

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The study is on the socio-economic bearing of donor aid suspension in Malawi between 2007 and 2011. It is conducted using a case study of Chiradzulu district. This chapter explains the background to the problem that prompted the study and explains its relevance and the questions it seek to answer. It briefly describes the research strategy and methodology, the key words used were defined and the organisation of the research report is presented.

1.2 Background to the study

The Republic of Malawi, located in South-east Africa is a landlocked sub-Saharan nation which heavily relies upon rain-fed agriculture for the sustenance of its people (Jere, 2007). It is one of the least developed countries in the world. Its economy is dependent on agriculture, tobacco being the number one export commodity amidst a global anti-smoking campaign and pressure to limit tobacco production. According to Madziakapita (2008), the revenue gained from exports is insufficient to meet the national economic demands and this leaves a budget deficit which is covered by donors of not less than fifty percent of the national budget.

Food security is a big concern in Sub-Saharan Africa. According to Monseau & Mittal (2005), Malawi like most countries in the region faces acute food shortages due to drought in some regions and the practising of poor farming methods. Hunger further affects education of school going children as they fail to attend classes and perform to the best of their ability because of malnutrition. The World Food Programme implemented the School Feeding Programme which is now known as the School Meals Programme to increase enrolment and attendance and reduce drop-out rate (WFP, 2009) hence enabling children attaining access to primary school education which is in line with the millennium development goals.

The WFP (2010b) indicates that inadequate funding led to suspension of pro-poor programmes like the School Meals Programme. While contributions from the Malawi government, USA, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Brazil and UN common funds were appreciated, they were inadequate. This led to 10 out of 13 districts in the country being affected by the suspension of the meals programme. This left 508 000 pupils without meals. This signifies the contribution donor funding makes and how critical it is for Malawian and

African development. Donor funding is pivotal for the effectiveness and efficiency of UN agencies such as the WFP.

Chiradzulu District is one of the districts in Malawi where the school meals programme was suspended. It is one of the most populated and poor districts in the southern region of the country. The coverage of the WFP school meals programme is the highest in the southern region of Malawi's three regions.

1.3 Statement of the Problem and Rationale for the Study

Donor Aid suspension is a major problem when attempting to address poverty and promote development in Malawi. According to the World Bank (2012), Malawi's economy from 2005 enjoyed an uninterrupted solid growth for five years in a row with a seven percent growth rate which was backed by sound economic policies and a supportive donor environment but in 2011 aid was suspended which created socio-economic problems such as shortage of foreign exchange, failure to import fuel due to the foreign exchange shortage, increased taxation and later on devaluation of the Malawian currency, Kwacha. According to the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee in WFP (2012) these problems have caused poor harvests and put 1.6 million people at risk of hunger in rural areas.

The research will attempt to establish how Aid suspension between 2007 and 2011 influenced the school meals programme and the socio-economic status of beneficiaries of the programme in the Chiradzulu District in Malawi. The study is significant in revelation of the relationship between Aid suspension and the performance of the school meals programme. In Malawi, food insecurity greatly impacts education because hunger increases the dropout, absenteeism and repetition rates (Burbano & Gelli, 2009).

Multilateral (the World Bank and International Monetary fund) and Bilateral (USA and United Kingdom) Aid donors who decided to suspend Aid to Malawi are the main donors of the WFP and the School Meals Programme in particular. It is therefore very important to have donor aid for the sustainability of the programme and cuts by donors are likely to affect the programme heavily.

This research is likely to contribute to the knowledge base on the role of Aid in addressing poverty. The area of Aid suspension and its consequences on a country, have to be understood in a broader context. The research is also meaningful to public policy with the knowledge that Aid flow is not stable and governments need to have an alternative plan

should Aid be suspended. It will also inform development partner policy on Aid provision in relation to which areas Aid can be suspended considering how suspension affects the beneficiaries of these programmes who are mainly the poor and not those in government high offices.

1.4 Research Questions

The following two research questions were relevant to the study:

How did suspension of Aid provision from 2007 to 2011 affect the WFP school meals programme in the Chiradzulu district in Malawi?

In which ways did changes in Aid suspension from 2007 to 2011 affect the socio-economic status of beneficiaries of the WFP school meals programme in the Chiradzulu district in Malawi?

1.5 A Brief Overview of the Research Strategy and Methodology

A qualitative research approach was used to explore and understand the socio-economic bearing of donor aid suspension in Malawi. A case study design was applied using the Malavi and Saint Theresa Primary schools in Chiradzulu district where the WFP's school meals programme is implemented. Participants in the study were three teachers at two schools where the programme is offered and four parents from the two schools who were involved in the administration of the programme. Semi-structure interview schedules that were pre-tested were used during the individual interviews conducted with the parents and teachers.

1.6 Definitions of Concepts

The World Food Programme: The world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger world-wide (WFP, 2013).

The School Meals Programme: The programme that provides food to school children where children are fed in school and or families are given food if their children attend school (De Lara, Mirabile, Kennedy, Fernandes, Luraghi, Gelli, Nelson, & Bundy, 2013).

Aid: Systematic cash transfers that flow from rich countries in the form of concessional loans or grants to poor countries (Moyo, 2009).

Bilateral Aid: Public funds that is offered in the form of loans or grants directly from one government to another (Todaro & Smith, 2009).

Multilateral Aid: The indirect transfer of international or public funds between governments through large organisations or institutions such as the United Nations, World Bank or International Monetary Fund (Todaro & Smith, 2009).

Food Aid: Aid that is supplied to needy countries by developing as well as developed countries in form of food commodities on grants or concessional loans terms and includes donations of food commodities by government and non-governmental organizations and the WFP (European Commission as cited in Madziakapita, 2008).

Socio-economic status: An individual's or group's social standing or class that is measured as a combination of education, income and occupation (American Psychological Association, 2013).

Poverty: It refers to the lack of sufficient income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments; and social discrimination and exclusion (United Nations, 1995).

1.7 Organisation of the Research Report

The first chapter is an introduction of the study. Chapter Two provides the literature review and links it with the theoretical framework applicable in this study. In Chapter Three the research strategy and methodology are explained. Chapter Four presents and discusses the study findings. The final chapter summarises the main findings, provides a conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an account of what has been published relating to the socio-economic bearing of donor aid suspension in Malawi between 2007 and 2011. It explains food insecurity in Malawi, the history of aid, the types of aid and the key players in aid. It illustrates the relationship between aid and development and then food aid and food insecurity. It goes on to specifically look at the WFP food aid and the school meals programme. It discusses the suspension of the programme and its significance thereof. It then shows the relationship between the programme and the Millennium Development Goals. Lastly, Rostow's modernisation theory is linked to the research to explain the relationship held between aid and development with reference to the Malawian context.

2.2 Food insecurity in Malawi

Food insecurity is a worldwide concern. The Regional Bureau for Southern Africa (2011) reported that Malawi is a food insecure nation that faces food related challenges. The challenges faced by the nation are chronic food insecurity of poor and vulnerable households, the high prevalence of chronic malnutrition and widespread nutrient deficiency, low income for smallholder farmers due to poor agricultural market policies and structures; and the recurrence of natural disasters such as drought and floods.

According to the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa (2011) the food insecurity in Malawi is mainly caused by the people owning small landholdings especially in the densely populated southern region. It is further reported that more than 40 percent of the rural household cultivate on half a hectare of land mainly devoted to maize production which is the staple food for the country. This leads to overuse of the marginal productive agricultural land causing soil erosion and nutrient depletion.

The Regional Bureau for Southern Africa (2011) also attributed Malawi's declined levels of production to late rains and a prolonged dry spell from December 2009 to February 2010. Communities in the southern districts were most affected. This increased the population of food insecure individuals from 2009 to 2011.

It is established by the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa (2011) that the food insecurity in Malawi affected education. Food insecurity was characterised by high rates of school dropouts, repetition and absenteeism of primary schoolchildren from food insecure households. This meant education levels declined in the country.

2.3 History of Aid

According to Moyo (2009) the existence of aid can be traced from colonial times under the colonial development act of 1929 when the British government administered grants for infrastructure projects in poorer countries. The history of aid as systematic cash transfers that flow from rich countries in form of concessional loans or grants dates back to the end of the Second World War. After the war delegates met at the Bretton Woods conference and decided to establish a framework for a global system of financial and monetary management (Moyo, 2009). The main agenda of the Bretton Woods conference was to find a solution in avoiding the repeat of the great depression by pouring in aid.

The history of Aid in Africa as a systematic fueling of resources by both multilateral and bilateral donors can better be described from the mid-1950s when Africa was going through profound changes. According to Moyo (2009) the loosening of colonial chains by western powers paved way to independence for countries like Ghana in 1957, Kenya 1963, Malawi and Zambia 1964. This political independence only led to financial dependency with western powers using aid to safeguard their interests. The USA used aid in the cold war to promote capitalism against communism while France and Britain to keep hold of strategic geopolitical areas.

Moyo (2009) further reports that by 1965 around half of sub-Saharan Africa became independent. Malawi, Zambia and Kenya on average had received US\$315 million each in aid by the end of the decade. This implies that the newly liberated states had chunks of dollars to return which they were borrowing in form of aid.

Malawi is an impoverished, landlocked, tropical southern African state and one of the poorest in the world (Sachs, 2012). He further explains, at the dawn of the new millennium the country was in dire need of assistance ravaged by AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis (TB) and extreme hunger but donor nations did little to help. Introduction of the global fund to fight AIDS, TB, and malaria was a huge step in addressing poverty considering the donor tendency

of fighting hard to keep the running programs as small as possible when poor people were dying.

The interconnectedness of aid and development lays in the belief that poverty and inequality can be quickly eliminated through growth and modernization. The economic gains of the leading industrial capitalist countries would trickle-down to developing countries through injection of aid and be used for development programmes and projects. This would revamp the economies until a stage when they are self-reliant then aid provision would come to an end.

2.4 Aid and Development

When we discuss aid and development the questions raised impromptu are why have this official assistance? How much Aid? And does Aid really work? The main idea behind donor aid provision is to help revamp the economy of underdeveloped nations just as it did in Europe after the Second World War through the Marshall Plan. The amount of aid required is dependent on the capacity of the state under question and whether or not it is a successful story is debatable but it has been remedial without doubt.

Aid in the development discourse is one of the tools used to address poverty. It has evolved from large infrastructure investment to projects in agriculture and rural development, social services (including housing, education and health), adult literacy and food for the malnourished (Moyo, 2009). Aid addresses absolute poverty, high unemployment, income inequality and worsening balance of trade positions.

Donor Aid is significant to the development of Malawi because it accounts for an average 40% of the national budget (Ttan, 2011). This reflects its significance to the socio-economy as the budgetary priority lies in food (nutrition), health, education and employment which all are also in line with the millennium development goals. Orjiako (2001) however claims that despite assistance in form of aid levels health and education in sub-Saharan Africa continue to deteriorate.

The WFP in Malawi benefits more than 29,500 children through supplementary feeding programme at 338 government health centres. In 2011 the school meals programme provided meals to an average 700,000 students half of which were girls (WFP, 2011). The programme increases attendance and protects the girl-child from early pregnancy because it keeps them

in school refraining from early marriages and helps them think critically when making life decisions.

2.5 Different Types of Aid

Authors differ in defining types of aid but Todaro and Smith (2009) categorize aid as bilateral, multilateral and private. Bilateral aid is that offered by one country to another for example Britain to Malawi. Multilateral aid comprises contributions made to international institutions like the United Nations' World Food Programme for use in developing countries. Private aid is that made by wealthy individuals such as Microsoft owner Bill Gates through the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation.

