) alternative strategies to improve the registration process, and (f) alternative strategies to

improve quality monitoring system in private secondary schools. The original plan was to conduct the interviews between 45 minutes and an hour but several of the interviews exceeded to 90 minutes. Throughout, interviewees were encouraged to speak out their opinions or suggestions on the systems. Finally, a focus group discussion with the interviewees was convened to look at the research findings and then, together, they discussed and came up with possible solutions to improve the registration and quality monitoring system. This also helped in triangulation of information in order to find out where there is convergence of information since it had been gathered from different sources.

#### ***4.4 DATA MANAGEMENT:***

The voluminous data collected was carefully managed starting right away in the field. While in the field, interview notes were taken down with the help of a Research Assistant, as interviews were conducted. Therefore, note taking was the foremost method for keeping data while in the field. However, at the end of each day, there was a review of all the information gathered to make sure that there were no omissions. This was done by going back to the data at the end of each day, rereading it, and comparing notes with the Research Assistant. A journal for the interview notes was compiled whereby direct quotes of the informants were recorded.

#### ***4.5 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE***

The mass of raw data collected was analyzed by first of all cleaning it; this was done by going through it, re-reading and checking for gaps. Follow-ups to the participants interviewed were made in order to fill in the missing information. The data was then organized so that it became easy to access because interviews were conducted with

various role groups namely; Education Methods Advisors, District Education Managers, PRISAM official, Proprietors/Head teachers. Therefore, role groups were used to organize data. Thereafter, efforts were made to get familiar with the data by reading and typing it, putting all the responses in bold. After typing the interview notes, these were again read now and again in order to get immersed into the data with a deeper understanding of it. Thereafter, the data was analyzed according to the categories and then, it was interpreted according to the results of the research findings, thus building an overall narrative of what has been learnt in this research study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. DATA ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

The stated purpose of this study was to understand and describe the current system of 'registration' and 'quality monitoring of private secondary schools. The purpose was also to subsequently come up with strategies for improving the systems so that they have the desired impact in contributing to quality education in Malawi. The two major categories are 'Registration,' and 'Quality monitoring' in private secondary schools. However, six subcategories have been developed within the mass of raw data collected from the two major categories. Therefore, this section presents the data collected as findings of the study and these are discussed, analyzed and interpreted so that they are meaningful. Conclusion and recommendations also are presented.

The following were the subcategories developed from the interview responses: a) The growth of private secondary schools, b) Regulations for opening a private school, c) The registration process, d) Problems with the registration, e) Strategies that could improve the Registration process, f) Quality monitoring, g) Problems with quality monitoring, and h) Strategies that could improve quality monitoring sys

#### ***5.1. THE GROWTH OF PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS:***

On the growth of private secondary schools in Malawi, all the 14 interviewees are knowledgeable about the growth of private secondary schools. But it was difficult for most of them to come up with an exact figure of private secondary schools in the country, at divisional and district level. Most of them support the growth of private education sector saying that most students have access to secondary education and there is high

competition amongst the schools. One of the head teachers of a private secondary school in the urban area said:

*Private secondary schools mushroom every night and this is a sign of high competition. One day, you go to Area 25, catching a bus that passes through Area 25B and C. You will be surprised.*  
(Proprietor of School 3)

What he meant was that there are so many private secondary schools in Area 25 but one cannot know them unless he/she goes right into the residential compound areas. The Advisor from MoEST estimated that there could be about 1000 private secondary schools. However, on registered and unregistered private secondary schools that currently exist in the country, both Advisors (one from the MoEST and the other one from Education Division) were not able to give the exact number of private secondary schools in the country and in the division respectively. This was not possible because new private secondary schools get opened almost everyday. Fortunately, both of them had lists of private schools, which were they said were out dated. This meant that the lists had either more or less number of schools because new schools get opened without their knowledge and some close down before they even register due different reasons such as financial constraints for running the school. They both pointed out that there are many schools that get opened and run for some time then later, close down on their own. The Advisor from Education Division Office stressed that they do not recognize any private school that has not been registered. Hence, he only had a list of schools showing registered secondary schools. He said:

*All the unregistered schools do not matter to us, we don't know them.*

(Respondent from Division Office)

It is important that the Advisors find out the reasons why schools are not applying for registration and if the conditions are not conducive, then they could be advised accordingly. Ignoring such schools completely might lead to an increase in number of unregistered schools and no one knows the state of the schools. The children need to be protected in terms of the quality of education provided to them because these are the future leaders of tomorrow.

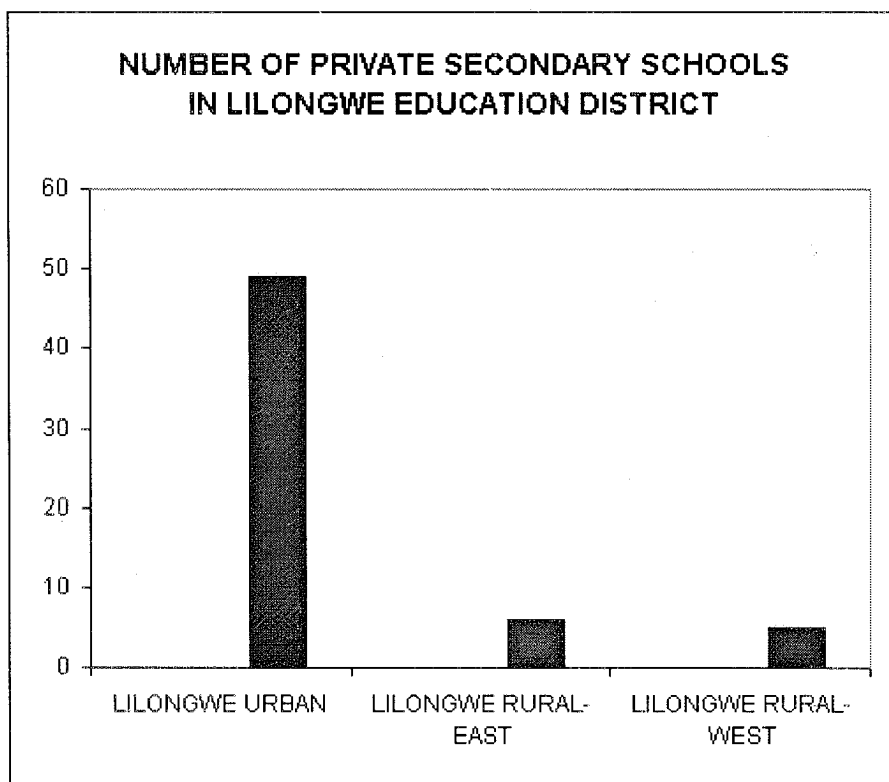
On the same issue of number of private secondary schools, surprisingly, two out of the three respondents from the District Education Offices were able to tell the exact number of private secondary schools in their districts. One respondent from Lilongwe (Urban) straight away said that he had 24 private secondary schools in his district at the time of interviews but could not tell the number of registered and unregistered. He also pointed out the problem of new private secondary schools getting opened almost everyday, therefore the numbers changes now and then. A respondent from Lilongwe (Rural-East) said that he had six private secondary schools in his district. However, he pointed out that he was not very sure about the sixth one, whether it is still in operation or not, since he was just hearing rumors that all the teachers have run away. On the question of registered schools, he said that all the five schools were registered except the sixth one which, he said, was unregistered. While a respondent from Lilongwe (Rural-West) was unable to state the number of private secondary schools in his district saying that he had no idea since he had not stayed long in the office and that secondary schools do not concern him as much as primary schools. However, individually, they all pointed out that the number of private secondary schools is growing.