The different kinds of aid are often used for humanitarian or emergency purposes when responding to disasters. Sometimes aid is used merely for charity. The purpose of aid which is emphasized in this study is that which Moyo (2009) calls systematic aid. Systematic aid is concessional loans and grants bilateral and multilateral. It is more developmental and not just remedial.

2.6 Different Role Players in Aid

The key players in aid are the major donors and recipient governments. In Malawi the major donors are the British Government through DFID, the American government through USAID, the German government through GTZ and the Chinese government bilaterally. Britain Malawi's former colonial master is the largest donor.

The United Nations spearheads multilateral aid in Malawi. Its team comprises of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Food Programme, Food Agriculture Organization, United Nations Development Programme, World Health Organization, Uniting the World against Aids, United Nation Refugee Agency, United Nations Population Fund and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

The role of the Chinese in aid provision to Africa according to Giralt (2007) is significant in the social development of Africa. Moyo (2009) praises the impact of the Chinese on Africa especially in being honest enough to point out their agenda as solely economic, having interests in the natural resources. Chinese aid as Giralt (2007) describes was previously not recognized as ODA aid was western. In Malawi the Chinese apart from embarking on construction and rehabilitation of roads have also built a new parliament building,

international conference centre with a presidential lounge and five-star hotel. Giralt (2007) points out China's aid being most favoured amongst states like Malawi because it has less political or governance conditions as compared to their western counterparts.

2.7 Politics of Aid

Aid is political in nature because its flow depends on the relationship between government and donors, and amongst donors themselves. Donors tend to have their own guidelines or conditions on how their aid should be used which at times differs from national policies government implements that inform projects and programmes. Donors have ideologies which differ and they compel a recipient government to choose because they cannot co-exist like China and Taiwan in Malawi.

Wroe (2012) will be used to relate the research to the political nature of aid. He observes the changing leadership qualities or poor governance by African leaders leading to strained relations between donors and recipient aid government. Tran (2011) reported that the fallout in relationship between Malawi and Britain was largely due to the United Kingdom citing Malawi's leadership as a modern autocracy by the president. Todaro and Smith (2009) concur with this notion as they concede that aid given to countries like Malawi is characterized by corruption and mismanagement.

The question asked by many is why African states like Malawi plea for aid. Orjiako (2001) says it boosts incomes and domestic consumption but not grow production capital. The neo-classical view of policy makers and advisers within the donor and the recipient community concur that foreign savings help economic development under appropriate circumstances and conditions although they also believe that an economy operating under appropriate circumstances and conditions may not require foreign aid to succeed. The question is however are the said intentions really the reason behind the provision of aid? Orjiako (2001) thinks otherwise because it does not address the impending issues hampering development in Africa such as terms of trade and world commodity prices that drive prices further down.

It is also argued that the main hidden agenda behind aid is or was to contain communism, Africa merely a ground for the East-West conflict. According to Orjiako (2001), it is why the USA has been decreasing its aggregate aid like from 1980s to 1995 it fell from 0.24 % of GNP to 0.10%. Todaro and Smith (2009) supports the argument by stating that despite an increase in the amount of aid provided by the US government, the percent of GNP in aid

provision has decreased over the period. Graham and O'Hanlon (1997) argues that strategically important countries like Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo) and Ethiopia indicate a sharp contrast in aid flows to equally but less strategically important countries like Guinea and Gabon or Malawi in our case. They use it for buying arms or pocketed by dictators without much opposition.

The arguments of Moyo (2009) will be used to explain why some feel aid is a failure and must be phased out. She connotes aid being nothing short of glamorous claiming it is politically and economically motivated with donors having hidden agenda and does not address the real issues affecting Africa such as terms of trade, world commodity markets that drive prices high, tendencies of autocratic leadership, unemployment and how multinational corporations impede local entrepreneurs from engaging in business. Moyo (2009) however claims that it has been a success in some countries such as Botswana and South Africa which Orjiako (2001) greatly disagrees with by citing that Botswana and Mauritius are rather examples of growth without high aid dependency. Further Moyo (2009) says bilateral aid is the mostly mismanaged thus why countries like Zimbabwe and Zaire now Democratic republic of Congo continued to get aid from the US and UK because of the resources they continued to gain from them. Mavrotas (2010) is in concurrent with Moyo's views as he claims "aid does not work".

2.8 Food Aid

Food Aid is directed towards food insecure countries so that they become food sufficient. It is one of the major ways of fighting hunger and food insecurity (Mousseau & Mittal, 2005). Food Aid is described by Barret and Maxwell (2004) as international concessional flows in the form of food or cash to purchase food in support of food assistance programmes. Major contributors of Food Aid to food insecure countries are the European Union (EU) and the United States of America representing 80% of total international Food Aid (Mousseau & Mittal, 2005). It is important to recognise that while countries in the EU like Britain form part and parcel of the EU's Food Aid they also contribute to Food Aid independently as bilateral donors. That implies that they independently, on a country to country basis contribute food Aid to Malawi.

According to Mousseau and Mittal (2005) three kinds of Food Aid must be distinguished and will be discussed. These are Programme Food Aid, Relief or Emergency Food Aid and Project Food Aid.

2.8.1 Programme Food Aid

Mousseau and Mittal (2005) reports that Programme Food Aid has no relation to food insecurity or malnutrition, but instead, represents a specific in-kind form of economic assistance. It is mostly provided on a government to government basis and sold in recipient government markets to generate cash. It is not given for free to the recipient government but usually sold through concessional financing and export credit guarantees. Recipient countries therefore purchase Food Aid at a lower rate than market interest rate.

2.8.2 Relief or Emergency Food Aid

This is the kind of Food Aid that is distributed freely to countries facing situations of food insecurity, generally by the World Food Programme (WFP), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and rarely the government institutions (Mousseau & Mittal, 2005). Relief or Emergency Aid is generally rendered in times of war, natural disaster and population displacement to the affected country. Some countries continue to receive Food Aid after war, natural disasters and population displacement therefore becoming permanent recipients of emergency aid because of facing chronic food insecurity.

2.8.3 Project Food Aid

The third kind of Food Aid, Project Food Aid, is that donated to support specific activities and projects and it is often related to promoting agricultural or economic development, food and nutrition security (Mousseau & Mittal, 2005). The activities and projects Project Food Aid supports most notably are food for work and school feeding programmes. The Project Food Aid is similar to the Emergency or Relief Aid in the way that it is distributed by the World Food Programme, NGOs and occasionally by government institutions. The two remain different though, Project Food Aid is more developmental while Emergency or Relief Food Aid is remedial, the former being promotional and the latter curative.

2.9 Food Aid in Malawi

According to Madziakapita (2008), Malawi begun to face food insecurity issues from 1891 to 1964. This is around the same time it began receiving Official Development Assistance or Aid that is traced form 1960 before it attained independence. Since, the government has tried several initiatives such as poverty reduction strategies, agriculture development strategies, strategic grain reserves, market intervention through trade liberalization and setting of a price

band, stimulation of agriculture production, promotion of small businesses, land reform, introduction of productive safety nets and requests for donor assistance to address food related problems (Madziakapita, 2008). Malawi government's main solution has been importing food and requesting food aid from other countries.

The influence of donors on development in Malawi is immense because they contribute about half of the national budget. Donors fund the government and non-government organisations to address poverty in Malawi. They also support government through their country offices or agencies. One of the leading international organisations in Malawi is the United Nations which implements its programmes through its country agencies. The agencies need adequate donor support to operate because if they are not being well funded, their programmes benefit fewer beneficiaries than the target or may not be implemented at all. One of those UN agencies operating in Malawi is the World Food Programme (WFP).

2. 10 The World Food Programme in Malawi

The WFP, an agency of the UN, and a major aid agent in Malawi, began its operations in 1965 in order to reduce food insecurity and vulnerabilities to external shocks and natural disasters (UN Malawi, 2012). It is stated that the main role of the WFP is to contribute to disaster mitigation through the improvement of household food security in highly vulnerable areas of the country (UN Malawi, 2012). The southern part of the country experiences most food insecurity. The disaster mitigation programmes work in tandem with a safety net initiative that address chronic and structural poverty by targeting places with acute food deficiencies towards attaining poverty alleviation.

The UN Malawi (2012) reported that the WFP in Malawi were running four programmes. The first was Protracted Relief and Recovery operation which was assistance to food insecure people suffering from the effects of natural disasters and HIV and AIDS. The second, protracted relief and recovery operation was assistance to refugees. The third, special operation involved roads and bridges rehabilitation in support of WFP operations in Malawi. The fourth was the Development Programme that involved school meal programmes.

Protracted relief and recovery operation programme that provides assistance to food insecure people suffering from the effects of natural disasters and HIV and AIDS in Malawi involved six activities (UN Malawi, 2012). The first of the six activities are targeted food distribution that is rendered to food insecure households due to floods, drought and other natural factors

whose beneficiaries are selected through the Malawi vulnerability assessment. Secondly, Food for Asset (FFA) activities that enabled communities to create sustainable agricultural assets such as small-scale irrigation infrastructure. Thirdly, support to people infected and affected by HIV and AIDS by providing food assistance to households taking care of chronically ill people, keeping orphans and vulnerable children, and mothers enrolled to Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission. Fourthly, therapeutic feeding was provided to severely malnourished children and their caretakers. Fifthly, supplementary feeding provided assistance to pregnant and lactating mothers, and moderately malnourished under-five children through increased consumption of nutritious food and improved health and nutrition practices. Sixthly, cash and food for livelihood pilot project was implemented to explore the appropriateness of food and cash in different contexts in addressing food insecurity.

Protracted relief and recovery operation was assistance to refugees that provided relief and recovery assistance to refugees residing in Dzaleka refugee camp since June 2002 (UN Malawi, 2012). Further assistance was given to refugees that had just arrived in the northern part of the country from Karonga transit shelter.

According to the UN Malawi (2012) the special operations programme aimed at rehabilitating roads and bridges in Malawi. The road infrastructure in Malawi is among the poorest in Africa and further deteriorates as a result of flooding, which breaks down the road surface and washes away bridges. This worsens the condition of those stricken by hunger because food supplies by the WFP to them are delayed. Sometimes the deliveries of the WFP are delayed by days or weeks or even months creating life threatening conditions (UN Malawi, 2012).

The Development programme that involved implementation of School Feeding Programme also known as the School Meals Programme is a pro-poor programme implemented in countries where sufficient food cannot be provided at home. It makes food accessible to starving school children, ensuring that children do not attend school hungry. It also contributes greatly to the longer goal of reducing poverty. According to WFP (2012) 23 million school age children attend class hungry and studies have proven that without adequate food and nutrition learning is difficult.

2.11 The School Meals Programme in Malawi

The free primary education initiative as a basic right in Malawi was introduced in 1994 to increase enrolment in schools but unfortunately it inadvertently increased gender gaps in favour of boys (Malawi Demographic and Health Survey, 2005). In 1999 the school feeding programme was piloted in Dedza district in response to the request of Malawi government by the WFP to correct the disparity caused by the free primary education initiative and reduce hunger amongst vulnerable children.