The respondent from PRISAM office, who has a private secondary school, also had knowledge of the growth of private secondary schools in Malawi quite well and urged the MoEST to control the growth, saying that the proprietors just construct schools anywhere they want to without even observing the distance from another school. She said that this leads to having too many within one area and this affects enrollment. On the number of registered and unregistered private secondary schools, she said that it was not possible for her to estimate because these schools open at anytime and operate in places difficult to be recognized, such as dwelling houses. However, she said that PRISAM secretariat office has just been identified, and once everything is put in place, they will have to take a record of all private secondary schools countrywide. She said:

*Although private secondary schools provide chances to many students who were unable to go to secondary due to shortage of places in government schools, most schools are not in good condition. It is time now that we ( MoEST&PRISAM ) should do something before things get worst. Already, in our 'Strategic Plan,' which is now out, we have indicated a number of things that we need to do to improve quality of education in the private schools. I hope these things will be implemented although DANIDA has pulled out. (PRISAM respondent)*

It was also difficult for her to mention the number of private secondary schools even those that are registered with them. However, she also acknowledged the growth of the private sector in education but felt that the growth is done at the expense of quality since many of them are not in good condition. Therefore, she feels that MoEST and PRISAM need to work together in improving quality of education. On the part of the three proprietors that were interviewed, all said that the growth of private secondary schools should be encouraged because they provide chances to many students who could be repeating or just staying at home. Private secondary schools indeed give chances to many students who could have been unable to secure places in government secondary

schools. The number of private secondary schools in the country, all lists obtained from the MoEST were said to be out dated and had different totals. The education division had a list that only showed their schools in the division so too the urban district office. (See Figure 5 on page 40 showing the number of private secondary schools in Lilongwe Education Districts)



**FIGURE 5: Showing the number of private secondary schools in Lilongwe Education Districts only namely, Lilongwe Urban, Lilongwe Rural-East and Lilongwe Rural-West.**

This means that in Lilongwe District alone, there are 60 private secondary schools in total, that is, registered as well as unregistered schools. There are many schools in the urban compared to rural areas. The difference in number of schools between Lilongwe Rural-East and Lilongwe Rural-West is very small, (there is a difference of only one school) compared to both rural areas and urban and Lilongwe Urban. This means that more people own private secondary schools in the urban than in rural areas.

Therefore, growth of private secondary schools is a well-known fact and is being noticed by many people as evidenced by the responses of the interviewees. The Ministry of Education and PRISAM are also aware that indeed private secondary schools are growing fast. Unfortunately, they seem not to have well updated lists of the schools that are registered and not registered, and the type of licenses issued. This means that they may not have an Education Management Information System (EMIS) on private schools that is well established. This may have an effect on the decisions that might be made as regards to private schools because well-informed decisions can draw on accurate information. Through the implementation of an EMIS for private schools, decision makers will be better informed about various educational issues and concerns.

In summary all the respondents say that the private education sector is indeed growing at a faster rate than expected. People have responded favorable but there is need to tighten up the regulations in order to ensure that schools meet basic minimum requirements and promote quality education. In addition, they should not be too close to each other as this affects enrollments. However, some proprietors feel that this increases competition among themselves and those that do not meet the minimum requirements will definitely close down on their own.

## ***5.2 REGULATIONS FOR OPENING PRIVATE SCHOOLS***

‘Regulations for establishing a private secondary school,’ clearly states that a school shall open only after permission is granted by the Ministry of Education. This means that no school is supposed to open without a license. Regulations state that all individuals and organizations wishing to open private schools shall have to apply to the Secretary for Education through their respective Division Education Office for a secondary school or

District Education Office for a primary school prior to the registration of pupils and the actual opening of the proposed school premises. It is further stated that the Ministry of Education will, before granting the license, visit the proposed premises of the new school to ensure that the basic requirements are fully fulfilled. It is also stated that after meeting the minimum requirements, a school will be licensed with the understanding that it will continue to develop and maintain the required standards. These basic minimum requirements guidelines have also been clearly stated in the same document specifying essential facilities which have to be included for a boarding as well as day secondary school.

However, during the interviews, the respondent from Education Division said that in most cases, when they go to inspect premises, they find that the school is already in operation. Therefore, in such a situation, they also look at other things such as number of teachers and their qualifications, availability of teaching and learning materials, time table and subjects offered. The following are the basic requirements for the establishment of private secondary school as stated in the Ministry of Education document:

*Name and address of proposed school, Location of school, Traditional Authority and District, Proprietor(s) name and address, Type of school, Proposed enrolment, Proposed fees, Proposed curriculum, Availability of textbooks, syllabuses, Proposed names of teachers and their qualifications, Proposed teachers' salaries, Board of Directors/Governors, Number and condition of classrooms, Availability and condition of the administration block, Convertible sports pitch, Number and condition of laboratories, Number of teachers' houses, Number and condition of the hostels, Availability and condition of kitchen, Availability and condition of the dining hall, Amenities-water, electricity, fire extinguishers and toilets, Availability and condition of Agriculture fields.*(Tooley, 1999. p.100-103)

Advisors inspect the schools to check for these basic requirements and following confirmation of the school fully fulfilling most of these basic requirements, it is provided with a full license on the grounds that it will continue developing the rest of the

infrastructure. Where the requirements are not fully met, the school is issued a provisional license that has a life span of one to two years depending on the number and type of shortfalls. If the school has no qualified teacher, it is supposed to be closed down.

All four proprietors interviewed and the PRISAM respondent said that they were very well aware of the regulations for establishing a private secondary school. However, out of these four, two said that they do not see the need for reinforcing these regulations while two expressed their concern over regulations not being reinforced by the Ministry of Education. One of them said that there is no need to reinforce the regulations, but let the schools that do not meet minimum standards shut down on their own because they will be exposed to high competition. They will not have many students since their schools are not in good condition. He said,

*Closing down private secondary schools that do not meet the set standards will not help us. If these schools get closed where will the children go?*

(Proprietor of School 3)

Schools could be left without reinforcing regulations thinking that they might close down but this might not be the case. They may continue operating in poor conditions, and this means children are not protected. Apart from just infrastructures, most private schools employ unqualified and under-qualified teachers, which affects the teaching and learning process hence poor quality of education.

The other proprietor also said that he does not see the need of reinforcing the regulations only to private secondary schools since there are also some government secondary schools, especially Community Day Secondary schools, that do not meet these minimum requirements. He further stressed that government schools should be models to

private schools so that proprietors can copy from them. He continued saying that proprietors will be forced to have what they see in these government schools.

On the contrary, another proprietor said that regulations have to be reinforced in order to encourage people to build better infrastructures. He gave his own example saying that when he submitted his application forms to open a secondary school, Advisors took time to visit the premises. As he was following up his application, he was told that he could go ahead and he did. He never knew that he would be given such a chance, therefore he just decided to turn his bottle store into a secondary school. He demarcated it into two rooms, forms 1 and 2 respectively. The small rooms at the back of his bottle store, which were meant for the bargirls, were turned into sleeping rooms for the girls who were on self boarding. The girls were renting the rooms at K100 per month. He did this within two weeks and was operating on the same premises for almost three years without anyone stopping him. He further said,

*I would have not started on a bottle store premises if they had stopped me because I had quite enough capital from the tobacco sales that year. This would have enabled me to construct this school of mine sometime back. But it was quiet and I thought it was fine. There were only two teachers by Then, myself and a friend of mine teaching forms one and two respectively and the results were not bad.(Proprietor of school 5)*

Therefore, he wished that MoEST should reinforce the regulations that they set otherwise standards of education will go down. It is unfortunate that he was not visited on time because turning a bar shop into a school is not allowed and he would have been told right away to close it. There was need to make some follow- up visits to the place after submitting an application. In support, the PRISAM respondent also expressed her worry over the mushrooming of private secondary schools, most of which she said were not up to the expected standards. She further said that there are some PRISAM members who

also own private schools that do not meet the set standards, instead of being exemplary. She said that the Ministry of Education and PRISAM should reinforce the regulations.