The pilot phase was an instant success and the programme was expanded over the years to help reduce food insecurity amongst the target groups. The WFP Malawi (2010) reports the pilot project had targeted 23,000 learners in 24 schools in Salima district and was extended to neighbouring Ntcheu district with the number of learners targeted to benefit increased to 31,500 in 37 schools. According to the WFP Malawi (2010), the programme was further expanded, and by November 2006 it had gone from targeting 489 schools to 679 in 13 districts. The additional 11 districts were, Chiradzulu, Salima, Chikhwawa, Kasungu, Mangochi, Mulanje, Nsanje, Phalombe, Lilongwe, Thyolo and Zomba. The programme is regarded as an investment in human capital through education and training.

According to the WFP (2010a), the programme had shortfalls in 2008 of 5063 metric tonnes and US\$ 2 932 891. Only 21% of the intended 635 000 learners had benefitted from the programme.

According to the WFP Malawi (2012), pupils in schools where the programme is present receive mid-morning porridge of corn soya blend (Likuni Phala) each school day. During the lean season, from January to April, when food shortage is widespread, the programme includes take-home ration for girls and orphaned boys in grade five to eight each month, as an incentive to remain in school. Take-home rations are a supplementary to school meals in the WFP school meals programme. The take-home ration comprises a 12.5 kilogramme bag of maize that is given each month to girls and orphaned boys that have attended school for at least 18 days each month. The focus of the programme is to minimize dropout rates, improve school enrolment and student concentration (WFP Malawi, 2012).

According to the WFP Malawi (2012), they had experienced problems to provide take-home rations due to lack of funds. Continuing take-home rations would be a problem unless the

WFP secured sufficient funding according to Abdoulaye Diop, WFP Malawi's country director in WFP Malawi (2012).

As part of community empowerment and promoting ownership, the communities organise themselves and prepare porridge using traditional methods mostly firewood and charcoal (WFP Malawi, 2012). The WFP collaborated with German Technical Corporation (GTZ) to help communities to use fuel efficient stoves which use up to 90% less fuel compared to the traditional methods.

2.12 Suspension of Aid in Malawi

According to Nyatoro (2008), one of the major challenges faced by Africa today is aid suspension. Aid dependent States are affected through temporary stoppage of deliveries, withholding new aid commitments, reducing the amount of aid committed or delivered in comparisons to previous amounts and purposive delay by the donor community in making a decision, one way or another, about future aid of a country. According to Nyatoro (2008) aid suspension is enforced based on four grounds, when a recipient government is in breach of international law as determined by the security council, fails to comply with formal contract such as the precondition of adopting SAPs then, breaches international law such as the United Nations charter or human rights convention as was the case with Malawi whereby the donor community accused the government of not respecting the rights of minority groups and legalize homosexuality, and bilateral dispute or donor self-interest.

According to Thomas et al (2011), Malawi was in the year 2000 named as one of the 16 countries dependent on aid. Malawi is landlocked and according to Thomas et al (2011) it is common for landlocked countries with few natural resources, poor education, health and infrastructure to be aid dependent. The aid that these countries benefit from is used for promotion of economic, social, political and environmental development in a sustainable manner (Thomas et al, 2011). Suspension of aid then impedes aid dependant nations like Malawi in attaining developmental goals.

2.13 Suspension of WFP School Meals Programme in Malawi

The WFP Malawi (2010) published that they had temporarily suspended school meals for half a million children in Malawi. According to the then WFP Malawi Country Director, Abdoulaye Diop, the WFP did appreciate support from governments of countries like Malawi since the school meals started in January 2008, however, more funding from the

Malawi government was required for the programme to reach December 2011 as planned. Ten out of thirteen districts that were benefitting from the programme would no longer receive the School Meals Programme until such time the WFP received more funding to support the programme. These districts were Chiradzulu, Kasungu, Lilongwe, Salima, Dedza, Ntcheu, Mangochi, Phalombe, Thyolo and Mulanje. The implication of the suspension of the programme was that 508 000 learners in 480 schools no longer received school meals. This further affected the learners because the school meals were reducing drop-out rates, promoting attendance and increasing enrolment. Learners' ability to concentrate in class and learn for a better future was also affected.

2.14 Significance of School Meals Programme

The WFP's school meals programme has five objectives. It aims at reduced dropout rates; improved regular attendance; increased enrolment; improving the children's ability to concentrate and learn through food provision and building the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology's capacity to manage a school meals programme (WFP Malawi, 2010).

The WFP Malawi (2010) reports that school meals reduced the dropout rates because learners stayed in school due to the programme. Learners fail to concentrate on an empty stomach and consequently dropout of school. In most cases they dropout to provide additional labour on their family's arable land.

The WFP Malawi (2010) commended school meals for increasing regular attendance of learners. In the communities facing food shortages, it is challenging for learners to attend classes on an empty stomach. The WFP (2012) reported that there were 67 million children who did not attend school because often the poor households had to make the difficult decision to either send their children to school or to the fields to work. The school meals programme encouraged the learners to attend classes regularly and reduced the rate of absenteeism.

According to the WFP Malawi (2010), the school meals programme increased enrolment of learners in primary schools. The presence of school meals acted as an incentive for parents to send their children to school where they will get both food and education. According to Del Rosso in Kearny (2008), a small pilot feeding programme conducted in Malawi, that was evaluated over a three month period showed that enrolment increased by five percent and attendance went up by 36 percent.

When hungry, learners cannot concentrate and learn optimally. The provision of the school meals programme contributed to the learners' ability to concentrate and learn better (WFP Malawi, 2010). According to the WFP Malawi (2010) outcomes of the school meals programme were 41 percent higher enrolment, 16 percent higher attendance and six percent higher pass rates for pupils.

Education has over the years proven crucial for socio-economic development especially in countries experiencing rapid change that requires skilled and flexible workforce (WFP, 2000). According to the WFP (2000), their analysis showed that investing in human capital is better than in physical capital because it results in economic growth which is more evident in the benefits of primary school education. Therefore it means the school meals programme plays a critical role in promoting social development in Malawi.

School meals according to the WFP (2012) provide social protection since they break the vicious cycle of hunger, poverty and child exploitation by reaching the world's poorest places including children that are orphaned, disabled, affected by HIV and AIDS and former child soldiers.

School meals are of nutritional value to learners and good health leads to increased learning and decreased morbidity of learners. "When combined with deworming and micronutrient fortified, school meals offer important nutritional benefits" (WFP, 2013, p. 2). The nutritional and health status of a child has a powerful influence on the child's learning. According to the WFP (2012) children who lack certain nutrients especially iron and iodine or suffer from protein-energy malnutrition, hunger, parasitic infections or other diseases do not have the same potential to learn as those who are healthy and well nourished. Children with diminished cognitive abilities and sensory impairments naturally perform less well as compared to regular learners.

Basic education provides essential skills of reading, writing and basic business skills. The school meals enhance a school child's chances of obtaining this basic education. This is important in the modern world because it increases people's chances of getting self-employed. Without basic education one finds it hard to excel in life economically, socially and even politically. It further builds an informed nation more aware on key issues through reading.

The WFP's school meals programme in Malawi has demonstrated that it promotes gender equality and women empowerment through the provision of take-home rations. Females in Malawi are a vulnerable group and their status in society is lower as compared to that of their male counterparts. According to the WFP (2012), the ration of maize given to households is a powerful incentive especially to girls. This promotes girls' education. Due to economic pressures and cultural practises, girls in Malawi drop out of school and enter into early marriages. According to the WFP (2012) the promise of one nutritious meal each passing day persuades poor families into sending their daughters to school.

The WFP (2010a) reported that school feeding reaches orphans and other vulnerable children such as those affected by HIV and AIDS. The programme is inclusive and provided to all children regardless of the various challenges they may be faced with.

According to the WFP Malawi (2010) the school meals programme is helping the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to build capacity to manage the programme on its own. This is an exit strategy for the WFP, when the government becomes independently capable of running the programme using its own coffers.

2.15 The Relationship between the School Meals Programme in Malawi and the Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) entail a global partnership that was adopted by world leaders in 2010 at the Millennium Summit to reduce extreme poverty through time-bound and quantifiable targets to be achieved by 2015. Malawi like most developing countries adopted these goals. One of the key targets of the MDGs is reducing by half the proportion of people suffering from hunger by 2015, this is with the realization that more than 850 million people suffer from hunger (Provost, 2012).

The MDGs are interlinked to the school meals programme. They relate to goals one, two, three, four and five.

The first MDG is that aiming to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by 2015. The WFP (2010a) reported that school meals programme breaks the vicious poverty cycle by investing in early childhood development. The programme is implemented among the poorest people in society who often cannot provide breakfast for their children before they leave for school. It is an incentive in itself that brings and keeps children in school and allows them to acquire education. This has an economic value as an educated nation is more productive than one that

is not. This further reduces short-term hunger and provides micronutrients needed by children to grow and learn.

According to the WFP (2010a), school meals are a unique safety net driven by the interdependency between various outcomes and combines short, medium and long-term benefits.

In a study conducted in India on the analysis of the income transfer effect of the school feeding programme, it was found that the programme had a significant socio-economic benefit to agricultural labourer households whose income levels are low and sending children to school had a higher opportunity cost (WFP, 2009). Malawi similarly is a highly agricultural state, agriculture accounts for 85 percent of the labour force (Chirwa, Kydd & Dorward, 2006). The school feeding programme would increase household income when the family saves the income they would have been spending on the food that is now being provided by the WFP.

The second MDG is to achieve universal primary education by 2015. Countries like Malawi, Kenya, Ghana and Nepal foresaw a high enrolment rate due to abolition of school fees and the introduction of free primary education which made their chances of attaining this goal higher (UN Department of Information, 2010). This however brought new challenges to the governments because the number of teachers had not increased when the pupil to teacher ratio did change and the size or number of classrooms had not changed either.

A greater challenge after these countries attained free primary education was keeping the pupils in school because most of them dropped out before reaching the final grade due to factors such as hunger (UN Department of Information, 2010). According to Malawi government's Ministry of Finance (2010), high dropout has impeded the country's course of achieving universal access to primary education. Through the school feeding programme, pupils who dropout due to hunger will remain in school and have a higher chance of attaining basic education.

The third MDG promotes gender equality and empowerment of women. It is interlinked with school meals because they also recognise the need to uplift the status of women in society. Poverty singles out vulnerable groups such as women and further suppresses their status. Out of the 72 million school age children not attending school in the world, two-thirds of them are poor Sub-Saharan African, South and East Asians; the majority of these dropouts are girls

(WFP, 2009). The meals coupled by the take-home rations encouraged parents to send girls to school. Basic literacy and numerical skills gained by the girls will in the future help them in dealing with day to day decisions, caring for families, accessing jobs and contributing for the betterment of society.

MDGs five and six are intertwined. They aim at reducing child mortality and improving maternal health respectively by 2015. According to the WFP (2010a), school feeding contributes to the two goals in the way that education influences girls' economic opportunities, their participation in community, decision-making, HIV infection rates and the level of literacy and child malnutrition.

Keeping children in school circles more especially girls delays them from early marriage and pregnancy as they spend more time in school. The education acquired increases knowledge and awareness on safe delivery and maternal health hence the girls make informed choices. It is however inconclusive according to Chirwa, Kydd and Dorward (2006) on how school feeding interventions affect nutritional status because it involves multiple factors and both quality and quantity food intake. In Burkina Faso and Togo the programme yielded improved nutrition of students (WFP, 2000). According to WFP (2012), girls who marry later have fifty percent lesser children on average. Having few children means the food that could have been shared becomes abundant for the few.

2.16 The Challenges of Aid Dependency

According to Thomas et al (2011), aid reduces poverty and inequality however the problem with aid is when a country becomes dependent on it which is unsustainable. This reduces the autonomy of recipient governments because donors make the decisions in policy formulation and implementation, the recipient governments become less accountable to their own citizens. A good example of this is the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) that were implemented in the 1980's and were a pre-condition for IMF and World Bank aid assistance (Marais, Muthien, Jansen van Rensburg, Maaga, de Wet & Coetzee, 2001). Poverty levels in developing countries worsened instead of improving, and the recipient governments could not rebuke them since they were a pre-condition. As a result in the 1990s Sub-Saharan Africa was largely heavily indebted, hampering sustainable social development.

Aid dependency may further create a passive mind-set in those who receive aid as the population becomes less inclined to invest, save, and produce for export and domestic consumption.

Food Aid in Malawi must be the responsibility of the Malawian government and its people. There must be an exit strategy to the WFP food aid the country benefits from. Dependency on food aid will make the government prone to adopting poor policies that may affect the governing of the country or the education system.

2.17 Theoretical Framework

Two major theories, the dependency and modernisation theories, dominate the debate on the relation between aid and development. This research used the modernisation theory to explain the relationship between aid and development. The assumption is that all developing nations must take a similar path to obtain wealth. The dependency theory is used to critique the modernization theory and explain how aid dependency has been detrimental to Malawian development.

Rostow (1960) identified five stages of economic growth. In his theory he relates the phases an aeroplane goes through when on a journey to that a country takes in economic development. These were; the first stage of a traditional society, the second of a transitional period or preconditions of take-off, the third of take-off, the fourth of drive to maturity and the fifth of high mass consumption.

In the first stage, a country in its traditional state is ravaged by poverty, primary production and traditional values. In this stage, a country practises subsistence farming like Malawians who practise smallholder farming that relies on rainfall to produce food. Its economy is highly dependent on agricultural production. Malawi's economy depends on agricultural production with over 50 percent of the country's exports from the sector. It is labour intensive and only uses limited technology.

In the second stage industrial revolution occurs, it is a prerequisite for social development to take place. After the Second World War, it was agreed that through industrialisation, development assistance or aid would be provided to developing countries in order that they redirect and channel resources from a traditional to a modern sector. This is around the same period Malawi began receiving unofficial aid. The assumption is that developing countries can develop if they receive development assistance and follow the path that western nations

went through. Borrowing from the World Bank and commercial banks and using the income for developmental purposes would lead to development of Malawi. Official aid programmes supplement the development process such as the WFP's school meals programme in Malawi that promotes education. The programme brings technical expertise and equipment that should be used in the development process.

In the second stage there is also an income, savings and investment growth that leads to the emergence of entrepreneurs. Increased specialisation that includes foreign expertise paid for by aid and entrepreneurship boasts trading. The trade is on primary products such as agricultural produce. The boom in trade is supported by the emergence of the transport industry. The government on the other hand encourages private enterprise to build a strong private sector. One of the challenges that Malawi faces is trade. It imports heavily and exports less. It needs to transform into a producing and manufacturing country from a consumer of manufactured products.

The problem arises in this stage as the case with Malawi when aid is interrupted or suspended. The development process is also interrupted as a result. For a country like Malawi whose budget depends on aid is greatly affected because it fails to fully implement its development programmes. The government begins to struggle and waits for donors to recommit so that the economy stabilises and then start to improve.

In the third stage, high economic growth and investment in infrastructure begins as a result of the aid provision and industrial development. Labour switches from the agricultural sector to the manufacturing sector. The economic transformations lead to political and social transformations to support industrialization. If Malawi followed the path that western countries used, it would have reached this stage.

There is a drive to maturity in the fourth stage. The drive to maturity is attained when there is economic diversification. There are increased goods and services produced, and less need to import. Technological advancement realised opens up a diverse range of investment opportunities.

In the final stage there is high mass consumption like in highly capitalist countries. The level of technological use is very high. The range and quality of goods and services is also high. There is prosperity and many opportunities for citizens. Malawi is very far from attaining this phase. Many western nations have the luxury of this phase where they enjoy a comfortable

lifestyle. Most of the people live in urban areas as opposed to rural and the life expectancy is high.

The dependency theory analyses the world system of relations to understand the causes of poverty (Friedmann & Wayne, 1977). The incorporation of an underdeveloped nation into a changing world capitalist system is characterised by bilateral relations. The bilateral relationship is between the developed/dominant nation and the underdeveloped nation. It was exploitative colonial relationships by dominant nations that made rich countries successful and not the stages of economic growth. Rather than being dependent on dominant nations, a developing country like Malawi should pursue policies of self-reliance that are developmental and not remedial.

2.18 Summary

This chapter focused on food insecurity in Malawi and explained the causes. It then explained Food Aid as an intervention to food insecurity, and the role of the WFP in Malawi and the WFP's school meals programme. Attention was also given to the suspension of aid and the school meals programme in Malawi. The contribution of the school meals programme and its relationship with the Millennium Development Goals were highlighted. Lastly, the chapter explained the modernisation theory and how it has failed as a model of development in Malawi. It explains how the dependency theory suggests a better path for Malawian development.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the research approach and methodology the research adopted. The research strategy and design as well as the primary aim and secondary objectives of the study are explained. The research instrument that was used is explained and the methods of data collection and analysis are shared. Ethical consideration and the limitations of the study are highlighted.

3.2 Primary Aim and Secondary Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of the study was to explore in which ways suspension of Aid provision by the WFP from 2007 to 2011 affected the school meals programme and the socio-economic status of the beneficiaries of the programme in Chiradzulu District.

The secondary objectives of the study were

3.2.1 To investigate the participants' perceptions about how the suspension of Aid provision to Malawi affected the school meals programme offered by the WFP.

3.2.2 To explore the participants' perceptions of how Aid provision suspension by the WFP between 2007 and 2011 affected the socio-economic status of beneficiaries of the school meals programme.

3.3 Research Approach and Design

A Qualitative research approach was used because it explains social phenomena (Hancock, 2002). It is concerned with opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals or an individual hence collects subjective data. The data obtained is used to develop concepts and theories that help us understand the social world better.

The research design used was a case study. Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 149) define a case study as “an in depth study about a particular individual or programme for a defined period of time”. The application of a case study is useful for investigating how people's experiences and perceptions about different interventions or programmes over time influence their circumstances (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The case study as a research design offers richer and in-depth information that usually is not offered by other methods (Hancock & Algozzine,

2006). It identifies how a set of circumstances come together and produce a particular manifestation.

3.4 Population, sampling and sampling procedures

A case study of Lilongwe district had been initially selected in the research proposal but was changed to Chiradzulu district. The change came about in response to advice given by the head of WFP's sub office in Blantyre. The office was approached prior to conducting the pre-testing of the research instruments. The head of the office proposed that the case study should be conducted in the southern region and not the central region of Malawi because the populous south is where poverty is extensive and the most affected by hunger and hence has the largest coverage of the WFP's school meals programme in the country. The programme is also most established in the southern region as opposed to the central and northern regions. Chiradzulu district in the southern region was chosen because of its close proximity to Blantyre City making it accessible to the area of residence. The programme is run in 47 schools in the district (WFP, 2010).

The small sample size of seven participants was used because the cost of travelling to more schools in Malawi was very high and not affordable for the interviewer. The head teachers at two primary schools, Malavi and Saint Theresa, where the school meals programme is administered were approached for permission to conduct interviews at their schools. They granted permission and referred the researcher to the teacher responsible for school meals at both their schools to assist in the process. Both head teachers were invited to participate in the study, the head teacher of Saint Theresa primary school failed to participate due to illness and the head teacher for Malavi primary school accepted and participated.

A meeting was held with the teachers responsible for the programme at both schools where it was agreed that the teacher would identify two parents at their school with the most experience in the programme based on the number of years involved, which was no less than two years and position held in the parents' school meals committee preparing meals, to be interviewed. The dates when the interviews would be conducted were also agreed upon. The groups of participants were therefore; three teachers and four parents who are involved with the administration of the school meals programme at the two different schools in Chiradzulu district, Malawi. The three teachers have been managing the school meals programme in two schools for at least three years and two parents at each school who were on the school meals committee for at least two years had been selected. This type of sampling used is called

purposive sampling seeing that it has to do with the judgement of the researcher. According to De Vos (2002), in purposive sampling a particular case is chosen that illustrates some feature or process that is of interest for a particular study. In this research Chiradzulu district in the southern region was selected and the two groups of participants were chosen because of their experience and knowledge on school meals.

3.5 Research Instrument

The same semi-structured interview schedule was used to obtain data from parents and teachers. This type of research instrument was chosen because it is a guide for composing questions and at the same time is flexible that it uses follow-up questions for clarification where it is not clear (De Vos, 2002). The use of an interview schedule was advantageous because the participants, especially the parents, were from a rural setting where literacy levels are low and the questions were read to them by the researcher and notes were taken by the researcher.

According to Mathers, Fox and Hunn (2002), the advantage of using open ended questions is they help to capture as much information and in the study they permitted an unlimited number of possible answers. Mathers, Fox and Hunn (2002) described the nature of open ended questions to provide opportunity to discuss in more detail and in the study where the participant had difficulty answering a question or gave a brief response, they were encouraged to consider the question further. According to Mathers, Fox and Hunn (2002) in a semi-structured interview the interviewer has freedom to probe the participants and in the study participants elaborated on their responses.

The use of open-ended questions however has its disadvantages. Some of the responses to a similar question were very different depending on the understanding of the question by the Participant. It required great effort to explain to ensure that some of the participants could understand the questions. This was not due to the questions being hard to understand, but rather due to the difficulty in command of the English language and lower literacy levels even for the teachers who wanted the questions translated to Chichewa to better understand the meaning.

3.6 Pre-testing of the Research Instrument

The research instrument was pre-tested with one teacher and two parents who are involved with administering the school meals programme at the Demonstration Primary School a beneficiary school of the WFP's school meals programme in Chiradzulu district.

The people participating in the pre-testing of the research tool did not participate in the final study. Pre-testing is conducted to know whether the actual tool is going to work (De Vos, 2002). Pre-testing determined the tool to be effective and no need for revision was required. The same tool that was pre-tested was used for the actual data collection.

3.7 Method of Data Collection

Data collection is the systematic gathering of information relevant to the research question. During the research study data was collected using in-depth interviews with the selected participants from the teachers and parents administrating the school meals programme at the two different schools in the Chiradzulu district in Malawi. Boyce (2006) commends use of in-depth interviews as more detailed as compared to other data collection methods. They provide deeper insight because of their flexibility to have follow-up questions and probes without interfering with dynamics

Interviews were conducted in the staffrooms at both primary schools and the one with the head teacher in the head teacher's office at Malavi Primary School. The staffrooms were considered more comfortable and quiet which was advantageous for tape recording. The rooms were set with two chairs facing each other and a table in between that enhanced face-to-face interviewing but at the same time not creating discomfort.

The interviews were conducted in English or Chichewa or both depending on the choice and understanding of the questions by the participant. English is the national language and Chichewa is the widely spoken language in Malawi. Each of the seven participants was interviewed once and each interview took an average of 45 minutes.

When the interviews commenced, the participants were thanked for volunteering to participate in the study and Appendix A was discussed with participants. Then Appendix B was discussed with participants where their consent for tape-recording the interviews was sought and that the tapes would be accessible to the interviewer and the supervisor. The tapes together with the interview schedules (Appendix D) would be kept in a secure place for two

years following any publications or for six years if no publication emanated from the study. The participants were informed that their confidentiality would be upheld and their personal details were not going to be included in the final research report. After accepting to participate and endorsing Appendix B and C, the participants were engaged in the interview.