The Ministry of Education and Education Division respondents both were asked the extent to which these regulations are reinforced. They both frankly said that they are not being strictly reinforced. The respondent from Education Division said that if they would be strict, then most of the schools would be closed down. As regards to penalties for unregistered schools, the Ministry of Education respondent said that all schools that open without being granted licenses are supposed to be closed down. If regulations are not reinforced, maybe the cause why most of these private schools run despite not having all the basic requirements. They might have complied with the regulations if they were reinforced but since they are not, most of them may not see the need for doing it. This gives them chances to operate without following the regulations. This is really an issue that the Advisory section to work out and have mechanisms put in place to ensure that regulations reinforced.

### **5.3 THE REGISTRATION PROCESS**

On the registration process, the respondent from the Ministry of Education described the current procedure as follows:

- a. Anyone who wants to open a private school obtains application forms from the Education Division offices and fills them, then submits them to the same office.*
- b. Advisors from the Education Methods Advisory section of the division go and inspect the premises. If they have not started constructing the school, they are told to do so straight away unless the premises are not suitable. Unfortunately, in most cases they apply when they have already opened the school.*
- c. Advisors write reports and send them to the Ministry of Education (Headquarters) for processing granting of licenses.*
- d. The reports are compiled and filed awaiting for the committee responsible for*

*private secondary schools to meet and go through them.*

- e. When the committee meets, they go through the reports and decide which schools could be granted licenses and their decisions base on the reports from the Education Division.*
- f. Thereafter, the Desk Officer for private secondary schools deploys a memorandum to the Honorable Minister for approval.*
- g. Once the approval has been granted, the desk officer writes letters to those that have not been granted licenses, informing them the areas where they need to improve. While the Registrar of schools writes and sends licenses to those that have been granted licenses. (MoEST Respondent)*

She was also asked how long it takes for a school to get registered and she said that it depends on how soon the Advisors visit the premises, write and send the report to the Ministry. She further pointed out that sometimes the reports are sent but it takes time for them as a committee to meet because they have other responsibilities. She further said that it also depends on the number of reports available. If they have few reports, they wait until they have many before scheduling a meeting. She also said that they wait until every member is available which she said was not easy because of the pressure of work on the officers. As a result, sometimes they take a long time before they meet. On the type of licenses issued, the respondent said that they issue two types of licenses, namely, provisional and full license. Provisional means temporary license with a duration of one to two years depending on the condition of the school.

The respondent from Education Division stated that anyone who wants to open a private secondary school comes to the Division Office and is given application forms. Those with problems are advised on how to fill them. The forms are then sent back to them to the Education Divisional Manager who hands them over to the Advisory section.

The Advisory section decides when to go and inspect the schools, and this depends on priorities of the activities on their plan that week and availability of transport. Proprietors who would like to use their own transport to pick the Advisors, are encouraged to do so and arrangements are made when they could come. When they go to the school, they have an instrument, which they use to check the condition and availability of the essential facilities. (See Appendix B attached). The proprietor is advised verbally during inspection on the shortfalls found and areas where he/she need to improve.

Thereafter, inspection reports are written and sent to the Ministry of Education headquarters. He further said that thereafter, they do not have any feedback as regards to which secondary schools have been issued licenses and what type. Therefore, it becomes difficult for them to do follow up visits.

The question on registration of private secondary schools was also extended to the District Education Offices. All the three respondents from the districts were asked to explain the extent to which they were involved in the registration of private secondary schools. Out of the three respondents, two of them said that they were partly involved since some proprietors come to them seeking advice before they open their schools. However, they both stated that they inform the proprietors to go to the division to get application forms. While one of the District Education Office respondents said that he was not involved in the registration of secondary schools, except that of primary schools. He further said that there are some people who come to him for the application forms and he advises them to go to the division office since he only deals with primary schools.

On the number of registered and unregistered private schools, the respondent from MoEST felt that the lists available were out dated. There were two different lists in terms

of numbers but all were compiled in 1999. She said that the numbers could either be more or less. The recent list that was available was taken from Center for Educational Research and Training (CERT). According to the research that they conducted in January, 2002 there were 324 private secondary schools out of which only 154 were registered (See Figure 6 on page 48 showing number of registered and unregistered private secondary schools in the country).

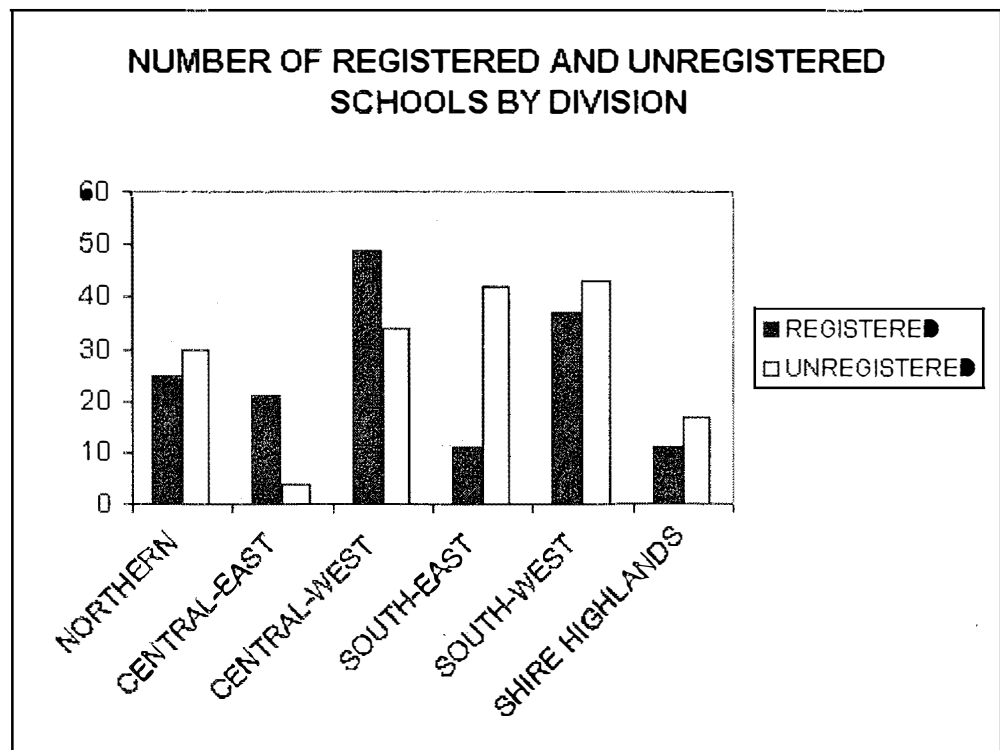


FIGURE 6: Showing number of 'Registered' and 'Unregistered' private secondary schools by Education Division

Source: CERT

There are 324 private secondary schools in the country. Out of these, only 154 schools are registered and 170 schools are not registered.

These are the schools that were on the list but there could be some schools that are still not on the list. There are so many unregistered secondary schools, some of them are not yet known despite being in operation. The regulation is that a private school is registered only if it meets most of the basic requirements set by the MoEST. Therefore some schools might not be registered because they do not meet these requirements. In Lilongwe Education Districts, there are more schools registered. The urban district has more than half of its schools registered. Both rural education districts have few schools and all of them are registered (See Figure 7 on page 49 showing the number of registered and unregistered private secondary schools in Lilongwe education districts according to CERT list).

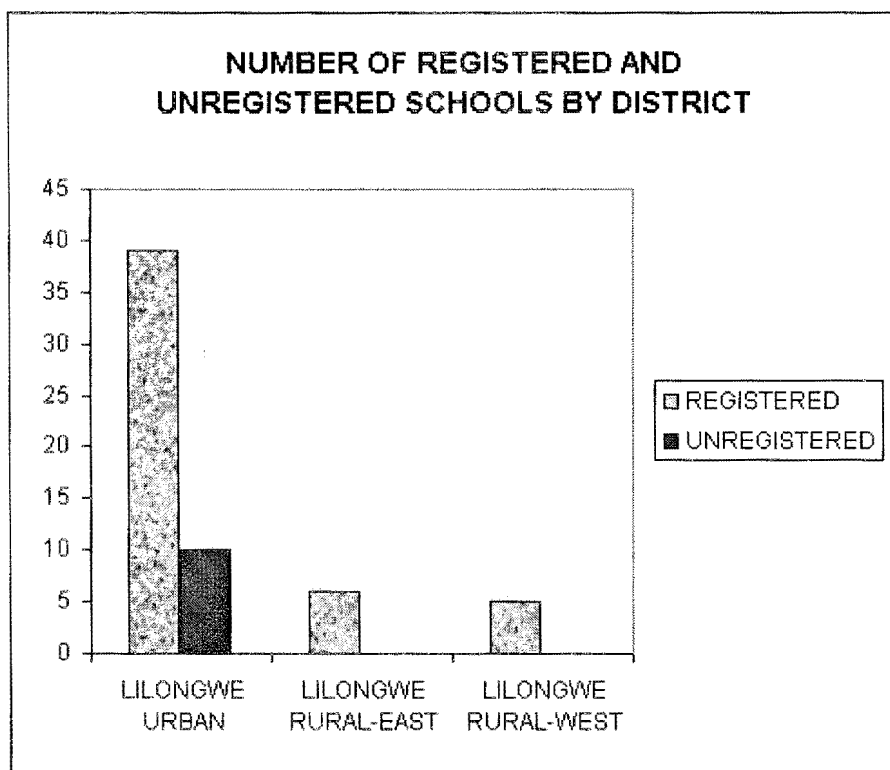


FIGURE 7: Showing number of registered and unregistered private secondary schools in Lilongwe Urban, Lilongwe Rural-East and Lilongwe Rural-West education districts.  
Source: CERT

There are 60 private secondary schools in Lilongwe, that is, 49 schools are in the urban, 6 in rural-east and 5 in rural-west. All the schools in both rural districts are registered but few schools are not registered in the urban. Therefore, 83% of private secondary schools in Lilongwe are registered. This might be the result of having many schools within the urban whereby, accessibility to the schools is not difficult. The schools are within reach of the Advisors and in some cases, proprietors pick them up to inspect their schools using their own vehicles. In addition, the proprietors are able to make some follow-ups to their applications since they are close to the Education Division as well as Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (Headquarters).

They were different reasons given as the cause for having so many secondary schools unregistered. Two respondents from the District Education Office, said that most of the proprietors may not be aware of the regulations, hence, they think that once the school is opened, that is all. While three Head teachers and two Advisors said that most of the proprietors are well aware of the regulations but just because they know that their schools do not meet the minimum requirements set by the government, they do not want to process registration. One of the Advisors said,

*These proprietors just don't want to register their schools because they know that their schools cannot pass since they are not of good standards.* (Respondent from Education Division)

One of the private secondary schools visited was not registered, but they had already submitted their application. When this proprietor was asked what she thinks could be the reasons for unregistered secondary schools, she said that it takes time for the Advisors to come and inspect the school despite submitting the application and frequent follow-ups. She further said that, even after the school has been visited, it takes a long time before one is issued a license. She added that it took almost a year before the Advisors came to inspect her school since she submitted her application and six months have passed without any feedback. A respondent from PRISAM thought that there were many unregistered secondary schools because of not reinforcing regulations. She said that if regulations were strictly reinforced, there would be no such cases of having so many

unregistered private secondary schools (PRISAM respondent). Although it is true that reinforcing regulations would have reduced the number of unregistered private schools, there may be still many other contributing factors to unregistered schools. The fact that some schools are not registered does not always mean that they do not meet the set standards. It might be because the Advisors have not gone to inspect the schools despite submitting their applications. Sometimes the Advisors might have inspected the school, produced the report and sent it to the Ministry of Education headquarters but the committee may take time to meet because they are busy with other official duties.

There were also some questions on 'Registration process' that were asked to Proprietors and Head teachers but in a different form. These respondents were asked to explain whether their schools were registered or not and explain how registration was done. If registered, they were asked to show me the license if it was within their reach so that I check for the registration number and the actual date. Out of eight respondents, seven said that their schools were registered and only five had access to the licenses; two said that they were kept by the proprietors at their houses. Some proprietors had their license hanged in a frame in their offices and duplicates kept by their head teachers. Out of these seven, five of them had provisional licenses and two had full licenses. However, it was noted that four out of the five had expired provisional licenses and two had licenses which did not specify duration despite being provisional licenses and one school was not yet registered.

The respondent whose school was not yet registered said that she had already submitted the application, Advisors had come to inspect the school and she was waiting for feedback. In addition, out of the seven registered schools, six were registered with

MoEST, PRISAM and MANEB. While one school was registered with MoEST and MANEB but not with PRISAM. When asked why he is not registered with PRISAM, he said that so far he has not yet seen the benefits of PRISAM, maybe in the future. The unregistered school claimed that it was registered with MANEB and PRISAM but not with MoEST saying that it is in the process of being registered only that the registration is taking too long. This was surprising, because it is not possible for a school to get registered with MANEB and not with MoEST. A school has to get registered with MoEST first before it is registered with MANEB. They cannot register a school that has no license. When asked whether the school is an examination center, she said that it was not an examination center because the MANEB officials say that they cannot register her school unless she registers with MoEST. Therefore, her school was not registered neither by MANEB nor MoEST.

It was also noted that the four proprietors who had expired licenses, three of them did not see anything wrong with it since they are still regarded as registered schools. They did not know that they are supposed to reapply. One of the proprietors said that he submitted the application to renew his license but there was no feedback. He further said,

*Moreover those who issued us these provisional licenses are the ones who are supposed to make some follow-ups in order to check if at all we have made improvements. If they don't come, then I don't have to worry since my school is registered already. (Proprietor of School 4)*

One of proprietors said that he knew that his school license had expired but did not know what to do next. The other two proprietors who had provisional licenses that did not specify duration, thought that all provisional licenses are written like that therefore, they were quiet, thinking that their licenses were permanent ones. Therefore, there is need

to find out whether there are two types of provisional licenses one with date of duration and the other one having no date of duration.

Private schools proprietors and PRISAM looks at the process of registration as cumbersome and slow because they have to wait long before they are issued with licenses. However, Ministry of Education officials (Headquarters and Division) argue that everything is done to handle each and every application objectively and blame the proprietors for not appreciating the need to follow the right procedure. These officials also note that most proprietors are fond of submitting their applications when time for national examinations is close so that their schools are registered to become examination centers. This results into having so many applications at a time, putting pressure on the officers who also have other things that they do.

In summary, according to the findings, the registration process starts from the division office and ends at the Ministry of Education headquarters where licenses are issued. It takes a bit of time depending on a number of factors, such as how soon the Advisors from the division go to inspect the premises and write and send the report to the Ministry. At the Ministry, it depends on how soon the committee meets and deploys a memorandum to the Honorable Minister for approval. Even after approval, it also depends on whether the licenses have been written and sent to proprietors. In addition, there is a breakdown of communication between the division office and Ministry of Education headquarters concerning which schools have been granted licenses and what type of licenses. There are no follow-ups on schools with provisional licenses. According to regulations, a school cannot be registered with MANEB unless it is registered with the Ministry of Education. All provisional licenses are supposed to have duration specified

and not left blank, as was the case with the two schools. If there were some follow-ups, such type of licenses would have been withdrawn and replaced with correct ones. One would think things are perfect since most of the private schools are registered but this is just three out of thirty-six districts but countrywide there are many unregistered private secondary school.