Afterwards, the participants were again thanked for volunteering and participating in the study. They were asked if they wanted a copy of the summary of the research report to be sent to them.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

In qualitative studies data analysis differs depending on the type of strategy but the general procedure according to Creswell (2009) is four interrelated steps. These steps are organising and preparing the data for analysis, reading through all the data, beginning a detailed analysis with a coding process and finally use the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis.

Thematic Content Analysis a useful data analysis method used in qualitative research was used for data analysis in this study. Thematic content analysis is defined as a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of materials for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, or biases (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). In this study data or the responses of participants were systematically examined. Responses that were similar and related were put together. Themes were then created that showed the different categories of data.

3.9 Trustworthiness of the study

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), trustworthiness in qualitative research involves credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility is establishing that the results of the qualitative research are believable according to the perspective of the participant. To achieve credibility there was prolonged engagement until data saturation occurred. Participants were persistently pursued for interpretations in different ways. Tape recording is proof for the data collection process for referential purposes.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), *transferability* is the extent to which the findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents. The logic of qualitative research is

contextualization and not generalisation. In terms of the transferability of the data, data collected is described in detail so that it can easily be transferred for other contexts. Detailed and thick descriptions of data were collected in the specific context and the research report could be used for judgement on other schools in other districts in Malawi. Use of purposive sampling made it likely that the breadth of information obtained is maximized and contribute to the transferability of the data. For the study to be dependable all field notes, tapes and transcriptions will be kept to be available to the supervisor to audit the documentation.

Dependability is used to address the issue of reliability on the assumption that if the work was repeated in the same context using the same methods and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained. The processes of the study are reported in detail therefore enabling a future researcher to follow similar steps and repeat the work. The research design and methodology explain how the research was planned and how data was collected. These would be very significant in repeating the work and ensuring the dependability of the study.

Confirmability refers to the ability of others to confirm the findings (Drisko, 1997). This is done to ensure that the findings are the perceptions of the participants and not the characteristics and preferences of the researcher. In this study in-depth interviews were conducted to attain exhaustion of data, and there was a thorough presentation of the perceptions of the participants and a detailed account of what steps were followed.

3.10 Limitations of the study

It was proposed in the research proposal that two WFP officials would be interviewed. Unfortunately, they were not available to be interviewed because the interviews were carried at a time when their office was busy.

It was observed that tape recording created discomfort in two participants. They were shaking at the beginning of the interviews as they kept looking at the tape recorder but became confident as the interviews progressed. According to De Vos (2002), tape recording can be a disadvantage when the participant has discomfort of being taped hence requires placing the tape recorder inconspicuously not to unnerve the participant.

The study required more time than anticipated as the process of data collection happened outside South Africa and then the data analysis also require extra time.

Traveling to areas where the school meals programme is administered is difficult because these are found in rural areas where sometimes public transportation does not reach. A researcher must have a vehicle or walk long distances to get to the school as was my case.

The research required substantial funding for transportation, accommodation and catering. It became costly as a self-funded research.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

In this study ethical principles of non-maleficence, autonomy and informed consent, deception, confidentiality and accessibility were adhered to.

The principle of *non-maleficence* governs the research that no harm is done to the participants and people in general. In Social Sciences harm to participants is often of an emotional nature although physical cannot be ruled out (De Vos, 2002). This may happen during data collection when a participant is uncomfortable to respond to a question. Participants were beforehand informed of the research topic and had the right to withdraw from the process or not to respond to any question if they found it uncomfortable.

Autonomy of the participants was respected by ensuring that the research respected and protected the rights and dignity of the participants. Autonomy was achieved through informed consent. *Informed Consent* was made and the participants had the legal right to withdraw at any time. A Consent Form for Participation (Appendix B) was made available where their participation was clearly indicated voluntary. A Consent Form for Audio-Taping (Appendix C) was also made available where the participants accepted to be recorded. According to De Vos (2002), self-determination is attained through informed consent because you have participants who are willing to provide as much data and avoid those that are less willing.

Non-deception was avoided in this study. According to De Vos (2002), deception occurs when you provide participants with incorrect information by lying and disguise the real goal of the study. The participants were told beforehand that the study would not provide any direct financial or economic benefits.

The *confidentiality* of the participants was upheld. According to De Vos (2002) confidentiality is handling of information in a private manner and agreeing to limit others access to private information. Participants did provide personal information and were

informed that the information would be available to the researcher and the supervisor. They were further informed that the tapes and transcripts used will be destroyed two years after a publication emanates from the study, or five years after the study, should no publication flows from the study.

3.12 Summary

The research methodology applied was described in this chapter and appeared to be appropriate in that it facilitated the answers to the research questions, aims and secondary objectives. The ethical considerations were highlighted and the limitations of the research study were discussed. The analysis of the collected data will be presented and discussed in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF ANALYSED DATA

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the analysed data and findings of the study are presented. The data analysis is then followed by the discussion of the findings of the study. The data were analysed using thematic content analysis and the following themes were identified: understanding of the WFP, understanding of the school meals programme, benefits of the school meals programme, suspension of the school meals programme and suggestions on how school meals programme presents and analyses the findings of the study. The findings of the study are presented and discussed in relation to the research questions, primary aim and secondary objectives of the study.

4.2 Profile of the Participants

In Table 4.1 the profile of the participants are presented.

Table 4.1 Profile of Participants (N=7)

Demographic Factor	Sub Category	No
Gender	Male	3
	Female	4
Age of participants	30-39 years	1
	40-49 years	2
	50-59 years	4
Position and role in relation to the programme	Teacher	3
	Parent	4
Years involved in the programme	2-3 years	1
	4-5 years	2
	6-7 years	3

There were more female participants (four) in the study as compared to males (three). Most of the participants (four) were in age range of 50 to 59 years old seconded by two participants

in the age range of 40 to 49 and thirdly one participant in the age range of 30 to 39. The positions that the participants held in the school meals programme were: Headmaster at a school where the programme is implemented, teachers responsible for the school meals programme at the two respective primary schools, Vice-Chairperson of Parents' school meals programme committee at school level, Committee member of Parents' school meals programme committee at Village level, Treasurer of Parents' school meals programme committee at school level and Chairperson of Parents' school meals programme committee at school level. Of the three teachers that participated in the study, a head teacher and teacher responsible for school meals were from Malavi Primary School and another teacher responsible for school meals from Saint Theresa Primary School. The participants had vast experience in the programme with three being involved for not less than six years, two at least four years and one at least one year. All the parents that participated in the study held a position in the parents' school meals committee, the Vice-chairperson and committee member were from Malavi Primary School and the Chairperson and Treasurer were from Saint Theresa Primary School.

4.3 Background to the schools benefitting from the School Meals Programme

The participants interviewed were from Malavi and Saint Theresa Primary schools. Both schools are located Southwest of Chiradzulu district in the southern region of Malawi. Malavi Primary School is a government school. Learners are taught from levels of standard one to standard six. Primary school ends at standard eight and learners that have completed standard six are given reference letters to complete their primary school at a primary school that has standards seven and eight.

Saint Theresa Primary School is a Roman Catholic Institution. It consists of all primary school levels from standard one to standard eight. It is located near the M1, Malawi's major road, as opposed to Malavi Primary School. It has a flea market nearby that is normally conducted Mondays and Thursdays which disrupts learning at the school. Saint Theresa Primary School has 10 500 learners and Malavi Primary School has 1 400 learners according to the respective teachers responsible for the school meals programme at both schools.

The households that surround the two schools are mainly subsistent smallholder farmers who grow maize. Their families have been affected by hunger in the past few years especially due to erratic rains the district experiences. The national fertilizer subsidy programme has helped improve maize production in communities of Chiradzulu district.

4.4 Food Insecurity in Chiradzulu

It was established that Chiradzulu district in Malawi is food insecure when respondents reported that Chiradzulu district was indeed food insecure and many households struggled to provide food especially during the lean season. According to IRIN (2013) the traditional lean season in Malawi is the period in between harvests when food stocks generally run out and is exacerbated by long dry spells or late rains. A participant confirmed this and said “learners coming from poor families from November to March starve”. This is the period when rains begin and Malawians plant maize their staple food and have to wait for the crop to grow before harvesting. He went on to say “during this period the learners go miserably to school with the hope of finding food through the school meals”. Many families are struck by hunger during the lean season and children are one of the vulnerable groups in the country that suffer most.

The themes identified by the study are now presented in relation to the context and the objectives of the study.

4.5 Understanding of the WFP

Respondents’ understanding was that the WFP is an organization that relies on donations and funding from other donors so they provide assistance depending on how much support they have received.

The participants described the WFP as “*bungwe*” or an organization. One participant said “*it is an organization that is donated to by other organizations. For it to run its programmes it depends on funding from the other donors*”. The participants were thankful of the WFP for introducing the programme. A participant said, “*I thank the organization responsible of the programme for introducing it*”.

The participants described the WFP as the organization that runs the School Feeding Programme. One participant said “*WFP is doing a lot of work to assist our learners because of some circumstances these learners meet in their daily living. Some are orphans others’ families are getting little money to support their families so what WFP introduced (the school meals programme) is so helpful*”.

The participants understand that the WFP provide materials used for the school meals programme. According to the participants the WFP provides “*flour (for cooking school porridge), stoves, plates, pails, pots, axes and hoes*”. All these are used in preparing and

serving learners with porridge at school. Apart from these items in the programme participants also mentioned provision of maize packs and cooking oil. A participant said, *“Girls and orphaned boys attending school for a month used to receive take home rations but this stopped. They would receive 10kgs of maize and 10litres of cooking oil”*.

The participants understand that the WFP works with the District Education Office when providing items used in the school meals programme. A participant said, *“There is a school meals representative in the District Education Office who is directly responsible to the schools and coordinates with the WFP”*. The participant further said, *“The goods provided by the WFP are given to the office of the head (teacher at primary school). The head (teacher) and the officials count the goods before the head (teacher) signs to confirm how much has been received to be stored”*.

Participants perceived that the WFP in collaboration with the Malawi government determined the amount of bags given to a particular school and the number of bags a school should use each school day. A participant said, *“In 2011 the official from Chiradzulu district drafted us to reduce the feeding portions because he claimed the enrolment we had that time was a little bit lower so we reduced instead of using four bags we used three bags but now since the enrolment is still high we are still using 4 bags per day, so that time even individual portions were reduced.”*

Participants perceived the WFP of being responsible for monitoring progress of the programme and making necessary changes when required. A participant said, *“Sometimes we receive flour which is sour for example the flour which is in stock now is sour. I remember October last year (2011) we reported that the flour you provided us is sour. After some discussions here (at the primary school with school meals committee) we reported and stopped eating. The WFP official came surveyed the place, tasted the flour and took a little for testing. Later on they came with feedback and said continue eating”*.

4.6 Understanding of the SMP

The participants understanding of what the school meals programme is, was that it is a WFP funded programme that is provided in selected primary schools in Malawi. A participant hence said, *“It is beneficial and must not stopped”*. Other participants described the programme as *“a porridge programme where learners are given porridge”*. Participants explained that learners are given porridge portions in the programme. A participant said, *“The WFP provides a cup for measuring to ensure that each child eats 100gms”*.