#### ***5.4 QUALITY MONITORING***

In this area, the purpose was to find out the extent to which quality of education offered in private secondary schools is monitored and how it is monitored. At the Ministry of Education, a respondent said that education offered in private secondary schools is rarely monitored because of limited resources. In addition, since there are so many schools, it is not easy for the Advisors to visit each and every school. In contrast, the respondent from the Education division said that they do monitor education offered in private secondary schools and that had just started visiting a few private secondary schools within the urban and were hoping to visit more. He stated that they observe teachers teaching and at the end of the lesson, they discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the lessons with teachers concerned individually and provide advice. When they go back to the office, they write confidential inspection reports, which are sent to schools. However, respondents remarked that reports were not made available.

On the same issue, all the respondents from Lilongwe Education Districts said that they do not know whether private secondary schools were being monitored or not. Out the four proprietors, three said that they never knew that Advisors from the Ministry of Education could come and conduct supervision visits to their schools since the Advisors had never been to their schools except for registration purposes. Only one respondent said

that his school had been just been visited in early January, however, they have not yet been sent the confidential reports. On how the inspection was conducted, he said that Advisors went into the classrooms and observed teachers teaching, looked at their schemes and records of work. Thereafter, the Advisors had discussions with the teachers individually and then the team went and briefed the head teacher in his office. He expressed an appreciation for their coming, and he wished they could come to his school frequently as this would improve teaching and learning. However, he wished he had the reports because feedback is important and teachers would like to see it. He said,

*We were told that they would send us all the 'Confidential Inspection reports' but three and half months have passed, we are still waiting for the reports. Are they really going to send us? (Proprietor of School 2)*

A respondent from PRISAM said that Advisors had never been to her school but she wished they could come, saying that this would strengthen teaching and learning that goes on and also encourage teachers. She further expressed her concern over the Ministry of Education not monitoring the standards of education in private secondary schools. She was further asked whether PRISAM has come up with any quality monitoring mechanism for private secondary schools. She said that it is stated in their Strategic Plan but nothing much has transpired yet because the secretariat is just being put in place.

Proprietors and head teachers were also asked if they have put in place any mechanism for quality monitoring in their private secondary schools. Out of the eight schools, only two schools had quality monitoring mechanism. One of the head teachers said that the owner of the school had employed someone who used to come and conduct inspection, supervising the teachers as they teach and providing necessary advice. He said that this inspector used to come twice a year but this year, he has not come, and they were

still expecting him anytime. The other head teacher said that the proprietor and himself (head teacher) supervise the teachers. They visit them in their classes and observe them as they teach two times a term. He said that they concentrate on methodologies used, that is, if they are asking questions and vary teaching methods and finally, the content. Thereafter, they hold a meeting with the teachers to discuss the strengths and shortfalls that have been observed in the lessons.

These findings show that there is very little quality monitoring in private secondary schools. According to PIF (2001) document, the Advisory section of the Ministry of Education is supposed to monitor quality of education offered in all schools whether private or government. It is unfortunate that these findings show that Advisors are largely unable to inspect private schools due to limited resources. Already there are so many public secondary schools with the turning of Distance Education Centers into Community Day secondary schools and with the addition of private secondary schools therefore, the goal of monitoring quality of education cannot be achieved. Hence, the deterioration of education standards in the country as evidenced from the national examination results. Since most of the private secondary schools and some of the Community Day Secondary schools lack science laboratories, do not have adequate teaching and learning materials and most of their teachers are unqualified, there is need to ensure that the quality of education offered is monitored.

#### ***5.5. PROBLEMS WITH THE REGISTRATION AND QUALITY MONITORING SYSTEMS:***

Problems concerning 'Registration' and 'Quality monitoring' expressed by the different role group respondents from MoEST, Education Division, District Education

Office, PRISAM, Proprietors and Head teachers of private secondary schools were brought forward for group discussion during the Focus Group Discussion meeting and these were grouped as follows:

➤ ***PROBLEMS WITH THE REGISTRATION PROCESS***

**1. Communication problem within the system and amongst stakeholders**

The respondent from the division said that they were not provided with any feedback from the Ministry of Education headquarters concerning which private schools have been granted licenses and what type. Out of the four proprietors interviewed, two said that they had never received any feedback on the areas that needed improvement but had received provisional licenses. The other two proprietors said that they got letters informing them about their shortfalls as well as provisional licenses. Thereafter, they worked hard to improve the situation and they wrote back but the Advisors had not returned during the time of interviews. One of the proprietors said that after submitting his application, Advisors came and inspected the school. After two months, he started following up since there was no response from the division. When he went, he was told to go to the Ministry of Education headquarters. When he went to the Ministry, he was told that the report was not available therefore he had to go back to the division. In addition, regulation procedures and any policies regarding establishment of private secondary schools have not been well circulated as result some people are running private schools blindly.

**2. Inadequate human and material resources**

The Advisory personnel in the division is not adequate, hence, they cannot cope with the number of private secondary schools in addition to government schools. If

they were many, they could be dividing themselves into groups when visiting schools for registration so that they would visit as many schools as possible. In addition, the section has only one vehicle, which sometimes is also used by other officers for official duties. Inadequate finances is another limiting factor for the Advisors to visit schools that are very far away since they need allowances for their accommodation and up keep. Therefore, when there is no money, they wait for the next funding.

### **3. Regulations are not strictly reinforced**

One of the regulations for establishing a private secondary school states that no-one should open a private school unless he/she has been granted a license. Schools that do not meet the minimum requirements are supposed to be closed down but there are so many unregistered schools that are in operation and yet they do not meet the minimum requirements.

### **4. Registration process takes a long time**

Registration process takes a long time before a license is granted. In addition, it is very difficult to make follow-ups when one is told to go to the Ministry of Education headquarters and there, he is told to go back to the division. Decentralizing the registration process might help so that more responsibility regarding registration of private secondary schools was left to Divisional and District offices, and the Ministry could just be provided with feedback. A Desk officer at the division office solemnly responsible for registration of private schools could be established in order to have an efficient streamlined, clear but firm registration process.

### **5. Poor quality of some Private Secondary Schools**

Respondents also pointed out that there are some private secondary schools that are not registered just because the owners are aware that their schools cannot pass, hence, they do not bother to process the registration. They keep on running the schools in those poor conditions. Such schools cannot be registered but they continue running, providing education services to the Malawian child despite being regarded as profit making institutions.

➤ ***PROBLEMS OF QUALITY MONITORING***

Problems concerning quality monitoring as expressed by the respondents were grouped into inadequate human and material resources. These were further elaborated as follows:

**1. Inadequate Advisory personnel at the Education division**

The number of Advisors was not adequate to cope up with the large number of secondary schools that currently exist and the number keeps on increasing with new schools opening up almost everyday. If the Advisors were many, they could be dividing themselves into groups so that they conduct inspection visits to as many schools within a month.

**2 Problems of Transport**

The Advisory section does not have adequate vehicles to enable them visit as many schools as they could wish. They have only one vehicle, which is also being used by other officers for official duties and sometimes they fail to go and inspect schools because of transport problems.

### **3. Financial constraints**

Apart from inadequate personnel and vehicles, financial constraints become a limiting factor to enable Advisors to inspect schools as many schools as possible. For example, some private secondary schools are far away from the Advisors duty stations therefore, they need allowances for their meals and money for accommodation. If there are no funds available, they hold on until when the funds will be available.