Participants also explained that the programme had take-home rations of maize and cooking oil. A participant said, *“Girls and orphaned boys attending school for a month used to receive take home rations but this stopped. They would receive 10kgs of maize and 10litres of cooking oil”*. Another participant confirmed this and said, *“Sometimes they (the WFP) provides maize to give girls and orphaned boys who have been attending classes for not less than 18 days to encourage them to work hard in school. Other times the WFP provides cooking oil like 2 years ago (2010) to give these two groups of students as well”*. One participant argued that learners receive 12.5 when they said, *“This is a 50kg bag that is shared between four learners”*.

Participants understanding of how the school meals programme works was that items used in the programme are passed onto their primary school through the head teacher from the WFP working together with the government’s District Education Office. A participant said, *“The goods provided by the WFP are given to the office of the head by the officials (from the WFP and the District Education Office)”*. A head teacher went on to say, *“My roles are to foresee that the program is working well at the school. I monitor what is going on and the property provided by the WFP. I record how many bags we receive, how many bags have been used and check physically if there is a shortage”*.

According to the participants the head teacher hands over the items used in the school meals programme to the teacher responsible for the programme at the school. A teacher responsible for the programme said, *“My responsibility is known as storekeeper in this program. In this role I ensure if we get sufficient goods depending on how much they (WFP) have sent. The number of goods sent varies sometimes they send 458 bags of Likuni phala and other times less. The bags are 25kgs. Other goods that are sent are pots, plates, spoons, a cup for measuring to ensure each child eats 100g, nthiko (pap stirrer) and stoves given by the WFP. We are also given ma phale that we lay on the floor so that we can put the bags and that they should not touch the floor.”* Another teacher responsible for the programme at a school went on to say, *“Some community members try to take the food home but I am responsible to say no because it is under my custody and we need to follow the instructions that we have been given from the officials”*.

Participants reported that the teacher responsible for the programme gives the parents daily, a specific number of bags of flour to cook for learners. A teacher said, *“I ensure that four bags are used per day that is one hundred Kgs. We (I and the parents) have to follow the*

instructions because we keep records. We record every day when we take the bags, hundred Kg from the stack. When the officials come they see the flow of consuming the bags”.

The participants reported that the number of bags used per day is determined by the number of learners that was reported to the officials. A participant said, *“At our school four and a half bags are cooked each day, this is according to number of learners. There are 1400 pupils and the WFP expects us to cook four bags for 1000 pupils”.*

According to the participants the parents are organised through the parents’ school meals committee. A participant said, *“There is a committee of 11 women that was elected by the 11 villages that surround the school (each to represent their village in the parents’ school meals committee). The village representatives select eight women from their village to help them cook when the turn for their village comes”.*

Participants reported that the parents play a key role and are responsible for preparing the school meals given to the learners. A parent reported, *“When we parents come here (at the school) our job is to clean the pots and prepare the porridge. At the moment what we do is give porridge by class from standard one to eight and after each class we clean the plates used. This is what all of us women do (parents involved in the school meals programme)”.*

Another participant said, *“The community members are involved in cooking the phala (porridge) to give the learners. They draw water from sources of water and come with this water. The main work is done by the community in respect to their villages around this area”.*

Kearney (2008) encourages community involvement and the assumption of responsibility by the community from the initial stages of the school meals programme. According to Kearney (2008) communities must be involved, take responsibility and participate from the beginning. Parents play a crucial role in the school meals programme of fetching firewood, drawing water, washing plates and cooking the porridge. The WFP Malawi (2010) commends the school meals for being a highly participatory programme that connects teachers, parents, cooks, children, farmers and the local market. It is through the participation of these various stakeholders of the programme that is important for the success of the programme

In a summary the school meals programme also known as the school feeding programme is one strategy used to address hunger and food insecurity in Malawi by the WFP. It was established that the programme is implemented in schools of food insecure districts to assist schoolchildren and their families address hunger problems they are faced with. It is a collaborative effort between the Malawi government and the World Food Programme whereby items used in the programme are passed on from the WFP officials to the government through the department of education at district level. The department of

education then delivers the goods to the selected primary schools chosen to benefit from the programme. The main component of the programme which is the porridge is provided to all learners in the beneficiary primary schools regardless of level of class and gender. The participants' expectation is that the school meals programme will not be phased because they cannot sustain themselves without the programme. All participants said, *"The programme must be continued"*.

4.7 Benefits of the SMP

The participants in the study reported that the school meals programme main beneficiaries are the school-going children and their parents. Participants said, *"The programme benefits both parents and children"*. They reported that the programme increases enrolment, regular attendance, enhances nutrition, improves concentration in class, prospects of the children in the long run due to attendance and the school meals substitute provision of breakfast at home by the parents to their school going children.

4.7.1 Attendance

Participants reported that the school meals programme increases regular attendance of learners. A participant said, *"This (the school meals programme) encourages learners to attend school regularly"*. Another participant said, *"The programme encourages learners to come to school each and every day"*.

The participants reported that the programme encourages the attendance of learners. A participant said, *"The children are powerful when they eat the porridge but find it difficult to reach lunch hour (12 noon) when they have not eaten the porridge"*. Another participant said, *"If the programme would be stopped then children would not learn"*.

4.7.2 Drop-out rate reduced and absenteeism

Participants also reported that the programme further reduces dropout and absenteeism. A participant said, *"It is the one thing (the school meals) which encourages learners to come here and not to dropout from the school or to be absent"*. Another participant commended the programme and said, *"I am content with the way the programme is run in our district. Many children are coming to school and there is less absenteeism meaning the porridge is helping. In class they are working hard because they have strength. They come while they have not"*

eaten and after they eat they are more energetic. The program is encouraging children not to be absent from school. It gives them the motivation to come to school to have the porridge”.

Participants in the study reported that the school meals programme increases enrolment of learners. A participant said, *“When the programme is running well learners come in numbers”.*

4.7.3 Concentration

Participants in the study reported that taking school meals encourage better concentration of learners in class. A participant said, *“When they eat they concentrate on lessons in the classrooms and this helps the learner to boost their knowledge in the classroom”.*

4.7.4 Nutrition

Participants reported that the provision of school meals enhances the nutrition of learners. A participant said, *“This time we cannot see the malnutrition diseases (affecting learners) due to provision of this food”.* The programme eradicates malnutrition cases.

4.7.5 School meals a substitute for breakfast

Participants reported that the school meals are a substitute for breakfast given to learners in their homes. A participant said, *“As parents we do not struggle to give food to children in the morning, they may leave without eating and eat here at school. We (parents) then come up with a program that when the children come back from school they should find food home but when it comes to morning they (children/pupils) are helped here at school”.* Another participant echoed similar sentiments by saying, *“We are brave (as parents) because a child leaves home knowing that they will get food at school. When a child returns from school he/she tells the parent that they have had something to eat and therefore the benefit of the program extends from a child to the village”.*

4.7.6 Empowering vulnerable children

Participants reported that the school meals programme assists a vulnerable group of children when it targets them through the intervention of take-home rations. A participant said, *“Sometimes in January, February and March they provide us with maize for needy learners”.*

The school feeding programme therefore provides social protection to programme beneficiaries. The WFP (2013) defines social protection as “systems, programmes and policies that help individuals and societies build resilience to risks, achieve equity and avail themselves of opportunities. Social protection instruments include safety nets, pension systems, insurance and labour programmes and policies”. School meals in Malawi began as a government social policy expressing government intent to improve the wellbeing of the citizens. They were translated into a social programme when a pilot project by the WFP was successful.

The programme is a food-based safety net. “Safety nets are programmes that provide cash or in-kind benefits in order to reduce poverty and vulnerability” (WFP, 2013). The WFP in collaboration with the Malawi government provides food assistance to the poorest of the poor through the school meals programme to protect them from falling below the minimum level of food security due to hunger-related problems the people face. The safety net increases the people’s resilience to shocks and promotes food security. The impact of school meals extend from the learner’s health and educational benefits to that of the family or household through the take-home rations of maize packs and cooking oil.

4.7.7 Literacy

The participants perceive the programme as beneficial and contributing to literacy levels. A participant said, *“This program must be continued because it encourages learners to come to school each and every day and helps the learner to boost their knowledge”*.

4.8 Suspension of the SMP

The first objective of the study was to investigate the participants’ perceptions about how the suspension of Aid provision to Malawi affected the school meals programme offered by the WFP. The following were in line with meeting the objective:

It was established that the suspension of the school meals programme between 2007 and 2011 affected the manner in which the programme was being implemented. The suspension of the programme caused low attendance, absenteeism, malnutrition, hunger, low enrolment This subsequently affected the beneficiaries of the programme because the programme is structured to enhance their wellbeing.

The participants of the study reported that school meals were sporadically suspended at their schools in the period between 2007 and 2011. However, the participants explained differently

how the suspension occurred and the time that it occurred. The programme was not entirely suspended at the schools period between 2007 and 2011. The suspension also occurred in the scope of benefits and implementation at least for a term in one school. One participant said, *“The programme has experienced suspension in the past three years (2009 to 2011), it seems the WFP are experiencing problems”*. Another participant reported that *“the school meals were suspended for a term in 2009 and they did not send food stuffs”*. Yet the head teacher at the same school with the former said, *“School meals were suspended for the first term of the 2010 to 2011 academic year that runs from September to December as they did not receive bags of flour to cook”*.

It was therefore established that Chiradzulu district was one of the districts where the programme was suspended. Participants in the study acknowledged that the school meals programme was suspended at Malavi and Saint Theresa Primary Schools of Chiradzulu district. These problems occurred in the period between 2007 and 2011. The suspension was characterised by the programme being stopped for as long as an entire academic term and the WFP requesting that it should be scaled down. Suspension of the school meals was problematic as Madziakapita (2008) explained that the Malawian government’s main solution to food insecurity is to import food and request food aid from donor countries. It meant learners and families that benefitted from the programme suffered.

4.8.1 Causes of suspension

Participants perceived that the suspension was caused by a number of factors. One participant said, *“It seems the WFP are having problems funding the programme”*. A second perception was of the view that the programme had expanded to too many schools and a participant said, *“I believe the WFP provides us with goods according to how much funding they receive. It may be possible that the programme has expanded and many schools are benefitting and that is why the amounts provided have been reduced. To fulfil their duty they give little share to all”*. A third perception was that the cause of the suspension was the global financial problems that occurred between 2007 and 2011 and a participant said, *“I believe it was the global financial problems that caused donors to stop funding the WFP”*. The fourth perceived cause of the suspension was the fallout in relations between Malawi and its major donors. A participant said, *“We could hear on MBC (the state radio) that our government and donors argued. The donors stopped providing the assistance that they were giving before and I think this is what caused the problems”*.

4.8.2 Financial mis-management

It is disputed as to what caused the suspension of the WFP School meals programme in Malawi but the fallout in relations between Malawi and its major donors is most plausible beginning with Britain, its largest donor and colonial master. According to Tran (2011) the United Kingdom government suspended aid to Malawi because of the government's failures in economic management. This would not be the first time because in 2010 they cut aid to Malawi by three million pounds according to (Tran, 2011). Britain's western allies that are other major donors to Malawi such as the United States of America and Germany followed suit in support of their ally by suspending aid to Malawi. A participant in the study expressed similar sentiments that this was the cause. The WFP principally relies upon foreign governments as the major source of funding and their support is entirely voluntary. Britain is one of the major donors to the WFP and since its support is voluntary it can decide to suspend or reduce their support when it chooses.

Madziakapita (2008) makes a case of economic mismanagement and argues that lack of prudence with public funds by the Malawian government had led donors to freeze aid. Recipient governments' mismanagement of donor funds has led to donors' withdrawal of assistance. The withdrawal of assistance affects the operations of development agencies such as the WFP in the implementation of developmental programs and projects. Donors expect accountability and transparency with the funds they provide so that they are used for the intended purposes.

4.8.3 Global financial crises

However, it could be argued that the global financial crisis of 2007 to 2008 was the major contributing factor to suspension of the school meals programme in Malawi. A participant said that the financial problems that the world was facing meant donors could not sustain their assistance to less developed countries. The major donors had been greatly affected by the crisis especially the United States of America which is a major donor to the WFP and developmental projects in Malawi through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). According to the WFP (2010b) the WFP Malawi Country Director Abdoulaye Diop said that the programme required more funding for it to continue because the current funding was insufficient and that consequently the programme would be suspended in ten out of thirteen districts. The WFP's school meals programme phase that ran from January 2008 to December 2011 in Malawi would therefore not be completed. The

western donors had used the income to address the immediate problems that were being faced in their countries.

4.8.4 The Development Partnership

The success and sustainability of the school meals programme is largely determined by the development partnership. The key development players in the partnership are the Malawi government, the WFP and multilateral and bilateral donors. For the programme to operate adequate donations from donors must be provided to the WFP for implementation of the programme. The WFP country office must then work in unison with the Malawi government. The Malawi government is knowledgeable about where the programme is needed most and ensures that the resources reach the people at the grassroots who are the primary school children.

The problem with development partnerships is all players must be in unison for the programme to be implemented. The multilateral and bilateral donors have conditions that are attached to their expectation, the WFP has a programme with specific objectives and the Malawian government has national programmes with objectives as well. However in development programmes donors have a bigger say because they provide the resources for implementation. Thomas et al (2011) argue that aid dependency which is unsustainable reduces the autonomy of the recipient government and it becomes less accountable to its citizens. The major donors in Malawi play the critical role and these are Britain, USA and Germany. When aid was suspended to Malawi it became apparent that the development partnership fell out and a major contributor was not playing their role fully.

4.8.5 Take-home rations

Participants acknowledged that the suspension of school meals programme affected provision of take-home rations of 10 litres cooking oil and 25kg maize for girls and orphaned boys. One parent complained saying “*normally the programme is provided with take home rations of maize and cooking oil but for the past three years (2009 to 2011) that has not been happening*”. Another participant said, “*In 2010 and 2011 maize (take-home ration) were not given and 10kg cooking oil was provided by the WFP twice*”.

According to the WFP Malawi (2010) one of the objectives of the school meals programme is to promote regular attendance especially that of girls and orphans, and reduce gender disparities in enrolment and dropout rates especially in upper grades. Gender disparity is

common in southern Africa and not Malawi alone where boys have better prospects of advancing in education. Women find themselves in a male dominant society where their role plays second fiddle to that of men. The school meals programme is structured in a way that promotes empowerment of girls by singling them out as a vulnerable group and providing take-home rations of maize and cooking oil as an incentive for coming to school. This is done with the belief that when you educate a girl therefore you have educated the entire nation. A community is bound to gain more from educating the girl-child because then she will not rush into early marriage and have better prospects of getting a good job. She will have healthier children by applying the reproductive education she has obtained.

The suspension of school meals and the take-home rations in particular possessed a greater threat to girls' attainment of primary education because the incentive the programme had of encouraging parents to send their girls to school had been lost. The families were no longer receiving cooking oil and maize packs by sending their girls to school. Even though gender gaps in access to education have been narrowed but according to the UN department of public information (2013) disparities remain for example in sub-Saharan Africa where 93 girls are enrolled for every 100 boys. Girls are more vulnerable to be forced to stay at home and assist with domestic chores rather than boys. According to Rostow's modernization theory the economy of a traditional country like Malawi is highly dependent on agricultural production through subsistence farming. The girls then become additional labour force to work on the family land due to the labour intensiveness of subsistence farming and less use of technology.

The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) under theme three of social development recognizes building a healthy, educated and gender sensitive population as a key priority towards attaining the overall goal of developing human capital for full participation in the socio-economic and political development of the country. That is human development must and is inclusive of women and their role must be enabled.

Suspension of school meals possesses a threat to the immediate objectives of the WFP programme and long term goals of the country. The causes of the suspension may have been debatable but the programme itself must be prioritized, to avoid the negative socio-economic effects it has on learners and the communities that benefit. The WFP (2013) reports that school feeding programme contributes to having healthy and well-educated children but its

impact depends on whether quality education is available. Food alone is not enough but a catalyst for a good learning environment.

4.8.6 Scaling down or reductions

Participants in the study reported that the suspension of school meals programme resulted in a reduction of porridge portions given to learners. Teachers responsible for the school feeding programme at both schools reported that the WFP requested that portions given to learners at their school be reduced from 100g to 75g which their schools followed. A teacher said, *“Previously it was 100 grams per learner but now it is 75 grams per learner, it was reduced in 2010”*. The other teacher explained that *“the learners were not happy with the reduction of the portions and their unhappiness was expressed by the learners going back to receive more portions after they already had received their portion for the day, receiving twice or more the same day in order to satisfy their bellies”*.

Participants reported that the suspension caused a reduction in the numbers of bags cooked per day. A teacher in the programme complained and said, *“Last year (2011 to 2012 academic year) the official from Chiradzulu district drafted us to reduce the feeding portions because he claimed the enrolment we had that time was a little bit lower so we reduced instead of using four bags we used three bags but now since the enrolment is still high we are still using four bags per day. So that time even individual portions were reduced and learners were unhappy. Their unhappiness showed through repetitions, receiving twice or more the same day in order to satisfy their bellies”*. One parent complained that the reduction in number of bags cooked per day meant the porridge cooked was too thin to meet the number of learners which was not the way porridge is supposed to be cooked but should rather be thick. *“Today I was given two bags instead of four and bargained with sir (the teacher responsible for the programme) to give me an additional bag and then cooked three bags because using two bags is like making thobwa (finger millet drink or ragi drink) and not phala (porridge)”*.

Participants reported that the suspension caused change in the type of flour provided by the WFP at both Primary schools. Participants reported that the two schools were at first receiving *Likuni phala* (fortified soya enriched flour) that they cooked for the learners. According to some participants the *Likuni phala* (fortified soya enriched flour) was changed to grain mill (Malawi Limited) flour. Another participant on the other hand said, *“The flour we receive is different. There are bags labelled Persia, its flour is good and contains milk, and there are bags labelled Australia, its flour is sour”*. A participant complained about the

new flour and said *“The porridge flour that is being used is getting rotten easily, because of the sacks that are being used. Once they have a small hole then they will have worms”*.

The second objective of the study was to explore the participants’ perceptions of how Aid provision suspension by the WFP between 2007 and 2011 affected the socio-economic status of beneficiaries of the school meals programme. Participants in the study had the following perceptions of how the suspension affected the socio-economic status of beneficiaries:

4.8.7 Reduced Attendance and Enrolment

It was reported by teachers and parents at both schools that when the school meals were suspended attendance of learners decreased. A teacher said *“learners would come to school but upon arriving and noticing that porridge is not being prepared in the school kitchen they would run away”*. This was a case of abscondment or desertion. According to the (WFP, 2013) the school meals have an educational role that is to increase attendance and enrolment in order for children to learn effectively henceforth the role of the school meals was undermined by the suspension. The primary school net enrolment rate was 78 percent according to WFP (2010a) but national literacy levels cannot improve if people enrol but do not attend classes.

In the advent of democracy in Malawi it was enshrined under the 1994 then new constitution that primary school education was compulsory and free for all citizens (Malawi Government, 1994). The new government policy to provide free primary education resulted in an influx in enrolment but this increase in learners came about with problems. One of them was keeping learners in school attending classes. The school meals programme is a government initiative supported by the WFP that intends to increase attendance, but with Malawians experiencing chronic hunger and the programme being suspended, it has proven harder to keep learners in school and achieve the UN target of education for all. The ultimate goal of education for all is sustainable education

4.8.8 Absenteeism and Drop-out

While some learners would not attend classes and ran away upon realizing that there was no porridge being cooked in the school kitchen, others stopped coming to school entirely. A participant said, *“When the program is running learners come in numbers but when they suspended this programme some learners were not coming because they knew that if we go there (come to the primary school) there is nothing to eat that is why there was a lot of*

absenteeism and dropout”. Another participant said, *“We had at this time for the first term almost one thousand two hundred learners but due to the suspension when we got to second and the third term some dropped out or took transfers to other schools so we reached nine hundred and eight”*. These schoolchildren that had entirely stopped coming to school returned when the school meals resumed.

The programme is an incentive for parents to send their children to school because they as a family will receive food through take-home rations, their children will be fed and attain education. But when the incentive is lost, parents would rather have their children as a source of labour in a largely smallholder agricultural nation where they will work on the family’s piece of land.

Absenteeism affects a country’s realization of sustainability education. When learners attend school for each schooling year a person increases earnings by up to 10 percent (UN Headquarters, 2010). Absenteeism reduces a learner’s chances of realizing sustainability education. The learner has difficulties in thinking critically and systematically and making well informed decisions. This requires a learner to attend school regularly and their studies must be uninterrupted. With education poverty can be beaten and a low-income country such as Malawi progress but this demands an efficient and effective school meals programme. However, the effort is not enough since an estimated 16 billion dollars is required annually to assist reaching EFA goals in poor countries when in 2008 poor countries only received 2 billion dollars in aid for basic education (UN Headquarters, 2010).

4.8.9 Malnutrition

A participant reported undernourishment even though the word *“malnutrition”* was used loosely of some learners during the suspension of the WFP school meals. A participant said *“when the flour was finished you could see that some learners had malnutrition diseases”*.

Learners that are malnourished face learning difficulties as compared to those that are not malnourished. Learners that are healthy boast a good cognitive ability that allows them to pay attention, remember and think. This further assists them to understand and solve problems easier. Malnourished learners on the other hand lack the capacity for the proper functioning of these mental processes. This is why their performance deteriorates.

According to Jukes, McGuire, Method and Stenberg (2002) malnourished children tend to enrol later than better nourished children. This is because parents deem the shorter malnourished children to be younger and not physically large enough to attend school. This

delays the children's academic progress. It is also likely to affect a child's self-esteem because their malnourishment will always make them seem smaller and young.

4.8.10 Pressure on households

Parents and teachers reported that suspension of the school meals increased pressure on low-income or food insecure households to provide breakfast when they had depended on the WFP program to provide breakfast for their school-going children. A participant said, *"Some parents would tell their children to go to school where they would eat porridge but if they stayed home they would starve because there was no food (breakfast). When the school meals programme was suspended it became difficult for the parents (to send their children to school)"*. Another participant also in support went on to explain that this was because *"other (learners') families are getting little money to support their families"*. The suspension of the programme therefore reduced the support these families were gaining.

4.9 Suggestions

Teachers and learners' parents were asked to suggest ways of improving WFP School meals programme in Chiradzulu district. The participants suggested the following:

Parents and teachers at both schools commended the school meals programme and requested that the school meals programme should be continued and maintained. One teacher suggested that the programme should include a take-home package as well that learners should take meals home. The teacher said, *"They (WFP AND Malawi government) better increase it (school meals) because you could see that some learners coming from poor families from November to March some learners starve. They come miserably at school hoping that when they come to school they will eat food so if they could increase their (WFP and government) support to take to their homes it could be better"*.