#### **5.6 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

##### **➤ SUGGESTED STRATEGIES THAT COULD IMPROVE THE REGISTRATION PROCESS**

Respondents suggested different alternative strategies that would help to improve the 'Registration Process.' The individual responses were brought forward for group discussion during the focus group discussion meeting, which was held for a day. The following were the suggested strategies:

1. There could be a Desk Officer specifically responsible for registration of private schools. He/she could be attached to the Advisory Section of the Ministry of Education headquarters.
2. There could be a team of officers who should work together with the Advisors from the division to conduct inspection of private secondary schools for registration. It was suggested that this team of officers could be attached to PRISAM secretariat and be trained by the Advisory section of the Ministry of Education.
3. The registration of private secondary schools could be left in the hands of the District Education Managers who should just provide feedback to the Division and

Ministry of Education regarding the schools that have been registered.

4. The Advisory section should be provided with two vehicles specifically for the section and increase its funding to enable the Advisors to visit private schools for registration on time and make some follow-ups as much as they can.
5. The MoEST and PRISAM should reinforce the regulations in order to ensure that all private secondary schools in operation have the minimum standards that are set. The Advisors should also visit the unregistered schools despite the owners not submitting application forms, and they should inform the Proprietors the right procedures that they need to follow, otherwise their schools have to be closed down unless they meet the minimum requirements.
6. Regulations for establishing private schools should be well publicized to the general public rather than just be exposed to them only when they want to open a private school. These regulations could be publicized through various media such as radio, newspaper, television.

➤ ***SUGGESTED STRATEGIES THAT COULD IMPROVE QUALITY***

***MONITORING SYSTEM***

1. The Ministry of Education could employ additional Education Methods Advisors personnel so that they can cope up with the large number of secondary schools that currently exist in the country. If they are many, they would be splitting themselves into groups and inspect as many schools as possible within a month.
2. Funding of the Advisory section of the Education Division office has to be increased to enable them to conduct inspection visits even to schools that are far away from their duty stations.

3. The Advisory section of the Education Division should have at least two vehicles specifically for the section to enable them to divide themselves into groups and inspect as many schools as they can within a month.
4. The proprietors could provide financial as well as material support to the Advisory section to enable them visit as many schools as possible.
5. There could be a team of Advisors attached to PRISAM but trained by the Ministry of Education to work together with the advisors from the Education Division when conducting inspection visits to schools.
6. There should be feedback provided to stakeholders, that is, proprietors and Ministry of Education (Headquarters) after conducting supervisory visits to private schools.

## **5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS:**

According to the research findings and Focus Group Discussions, the following are recommendations suggested for improving the registration and quality monitoring system:

1. MoEST and PRISAM could come up with an additional Inspection teams for each Education Division to be solely for private secondary school. However, they have to work hand in hand with the Advisory section of the Ministry. They have to be trained by the Advisory section of the Ministry.
2. Private secondary schools head teachers need to be oriented in school-based monitoring by MoEST and PRISAM as stakeholders, and this has to be intensified by ensuring that the head teachers supervise their teachers regularly.

3. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should be the sole provider of licenses, hence, the registration of schools has to be left in their hands.  
  
However, PRISAM Inspection team representatives could be accompanying the Advisors from the divisions when they go to inspect private schools for registration and thereafter, jointly they should brief the proprietor of their findings and recommendations. However, the Advisors from division should be the ones to write reports but copies should also be sent to PRISAM Secretariat office for follow-ups.
4. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology responsible officers should exercise their authority to penalize any proprietor who does not comply with the regulations that are put in place for establishing a private secondary school.  
  
Registered and Unregistered schools have to be publicized frequently.
5. There is need for effective communication and proper coordination between the Ministry of Education headquarters, Division, PRISAM and Proprietors concerning issues regarding private schools.
6. PRISAM should register only schools that have been registered by MoEST as this will encourage proprietors to follow the regulations.
7. Ministry of Education and PRISAM should come up with a register of all private secondary schools and this has to be updated now and then so that there is adequate current information concerning private secondary schools.
8. There is need have a desk officer who could be the contact person specifically for private schools based at the Ministry of Education headquarters.

## **5.8 CONCLUSION:**

The number of private secondary schools is increasing yearly but most of them are not registered, hence, the Ministry of Education does not recognize them. Most of these unregistered schools are bound to be deficient in the basic minimum requirements such as qualified teachers, appropriate infrastructure, availability of teaching and learning materials and Science laboratories. However, sometimes it is because they are waiting from the Ministry of Education for a response to their application after the advisors had visited the schools since the registration process takes a long time. Therefore, it is important to ensure that there is efficiency and effective registration process and at the same time, ensuring high quality education provision in all schools. Therefore, it is important that the delivery of education in private schools is monitored. Unfortunately, this study shows that the delivery of education in private secondary schools is rarely done and quality control mechanisms are inadequate despite the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology objectives and current efforts to encourage and regulate private secondary education. Looking at the growth of private schools, the private sector seems to be and will continue to be a major contributor to the provision of secondary school education. Government needs to tighten up the control of the provision of education in Malawi by ensuring that the private schools instituted are legally acceptable and at the same time see to it that learners are protected.

Finally, the researcher recommends that this study be conducted at a larger scale in order for the results to be generalized. In addition, further research needs to be carried out on many other areas of private schools regarding registration, the kind and

scope of quality monitoring done in private secondary schools, and the growth of private secondary schools versus development in terms of providing quality education.

## REFERENCES:

- Chaponda, T. (2001). *Economic focus*. In weekend Nation Newspaper of 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> April, (p. 13). Blantyre: Nations Publications.
- Chediell, R.W., Sekwao, N., & Kirumba, P.L. (2000). *Private and community schools in Tanzania (Mainland)*. UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Chifonyise, S. (2001). Quality and value in private education in Zimbabwe in *Quality and Value in Private School Education in Malawi: A conference by the British Council and PRISAM, 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2001* (p.25).
- Chimaliro, M. (2001). *Which is which column*: In the Supplement to weekend nation newspaper of 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> September, Blantyre : Nations Publications.
- Holsinger, D. B. & Cowell, R. N. (2000). *Positioning secondary school education in developing countries: Expansion and Curriculum*. UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Kemmerer, F. (1994). *Utilizing education and human resources sector analysis: Fundamentals of Educational Planning 45 (7)*, Paris: UNESCO: International Institute for Education.
- Kiernan, M., Latham, M., Macrae, M. & Read, T. (2000). *The development of private secondary education in Malawi: Towards a Public-Private Partnership*. Lilongwe: CfBT & DANIDA.
- Kitaev, I. (1999). *Private education in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Paris: International Institute For Educational Planning.
- Muwonge, S.N. (2001). Quality and value in private education in Uganda in *Quality and value in private school education in Malawi: A conference by the British Council and PRISAM, 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2001* (p.24).
- Policy and Investment Framework (2001). Ministry of Education, Science & Technology Lilongwe.
- Phiri, D. (2001). *Economic and business forum*: In the Nation Newspaper of 24<sup>th</sup> December (p.13). Blantyre: Nation Publications.
- PRISAM Preliminary guidelines on school management and governance (2001). A conference held from 3rd to 4th October at the British auditorium in Lilongwe.
- Strategic Plan Development for Private Schools Association of Malawi (2001). Lilongwe: Staff Development Institute Consultants.

The British Council ( 2001 ). *Quality and value in private school education in Malawi*. Conference held by The British Council and Private Schools Association of Malawi. Lilongwe: The British Council.

Tooley, J. (1999). *The Global Education Industry: Lessons from private education in Developing countries*.

UNESCO ( 1997 ). *Financing and financial management of education*. Pan-African Seminar, Dakar: International Institute for Educational Planning.

Walford, G. (1989). *Private schools in ten countries: Policy and practice*. New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, Inc.

## **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **1. MINISTRY OF EDUCATION HEADQUARTERS:**

Private secondary schools have exploded and this has increased access to secondary education. Unfortunately, there is not much information concerning these secondary schools. Hence, I am interested to know more from you on the registration and quality monitoring system of private secondary schools. There are several areas that I would like to learn more about and I appreciate your honest opinion on these topics.

- Do you have any idea of the total number of private secondary schools that are currently in operation?
- Are all private secondary schools that are in operation registered? If not, how many are registered/unregistered?
- What regulations are in place for a school to be registered?
- How is the registration process done?
- Are there any problems with the registration of private secondary schools?
- What type of licenses do you issue?
- Are there any penalties for unregistered schools? If no, why?
- How is quality of education offered in private secondary schools monitored?
- What do you think would be the BEST alternatives to improve registration and quality monitoring systems of private secondary schools?
- Do you have any other important issues to share on this area?

### **2. EDUCATION DIVISION OFFICE (EMAS SECTION)**

According to the Policy and Investment Framework (PIF), the Education Methods Advisory Services is responsible for monitoring quality of education in all schools and ensure that good standards are maintained. Fortunately, you are one of the Advisors charged with this responsibility. Therefore, I would like you to tell me more on quality monitoring and registration of private secondary schools.

- Do you have any idea of the total number of private secondary schools that currently exist in your education division?
- Are all the private secondary schools in operation registered? If not, how many are registered/unregistered?
- How do you carry out registration of private secondary schools?
- Are private secondary schools inspected, in terms of monitoring quality of education offered?
- What type of inspection and how often do you conduct inspection visits?

- What problems do you face in the Advisory section concerning quality monitoring and registration of private secondary schools?
- What do you think could be the BEST alternatives to improve quality monitoring and registration systems in private secondary schools?
- Do you have any other important issues to share on this area?

### **3. DISTRICT EDUCATION MANAGERS:**

I am carrying out a study on the growth of private secondary schools in Malawi and its impact on the registration and quality monitoring systems. Fortunately, I am interested in some of the schools in your district. Therefore, I would like to learn more from you on the following areas:

- Do you have any idea of the total number of private secondary schools that currently exist in your district?
- To what extent are you involved in the registration of these private secondary schools?
- How is the process done?
- In your opinion, does the registration process work well?
- What do you think could be the BEST alternatives to improve the registration system?
- Do you have any other important issues to share concerning private secondary schools?

### **3. PRISAM AND PROPRIETORS/HEADTEACHERS:**

As one of the PRISAM members/Proprietor of this private secondary school, I would like you to tell me more on how you view the extent to which you think the PRISAM/Proprietors work with government in particular, the MOEST (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology) on issues relating to education services. I am interested to learn more from you on the following areas:

- Is your secondary school registered?
- Are there any problems with the registration of private secondary schools?
- Has your school ever been inspected in terms of monitoring quality of education offered?
- Is there any quality monitoring system in private secondary schools? If not, what mechanism have you put in place for your school to ensure that quality of education offered is monitored?
- Does the quality monitoring system work well? If yes, why? If no, why not?
- What do you think would be the BEST alternatives to improve the systems?

RESEARCH TITLE: *The Growth of Private Secondary Schools in Malawi:  
Its implications on the Registration and Quality  
Monitoring systems.*

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MINISTRY OF EDUCATION HEADQUARTERS:**

**SECTION A: NUMBER OF REGISTERED/UNREGISTERED PVT. SCHOOLS  
IN THE COUNTRY**

1. Do you have any idea of the total number of private secondary schools that are currently in operation?

Yes	
No	

2. Are all private secondary schools that are in operation registered?

Yes	
No	

3. How many are registered/unregistered?

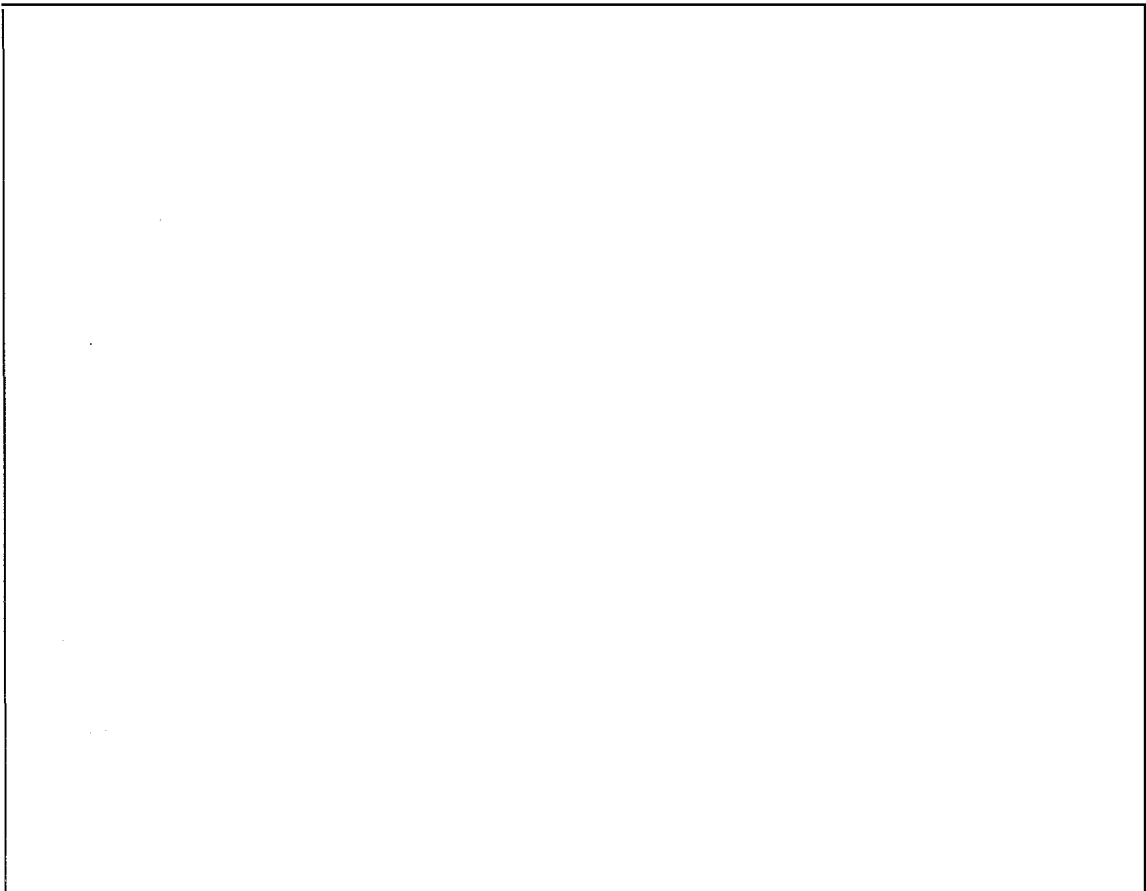
No. of Registered Pvt. Schools	
No. of Unregistered Pvt. Schools	
<b>Total</b>	

4. What do you think could be the reasons for having so many unregistered private secondary schools?



SECTION B: REGULATIONS FOR ESTABLISHING A PVT. SEC. SCHOOL

5. What regulations are in place for a school to be registered?



6. Are all these regulations reinforced? That is, I would like to know if indeed you register only those schools that meet all these minimum requirements.

Yes	
No	

7. If No, why are they not reinforced?

8. Therefore, what specifically do you emphasize out of these regulations that have been stipulated here?

**SECTION C: THE REGISTRATION PROCESS**

9. How is the registration process done?

--

10. What type of licenses do you issue?

Type of licenses issued

11. What is the duration of the provisional licenses issued?

--

3. Are there any penalties for either the unregistered schools or those that do not meet the minimum requirements set?

Yes	
No	

13. If 'Yes,' what are these penalties?

--

14. Are these penalties really reinforced?

Yes	
No	

15. If Not, why are they not reinforced?

--

--

*SECTION D: PROBLEMS WITH THE REGISTRATION PROCESS*

16. Are there any problems with the registration of private secondary schools?

Yes	
No	

17. If yes, what are these problems?

PROBLEMS WITH THE REGISTRATION SYSTEM

18. Has a committee responsible for private schools, have you ever attempted to solve some of these problems that you have just mentioned?

Yes	
No	

19. If yes, what did you do?

--

*SECTION E: QUALITY MONITORING DONE IN PVT. SEC. SCHOOLS*

20. As a Ministry, do you monitor the quality of education offered in private secondary schools?

Yes	
No	

21. If yes, how often do you visit the schools?

--

22. If No, why is the quality of education offered in private secondary schools not monitored?

--

23. If Yes, how is this quality monitoring in private secondary schools done?

*SECTION F: ALTERNATIVES TO IMPROVE THE SYSTEMS*

23. What do you think would be the **BEST** alternatives to improve registration and quality monitoring systems of private secondary schools?

**SECTION G: OTHER ISSUES PERTAINING TO REGISTRATION AND  
QUALITY MONITORING SYSTEMS**

24. Do you have any other important issues to share pertaining to registration and quality monitoring systems?

--

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SENIOR EDUCATION METHODS ADVISOR  
(CENTRAL-WEST EDUCATION DIVISION OFFICE)**

**SECTION A: NUMBER OF REGISTERED/UNREGISTERED PRIVATE  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CENTRAL-WEST EDUCATION**

**DIVISION**

1. Do you have any idea of the total number of private secondary schools that currently exist in your education division?

Yes	
No	

2. Are all the private secondary schools that are currently in operation registered?

Yes	
No	

3. If No, how many are registered?

No. of registered private sec. schools	
--	--

4. What do you think could be the reasons why there are so many private secondary schools that are not registered?

--

*SECTION B: THE REGISTRATION PROCESS*

5. To what extent are you as EMAS section involved in the registration of private secondary schools?

--

5. Are you provided with any feedback on the schools that have been granted licenses and what type?

Yes	
No	

6. Do you conduct follow-up visits to the schools that have been either issued or not issued with licenses?

Yes	
No	

7. If 'Yes', how often? I would like to know how many times a month/year you as a section do follow-up visits to private secondary schools.

--

8. If "No", how do you check whether the licenses issued have been expired or not?

--

9. What do you do with the schools that have either their licenses expired or have not improved as advised?

--

**SECTION C: QUALITY MONITORING IN PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

10. Apart from inspecting private secondary schools for registration, do you as Education Methods Advisory Section, monitor the quality of education offered in these schools?

Yes	
No	

11. If Yes, how often?

--

4. If "No", why don't you monitor the quality of education offered in these private secondary schools?

--

**SECTION D: PROBLEMS WITH REGISTRATION AND QUALITY**

**MONITORING SYSTEMS**

5. What problems do you face in the Advisory section concerning quality monitoring and registration of private secondary schools?

--

6. Have you ever tried as a section to solve some of these problems?

Yes	
No	

7. If 'Yes,' what did you do?

--

17. What do you think could be the BEST alternatives to improve quality monitoring and registration systems in private secondary schools?

--

18. Do you have any other important issues to share pertaining to Registration and Quality monitoring in private secondary schools?

--

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DISTRICT EDUCATION MANAGERS  
(LILONGWE URBAN, LILONGWE RURAL-EAST AND LILONGWE RURAL-WEST):**

**SECTION A: NUMBER OF PRIVATE SEC. SCHOOLS IN THE DISTRICT**

1. Do you have any idea of the total number of private secondary schools that currently exist in your district?

Yes	
No	

2. If 'Yes,' how many are registered?

--

3. What do you think could be the reasons why there are so many unregistered private secondary schools?

--

*SECTION B: THE REGISTRATION PROCESS*

4. To what extent are you involved in the registration of these private secondary schools that are in your Education District?

--

5. Does the registration process work well?

Yes	
No	

6. If 'No', why do you think so?

--

7. Therefore, in your opinion, how would you wish the registration process be done?

--

*SECTION C: QUALITY MONITORING OF PRIVATE SEC. SCHOOLS*

8. As an Education District Manager for this district, do you think quality of education offered in your private secondary schools is monitored?

Yes	
No	

9. If 'Yes,' do you think quality monitoring system work well?

Yes	
No	

10. If 'No,' how would you wish it to be done?

--

*SECTION D: BEST ALTERNATIVES TO IMPROVE THE REGISTRATION*

*AND QUALITY MONITORING SYSTEMS*

11. What do you think could be the BEST alternatives to improve the registration and quality monitoring systems?

--

--

*SECTION E: OTHER ISSUES PERTAINING TO REGISTRATION AND*

**QUALITY MONITORING SYSTEMS**

12. Do you have any other important issues to share pertaining to registration and quality monitoring of private secondary schools?

Yes	
No	

13. If 'Yes', what are these issues?

--

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PRISAM AND PROPRIETORS/HEAD TEACHERS:**

**SECTION A: DATE OF OPENING AND REGISTRATION OF THE SCHOOL**

1. When was this private secondary school opened?

Name of school	
Date/Year opened	

2. Is this secondary school registered?

Yes	
No	

3. If 'Yes,' when was it registered?

--	--

4. Is your school registered with Private Schools Association of Malawi/Malawi National Examinations Board?

Yes	
No	

5. If 'No', why Not?

--

6. Would you mind to show me the license/certificate if there is any and if at it is available?

TYPE OF LICENSE	AVAILABLE	NOT AVAILABLE

**SECTION B: PROBLEMS WITH THE REGISTRATION OF THE SCHOOL**

7. Did you experience any problems when processing the registration of this school?

Yes	
No	

8. If 'Yes,' what were the problems?

--

--

9. In your opinion, why do you think there are many private secondary schools that are not registered?

--

**SECTION C: MONITORING QUALITY OF EDUCATION OFFERED**

10. Has this school ever been inspected in terms of monitoring the quality of education that it offers? (What I want to find out is whether Advisors from either the Education division or Ministry have visited this school to supervise how teaching and learning is going on in the classrooms).

Yes	
No	

11. If 'Yes,' when was it visited and where did the officers come from? Were they from the division or MOEST headquarters?

Date/Year visited	
Office	

12. If 'No,' what quality monitoring mechanism has been put in place for this school?

--

13. Do you have any idea whether PRISAM Secretariat has put in place any quality monitoring mechanism specifically for private secondary schools?

Yes	
No	

14 .If 'Yes,' what have they done?

--

15. Generally, do you think quality monitoring system work well?

Yes	
No	

16. If 'No,' why do you think so?

--

SECTION D: ALTERNATIVES TO IMPROVE REGISTRATION AND  
QUALITY MONITORING SYSTEMS

17. What do you think would be the BEST alternatives to improve the registration and quality monitoring systems?

--

--

**SECTION E: ANY OTHER ISSUE (S) PERTAINING TO REGISTRATION AND  
QUALITY MONITORING SYSTEMS IN PRIVATE SECONDARY  
SCHOOLS**

18. Do you have any other issues you would like to share with me pertaining to Registration and Quality monitoring system in private secondary schools?

Yes	
No	

19. If 'Yes,' what are these issues?

--