Some participants suggested that the WFP's school meals programme in Chiradzulu district should be expanded. A participant said, *"They are other schools that do not have the programme but need the programme"*. The participants' perception was that other schools deserved to get similar assistance as they were getting.

Participants suggested that the supply has to be sufficient when giving portions to meet the nutritional needs of learners. Parents and teachers complained that the school meal portions of 75g that are a directive of the WFP were not enough for the learners. They suggested that

the WFP should revert back to giving learners a portion of 100g porridge. Participants also perceived the number of bags being cooked per day insufficient and need to be increased. A participant suggested that the number of bags cooked per day be increased because they had one thousand and three hundred learners at their school and were requested to cook four bags when previously they were cooking four bags for a thousand learners. The increase in number of learners should have been met with increase in number of bags cooked a day.

Participants suggested that the WFP and Malawi government should provide additional support in the programme. Firstly, parents suggested that the WFP should provide firewood for cooking because it was difficult for them as parents to fetch firewood each morning for cooking especially during the rainy season when the trees become wet. Secondly, teachers at one school requested installation of a borehole at their school because parents had to walk a long distance to fetch water. One of the teachers complained and said *“the children (learners) bring water for washing their plates.”* Thirdly, participants suggested that the WFP should revert to using old sacks that were durable and protected the flour from rotting. One teacher complained and said, *“The porridge flour that is being used is getting rotten easily, because of the sacks that are being used. Once they have a small hole then they will have worms. The khaki bags that were used before were good”*. Fourthly, participants suggested that the WFP should provide cups instead of plates that are used by the learners for eating the school meals. A participant said, *“At the moment what we do is give porridge by class from standard one to eight and after each class (finishes eating) we clean the plates used but if each child has a cup and takes the cup home to clean on their own then our job as parents is to clean the pots and prepare the porridge. It lessens our work.”*

Participants commended the programme’s pro-poor nature and requested that it should be continued by the WFP and never end. Food aid is one way of promoting social development in a hunger prone country especially by empowering learners. According to the WFP (2000) investing in human capital is better than in physical capital because it results in economic growth which is more evident by investing in primary school education. The acquired basic education provides essential skills of reading, writing and basic business skills. However, the problem is when an aid dependency syndrome and the sustainability of such an important programme rely on voluntary donors for its funding. A national program so critical must not rely on voluntary funding that cannot be predetermined all the time. Aid dependency in Malawi is not only with the School feeding programme but the entire national budget relies heavily on donor funding for the implementation of national programs and projects. A good

and strong government must be able to fund its essential programs and projects so that it is accountable to its people.

In the second stage of Rostow's modernisation process, after the Second World War, development assistance or aid was given to developing countries to help them transform from a traditional to a modern state. This was done with the assumption that less developed countries can develop only by following the path western countries did using the development assistance. This path is not working for Malawi because it is creating dependency. For the beneficiaries of the programme, they feel they cannot address the problem of hunger on their own. The inconsistency of aid flow due to reasons better explained by donors is a manifestation that aid as a long term solution is failing.

4.10 Concluding remarks or summary

The chapter presents and discusses data that was collected. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data. The following themes were identified in the study: understanding of the WFP, understanding of the school meals programme, benefits of the school meals programme, suspension of the school meals programme and suggestions on how school meals programme presents and analyses the findings of the study. The themes explain the relationship between the findings and both modernization and dependency theories.

CHAPTER FIVE: MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The summary of the main findings, a conclusion and recommendations in relation to practice and policy based on lessons learnt from the study are presented in the final chapter.

5.2 Main Findings of the study

The main findings are presented in relation to the research objectives.

Objective One: To investigate the participants' perceptions about how the suspension of aid provision to Malawi affected the school meals programme offered by the WFP.

The findings revealed that the suspension of aid by the WFP led to inconsistency and discontinuation of the school meals programme at the different schools. Unfortunately the discontinuation coincided with the lean season (from December to March) in Malawi when shortage of food/famine and hunger are widespread in the country.

Furthermore, the take home rations for orphaned learners and girls, which is a component of the WFP School meals programme was also inconsistent and discontinued. Therefore these groups were experiencing major challenges in terms of famine and hunger.

The change in the kind of ingredients given to beneficiaries of the Schools meal programme also resulted in concerns about the sufficiency (in terms of portion size) and nutritional value (change from *Likuni Phala* to *Grain mill Malawi Limited*) of the meals.

The decrease in the number of flour bags available to the different schools and the number of bags cooked per day has resulted in learner dissatisfaction of the 75 grams eating portions and caused repetitive reception by some learners at the cost of other learners.

The findings revealed that some learners dropped out and others would not attend classes upon realizing that there was no school meal prepared in the school kitchen. They would eventually return home without attending classes or finishing them. This in the long run prolongs a learner's time in school and hampers chances of attaining primary education.

The findings revealed that the suspension of the school meals programme led to malnourished cases of learners as observed by research participants. The programme had prior to its suspension been of nutritional benefit to learners.

Objective Two: To explore the participants' perceptions of how Aid provision suspension by the WFP between 2007 and 2011 affected the socio-economic status of beneficiaries of the school meals programme.

The suspension of the school meals programme increased pressure on parents of learners who in most instances were from low socio-economic status to provide an extra but very important meal namely breakfast for their school-going children. The school meals programme also motivated parents to send their children to school which in turn improved the attendance and hopefully in the long run the educational status of the children.

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion it is very clear from the research findings that the suspension of Aid and especially the WFP'S School Meals Programme between 2007 and 2011 had severe consequences for the beneficiaries of the programme and the country as a whole. The suspension affected the socio-economic wellbeing of beneficiaries and this became evident in the reduced/irregular school/class attendance by learners, absenteeism, malnourishment of learners and increased pressure on parents from low socio-economic status to provide one extra meal per day for their school going children. The research participants commended the programme for being beneficial and requested for its continuity with the assistance of the WFP.

Chiradzulu district was chosen as a case study because it is one of the least developed and poorest districts where famine and illiteracy are rampant. Further studies are recommended to explore lasting solutions for the sustainability of school meals programmes in Malawi and the creation of an exit strategy from the WFP because the people cannot remain dependent on foreign assistance forever.

5.4 Recommendations

1. The implementation of the school meals programme in Malawi Chiradzulu district must continue as it has a proven record of promoting socio-economic development. It is of nutritional benefit to schoolchildren in hunger stricken regions. More especially orphans and other vulnerable children, girls to be particular, who are targeted through the take-home rations component of the programme. Participants of the study made it clear that if the programme would be discontinued, the schoolchildren and families who benefitted from the programme, will continue to suffer and poverty will prevail.

2. A self-sustainable model of running the school feeding programme must be developed and adopted by the recipient government. The suspension that Malawi experienced should be noticed by other less developed countries and their governments so that they are aware of pitfalls and prepared and able to finance crucial development programmes. According to the WFP (2013) where the programme is more successful governments have an effective mechanism for recovering costs from well-to-do families.
3. It is tempting to expand a programme extensively when it is successful but expansion should be determined by the resources available. The programme cannot be universal but targeted which is feasible and sensible to donors.
4. It was observed and confirmed by participants that firewood is used for preparing the meals. There is need to find a renewable energy source such as biomass from old pit latrines to generate power for cooking. The cutting down of firewood promotes deforestation. Use of firewood is inconvenient in the rainy season because the wood is wet and hard to catch fire.
5. The development actors involved in the school meals programme must work with communities involved to install boreholes as a source of water. In some schools parents that prepare school meals walk long distances to water sources to collect water. The availability of water would also benefit the children and promote cleanliness of the schools.
6. There is need for a proper communication channel for new developments to reach people at the grassroots. When the WFP decided to reduce feeding portions from 100gms to 75gms, teachers responsible for the programme did not know why the reductions occurred.
7. There is need for more research to find out how food aid in developing countries can be more sustainable by developing local capacity to run school meals independently.

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PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS INVOLVED
WITH THE SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAMME

Good day,

My name is Charles Malikebu and I am a registered student for a Master of Arts in the field of Social Development at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. As part of the requirements in fulfilment of the degree, I am conducting a research study about how the changes in Aid provision by the World Food Programme affected the socio-economic status of the beneficiaries of the school meals programme in the Chiradzulu district of Malawi. The information might contribute to the body of knowledge for donors about the perceptions of different role players involved with the school meals programme and the influence thereof on the socio-economic status of beneficiaries of the programme in Chiradzulu district, Malawi.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. Your participation is voluntary and it is your right to at any point decide to withdraw from the study or not to answer the questions you feel uncomfortable with. Refusal to continue with your participation in the study will not be held against you in any way. If you accept the invitation and agree to participate in the study, I shall arrange to interview you at a time and place suitable for you. The duration of the interview is likely to be about one hour.

With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded. Only my supervisor and I will access the tapes. The interview schedules and tapes will be kept in a secure place for two years following any publications or for six years if no publication emanate from the study. Confidentiality shall be upheld and your personal details will not be included in the final research report.

Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the research study. I shall answer them to the best of my ability. I may be contacted on +27 844 198 8489 or my supervisor. Dr Edmarie Pretorius on 011 717 4476 should you need clarity. A copy of the final research report will be made available to you should you wish to receive the findings of the study.

Thank you considering in participating in this research study.

Charles Malikebu

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

I, hereby consent to participate in this research study. The purpose and procedures of the study have been clearly explained to me. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I may refuse to answer particular questions or withdraw at any point I feel uncomfortable to participate without any negative consequences. I also understand that I will not receive any financial benefit for participating in the study seeing that it is a study for academic purposes. I do understand that my responses will be kept confidential.

Signature:

Date:

CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO-TAPING OF THE INTERVIEW

I,
hereby consent to the tape-recording of the interview. I understand that my confidentiality
will be maintained at all times and that the tapes will be kept in a secure place and destroyed
2 years after publication or six years after completion of the study if there will be no
publication.

Signature:

Date:

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS AT
THE SCHOOLS

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Gender:

Age:

Position:

Number of years involved with the WFP?

Number of years involved with the school meals programme in the Chiradzulu district?

QUESTIONS

1. Give an overview of the Aid Provision by the WFP that Malawi benefitted from between 2007 and 2011.
2. The Aid provision by the WFP to Malawi was suspended between 2007 and 2011. Share your views on the reasons why the WFP's Aid provision was suspended.
3. Describe the school meals programme of the WFP to schools in the Chiradzulu district.
4. Explain how you perceive the suspension in WFP Aid provision affected the school meals programme in Malawi between 2007 and 2011.
5. In your view, how did the suspension in Aid provision for the school meals programme affected the socio-economic status of the beneficiaries of the programme between 2007 and 2011?
6. What role do you fulfil in the school meals programme in Chiradzulu district?
7. Share any suggestions you might have to improve the school meals programme in Chiradzulu district.

ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON MEDICAL)
R14/49 Malikebu

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**PROTOCOL NUMBER H120925****PROJECT TITLE**

The Socio Economic Bearing of Donor Aid Provision
suspension in Malawi between 2007 and 2011: a case
study of the WFP school meals programme in Chiradzulu

INVESTIGATOR(S)

Mr C Malikebu

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT

Human and Community Development/Social Work

DATE CONSIDERED

14/09/2012

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

Approved unconditionally

EXPIRY DATE

06/03/2015

DATE 07/03/2013**CHAIRPERSON**

(Professor T Milani)

cc: Supervisor : Dr E Pretorius

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10005, 10th Floor, Senate House, University.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

Signature_____
Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES