



# **An Assessment on the Impact of Constituency Development Fund on Community Transformation in Malawi: A Case Study of Mzimba and Nkhata Bay Districts.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research was purposed to assess the impact of the Constituency Development Fund on Community Transformation with special reference to social and economic investments in Malawi. The study was conducted in Mzimba and Nkhata bay districts respectively. The main objective was to "assess the impact of the constituency development fund on rural and community transformation in Malawi". The study examined the following variables that affect the utilization of CDF in public projects namely: Institutional and regulatory framework (national CDF guidelines): Community engagement process in such areas as: project identification and prioritization, budgetary and funds allocation, monitoring, and control: Political cultural factors: socio-economic factors such as local capacity or skills, community income level, and individual literacy level

The study employed the descriptive research design to carry out this research which used both quantitative and qualitative approaches in the collection of data. The target population was 200 CDF stakeholders from which a sample of 102 respondents was selected. Data collection was done using questionnaires and in-depth interviews for both primary and secondary data. Questionnaires were administered to Council Management, Councillors, ADCs, VDCs community members, and other stakeholders in the communities under study. The researcher used both primary and secondary data in the analysis. The outcome was used to identify the value of the independent variables to the dependent variable. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics through SPSS version 16.0. Generally, the findings of the study indicated that there is a huge gap between what is said in the CDF revised guidelines and what is being practiced on the ground.

The study revealed that community participation is still very low, especially in such critical areas as procurement, funds management, and project implementation. The study also showed that politics take huge control in the identification and distribution of CDF projects. The study further revealed that there is an imbalance of project identification and selection in that more recourse goes to the education sector mainly in such areas as the building of school blocks, and renovation of existing school structures. The study showed that the Agricultural sector gets the least from the CDF which poses a huge risk to food security. It was also established that most CDF-funded projects do not last within a single budget. The study recommended that Government should make further improvements in the management of the above-identified gaps for effective project management that will ensure CDF projects are completed on schedule and effectively in transforming communities.

The study recommends a need to institute proper legislation to control management CDS. The legislation should propagate the procedures, rules, regulations, and mechanisms for the administration, management, utilization, monitoring, evaluation, transparency, accountability, and auditing of CDF projects. It is important to note that when communities rely too heavily on politicians, to bring development they relinquish control of their natural and material resources and more importantly may not have a voice in their future. The CDF project purpose should be a source of inspiration and motivation for stakeholders and communities.

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**Keywords:** Project identification, Guidelines, Allocation of funds, Constituency Development Funds, Monitoring and control, political interference, Completion, Project implementation, Management; Schedule, Stakeholders, Corruption, Participation, Transformation, Procurement.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In light of the foregoing and to addressing the question of Community transformation and rural poverty, developing countries have continuously emphasized the need for rural and community investment as a means to the social and economic development of communities. (Mensah, 2019), argues that for Community Transformation to meet sustainable development, it requires special resources and institutions such as food security, health, and educational facilities, access to financial services, and peace that will fulfil people's aspirations for a better life. In the process of making these institutions present and functional, rural people have to be involved in the development of their respective communities for sustainability thereof. (Raworth, 2012)

In actualizing this strategic vision, Constituency Development Fund was first approved by Malawi National Assembly in the 2006/2007 fiscal year to promote efforts towards poverty eradication through interventions and programs implemented at the constituency level. In the 2022/23 financial year, Malawi Government has changed the focus from supporting micro-projects to CDF being a key vehicle for local economic development rather than

maintenance (Government of Malawi, 2022). Also (Nkombo, 2013) argues that the rationale behind this initiative is to provide members of parliament and their constituent communities with the opportunity to make choices and implement projects that maximize their welfare.

This fund was established mainly to assist fight poverty through the implementation of development projects at the local level and particularly those that provide basic needs such as healthcare, education, water, agricultural services, security, and electricity among others (Government of Malawi, 2014). The funds allocated for CDF have seen an increase in the amount along with the overall size of the National Budget supported by both foreign aid and domestic revenue. The trend has been the same in Malawi where Constituency Development Fund has increased from MWK 1 million since its introduction in 2006 to MK 100 million per constituency in the 2022/2023 financial year.

(Siwale, 2020), states that the Constituency Development Fund is a funding arrangement that disburses funds from the central government directly or indirectly to electoral constituencies for local infrastructure projects. A Constituency Development fund is a source of funds that is made available to a Member of Parliament to facilitate the implementation of minor projects in his/her constituency. The Constituency Development Fund in Malawi seeks to provide Members of Parliament and their constituent communities with the opportunity to make choices and implement projects that maximize their welfare in line with their needs and preferences (Lewanika, 2019). The Constituency Development Fund is there to respond to immediate, short-term community development needs. It represents a central government transfer to the local authorities, which is in line with the fiscal decentralization process. Decisions about how these funds are allocated and spent are profoundly influenced by elected members of parliament.

Again, the Constituency Development fund is a concept that to some extent represents a form of proximal governance and policy-making that is within the framework of decentralized development. In this framework, members of parliament and local government are expected to be the primary agency in the provision of social services to communities. It is however argued that it can result in an effective means of improving the quality of life of local communities and, thus contributing to infrastructure development and the promotion of sustainable livelihoods. Malawi as a country consists of Twenty Eight districts which have One Hundred and Ninety-three constituencies, each represented by an elected Member of Parliament. Two of the twenty-eight districts are Mzimba and Nkhata bay respectively which are also areas of focus in this research.

## ***1.2 Background of the study***

The Constituency Development Fund represents central government transfer to the local authorities, which is in line with the National Decentralization Policy. In its original form, the CDF sought to complement other existing funds such as District Development Fund by redirecting additional funds to the constituency to solve immediate short-term socio-economic problems identified by the community. In its current form, the CDF is a developmental fund to expedite resource mobilization for local economic development within constituencies.

It is a funding mechanism of the Malawi Government aimed at financing small and short-term projects in the communities. Money for the CDF is provided through the National Budget which is approved by the National Assembly every year. Being part of the voted expenditure in the budget, the Fund is, therefore, subject to public funds management laws and procedures as specified in Malawi's Public Finance Management Act, 2003, Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets Act, 2016, the Public Audit Act, 2018 and the Corrupt Practices Act, 1995 as amended.

In 2006 Constituency Development fund was introduced in Malawi through the Parliament to implement developmental projects which would in the long term improve the socio-economic well-being of the constituents. The objective of this Fund in Malawi is to create an enabling environment where members of parliament, ward councillors, and the communities have the opportunity to make choices and implement projects that will improve the standard of living of the people in line with their needs and preferences. Again to ascertain that the demands of constituency-driven politics are met concerning the supply and demand for the provision of constituency service, outside the line of ministerial governance structures of national and local government social service provision. (Government of Malawi, 2014)

The Constituency Development Fund is a type of decentralized government funding that is meant at delivering goods and services directly to the constituency by the delivery of additional funds to the local communities, and outside-line ministries (Christopher Ngacho, 2014). It is mainly a developing country policy that is planned to contribute towards the improvement of social infrastructure and community development as a whole. In countries where Constituency Development Fund is operational, it is appropriated by Parliament within the national budget of a country. The management and implementation of the CDF are anchored on six principles that seek to promote and realize the democratic empowerment of citizens. These principles include; community ownership, community contribution, community demand-driven projects, public good projects, transparency and accountability, and community empowerment (Government of Malawi, 2014)

The constituency development fund is essentially a developing world policy framework that aims at providing public funds with the view of benefiting the communities through allocations of funds to constituencies. The decisions on how the funds would be spent are influenced by local authorities and Members of Parliament through numerous participatory governance structures, which differ from country to country. The main feature of the Constituency Development Fund is that it creates a platform for politically driven development initiatives, rationalized within the premise of the significance of locally-based development.

(Nkombo, 2013), argued that Constituency Development Fund can address developmental and governance challenges that many countries face. They purportedly: ensure project delivery in the face of ineffective and corrupt local government structures, bypass central bureaucracies and channel funding directly to a community level, enable the participation of the local population in the choice of which local infrastructure is delivered, empower the legislature by allowing them to allocate and spend resources independently of the executive, and allow MPs and councillors to respond directly to concrete demands from their constituents.

By its design, the Constituency Development Fund process creates the potential for perceptions of undue political interference. As it is argued that Constituency Development Fund is an avenue for the perpetuation of neopatrimonialism citing that the heavy involvement of MPs in the implementation of the Constituency Development Fund aggravates the problem. Furthermore, its arrangement is in breach of the principle of the separation of powers by conferring parts of the executive function on the legislator, and this contributes to political clientelism because it means that the MP is managing government funds, rather than representing citizens and holding the executive accountable. However, it is further seen that contrary to the Constituency Development Fund guidelines, some Members of Parliament manage Constituency Development Fund resources with party structures, side-lining Area Development Committees that are supposed to participate in the implementation of the fund.

### ***1.3 Statement of the problem***

The concept of the Constituency Development Fund has spread to most developing countries. As presented in this paper, Constituency Development Fund is a decentralized government funding which aims to deliver goods and services to the people. This is done through a system of distribution of additional funds for local developmental projects, and outside-line ministries directly to the community. Constituency Development Fund however represents the principles of decentralization as an engine of social infrastructure development in that it finances development initiatives at the grass root level through decentralization of funds and decision-making at the local level.

Constituency Development Fund in Malawi continues to face numerous challenges as it is not taken seriously as a tool for social infrastructure and community development. This problem comes from the fact that successive governments have been advancing the decentralization agenda since independence and multiparty with very little improvement in the performance of local government. It is significant to note there is little room for community participation in decision-making on local development activities and affairs.

Like many rural constituencies in Malawi Mzimba northeast and Mzimba West constituencies in Mzimba district and Nkhata north and Nkhata bay North West in Nkhata bay districts, are lagging in terms of infrastructure development. The constituencies' economic and social infrastructure pose a serious challenge to the development of the constituencies which are coupled with poor road network, poor education facilities, and poor health care delivery, poor access to clean water, markets, and commercial banking services among others.

Tangible results on how Constituency Development Fund has been used since its inception have not been well documented this is because not much research has been carried out in the area of Constituency Development Fund. The development of the people at the grassroots is vital for the country because it has implications for poverty reduction and national development, which is the country's stated ultimate goal of the Malawi 2063 agenda. (National Planning Commission, 2020)

As it is outlined in the (Government of Malawi, 2022), the total allocation of the CDF per Constituency is disbursed among four major components Community development projects get 90% and education Bursaries gets 5% while administrative cost is allocated 3%, and constituency administrative assistant operational costs gets 2%. It was therefore essential to critically assess how Constituency Development Fund has and is impacting community transformation. It's significant to look at the key issues, which need to be addressed to achieve their stated objectives as indicated in the CDF implementation guideline handbook. It was against this background that this research was executed by applying both qualitative and quantitative research methods to assess whether Constituency Development Fund improves and bring about development in rural communities.

### ***1.4 Objectives of the study***

#### ***1.4.1 Main objective***

Assessing the impact of the constituency development fund on rural and community transformation in Malawi

#### ***1.4.2 Specific objective***

- i. To assess the degree of community participation in the identification, prioritization, and implementation of Community development Fund-funded projects in the Mzimba and Nkhata bay districts
- ii. To determine the scope of awareness of community members on Community Development Fund operating guidelines and policies in the Mzimba and Nkhata bay districts
- iii. To determine the level of impact of Community Development Fund-funded projects on the social economic welfare of the community members in Mzimba and Nkhata districts respectively
- iv. To determine the accountability, transparency, and administrative mechanisms of Community Development Fund resources in the Mzimba and Nkhata bay districts.

### ***1.5 Significance of the study***

According to (Chrine, 2020), the Constituency Development Fund seeks to provide Members of Parliament and their constituent communities with the opportunities to make choices and implement development projects that maximize their welfare in line with their needs and preferences. The Constituency

Development Fund is there to respond to immediate, short term while realizing long-term community development needs. Under CDF priority is given to short-term and immediate interventions, micro-projects, or programs whose benefits accrue to communities or groups of individuals than individuals. Such projects broadly include community income-generating activities, community irrigation schemes, agriculture inputs, drug revolving funds, community fishing ponds, school buildings, health clinics, community buildings, boreholes, feeder roads, bridges, and route infrastructural maintenance work, rehabilitation or new investment projects as identified by the communities and the Member of Parliament.

With this in mind, a shift has taken place in Malawi's development program governance structure. Whereas before the CDF initiative the central government was providing, and planning development projects without much involvement and participation of local communities while today with the change of government policies community members are involved and decide on the project needs for their communities (Blessings Chinsinga & Dan Banik, 2016). This shift has been also impelled and complemented by changing the mind on appropriate approaches to community and national development as a whole.

(Pandeya, 2015) Suggests that more community participation and more decentralization result in more democracy and well and evenly distributed development in the country. Malawi as a democratic country has adopted decentralized participatory development frameworks with an aim of a bottom-up strategy of tackling developments in all designated constituencies (Chinsinga, 2009). Nevertheless, a few successful case studies have been shared and the challenges have been overwhelming. Key among these challenges is political interference and poor involvement of local community members and local structures in prioritization identification and implementation of the projects.

Again since the inception of the Constituency Development Fund in 2006, the Malawi government in partnership with development partners has invested a huge amount of financial resources in constituencies through district councils. This is intending to improve the social and economic welfare of the people and as a tool for promoting participation in development and attainment of national development agenda. As such it is of paramount significance to measure and appreciate the impact that emerged as the result of the Constituency Development Fund program.

The findings of this study can help the organizations, government, oversight authority, and development partners with essential information on the effective utilization and agree to the role of CDF funds in community transformation. The study also potentially identified framework and policy gaps and has suggested improvements and amendments to policy, guidelines, and practice concerning the effective implementation and management mechanisms of Constituency Development Fund-funded projects.

Further insights in this study topic are of great significance to scholars in Community development and transformation as well as contribute to organizational learning and knowledge sharing by reflecting upon and sharing experiences and lessons with development stakeholders. To the academic community, the study would enable them to understand the contributions and efficacy, and dimensions of CDF and open-up opportunities for further research on the program, and contribute to the body of knowledge for community transformation through diverse ideas to narrow the research gap in the area of Constituency Development Fund projects.

### *1.6 Scope of the study*

The research was conducted in four constituencies which implied two from Mzimba and two from Nkhata bay districts respectively. These constituencies are Mzimba West and Mzimba northeast in Mzimba district and Nkhata bay North West and Nkhata bay north in Nkhata bay District. These constituencies have been identified to be the case study for this research because they are among the constituencies in Malawi whose development purse has been very slow despite the allocation of CDF in every national budget since its inception. The study involved community members from these stated constituencies, CSO representatives, government officials, and local community administrative structures.

This research analyzed the political, social, and economic diversities of targeted constituencies, their differential capacities to manage CDF-funded projects, impact on development and suggest possible strategies for advocating for policies and frameworks of CDF which enhance community transformation and community members' knowledge and participation in development so that a true community has driven development process that has inherent mechanisms for sustainable community development and transformation realized.

#### **Nomenclature**

**Project:** It is defined as a sequence of tasks that must be completed to attain a certain outcome. It is any temporary endeavour with a definite beginning and end". Depending on its complexity, it can be managed by a single person or hundreds.

**Framework:** It is a real or conceptual structure intended to serve as a support or guide for the building of something that expands the structure into something useful.

**Development:** It is a process that creates growth, progress, positive change, or the addition of physical, economic, environmental, social, and demographic components.

**Project Identification:** Documentation of a Project with provision for planning further development

**Project Implementation:** The process of executing project activities in line with the implementation plan

**Project Management:** The application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the stakeholder needs and expectations

**Stakeholder involvement:** The active engagement of all individuals or groups with an active stake in the project

**Fund:** it is a comprehensive financial provision that is set aside and accessible for the satisfaction of community development

**Community:** It is a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common

**Participation:** The process during which individuals, groups, and organizations are consulted about or have the opportunity to become actively involved in a project or program of activity.

**Constituency Development Fund:** A fund established through an Act of Parliament and managed at the Constituency level intending to promote grass-root development.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** The ongoing process of obtaining regular feedback on the progress being made toward achieving their goals and objectives

**Political Involvement:** The active engagement of all political groupings with an interest in a project

**Project Completion:** The completion of a project within budget, time, and intended design and utilization

## 2.0 literature review

### 2.1 Introduction

A literature review is a comprehensive summary of previous research on a given topic. The literature review surveys scholarly articles, books, and other sources relevant to a particular area of research. The review enumerates, describe, summarize, objectively evaluate and clarify previous research. It gives a theoretical base for the research and help the researcher determine the nature of the research. A literature review creates a landscape for the audience, giving it a full understanding of the developments in the field. This landscape informs audience that the author has indeed assimilated the vast majority of previous, significant works in the field of the research.

This chapter details with reviewed literature relating to the research question. The review of literature involves the systematic identification and analysis of documents containing information related to the research question being answered. The aim of literature review is to understand what has already been done in relation to the research question being answered and determine the gaps in such literature that this research had endeavored to address. It helps to determine what exists in the scholarly literature. It also identifies possible gaps in the scholarly literature for further research. Again it informs the research topic, theory if applicable and associated methodology.

This paper reviewed key concepts of CDF, community infrastructure, concept of decentralisation, and community participation, community awareness and knowledge on CDF operating guidelines and practices and development. It provided a theoretical base for the study through analyzing the administration, implementation, transparency, accountability and participatory approach to development, stakeholder involvement, skills of management teams and committees, funding and resources, governance and summary and research gaps.

As emphasized by (Van Lange Paul A. M, 2015), a literature review assists the researcher achieve a critical analysis of the existing literature in the proposed research area and in clarifying and framing research questions as it gives a broader view of what has been done and not done prior to the proposed research. Again (Oztemel, 2018), states that literature review is useful in discovering research findings and how they relate to the existing appropriate literature.

### 2.2 Main literature review

#### 2.2.1 Brief overview of decentralization and its rationale in Malawi

After the one-party rule, Malawi undertook changes to reflect the new political and governance era. Decentralization of administrative and political power to local levels was among the change. New decentralisation policy was adopted in 1998 following the enactment of a new Local Government Acts in the same year. (Government of Malawi, 2005) Whereas the decentralisation policy sought to create an operational framework for decentralisation in Malawi, the Local Government Act is the legal framework within which the policy operates (Chiweza, Asiyati Lorraine, 2010). The Local Government Act (1998) is the foundation document for the legal implementation of decentralization in Malawi. The LGA enshrines key elements of the Decentralization Policy including structure of government; District Assemblies, composition of the Assemblies, and powers of the Assemblies, functions, and financing and powers and functions of community development structures. (Blessings Chinsinga, 2007)

According to (Chibwana, 2011), the fundamental objectives of the Decentralization Policy are to: Create a democratic environment and institutions in Malawi for governance and development at the local level, which facilitates the participation of the grassroots in decision-making. Eliminate dual administration such as field administration and local government at the district level with the aim of making the Public Service more efficient, more economical and cost effective. Promote accountability and good governance at the local level in order to help government reduce poverty. Mobilize the masses for socio economic development at the local level.

There are two fundamental objectives: firstly, the main motivation for decentralizing in Malawi is to deal with the deteriorating socio-economic conditions. Therefore, government views decentralisation as a key strategy for implementing its enunciated policy of Poverty Alleviation (Blessings Chinsinga, 2008). The framework of the policy emphasized on the need for a participatory process in which government, the civil society and the private

sector organize themselves to explore grassroots solutions to poverty. The call was sanctioned by the evidence of extreme conditions of pervasive poverty, especially in the rural areas coupled with the many competing needs, which have resulted in an uncoordinated approach to development ( World Bank, 2006). This resulted in a plethora of incoherent and disjointed activities in the various sectors, which have tended to perplex rather than assist the beneficiaries.

As such, an all-inclusive and integrated approach to development and poverty reduction was therefore required. In this vein, the policy adopted decentralisation as an institutional objective and strategy for implementing the community empowerment and development programmes. And in a bid to institutionalize community development interventions, the government established a special fund known as constituency development fund and was formally approved by National Assembly in 2006/2007 fiscal year, which has central government authority to local and community committees to decide, plan, manage and implement development interventions addressing their own unique needs. (Government of Malawi, 2022)

Secondly, it was to establish a single institution at district level, which can manage many of the functions, currently performed by line ministries to eliminate overlapping structures. The single unit it was envisaged would abolish the dual administration of local government at the district level, which has resulted in an intense scramble for resources between the two systems. Furthermore, it resulted in unnecessary duplication of efforts and very inefficient utilisation of human, financial and material resources.

Thus, decentralisation is aimed at facilitating the creation of a single unit of administration at district level that can coordinate in a cost effective manner the delivery of services, planning and implementation of political, social and economic development programmes. Since decentralisation embraces democratic values and ideals, it is also envisioned that local authorities can promote popular participation in the development process. ( David Booth, 2002) But this can only be achieved through an effective, well-coordinated and comprehensive devolution of power.

### ***2.2.2 General Overview and rationale of Constituency Development Fund***

The sovereign republic of Malawi has 193 constituencies dotted country-wide and each represented by a Member of Parliament elected every five years. Every constituency has wards represented by the councillors and in these wards there are community development structures established under local government Act. In the 2006/2007 fiscal year, the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) was initiated in Malawi by the National Assembly, with an aim of providing local structures and authorities with discretionary funds whose utilisation is solely for the provision of social and maintenance services such as education, health, water and sanitation, agricultural services and other supplementary benefits to the community.

As this fund was envisioned to be purely for community service, its utilisation is expected to occur within a socially inclusive participatory framework to all community members. Against this background and in a hope to consolidate the fund's rationale, the Government of the Republic of Malawi through the National Assembly enacted an operating guidelines which have periodically been revised in order to address the framework gaps and incorporate the current national development agenda and priorities which can also guide the disbursement, management and utilization of the fund.

(Christopher Ngacho, 2014) affirms the importance of CDF, The Fund was introduced within Malawi's wider decentralization policy drive as a public fund to finance development projects at the constituency level through the coordination of elected Members of Parliament, ward councillor and community structures. Therefore, the fund is designed to actively engage the local citizens on their priority needs. It is in this disposition that the fund holds strong opportunities in community transformation and national development if well managed. These projects financed by this fund have a great inspiration in the quality of life of rural people. Constituency Development is an increasingly central fund in national development and plays a key role in community transformation as it is situated within the local government framework and was set up by the government to mitigate community needs and harmonize the spread of development throughout the country.

Constituency Development Fund is an initiative based on direct transfers of budgeted funds from central government to parliamentary constituencies for financing local development through district council (Robert Ochoki Nyamori, 2009). (Mwangi S. Kimenyi, 2005) States that the Fund represent a form of proximal governance and policy making within a framework of decentralized development. Since the establishment of the CDF in 2006, funds in constituencies funds are being used largely at the discretion of MPs, and regardless of being subject to operating guidelines or legal requirements outside of those specified in the Local Government Act.

There has been a review of these guidelines which at some point it preserved as a political influence that has seen an MP having more powers over CDF in the very newly revised guidelines of 2022. This makes Community members especially those not affiliated to political parties perceive that MPs 'change the order in which to handle the CDF' in the view of safeguarding their parliamentary seat. This erodes the issue of trust in parliamentarians and undermines strong and effective governance. (Wamugu, 2017)

Unlike other development funds that come from the central government through administrative organs and bureaucracies, funds under this program go directly to the people at the grassroots through district council. This gives the people at local level the opportunity to make expenditure decisions that maximize their welfare through establishing community development projects. It was with this background, that this study sought to assess whether Community Development Fund impacts community transformation in Malawi. It also investigates the extent of the knowledge and community participation, transparency and accountability in the selection and implementation of Constituency Development Fund.

This Fund was first introduced as a way of empowering Members of Parliament to respond to emergencies such as funerals in their respective constituencies (Government of Malawi, 2022). However, over time the fund has evolved into a very important tool for the developmental of constituencies. The Fund now empowers communities by providing funding for micro-community development projects. (Government of Malawi, 2022)

Community Development Fund has registered key achievements since inception in 2006. The greatest achievement has been genuine shifting of projects formulation from line ministries to communities where local initiative ownership, community participation and accountability and transparency have been encouraged. Citizens have an opportunity to align their needs and demands with resource allocation (Lafourcade, 2005)

There is general improvement of physical infrastructure in majority of the constituencies' especially social facilities like schools, health, construction of bridges and water points hence improved accessibility to such facilities. In particular the poor in the past experienced serious problems accessing basic services but through CDF the situation has changed for the better (Lafourcade, 2005). The programme has most importantly created employment for local populace because local artisans are awarded contracts and materials for construction works are normally sourced locally.

According to (Chrine, 2020) the major goal of Constituency Development Fund is therefore to meet local communities' needs and demand for developmental projects, which are not in the list of priorities of the regular structures of national and local government arguably due to the absence of effective links with local communities. CDF has the capacity for the government to bypass central bureaucracies and deliver goods and services directly to constituents or communities. Again, as espoused by (Christopher Ngacho, 2014), Constituency Development Fund is meant to provide resources to be used in the development of communities to give them a choice to maximise their welfare in line with their needs and preferences. The resources are aimed at the provision of infrastructure such as the constructing of roads, bridges, building of class rooms and teachers houses. The fund aims to redistribute national resources to the community so as to alleviate poverty; bring facilities and services closer to the people; and raise the standard of living of local communities.

The Fund also seeks to avail resources to local communities to fund development projects at constituency level and to ultimately achieve bottom up development (Chrine, 2020). Apart from the objective of poverty reduction CDF is also aimed at enhancing people's participation in decision making processes; promoting good governance; and promoting transparency and accountability (Lewanika, 2019). However, the types of community projects that are eligible for CDF in Malawi are stipulated in the revised CDF Guidelines. According to the revised Guidelines, these should be community-based projects whose outcomes should benefit the community and enhance development and transformation. They generally include projects related to education, health, water, sanitation, recreation, agriculture. Roads, bridges and economic ventures

### ***2.2.3 Challenges associated with CDF in Community Transformation***

This study appreciates that besides constituency Development Fund benefiting and impacting the community transformation it is faced with numerous challenges such as; lack of community capacity to engage effectively with the local governance organs to ensure efficient use of resources (Lafourcade, 2005). This is coupled by weak systems, institutions, policies and procedures at the constituency level. Lack of transparency and accountability at all levels of the project cycle. Propagation of institutions that is unresponsive to community opinions and the need of the people at the ground. Lack of community participation and awareness of constituency Development Fund at all levels of the community has been a major hindrance to transformative development in the community. Issues of nepotism, combined with political influence from mostly Hon. Members of Parliament, overwhelming corruption in procurement of services or project materials and favouritism in the selection of committees and beneficiaries. (Mabveka, 2014)

According to (Mabveka, 2014) in some cases un-prioritised projects, poor quality and sub-standard projects are implemented at the expense of the poor people. Noteworthy in some instances mismanagement of completed projects, poor finishing due to cheap materials and, unequal distribution of resources amongst the different locations in a constituency (Matetai, 2016). Civil Society' organizations and media institutions that are at community level lack a collective voice and do not have the capacities to mobilize and sensitize citizens on issues of good governance. Constituency Development Fund committees on the other hand are sometimes comprised of political party members and that lack different capacities especially in the areas of good governance (Wachuru, 2013). They are unresponsive to citizen enquiries, opinions and needs and deny them information on fund utilization. Some of the CSOs and committees do not follow democratic processes. Most community members as a result of the "top-down" approach were and are still used to the government taking lead in development initiatives.

Decentralisation is meant to lead to improved livelihoods, increased community participation in decision-making, enhance government transparency as more people become aware of the activities and projects being undertaken and the resources available (Chiweza, Asiyati Lorraine, 2010). But this is not evidenced in CDF practice in Malawi. Again CDF Guidelines do not stipulate the number of projects that a constituency can implement each year. This could be the reason for the many poorly implemented projects each year as opposed to a smaller number of projects but at a much better level of quality. The Guidelines stipulated give too much flexibility when it comes to the quality and number of projects (Government of Malawi, 2022). This can cause the abuse by politicians and other local government officers in relation to the implementation of CDF funded projects. There is need for CDF projects to involve the full participation of the community in terms of labour, monitoring and evaluation and also an emphasis on prioritizing the locally available materials, as much as possible.

### ***2.2.4 Constituency Development Fund Initiatives***

The Constituency Development Fund in Malawi was introduced in 2006/2007 fiscal year. The fund was designed to support grass-root development projects (Government of Malawi, 2014). The aim was to achieve equitable distribution of development resources across the country and to control disparities in regional development brought about by political influence. It targeted all constituency-level development projects which aim to combat poverty at the grassroots (Government of Malawi, 2022). Since its inception Constituency Development Fund program has facilitated the putting up of

new roads, health and water and education facilities in all parts of the country, including remote areas that were usually overlooked during funds allocation in national budgets.

Constituency Development Fund is helping provide services to communities that for many years did not benefit substantially from government services. In particular, basic services like health care, good roads and schooling are now being made available through Constituency Development Fund. In this regard, if the CDF initiative is properly implemented, it can play a significant role in the achievement of the National Vision 2063 objectives, which are overly geared towards enhancing economic growth, wealth creation and poverty reduction. Given the importance of this Fund in community transformation, it is critical to strengthen its institutional, design and implementation aspects (Kipkorir, 2021). This would be instrumental in enhancing the efficiency in the utilization of funds and reinforcing Constituency Development Fund implementation by promoting community involvement in processes and undertakings.

In addition (Aziza, 2022), argues that availability of adequate funds has a direct relationship with efficient implementation of community projects. Adequate funds helps in successful completion of community projects. While the overall resource available can in theory be sufficient to complete the project, there can be complications arising from the way in which the projects are organized. There can be more activities planned to take place at the same time and this cannot be possible given the amount of resources available. Projects usually compete for resources. These resources include manpower, money and time.

These projects compete against each other putting the project manager in the position of being in competition. Running a project initiative heavily depends on availability of varied resources to facilitate execution of tasks to accomplish organizational goals, (Robert Ochoki Nyamori, 2009). A project intervention is established on the platform of availability of resources invested with the sole purpose of gaining interest. (Hanna Hopia PHD, 2016), states that no project venture can operationalize any superior competitive project idea at a resource disadvantage, for ideas can just remain so, if there are no resources to set them in a motion. The successful execution of community projects, keeping them within estimated cost and the prescribed schedules, primarily depends on efficient, transparent and accountable development mechanisms capable of sustaining growth and development in order to cope with the requirements of social and economic transformation and to utilization development resources. (Robert Ochoki Nyamori, 2009)

As pointed out by (Khwaja, 2004), development can only be meaningful if it involves the participation of beneficiary communities. This participation is at all levels from project identification, selection right through to implementation. One of the aims of the study is to examine the extent of community participation in the selection and implementation of projects on which Community Development Fund is utilized. It was therefore important to carry out an assessment given that Community Development Fund projects must reflect the priority needs of the local people and community participation in project implementation is one of the characteristics of Community Development Fund. The Community participation in identification, implementation and monitoring of CDF projects is key to the success of such projects.

However, community participation is seen to be an effective strategy of managing public affairs (Lewanika, 2019). This study is necessitated by the fact that most of the research that has been done have revealed that the level of community participation in constituency development fund projects, at the constituency level is low hence affecting community development. As earlier mentioned in the paper one of the study's objectives tackles the issue of the level of community participation in the identification and the implementation of projects by looking at the essentiality of participate in CDF projects. This study does not merely look at the participation of the community in Community Development Fund projects but it goes a step further to find out whether Community Development Fund actually benefits the community or in transforming the lives of community members.

### ***2.2.5 Community familiarity of Constituency Development Fund operating guidelines***

Poor familiarization of community structures and fund administration on their principal roles and responsibilities in the governance of Constituency Development Fund has contributed to poor performance or broad failure of the Fund (Simpson, 2007). Poor participation, particularly for community members who are principal beneficiaries, results in poor Identification, prioritization and implementation of projects. There are challenges to ensuring that all decentralized funds reach all parts of the district or constituency in adequate quantities, and that all funds allocated are actually utilized instead of being returned to the source while the exist development needs (Chiweza, Asiyati Lorraine, 2010). Generally, community awareness and participation in devolved funds has been low and has been faced with more inequalities, and the funds are seen to have had little impact on the quality and durability of projects. Communities have questioned the various processes in identification prioritization and implementation of projects, as well as the monitoring and controlling of projects and funds, and have expressed concerns about accountability and transparency. (Ansari, 2012)

There is a great deal of work to be done to empower and educate community structures on their roles in development through devolved funds and of the various funds decentralized to ease access for community planning by community members (Rabia Malik, 2019) and in his study further points at low awareness and information about the funds, power of controlling, the procedures for application and use of the allocated funds, and inadequate orientation for the community structures on the procedures for utilization of the funds, poor monitoring and control systems as key significant problems that affects to establish whether the fund is bringing impact to the community

Other scholars have also pointed inadequacy of participation in the institutions for decision making in the community matters, thus, participation in project identification, planning and implementation, selection of committees, and monitoring and control. This is a product of insufficient information on CDF objectives and operating guidelines hindering participation of targeted beneficiaries. Moreover, (Rabia Malik, 2019) suggests that politicians can dominate or unlawfully influence project identification, planning and implementation because of political powers they have taking advantage of



inadequate information on CDF procedures by community members. This leads to a state where the funds do not meet the needs of the targeted beneficiaries due to misplaced priorities originating from non-consultative planning process by single-handedly appointed committees.

In the study of (Pandeya, 2015) it was contended that community knowledge on CDF is considerably unsatisfactory in most cases and that elected constituent institutions can influence individual members of the community to have increased knowledge of CDF. Members of particular constituencies are expected to be active in the all project phases to ensure that objectives of the project are met using resources allocated for them within a given period of time. According to (Mabveka, 2014), training community members in skills, awareness and knowledge of basic project management needs to be emphasized in order to navigate projects effectively. Given the above findings, it can be right to suggest that the government of Malawi through local government structures need to strengthen project management prospectus at all levels with an aim of equipping communities with project management knowledge and awareness that would help them obtain skills and capacity from various local projects.

Capacity building and training community structures about Community Development Fund development projects to stimulate awareness and knowledge is of utmost importance (Pandeya, 2015). Training is a process by which individuals gain knowledge, skills and attitudes that are helpful in shaping the lives of the people. Imparted skills and knowledge are important in solving emerging problems and challenges that would affect community development. (Wamugu, 2017), enlightens that when the community members of a society increase their personal knowledge, awareness and management of resources, community sustainability and just distribution of resources can be attained.

### **2.2.6 Community transformation and Governance**

Community transformation has no universally accepted definition. The term is used in different ways in vastly divergent contexts. It connotes overall development of communities with a view to improve the community quality of life. According to (Simpson, 2007) community transformation deals with multi-sectorial issues such as infrastructure, health care, hygiene, education, environment, water and sanitation, food security, governance as well as community income generation. Thus, transformation is a process that aims at improving the standard of living of the people living in the communities.

With the result that Community Transformation has the provision of social institutions such as education and health that could provide the catalyst to transform the rural areas, Community Transformation can also be seen as an ideology and a practice because in essence it can imply a broad re-organization and mobilization of rural masses in order to enhance their capacity to improve their lives and with changes consequent upon this. Hitherto (Leo W.J.C. Huberts, 2014), Community Transformation aims at improving the livelihoods by implementing comprehensive development projects, programmes of strategies for rural areas where a majority of people in poverty live (Rumphu Cival Society Network, 2017). Community transformation can also contribute to reduce poverty in urban areas by reducing excessive population influxes from rural communities.

According to the World Bank (2001) in their paper Rural Development Strategy, there is an attestation that community transformation must be clearly designed to increase community productivity. Thus, there should be improved food supplies and nutrition, together with basic facilities and social and economic services, such as health and education. Subsequently, this not only directly improves the physical quality of life of the poor communities, but can also indirectly enhance their productivity and their ability to contribute to the national economy. Therefore, in this study, community transformation is to ensure that social inputs and welfare facilities and services are developed using constituency development fund; these include physical inputs such as the provision of feeder roads, safe water and electrification, social inputs namely health and educational facilities and service and institutional inputs such as credit facilities, agricultural research facilities, community expansion services among others.

Again leadership is significant issue that can be best analysed within governance context (Leo W.J.C. Huberts, 2014). In general, governance refers to the system such as traditions, institutions and processes by which power is applied in making decisions on issues of community concern including giving citizens a voice in the process. (Muange Eric, 2013) The good governance is based on the exercise of fairness, transparency, accountability, responsibility, discipline, justness, efficiency and effectiveness among other values in discharging duties. Hitherto, the Constituency Development Fund lacks an effective mechanism for the most anticipated good governance (Chinsinga, 2009).

The Constituency Development Fund lacks its own structure for disclosure and accountability, since these are handled by council officials without much involvement of local people. The district councils have often been accused of inefficiency and ineffectiveness and not transparent with CDF. This is worsened by the near complete absence of community participation in the use of the fund. There seems a significant relationship between the nature of project team and the implementation of Constituency Development Fund Funded projects. In the light of this possibility, it can be tempting to believe that the extent to which project outputs are obtained, is largely determined by the degree to which adequate governance is provided. Governance entails a display of vision and integrity, perseverance and courage, hunger for innovation and willingness to take risks. Effective leaders have the ability to read the forces that shaped their times and seize on the resulting opportunities (Leo W.J.C. Huberts, 2014).

In the views of (Chinsinga, 2009) good governance must be a priority since it's the single most important factor which can determine the rate at which the country should empower its citizen and improve the livelihood. There is need to identify and remove institutions and regulatory obstacles that would still affect the full participation of citizens in the process of formulation and implementation of social and economic frameworks.

Governance, as enshrined by the guiding principles of leadership and integrity in the constitution of the republic of Malawi entails selfless service based solely on the public interest demonstrated by: honesty in the execution of public duties; accountability to the public for decisions and actions; and discipline and commitment in service to the people (Mabveka, 2014). On account of such leadership insights, it's apparent that adequate community leadership is fundamental to the sustainability of community based development programs. Development refers to a balanced growth in the economic

and social fields, and that development should be much more quality of life as seen by an individual, a community or a country at large (M. Liphadzi, 2017).

This principle is based on the proposition that the core of any chosen community development intervention should emanate the needs of the community (Chiweza, Asiyati Lorraine, 2010). This felt need must be seen to cut across majority of community members, thus through adequate leadership the community can be sensitized and mobilised to set own development goals and initiate sound actionable strategies that address such needs according to their experiences and local available resources.

In the words of (Paul Kishindo, 2003) a good leader listens and takes into consideration team members' views. The leadership should be able to create an environment that allows people to contribute, never overbearing and always motivating. For community based development projects to be sustained, it's obligatory upon the leaders to steer the process of setting the community goals (Happy Kayuni, 2008). These goals must be agreed on by the majority and should be congruent with the aspirations, desires and expectations of the people themselves. This can only be attained by involving the community members in decision making, planning, and design of the projects, implementation, monitoring and control in addition to future sustainability of the projects.

### **2.2.7 Community Participation and Empowerment**

According to (Mike Robinson, 2006) community participation in decision-making, planning and action is a human right. An increasing number of citizens are disillusioned with government and want to see more participatory approaches to democracy. Community transformation and community participation often works with specific groups of the population, especially those that are marginalized and disadvantaged. The actual process of participation can inherently empower individuals and communities to understand their own situations and to gain increased control over the factors affecting their lives. This can, in turn, enhance people's sense of wellbeing and improve their quality of life. (Zoë Heritage, 2009)

The concept of community participation is viewed as a basis for project success. The World Bank (2004) defines participation as a process through which stakeholders' influence and share control over development initiatives, and the decisions and resources which affect them. The objectives of community participation are: empowerment; building beneficiary capacity; increasing project effectiveness; improving project efficiency; and project cost sharing. The framework identifies four levels of intensity of participation, namely: information sharing; consultation; decision making; and initiating action (Daniela Luisi, 2001). Furthermore, it can be argued that community participation generally is more successful when the community takes over much of the responsibility than when higher level public agencies attempt to assess consumer preferences through surveys or meetings (M. Liphadzi, 2017).

In order for community participation to work, projects must include special components like villagers being recruited to help in all phases of designing, implementing, maintaining, supervising, and evaluating new water supply and sanitation systems, but only if the time, effort and money is spent to do it right (Hedayat Allah Nikkiah, 2009). Special attention must also be paid to the development of local committees and governance structures that can adequately oversee local participation (Boehm Staples, 2004). Empowerment is operative at various levels: personal or individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, and collective (Feliciano Villar, 2017). Again (Benedetto Gui, 2000) emphasized personal and collective dimensions, while (Max Kaase, 1999), examined personal, interpersonal, and institutional or political dimensions. It can be said that the interpersonal dimension is included in the collective dimension because the term interpersonal has a connotation of collectiveness. The institutional or political dimensions can be represented as part of the collective dimension. Therefore, the components of empowerment can be examined in the context of both personal and collective aspects (Johannes Fedderke, 2011).

(Jennifer L. Edwards, 2001), argues that personal empowerment relates to the way people think about themselves, as well as the knowledge, capacities, skills, and mastery they actually possess. Meanwhile, collective empowerment refers to processes by which individuals join together to break their solitude and silence, help one another, learn together, and develop skills for collective action (Belinda Reiningger, 2000). In a way, empowerment develops from individual and social concise or a critical consciousness to collective action.

In addition, the processes of the components leading to empowerment include both individual and social factors. Strengthening intellectual capabilities and the power within can be seen as individual factors in the process, whereas mobilizing collective action and maximizing power can be referred to as social factors (John Drury, 1999). (Frances Dunn Butterfoss, 2006), established that most community projects depreciated in their unfinished conditions and were therefore not addressing the needs of the local beneficiaries. (Frances Dunn Butterfoss, 2006), further noted that some projects were started without involving the local beneficiaries in their identification and prioritization, which subsequently failed to solicit their support.

Personal empowerment sometimes conflicts with the development of collective empowerment, when empowerment is not effectively operating. Although individuals can become more empowered personally through the process of personal development, they cannot always become effective in helping to build their group's collective empowerment. Personal empowerment should be consistent with collective empowerment to improve the value of social and economic justice (Hedayat Allah Nikkiah, 2009).

Contemporary development scholars have been advocating the inclusion of people's participation in development projects as they believe that unless people participate in a development project, it's not likely to achieve anything of benefit to them. In line with this view, (Daniela Luisi, 2001), argues that people's participation in development projects can help bring effective social change rather than impose an external culture on a society. Similarly, (Peter Hille, 1996), referring to the experience of Community Transformation programmes, states that community participation in the design and management of a programme greatly enhances the likelihood of programme success due to improved goodness of fit and increased sustainability.

The main reason behind people's participation in their development is that real development must be people-centered. In this vein, (Peter Hille, 1996), argue that the development process "should not ignore the creative initiatives of people as they are the primary development resource. (Chibwana, 2011), assert that participation can lead to initiatives on the people's part and allow them to assume ownership of the development process, while, (Pandeya, 2015), stress that people's participation helps individuals resolve their problems by themselves.

According to (Pandeya, 2015), the conventional method of expert-dominated decision making processes in people's development and further argues that there should be no more non-consultative modes of central decision-making and decision making must truly be returned to the people. (Chiweza, Asiyati Lorraine, 2010), argues that participation is a means of the empowerment of people that involves, among other things, transformation of attitude and values, possibility that people can more actively control their own lives and people help themselves make decisions that are right for them and speak up themselves for each person's perspective and voice.

Although the overall definition of participation in many ways seems to be strongly related to empowerment involving people in the process of their own development, this definition, however, is imprecise in the sense that it can be easily directed and manipulated to one's convenience and thinking. It can be imperative that development authorities such as development planners, policy makers and implementers and development beneficiaries about people's participation in development. (Robert Ochoki Nyamori, 2009), established that participation is such instrumental in building the knowledge, capacity of the People, taking on board the needs and skills of the people as well as acting as a learning Platform. In these aspects, participation becomes an imperative element of empowerment for People even in the context of CDF projects.

### ***2.2.8 Legal Framework, Management and Utilization, monitoring and control of CDF***

The revised CDF guidelines (Government of Malawi, 2022) states that management and implementation of the CDF resources is anchored on six principles which seek to promote and realize democratic empowerment of citizens. These principles are as follows; Community Ownership: the fund is collectively owned by the communities that make up the constituency. Community Contribution: the community that benefit should contribute 10% to enhance ownership of the CDF projects. The contribution should be in form of locally available resources, labour and time. Community Demand Driven Projects: Projects under CDF are identified, managed, and implemented by elected Member of Parliament and/or local development structures viz: Area Development Committee, Village Development Committee and Project Implementation Committee.

Where the constituency has more than one local development structure, the structure where the project is implemented can lead. Public good Projects: Projects that are financed by CDF are those that can be shown to deliver some public or collective good and it cannot be spent on private goods and services. Transparency and Accountability: CDF projects should be implemented in a transparent manner and the funds should be well accounted for. Implementation of CDF can help put in place mechanisms through which information about CDF activities and processes in the communities is disseminated and the people who bear direct responsibilities for the management of CDF and WRF are regularly explaining their activities and decisions regarding CDF and WSF to the beneficiary communities: and Community Empowerment: CDF projects must foster community empowerment through participatory project management including key decision making in procurement and financial management.

The Fund seeks to provide Members of Parliament and their constituent communities with an opportunity to respond to their community development needs identified through a community participatory process led by the elected Member of Parliament. The guidelines also state that all projects funded under the CDF must always follow the project cycle. Projects financed under this fund must start and end within the same financial year. Where approved projects have not been completed during a financial year, such projects should be reprioritized and carried forward to the following year. In such cases, the Local Authority can assess and cost the works remaining to complete the project.

According to (Government of Malawi, 2022) which is the revised CDF management guideline; Constituency Development Fund guidelines provide the framework on the Principles of management, disbursement and utilisation of the Fund. It goes further to explain the roles and duties of all parties relating to Fund, Constituency Development Fund Committee, Functions of Committee, and the approval of the project. The CDF should be disbursed under the satisfaction of all keys parties with an appropriate approval of Member of Parliament in consultation with local authority (Government of Malawi, 2022). The CDF consists of monies appropriated by Parliament for the purposes of the Fund. The monies received by way of grants, fees, council contributions or donations should be used for purposes of the Fund specifically intended for funding projects.

The guidelines also state that all unutilized funds should remain in the constituency account by the local authority and investments should not be permitted elsewhere, except for funds meant for a project that is cancelled or discontinued. The Fund guidelines further provide for the formation procedure and the operational structures to oversee the implementation of the fund. The fund guidelines also provide for how the CDF projects should be identified, the number and type of projects to be funded. The revised guidelines provide specific and better degree of protection of the fund against misappropriation by disgruntled individuals in the course of duty and are also instructive on the need for community involvement participation with regard to objectives of the fund.

The objective of monitoring and evaluation and control under the CDF is to ensure proper project implementation, quality outputs, feedback to relevant stakeholders and timely decision making. Monitoring and evaluation should be done at three levels namely: community, local authority and national (Robert Ochoki Nyamori, 2009).

At the community level; the Member of Parliament has the responsibility to ensure that projects in the constituency are being implemented as planned. The ADC/UDC and PIC is responsible for day-to-day monitoring of the projects. The ADC/UDC and PIC should keep a record of all projects being implemented in the area and provide a report to the Member of Parliament on a semi-annual basis. The Member of Parliament should compile annual

reports on the implementation of the project and should submit them to the Council. The Development Committee of the Council should consider and discuss the CDF reports. The Committee should, in turn, report its findings to the full Council Meeting. The Member of Parliament should jointly organize a public meeting twice a year to account for CDF implementation to the constituents (Government of Malawi, 2022) CDF guideline.

Again at the local authority level; the Council sets aside up to 3% of the CDF allocation for monitoring and administration of the CDF projects. Council officials, in collaboration with Members of Parliament should visit each project at least twice during its implementation period and compile reports highlighting key observations made, advice provided and any corrective action taken. The Council is to ensure that technical designs and specifications are being adhered to, quality materials are delivered at project sites and expenditure are matching the physical progress of the projects. While at the national level, Ministry of Local Government, and Ministry of Finance, work to periodically monitor adherence to implementation plan, financial flows, procurement and physical progress of all CDF projects.

### **2.3 Theoretical reviews**

The theoretical framework defines the key concepts, theories and models that are related to the key research questions. This paper focuses on community transformation, knowledge, community participation, the concept of decentralisation, transparency and accountability which is in regards to the provision of Constituency Development Fund and its benefits. This is in line with the research topic “The assessment of how Constituency Development Fund impact community transformation”.

#### **2.3.1 Theories of projects implementation**

(Paul C. Nutt, 1986)'s theory states that project implementation is a series of steps taken by responsible project team to plan change process to prompt compliance needed to execute changes'. Project Managers use implementation to make planned changes in organizations by creating environments in which changes can survive and be rooted. Implementation is a procedure directed by a manager to implement planned changes in an organization. There is widespread agreement that managers are the key process actors and that the intent of implementation is to execute planned changes, whether they be unique or routine. However, procedural steps in execution have been difficult to specify because implementation is ubiquitous. (Amachree, 1988) , the several important distinctions pertinent to these processes of planned change, identifying four procedures called the entrepreneurial, exploration, control and implementation sub processes. From this perspective, implementation can be viewed as a procedure used in planning change process that lays out steps taken by the entire stakeholders to support change.

According to (Amachree, 1988), project implementation strategies have evolved in order to design, organize and control the complex and diverse activities of modern social and commercial development projects. All projects share one common characteristic, the projection of ideas and activities into new endeavours. The ever-present element of risk and uncertainty means that the events and tasks leading to completion can never be foretold with absolute accuracy. For some very complex or advanced projects even the possibility of successful completion might be in serious doubt (Amachree, 1988). The purpose of project management is to foresee or predict as many of the dangers and problems as possible and to plan, organize and control activities so that the project is completed as successfully as possible in spite of all the risks. The aim is for the final result to satisfy the project sponsor or purchaser, within the promised timescale and without using more money and other resources that were originally set aside or budgeted.

##### **2.3.1.0 Development Theories**

The issue of development has evolved it has numerous definitions and perspectives, which includes but not limited to Modernization, urbanization, industrialization, social or political transformation, technological improvement and economic growth (Eisenstadt, 1978). It has however moved from Modernization to participation, Dependency to empowerment and from top-down to bottom up (Alejandro Portes, 1976). In order to establish a view of development that is relevant to the study the Modernization and Dependency paradigms should be explored in order to provide a historical perspective on how growing dissatisfaction with these views led to the rise of alternative approaches that called for more people-centered development.

In addition, development has been taken to be a multi-faceted concept which is driven by community involvement in partnership with other important stakeholders and encompassing a number of values including empowerment, participation, sustainability, transparency and accountability among others. According to (Katie Willis, 2011), development refers to “a form of social change that will lead to progress, the process of enlarging people’s choices, acquiring knowledge and having access to resources for a decent standard of living, and a condition of moving from worse to better.”

The term development has been defined differently by various scholars, it can be defined as a process that increases choices and presents new options. It means diversification and anticipating change (Katie Willis, 2011). For some, the idea behind development suggests change directed toward some particular social or economic goal. It can be significant to note that development can be divided into three spheres; political, economic and social development. This brings it down to our main objective which is the provision of Constituency Development Fund towards community transformation. One cannot overlook the fact that the use of CDF in developmental projects affixes the process of development as a whole. It’s therefore, significant to critically analyse traditional, modernization and dependency theories in detail that are linked to the study.

### 2.3.2.1 Traditional Theories

This embraces various development theories and approaches which have emerged over the years with the original ideas on what development entails having grown from what is viewed as a Western concept of development. Two of these theories are the Modernization and Dependency theories; this gave a good guide to the study.

- **Modernization Theory:** According to this theory, the values that are present in developed countries are lacking in societies that are not developed. In order for a society to modernize, it needs to let go of its values and embrace new technology and values. It emphasises the need for a country to change its traditions values, attitudes and institutions. (D C Ukwandu, 2017), (Gwynne, 2009). Again (Dunford, 2009), states that the essence of Modernisation is that if less developed countries are to become developed; they should follow the path taken by developed countries.

According to this theory, the values present in developed countries are lacking in societies that are not developed. In order for a society to modernize, it needs to let go of its values and embrace new technology and values. It emphasises the need for a country to change its traditions values, attitudes and institutions (D C Ukwandu, 2017). Modernization theory sees economic development as a process by which traditional societies become more complex and differentiated. Modernization theory however, has had a lot of criticism in terms of inequalities between societies. It can be viewed as a development process that is imposed from outside. The theory failed to recognise the role of target communities and to appreciate the initiative and creativity of so called underdeveloped societies. (Dunford, 2009)

- **Dependency Theory:** As a result of the perceived failure of Modernization theory to explain the disparities between developed countries and developing countries, Dependency theory began to take root (David G. Hays, 1964). It was the result of the failure of Modernization theory to show the relationship between the developed world and the poor regions of the world (Matunhu, 2011). Dependency is an explanation of the economic development of a state in terms of the external influences such as political, economic, and cultural on national development policies (David G. Hays, 1964).

The basis for Dependency theory is that resources flow from poor and underdeveloped countries which are considered to be the periphery to wealthy nations which are at the core. This outflow of resources, leads to the impoverishment of underdeveloped countries while developed ones are enriched. As a result of this relationship, satellite countries become dependent on countries in the metropolis (Arno Tausch, 2010). Dependency theory premises are that there is a world system in which underdeveloped nations are the source of natural resources, cheap labour and markets for developed nations while being a destination for obsolete technology from countries in the metropolis (Arno Tausch, 2010).

(Cristóbal Kay, 1989), and other development theorists view development and underdevelopment as two opposite sides of a world system in which developed countries develop at the expense of underdeveloped countries. These theorists argued that Modernization theory failed to recognise that underdeveloped countries existed in a world economic structure that was dominated by developed capitalist countries thus hampering their development efforts (D C Ukwandu, 2017). A result of this relationship is the failure by poor third world countries to escape this system and they are therefore kept dependent on developed first world countries. (David G. Hays, 1964). States that the result of this relationship which at some extent can be regarded as hand-outs, often to the less privileged countries that become purely dependent on the developed countries, This theory can be applied to the concept of Constituency Development Fund if not properly handled as the people can be dependent to the funds as opposed to being equal partners in development.

### 2.3.3 Rights Based and Social Accountability Approach to development

Rights based approach to development is a conceptual framework that is based on international human rights standards and directed to promoting and protecting human rights (Ackerman, 2005). RBA therefore gives a very different taste to development; Again (Unerman, 2007), has argued that, instead of talking about beneficiaries with needs or consumers with choices the human rights approach speaks of citizens with rights. Citizens are active subjects in the political sphere, not objects of intervention by government programmes or passive choosers in the marketplace, the end, RBA can be envisioned as the application of the basic principles of the Universal declaration of Human Rights in the area of development.

Social accountability is a right which is grounded in a new manifestation of citizenship based on the right to hold governments accountable by expanding people's responsibility (World Bank, 2004), while a rights-based approach to development includes: express linkage to rights, accountability, empowerment, participation, and non-discrimination and attention to vulnerable groups. In social accountability per se, an accountable government is one that pro-actively informs about and justifies its plans of action, behaviour and results and is sanctioned positively and negatively accordingly (Ackerman, 2005)

The core elements of accountability are therefore information, justification and sanction. A fully accountable government would approach these tasks in a proactive manner and do so along all three temporal dimensions (past, present and future). Accountability is one of the most effective ways to combat corruption, clientelism and capture and thereby assure good governance and service delivery. Social accountability can be defined as an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement, i.e. in which its ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations who participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability (Carmen Malena, 2010). Initiatives as different as participatory budgeting, administrative procedures acts, social audits and citizen report cards all involve citizens in the oversight and control of government and can therefore be considered social accountability initiatives.

Rights based approach and social accountability initiatives are natural partners; this requires citizen participation and government accountability, which are precisely the central concerns of social accountability. Equality, non-discrimination and inclusion also should find a comfortable home in social accountability initiatives since these initiatives stimulate the participation of common people in the supervision and control of governments. Rights-based approach and social accountability consider the full range of indivisible, interdependent and interrelated rights: civil, cultural, economic, political and social. In this regard, the Constituency Development Fund projects should expand the reach of community members across health, education, and improved livelihoods of the community which are internationally agreed human rights which can be guaranteed through their participation in the projects.

Rights-based approaches focus on raising levels of accountability in the development process by identifying claim-holders and their entitlements and corresponding duty-holders and their obligations. The two approaches consider both the positive obligations of duty-holders to protect, promote and provide and at their negative obligations to abstain from violations. They take into account the duties of the full range of relevant actors, including individuals, States, local organizations and authorities, private companies, aid donors and international institutions. In this respect, the success and sustainability of Constituency Development Fund projects can only be achieved under transparent and accountable fund management teams who are the duty-holders at the location and constituency levels.

These rights based approaches provide adequate laws, policies, institutions, administrative procedures and practices, and mechanisms of redress and accountability that can deliver on entitlements, respond to denial and violations, and ensure accountability. They call for the translation of universal standards into locally determined benchmarks for measuring progress and enhancing accountability. Proper policies and institutionalization in the management of Constituency Development Fund are necessary requisites in achieving transparency, accountability and avoiding project overlaps ^ well as clearing participation barriers by clearly stating roles of different stakeholders.

Rights-based approaches give preference to strategies for empowerment over charitable responses. They focus on beneficiaries as the owners of rights and the directors of development, and emphasize the human person as the centre of the development process directly, through their advocates, and through organizations of civil society. The goal is to give people the power, capacities, capabilities and access needed to change their own lives, improve their own communities and influence their own destinies. The existence of properly defined and accessible redress mechanisms for Constituency Development Fund projects are requisites for enhancing management teams accountability to the public through offering avenues for the community members to file complaints about abuses observed in the projects implemented and the fund misuse.

Rights-based approaches and accountability require a high degree of participation, including from communities, civil society, minorities, indigenous peoples, women and others. Such participation must be active, free and meaningful as mere formal or ceremonial contacts with beneficiaries are not sufficient. The very essence of establishment of Constituency Development Fund is to ensure bottom-up approach in development that consumes the locally available skills, resources besides allowing People to take charge of their destiny through a development process they can identify with. Rights-based approaches and social accountability give due attention to issues of accessibility, including access to development processes, institutions, information and redress or complaints mechanisms. They employ process-based development methodologies and techniques, rather than externally conceived "quick fixes" and imported technical models.

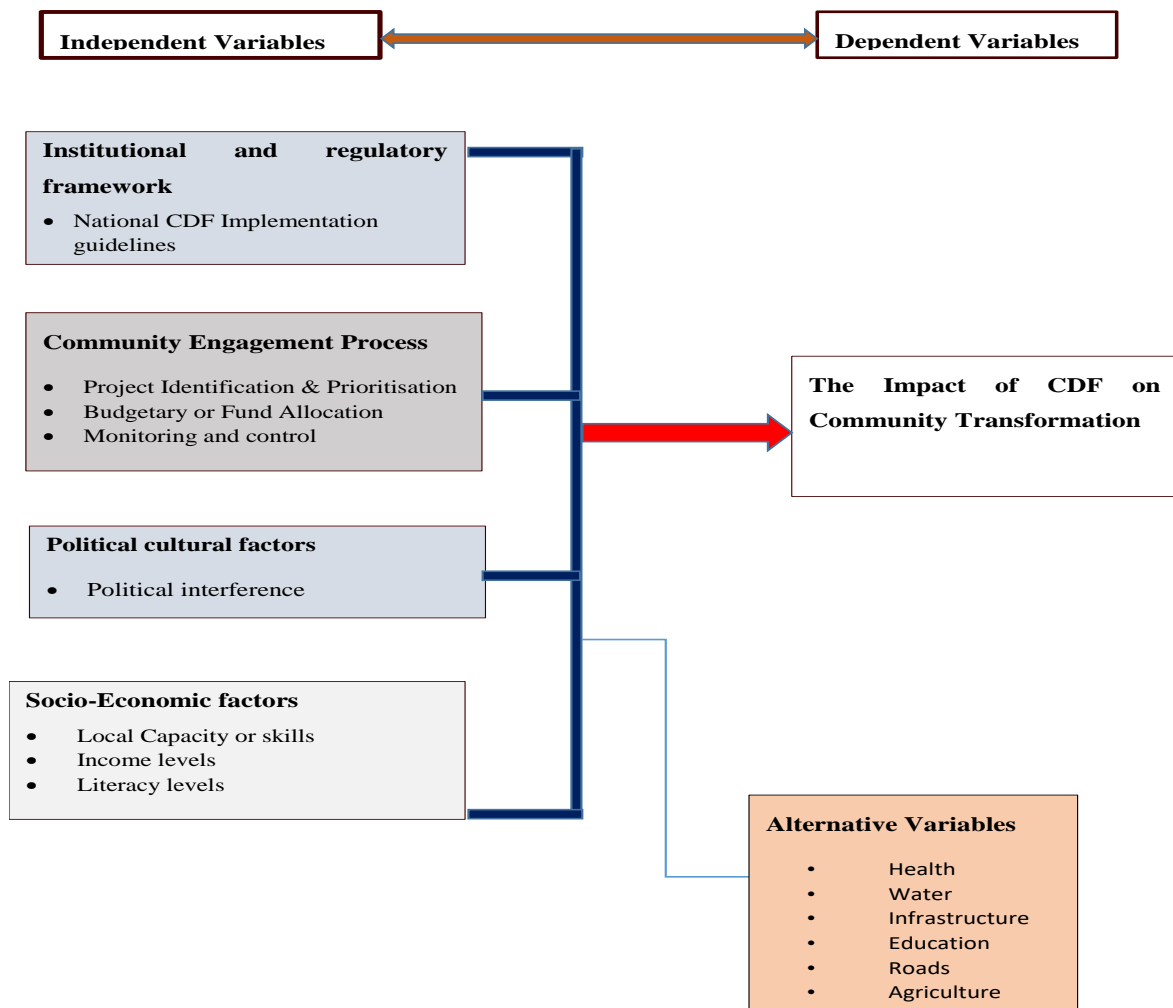
All Constituency Development Fund development decisions, policies and initiatives, while seeking to empower local participants, are also expressly required to guard against simply reinforcing existing power imbalances between, for example, women and men, rich and poor in the community, and workers and employers. Moreover, community members require functional participation beyond the information level in order to be active stakeholders in the Constituency Development Fund projects. Social accountability also scales up participation. Instead of seeing citizens as simple users whose participation should be limited to deciding when and where a project or service should be implemented, social accountability envisions them as citizens who can engage in and evaluate the entire planning and evaluation process from beginning to end.

Citizen auditing strikes at the heart of practices that preserve the powers of bureaucrats and politicians: the secrecy in public accounts that can mask the use of public funds for personal advantage (Michael MacMillan, 2010). Social accountability also easily supports the legal defence of human rights. Once citizens are mobilized in supervising the government, it's a small step for them to start demanding and designing new laws as well as using the existing laws to back up their claims against the state; there is great potential for setting up positive feed-back loops between social accountability and the law. In addition, the respect for human rights, in particular basic civil liberties are a precondition for effective social accountability initiatives.

#### **2.4 Conceptual Review**

A conceptual framework is a product of qualitative process of theorization which interlinks concept that together provides a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon or phenomena (Vyacheslav Karpov, 2010). The concepts that constitute a conceptual framework support one another, articulate their respective phenomena, and establish a framework-specific philosophy that defines relationships.

Table 1 conceptual framework



### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the methodology which was employed during the study. It describes, among other things the research design, the target population, sample size and sampling procedures, data collection and data analysis procedures that were employed. It also took into account the respondents that were engaged in the study and how the data got analysed. The chapter finally presents ethical considerations, the anticipated challenges in the field and their possible solutions.

#### 3.2 Research Design

This study employed a mixed method approach, in which quantitative and qualitative methods were both used to answer the research questions of this study as outlined below. In this research both deductive and inductive research approach of inquiry were used. Using the deductive approach, the researcher based on the reasoning from the more general to specific i.e. from top down approach. Through this reasoning, the researcher started by considering the general social development theories provided in the study.

While through the inductive reasoning approach which is the bottom up approach; the researcher also had to recognize specific observations and measures, then detect patterns and regularities, formulates some tentative hypotheses and finally develop some general conclusions and theories about the impact of CDF on community transformation. (Trochim William, 2000), said that inductive reasoning, by its very nature is more open-ended and exploratory, especially at the beginning, while deductive reasoning is narrower in nature and is concerned with testing or confirming hypotheses..

### 3.3 Population of the study

The research was conducted in four constituencies which involved two from Mzimba and two from Nkhata bay districts respectively. These constituencies are Mzimba West and Mzimba north east in Mzimba district and Nkhata bay North West and Nkhata bay north in Nkhata bay District. These constituencies have been identified to be the case study for this research because they are among the constituencies in Malawi whose development purse has been very slow despite allocation of CDF in every national budget since its inception. The study involved community members from these stated constituencies, CSO representatives, government officials and local community administrative structures.

This research had to analyse the political, social and economic diversities of these constituencies, their differential capacities to manage CDF funded projects, impact on development and suggest possible strategies of advocating for policies and frameworks of CDF which basically enhances community transformation and community members' knowledge and participation in development so that a truly community driven development process that has inherent mechanisms for sustainable community development and transformation is realised.

The majority of constituencies in Malawi are in rural and they have highest population as compared to urban constituencies. These constituencies face common challenges in terms of resource allocation, development prioritization and in general social and economic investment is much higher in urban constituencies than in rural constituencies. Most of these constituencies rely on CDF as the main fund that can be used to facilitate development and yet it does not sustain the needs of the constituencies to fullest.

Like many other rural constituencies in Malawi, Mzimba north east and Mzimba West constituencies in Mzimba district and Nkhata north and Nkhata bay North West in Nkhata bay districts, are lagging behind in terms of infrastructure development. The constituencies' economic and social infrastructure pose a serious challenge to the development of the constituencies which are coupled by poor road network, poor education facilities, and poor health care delivery, poor access to clean water, markets and commercial banking services among others. The study had a target of reaching out a population of 200 individuals in all constituencies.

### 3.4 Sampling Procedure

The researcher considers to apply a multi-stage sampling technique.

**Stage 1: Quota Sampling:** - Using the Probability Proportionate to Size (PPS) sampling technique. The sample size was broken down proportionate to the number of respondents in each of the constituency

**Stage 2: Cluster Sampling:** – The total sample size in each was further divided into clusters. To determine the number of clusters to be sampled the following formula was used.

$$K = \frac{\sqrt{n}}{2}$$

Where

K is the number of clusters to be sampled

n = sample size

$$= \frac{\sqrt{102}}{2} = \frac{10}{2}$$

Therefore, there were 5 clusters

### 3.5 Sample size

To determine the sample size of the study and number of respondents to be interviewed the researcher proposes the following formulae

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$= \frac{200}{1 + 200(0.052)^2} = 100 \text{ adjusted by 2\% for non-response} = 102$$

Where

- n is the sample size
- N is population or the number of respondents



- $\alpha$  is the level of precision or absolute margin of error assumed equal to 0.05

Therefore the study had a sample size of 102 respondents

This sampling approach used allowed each member of a population to have an equal opportunity to become part of the sample. As all members of the population had an equal chance of becoming a participant, this is said to be the most efficient sampling procedure. In order to conduct this sampling strategy, the researcher defined the population first, listed down all the members of the population, and then selected members to make the sample.

### **3.6 Sampling Area**

The sampling area of this study were wards. All wards were equally represented in this study to avoid biases. These four constituencies have in total eight wards where every constituency has at least two wards. These wards were also regarded as clusters in this study. The study also involved community members from these stated clusters, Civil Society Organisations, faith based organisations, councils and local community administrative structures.

### **3.7 Sources of Data Collection**

This study got data from both sources Primary and Secondary sources respectively. The primary source of information for this research was mainly obtained from questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and observations. The secondary data on the other hand was collected from articles, previous research findings, books, journals, internet project files and other documentations with relevant information.

### **3.8 Methods of data collection**

Data analysis can take various formats. The method chosen depends on the subject matter of the research. This study employed qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection.

#### **3.8.1 Quantitative method**

The quantitative data was collected using a standardized household questionnaire to determine relevance of the project implementation approach, effectiveness of the strategies used in project implementation, the intended and unintended impact of CDF on community transformation. The researcher had to measure the overall impact by comparing the research results against the baseline report and results framework based on indicators available. And relevant documents like community program design documents including, budgets, semi-annual and annual project reports, strategic documents, district social economic profiles and other documents necessary for the study.

#### **3.8.2 Qualitative method**

This involved engaging key stakeholders into strategic discussion meetings, where relevant issues pertaining to the community projects were discussed. This was done with a purpose of evaluating aligned project funds with the community expectations. In addition, one Focus Group Discussions session was conducted in each with local development committees, and community members. Key informant interviews were done with key officials in the community and at the council, this also engaged traditional leaders and other key stakeholders from CSOs available in the constituencies. The qualitative data, through Content Analysis was organized and managed through a process of coding. Through coding the important points and facts expected to be raised in this study were established. The information was transcribed into narratives to highlight the important messages, features and findings of the study

### **3.9 Tools for Data Collection**

The researcher had to use the following tools during this exercise: Household Questionnaire; Progress out of Poverty Index; Unobtrusive measurement – by analyzing data from various project reports; Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews.

#### **3.9.1 Survey Questionnaire**

A Survey Questionnaire is one of the popular tools used in survey research. According to Business Dictionary (2016), it is a list of a research or survey questions asked to respondents, and designed to extract specific information. It can also be described as a research instrument consisting of and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. Or it is a set of questions for obtaining statistically useful or personal information from individuals. The questionnaire serves four basic purposes i.e. “to collect the appropriate data; make data comparable and amenable to analysis; minimize bias in formulating and asking questions; and to make questions engaging and varied” (Business Dictionary, 2016).

Survey questionnaires were filled by the respondents drawn from the community members and local key informants across the four Constituencies. The questions in the questionnaires were both open and closed ended to allow for both quantification and qualification of the data collected. A total of 93 structured interviews were actually conducted using this tool. The survey questionnaires were important in establishing the demographic characteristics

of the respondents, their knowledge and awareness of CDF guidelines, impact of CDF, and the implementation procedures of Constituency Development Fund.

### **3.9.2 Progress out of Poverty Index**

Progress out of Poverty Index, Malawi 2010 vision; this is a poverty measurement tool for organizations and businesses with a mission to serve the poor. The PPI is statistically-sound, yet simple to use: the answers to 10 questions about a household's characteristics and asset ownership are scored to compute the likelihood that the household is living below the poverty line – or above by only a narrow margin. With the PPI, organizations can identify the beneficiaries who are most likely to be poor or vulnerable to poverty, it can also be used to measure the impact of an intervention in the community; and integrating objective poverty data into their assessments and strategic decision-making (Kalunga, D.H., 2016). The researcher used this tool to establish the extent to which CDF projects are helping in shaping individual social-economic transformation

### **3.9.3 Unobtrusive measurement – by analyzing existing data from project reports**

Unobtrusive data collection (Collodel, A., de Beer, F. and Kotze, D., 2012) is a process of collecting data without the participants' prior knowledge. It focuses on; (i) content analysis, (ii) analysis of existing statistics, and (iii) comparative and historical research. In content analysis, researchers focused on social artifacts such as documents and personal documents and community history. Content analysis was defined by (Babbie, 2011) as the study of recorded human communications, such as books, websites, paintings and laws. Statistical data analysis uses existing statistics and there is a wealth of statistics available for social research. In this study, the researcher basically used content analysis, to measure the level of impact of Constituency Development Fund based on the results of the indicators per funded project objective. Again through observation, the researcher was able to determine whether the intended CDF projects actually contributed towards community transformation.

### **3.9.4 Focus Group Discussion**

The researcher also used FGDs when collecting data. Here the researcher asked questions at group level that gave a platform to the participating members to discuss issues affecting the quality of service delivery. By using this qualitative tool the researcher asked the participants to learn individual perception, attitudes, beliefs, opinions or ideas about the need for CDF and the impact the fund is helping in transforming their communities. In focus group discussion participants were asked to be free to contribute their individual opinion.

### **3.10 Tools for Data Analysis**

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching, organising and breaking data into manageable units then synthesizing the data to search for patterns. Data collected from the respondents was checked for completeness and comprehensiveness. The returned and duly filled questionnaires were verified and coded and tallied. Data analysis was a central activity to this assignment. Two approaches were considerably used during the analysis. Firstly, all quantitative data got analysed using Statistical Package for Social Scientist (SPSS). Descriptive analysis and inferential statistics such as frequencies; means; percent, cross tabulations and statistical tests were also applied. Confidence Intervals were calculated to indicate whether the CDF funded interventions are effective or have made a significant impact regarding the transformation of communities.

Secondly, qualitative data cannot simply be analysed using SPSS because it produces large quantities of information that is diverse and include a range of opinions from the respondents. (William E. Wagner III, 2009) In order to summarize the data and highlight the important points, the qualitative data were organized and reduced through a process of coding. Through coding the important points and facts raised were established. Such information should also be transcribed into narratives and incorporated in the report to either compliment or supplement quantitative findings in various sections of the quantitative findings.

### **3.11 Validity of Instruments**

Validity is the extent to which the instruments will capture what they purport to measure. It is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences which are based on the research results. It is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon or the research. Data validity deals with how accurately the instrument represents the variables of the research. The research tools were subjected to a rigorous process of validation. The first process was to discuss with the supervisor who helped examined research questions in the questionnaire to evaluate the appropriateness in addressing the critical issues of the research. This was followed by a pre-test in a selected sub location with selected individuals. The major aim of the pilot study was to check for the validity of the questionnaires. After the pilot study, a number of questions were reworded, introduced or deleted all together. The final tool was then reproduced and data collection proceeded well within the stipulated time.

### **3.12 Pilot study**

Six questionnaires were administered as a pilot run prior to the study execution. Pilot study was significant step in the anticipated research process because it helped to reveal imprecise questions and unclear instructions. It helped the researcher to capture important comments and suggestions from the public that enabled the researcher to improve efficacy of the instruments. It also helped in enhancing the reliability of the instruments as consistent measures of

the model being studied were determined. The data collected during pilot studying were prepared, analyzed and interpreted. Based on the outcomes, the instrument was reviewed further in readiness for actual data collection.

### 3.13 Limitations of the study.

This study took into account the political environment of the targeted constituencies that CDF being a fund which is highly connected with politician challenges or certain limitations are inevitable. The most anticipated limitations would be access to information mostly from council people with the assumption that this study was doing a kind of project audit. The study also took into consideration that political differences in communities where the study was administered which can affect participation and quality of data provided mostly from quarters that cannot be in support of the ruling political incumbents. In view of these limitations and other un-anticipated ones, it was well planned to seek the required approval from the relevant authorities before the field work commenced. All the relevant authorities such as councils and ministry of local government, community development structures were requested for an audience that aimed at orienting them the objectives of the study

At the time of fieldwork, the respondents, participants and informants were enlightened on the purpose, duration and potential use of the research results beyond academic purposes; and any other research related information as might be of interest to the respondents was duly be clarified before any data would be collected. Respondents were also be informed of their right to disqualify themselves or withdraw at any stage of the study. The participants' consent was sought to allow for taping of discussions that would be transcribed later; and they were informed that no piece of information gathered in the course of the study was be used to jeopardize their welfare and relationships. They were assured of their anonymity during publication of the research findings.

## 4. Research findings and discussions

### 4.1 Introduction

This research chapter presents the findings and makes inferences from the trends observed. The presentations have been done across knowledge and awareness on CDF implementing guidelines and projects, community participation in Constituency Development Fund projects, the scope of awareness of community members, level of impact of Community Development Fund-funded projects and accountability, transparency, and administrative mechanisms of Community Development Fund resources. This is to examine whether it has achieved the stated objective of CDF in Malawi of providing MPs and their constituent communities with the opportunity to make choices and implement projects that maximize their welfare in line with their needs and preferences. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are described, the data is presented in tables and bar charts, and a detailed analysis of the observations is done concurrently.

The Constituency Development Fund in Malawi lies within the country's wider decentralization policy. The decentralization framework in Malawi aims at bringing about community holistic involvement in decision-making and resource allocation; transparency and accountability; equitable and fair access to essential socio-economic services; Constituency Development Fund has similar aims and its success in bringing about community development depends on its stated objectives and whether the modalities for its management and administration have been adhered to.

### 4.2 Response Rate

This study was conducted in four constituencies of Northern Malawi namely; Mzimba North East, Mzimba West, Nkhata bay north, and Nkhata bay North West in Mzimba and Nkhata bay districts respectively. The sample size was 102.

**Table 1 Response Rate**

Category of Respondent	Target	Actual	% collected
Key Informants -council	6	4	67%
Local Key informants	16	14	88%
General individuals	80	75	94%
	102	93	91%

As one way of ensuring to have desired quality and relevant data collected for this research, the researcher distributed 102 questionnaires which were administered to the respondents from all target constituencies as indicated in table 4.1 above. However, only 91% of the questionnaires were correctly administered. This gave a response rate of 92.82% returned, and 7.18% failed to be administered. This response rate is acceptable and representative and conforms to (William E. Wagner III, 2009) stipulation that a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting; a rate of 60% is good and a response rate of 70% and above is excellent.

### 4.3 Respondents by Gender

The study shows the respondents according to their gender. The gender component is considered to be significant in any community development activity.

**Table 2 Gender of the respondents**

		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	38.7	38.7	38.7
	Male	61.3	61.3	100.0
Total		100.0	100.0	

The result of the study showed that 38.7% were females and 61.3% were males. The findings indicate that both genders were fairly considered in the study. This was important because in development activities thirty per-cent of female representation in the study was adhered to under the United Nations (2000) declaration on Women's representation in all important positions and development components.

### 4.4 Age Group of the respondents

The study sought to find out the age group of the respondents. The age group of the respondents is important in knowing whether the respondents know government development frameworks and CDF projects taking place in the particular communities

**Table 3 Age group of the respondents**

		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-35	21.3	21.3	21.3
	36-55	36.0	36.0	57.3
	Above 56	42.7	42.7	100.0
Total		100.0	100.0	

### 4.7 The degree of community participation in the identification, prioritization, and implementation of CDF-funded projects

Community transformation can only be meaningful if it involves the participation and contributions of the community that is receiving. This participation is at all levels from project identification, selection, and prioritization right through to implementation. One of the aims of the study was to examine the extent of community participation in the selection and implementation of projects on which CDF is utilized. It was, therefore, important to carry out such an assessment given that CDF projects are supposed to reflect the priority needs of the local people, and community participation in project implementation is one of the characteristics of CDF. To do this, respondents who were beneficiaries of CDF projects were asked whether they had been involved in the selection and implementation of projects. Respondents were also asked about the extent to which projects that had been implemented reflected their needs as members of the community.

#### 4.7.0 Are people given the opportunity or right to participate in the management of CDF project funds

The study sought to find out from the respondents whether people in the community have the opportunity to participate in the management of CDF project funds

**Table 4 People's opportunity to participate in CDF funds management**

		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	30.7	30.7	30.7
	No	69.3	69.3	100.0
Total		100.0	100.0	

The research findings indicated that 30.7% of the respondents said "yes" that people in the community are given an opportunity in managing CDF project funds while the majority of 69.3% of respondents indicated that people are not given the opportunity in the management of CDF project funds. This is a worrying outcome since the guidelines clearly outline the key role of the local people as key stakeholders in the management of CDF projects. This also breaches the clear objective of the CDF, decentralization, and local government frameworks of local people empowerment, transparency, and accountability.

#### 4.7.1 Are people given the opportunity or right to participate in determining the location of the project

The study sought to find out whether the people in the communities have the opportunity to participate in determining the location of the particular CDF projects

**Table 5 People's participation in determining the location of the project**

		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	49.3	49.3	49.3
	No	50.7	50.7	100.0
Total		100.0	100.0	

The research findings indicated that the majority of the respondents about 50.7% stated that people in the communities have no opportunity in determining the location of the projects while 49.3% of the respondents indicated that people in the community are given the opportunity in determining the location of the projects. Effective community participation in this regard can be transparently achieved by also involving the people in the community in determining the location since they are the best to allocate the place for the project which can also be cost-effective in the implementation of the projects.

#### 4.7.2 Are people given the opportunity or right to participate in selecting and prioritizing the projects?

The study sought to find out whether the people in the communities have the opportunity to participate in selecting and prioritizing the projects

**Table 6 People's participation in selecting and prioritizing the projects**

		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	60.0	60.0	60.0
	No	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total		100.0	100.0	

The study revealed that efforts of involving community members in the selection and prioritization of the development projects for their particular communities are being put in place. As evidenced in this study that 60.0% of the respondents said that community members are to some extent given an opportunity to participate in selecting and prioritizing development projects in their respective societies. This significantly speaks well of one of the key principles and objectives of the operating guidelines for the CDF.

#### 4.7.3 How were the projects funded by the CDF identified?

The study sought to find out whether the people in the communities know how the projects are identified

**Table 7 Ways of identifying CDF Projects**

		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	The community identified/agreed	64.0	64.0	64.0
	Extracted projects from district plans	17.3	17.3	81.3
	MP/Councillor suggested the projects	18.7	18.7	100.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	

The study revealed that 64.0% majority of the projects are identified by the community members, while 17.3% are projects extracted from the DDPs and 18.7% of the projects funded under CDF are being suggested by either MP or the councillor. The revised operating guidelines for the CDF and other relevant local development policies encourage the holistic involvement of community members in the identification of development projects. This model brings about community empowerment, helps build the capacity of the communities, and enhances effective community participation.

#### 4.7.4 How is CDF Money provided to the Community

The study sought to find out the knowledge of the community member on how the CDF is provided to the community.

**Table 8 Knowledge of people on how CDF is provided to the community**

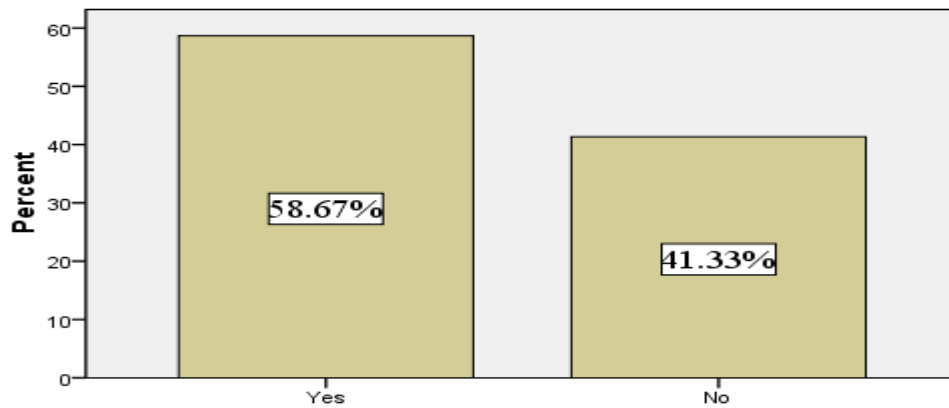
		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	District Office	28.0	28.0	28.0
	CDF committee	5.3	5.3	33.3
	MP/Councillor	58.7	58.7	92.0
	ADC	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	

The study revealed that 28.0% of the respondents believe that CDF is provided to the community by the Council office, while the majority- 58.7% of the respondents think that CDF is provided by the MP or the councillor and 5.3% know that the CDF money comes with the CDF community and 8.0% thinks that CDF is provided to the community by Area Development Committee. This indicates that the communities have different knowledge about how the CDF is provided to the community. Proper information dissemination to the community members is seen to be significant which can help community members with the truth about how CDF money is provided to the community.

**4.7.5 Are community members involved in monitoring CDF projects?**

This study sought to find out whether people are involved in monitoring CDF-funded projects in constituencies under review

**Figure 1 Involvement of people in monitoring CDF projects**

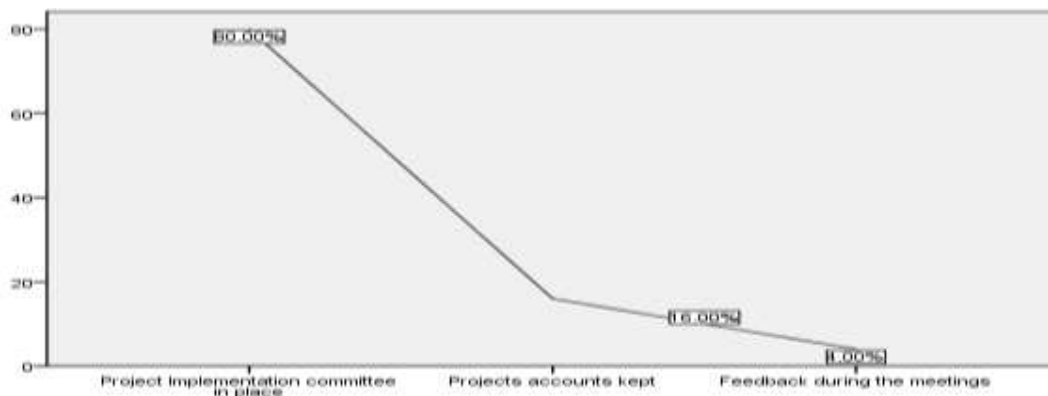


The study revealed that 58.67% majority of the respondents believed that people in the communities are being involved in the monitoring of CDF projects while 41.33% of the respondents did indicate that they don't see any merit or at all involvement of the community members in monitoring and controlling of CDF projects. Project monitoring is key for transparency and accountability of any kind of development project as it helps all stakeholders agree on the project progress and identification or addressing of potential project risks

**4.7.6 How does the community monitor/keep track of CDF project implementation?**

The study sought to find out how the community monitors CDF project implementation

**Figure 2 how communities monitor the implementation of CDF projects**



The study revealed that communities keep track of the CDF project implementation through Implementation Committees in place and by keeping track of project accounts. 80% of the respondents indicated that established project implementation committees help in effectively monitoring the CDF projects in the communities while 4% stated that the community monitors the implementation of the CDF projects by having feeding from either the council, MP, or the ward councillor about the progress of the particular project. Effective monitoring is achieved when there is transparency in information sharing and proper involvement of the community since it's a key stakeholder.

**4.7.7 Involvement in planning and identification of CDF projects affects completion**

Project planning and Identification involve various stakeholders, and it was important for the successful completion of CDF projects. The study sought to establish the involvement of stakeholders in project identification and planning, and the findings obtained were indicated in the table below.

**Table 9 Involvement in project planning and identification**

		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	81.3	81.3	81.3
	No	18.7	18.7	100.0
Total		100.0	100.0	

The table above indicates that 81.3% of the respondents strongly believe that the involvement of community members in the planning and identification of projects affected their completion. Of the others, 18.7% disagreed. This showed that the majority of the respondents viewed the involvement of community members in the planning and identification of projects to be important. The study presented that when planning and identification of projects are held with all stakeholders completion of projects is usually successfully done. Consequently, the non-involvement of all stakeholders in the planning and identification of the CDF projects may affect their completion negatively.

#### **4.7.8 Does political interference affect the completion and non-completion of CDF projects?**

It was suggested that there is high political involvement in the implementation of Constituency Development Fund projects from the Members of Parliament, Ward councillors, and Ruling party leaderships, the study found from the respondents. The results are presented in the table below.

**Table 10 Political interference affects the completion and non-completion of CDF projects**

		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	80.0	80.0	80.0
	No	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total		100.0	100.0	

The results of the study point out that 80% of the respondents agreed that Political involvement affected the completion and non-completion of CDF projects followed by 20% of respondents who did not agree that Political interference affected the completion and non-completion of the CDF projects. The study revealed that more than half of the respondents agreed that Political interference affected the completion of CDF projects.

#### **4.8 Scope of awareness of community members on CDF operating guidelines and policies.**

##### **4.8.1 Are you involved in the Management of Constituency Development Funds**

The study sought to find out the involvement of the Community stakeholders in the Management of constituency Development Fund projects in the target constituencies. The results are indicated in the table below.

**Table 11 Knowledge of how the community can be involved in the management of CDF funds**

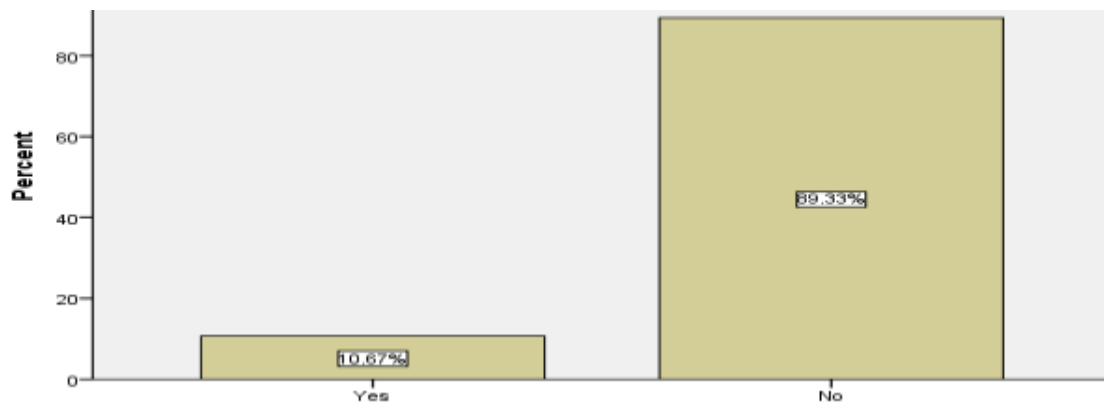
		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	45.3	45.3	45.3
	No	54.7	54.7	100.0
Total		100.0	100.0	

The research findings indicate 54.7% majority in the community is not involved in the management of the CDF Funds. The other respondents representing 45.3 % indicated that community members are involved in managing CDF project funds. The implication is that community participation in CDF projects in most cases is not properly considered for managing funds under CDF support. Therefore, CDF project finance reports cannot be wholly accepted by the community.

##### **4.8.2 Community awareness of CDF Operating Guidelines**

The study further sought to find out how the level of community awareness about the CDF operating guidelines in the target districts. The results are indicated in the figure below.

**Figure 3 awareness of CDF operating guidelines**



The findings from the community responses indicate that 89.33% of the majority of respondents said they are not aware of the availability of CDF operating guidelines while 10.67% responded that they are aware of the guidelines. This means that there is a huge knowledge gap among the community members on how the Fund needs to be executed. This has the potential of misinformation.

**4.8.3 The general awareness of CDF among the general population in this community?**

The study sought to know the level of awareness and knowledge of CDF among the community members. This is because; Community awareness determines the level of access and participation or involvement avenues, project identification and prioritization, monitoring and control, and management besides broadening the understanding of socio-political entitlements of the community in CDF projects.

**Table 12 knowledge of the community members on the amount disbursed and the cost of the project**

Gender of the respondent				Do you know how much has been disbursed		Total
				Yes	No	
Male	Do you know the cost of the projects	No	Count	2	41	43
			% of Total	4.3%	89.1%	93.5%
			Std. Residual	-.9	.3	
	Yes	Count	2	1	3	
		% of Total	4.3%	2.2%	6.5%	
		Std. Residual	3.4	-1.1		
Total			Count	4	42	46
			% of Total	8.7%	91.3%	100.0%
Female	Do you know the cost of the projects	No	Count	0	24	24
			% of Total	.0%	82.8%	82.8%
			Std. Residual	-1.3	.4	
	Yes	Count	2	3	5	
		% of Total	6.9%	10.3%	17.2%	
		Std. Residual	2.8	-.8		
Total			Count	2	27	29
			% of Total	6.9%	93.1%	100.0%

The data shown above was cross-tabulated to establish the level of knowledge or awareness by gender concerning the costs of projects and the actual amount disbursed to the community. The study established that awareness of the project cost and amount disbursed to the community remains a huge concern. The study further established that the information about the project transaction is known or limited to a few individuals who have great potential for speculations of abuse or initial mismanagement of project resources. The study established that only 6.5% of male and 17.2% of female respondents agreed that the community is aware of the costs of the project. While the majority of both male and female respondents about 93.5% male and 82.8% counterparts raised a concern that most CDF projects are implemented in the community without the information properly shared with the community on how is costing the project and how much disbursed to the particular constituency.

The findings of the study show a substantial contradiction of the revised CDF guidelines that promote transparency and accountability and empowerment in the management of CDF-related funds. The guideline state that CDF & WRF projects shall be implemented transparently and the funds shall be well accounted for this including those known to the community. Implementation of CDFWRF will put in place mechanisms through which information about CDF & WRF activities and processes in the communities is disseminated and the people who bear direct responsibilities for the management of CDF and WRF regularly explain their activities and decisions regarding CDF and WSF to the beneficiary communities. It further states that CDF & WRF projects



will foster community empowerment through participatory project management including key decision-making in procurement and financial management.

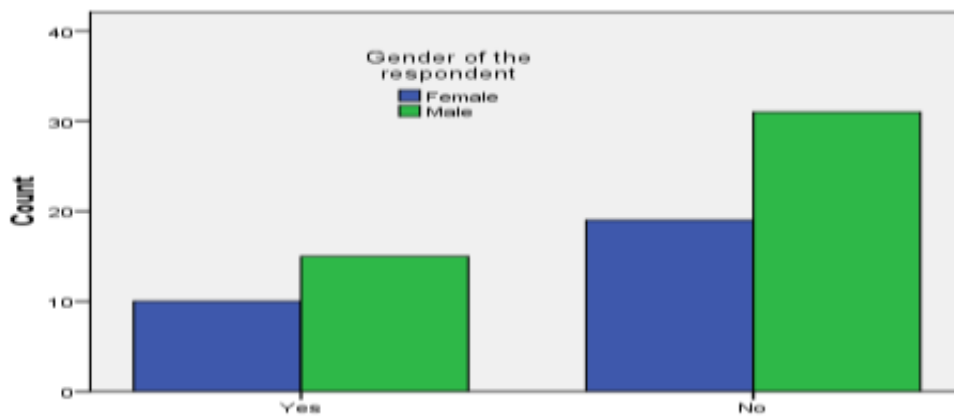
**4.8.4 Whether CDF released is used properly and as per the guidelines \* Gender of the respondent**

The study sought to establish the views of the respondents on whether CDF released is properly utilized and in the table below were the findings

**Table 13 Do you think the CDF released is used properly and as per the guidelines by Gender**

		Gender of the respondent		Total		
		Female	Male			
Do you think the Constituency Development Fund released is used properly and as per the guidelines	No	Count	19	31	50	
		% within Do you think the Constituency Development Fund released is used properly and as per the guidelines	38.0%	62.0%	100.0%	
		% within the Gender of the respondent	65.5%	67.4%	66.7%	
		Std. Residual	.0	.1		
	Yes	Count	10	15	25	
		% within Do you think the Constituency Development Fund released is used properly and as per the guidelines	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%	
		% within the Gender of the respondent	34.5%	32.6%	33.3%	
		Std. Residual	.1	.0		
		Total	Count	29	46	75
		% within Do you think the Constituency Development Fund released is used properly and as per the guidelines	38.7%	61.3%	100.0%	
	% within the Gender of the respondent	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

**Figure 4 Do you think the Constituency Development Fund released is used properly and as per the guidelines**



As shown in the table and figure above, a cross-tabulation was applied to establish the viewpoints of the respondents on whether funds released under the CDF financing window are put to proper use or utilized. This was also to establish how women and male separately view the management of the CDF in their respective communities. It was established that the majority about 66.7% both women and male respondents had some issues with how the CDF is being used or utilized in their respective communities while 33.3% felt that CDF is put to proper use and utilized for the intended purpose. It was further established that 62.0% of the male and 38.0% of female respondents felt that CDF is not properly used while 60.0% of male and 40.0% of female respondents agreed that CDF is being utilized properly in their designated communities. This study perceived that despite policy efforts of efficiency and accountability the community members seem to have doubts about how most CDF project resources are being utilized in Malawi.

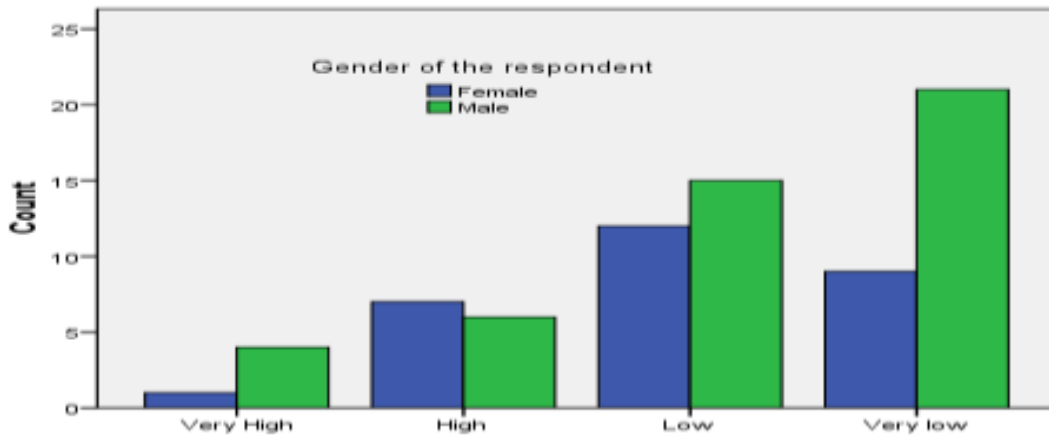
**4.8.5. General awareness of CDF among the general population in this community? \* Gender of the respondent Cross-tabulation**

The study sought to establish general awareness among the population in the communities and the table below were the findings

**Table 14 the level of general awareness among the population in communities**

			Gender of the respondent		Total
			Female	Male	
In your opinion, what is the general awareness of CDF among the general population in this community?	Very low	% within In your opinion, what is the general awareness of CDF among the general population in this community?	30.0%	70.0%	100.0%
		% within the Gender of the respondent	31.0%	45.7%	40.0%
	Low	% within In your opinion, what is the general awareness of CDF among the general population in this community?	44.4%	55.6%	100.0%
		% within the Gender of the respondent	41.4%	32.6%	36.0%
	High	% within In your opinion, what is the general awareness of CDF among the general population in this community?	53.8%	46.2%	100.0%
		% within the Gender of the respondent	24.1%	13.0%	17.3%
	Very High	% within In your opinion, what is the general awareness of CDF among the general population in this community?	20.0%	80.0%	100.0%
		% within the Gender of the respondent	3.4%	8.7%	6.7%
Total		% within In your opinion, what is the general awareness of CDF among the general population in this community?	38.7%	61.3%	100.0%
		% within the Gender of the respondent	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Figure 5 General awareness of CDF among the general population in this community?**



The study sought to establish an overview of the general awareness of CDF among the population in the communities about gender differences. The study established that awareness of CDF among the general population in communities is very low. Of the individuals who were interviewed, 61.3% of male respondents felt that the general population in communities has very low awareness of CDF-related information, and 38.7% of female respondents also agreed that fact that the general awareness of the CDF among the population in the communities in absolutely or very low. It was further noted that 40% of the respondents believed that the general awareness of the CDF among the population in the community is just very low and 36% perceived awareness to be low. While 17.3% suggested that there is high awareness among the population in their respective communities and only 6.7% stated that there is a high awareness of the CDF among the population. Community awareness plays a significant role in community transformation programs and CDF is a tool for community projects it is indebted that communities need to have full awareness of the CDF-related data.

**4.8.6 Opinion on the possible challenges that can affect the implementation of the CDF projects**

The study was administered to find out from the general public how they perceive would be challenges that can potentially affect the implementation of the CDF projects in their designated communities and the table below were the findings

**Table 15 opinion on the common challenges in the implementation of Constituency Development Fund projects**

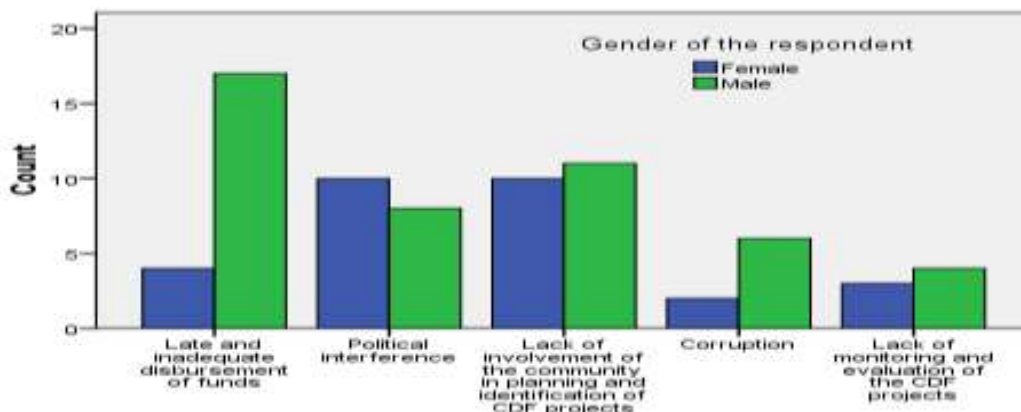
			Gender of the respondent		Total
			Female	Male	
In your opinion, what are some of the common challenges in the implementation	Lack of monitoring and evaluation of the CDF projects	% within In your opinion, what are some of the common challenges in the implementation of Constituency Development Fund projects	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%
		% within the Gender of the respondent	10.3%	8.7%	9.3%

<b>of Constituency Development Fund projects</b>	<b>Corruption</b>	<b>% within In your opinion, what are some of the common challenges in the implementation of Constituency Development Fund projects</b>	<b>25.0%</b>	<b>75.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
		<b>% within the Gender of the respondent</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>	<b>10.7%</b>
	<b>Lack of involvement of the community in the planning and identification of CDF projects</b>	<b>% within In your opinion, what are some of the common challenges in the implementation of Constituency Development Fund projects</b>	<b>47.6%</b>	<b>52.4%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
		<b>% within the Gender of the respondent</b>	<b>34.5%</b>	<b>23.9%</b>	<b>28.0%</b>
	<b>Political interference</b>	<b>% within In your opinion, what are some of the common challenges in the implementation of Constituency Development Fund projects</b>	<b>55.6%</b>	<b>44.4%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
		<b>% within the Gender of the respondent</b>	<b>34.5%</b>	<b>17.4%</b>	<b>24.0%</b>
	<b>Late and inadequate disbursement of funds</b>	<b>% within In your opinion, what are some of the common challenges in the implementation of Constituency Development Fund projects</b>	<b>19.0%</b>	<b>81.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
		<b>% within the Gender of the respondent</b>	<b>13.8%</b>	<b>37.0%</b>	<b>28.0%</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>% within In your opinion, what are some of the common challenges in the implementation of Constituency Development Fund projects</b>	<b>38.7%</b>	<b>61.3%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
		<b>% within the Gender of the respondent</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

This study sought to establish the opinions of the respondents on what could be the possible challenges that affect the effective implementation of CDF projects in Malawi. The study established that 61.3% of male and 38.7% of female respondents agreed on the presence of possible challenges in the management and implementation of CDF projects. The study findings show that 28% of the respondents indicated late and inadequate disbursement of project funds as a possible challenge that would affect the effective implementation of CDF projects. 24% of the respondents suggested that political interference is a challenge to the effective implementation of the CDF projects. The lack of involvement of the community members in the planning and identification of some projects was also seen by 28% of the respondents as a significant challenge in the implementation of the CDF projects. 10.7% stated that corruption is also a challenge in the implementation of the CDF projects while 9.3% of the respondents suggested that lack of proper monitoring and evaluation systems is a key challenge in the implementation of the CDF projects.

It was further noted that people in communities perceive challenges in different ways but agree that CDF projects face so many challenges that potentially affect the implementation cycle of such projects. For instance, 81% of male respondents believed that late and inadequate disbursement of funds affects the implementation of the CDF projects while 19% of female respondents supported their male counterparts. In terms of political interference, 55.6% of female respondents took it as a big challenge and 44.4% also agreed with the female respondents. In terms of the lack of involvement of community members in the planning and identification of the projects, 52.4% majority of male respondents took it as a principal challenge and 47.6% also agreed with their colleagues. In terms of corruption, 75% and the majority of male respondents stated that corruption is affecting most CDF projects and 25% of female respondents concurred with their colleagues. Lastly, 57.1% of male respondents and 42.9% stated that the lack of proper and inclusive monitoring and evaluation systems affects the effective implementation of most CDF projects in their respective communities.

**Figure 6 Opinion on the common challenges in the implementation of Constituency Development Fund projects**



#### 4.8.7 Knowledge of how much CDF comes from the central government annually

The study sought to establish the awareness of community members on the total CDF allocated to their respective constituencies. The emphasis was to understand knowledge preferences by gender and age differences.

**Table 16 knowledge of the communities on how much CDF comes from the central government**

		Do you know how much CDF comes to your constituency from the government annually?		Total	
		Yes	No		
Gender of the respondent	Female	% within the Gender of the respondent	31.0%	69.0%	100.0%
		% within Do you know how much CDF comes to your constituency from the government annually?	39.1%	38.5%	38.7%
	Male	% within the Gender of the respondent	30.4%	69.6%	100.0%
		% within Do you know how much CDF comes to your constituency from the government annually?	60.9%	61.5%	61.3%
Total	% within the Gender of the respondent	30.7%	69.3%	100.0%	
	% within Do you know how much CDF comes to your constituency from the government annually?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

The study sought to find out the knowledge of individuals on how much CDF is being allocated to their respective constituencies. The study established that the majority were not able to mention the figure or amount of CDF that comes to their constituencies. 69.3% of the respondents indicated that they are not aware of how much CDF comes from the central government while 30.7% of respondents agreed that they are aware of the amount allocated to their constituencies. In terms of gender it was established that 61.5% of male respondents indicated that they are not aware of the amount of money allocated to their constituencies and 38.5% of female respondents concurred with their male colleagues. Among the women, 31% indicated that they are aware of the amount allocated and 69% said they are not aware. While among the male respondents 30.4% indicated that they are aware of the amount and 68.6% stated they were not aware of the amount of CDF that comes from the central government. This shows that there is a significant gap of knowledge among the general population of the communities in Malawi on the amount of CDF allocated by the central government.

#### 4.9 The level of impact of Community Development Fund-funded projects on the social economic welfare of the community members

##### 4.9.1 Development projects implemented through CDF

The study sought to establish the nature of projects that have been supported or implemented through CDF and in the table below were the findings

**Table 17 types of developmental projects that have been implemented in the communities**

		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Roads	10.7	10.7	10.7
	Schools	33.3	33.3	44.0
	Clinics	13.3	13.3	57.3
	Bridges	25.3	25.3	82.7
	All of the above	17.3	17.3	100.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	

Individuals were asked to identify both completed and uncompleted projects that are fully financed through CDF. The findings indicated that 10.7% of respondents stated that they have seen road-related projects being implemented in their respective communities. 33.3% of respondents confirmed that they have seen school block construction and renovation-related projects within their communities. 13.3% of the respondents said that they have seen clinic construction and renovation-related projects and 25.3% stated that they have seen the construction of new bridges and renovation of old bridge-related projects being financed through CDF while others indicated that they have seen almost all of the above projects being implemented and completed in their communities.

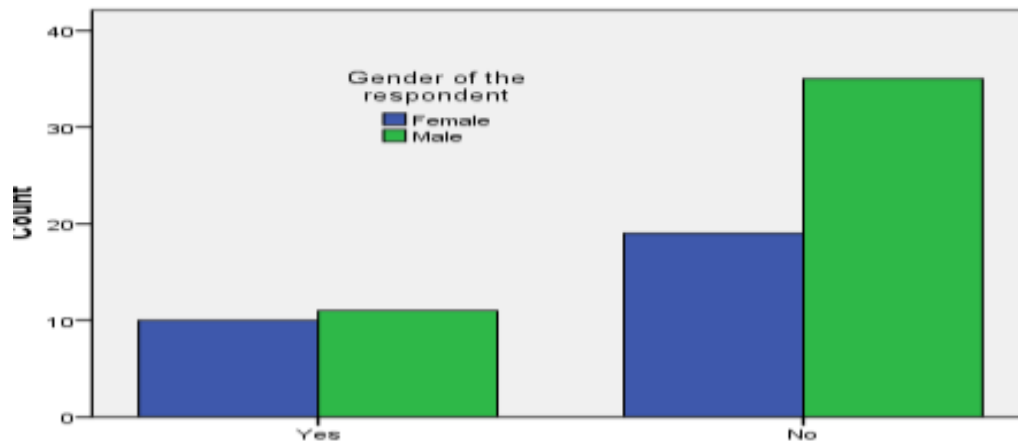
4.9.1 Whether the funding received from CDF is sufficient to complete the community projects.

The study sought to find out the opinions of the respondents on whether the CDF released to the communities is enough to complete a particularly given project. The table below shows the findings

Table 18 do you think the funding received from CDF is sufficient to complete the community projects?

		Gender of the respondent		Total	
		Female	Male		
Do you think the funding received from CDF is sufficient to complete the community projects?	No	Count	19	35	54
		% within Do you think the funding received from CDF is sufficient to complete the community projects?	35.2%	64.8%	100.0%
		% within the Gender of the respondent	65.5%	76.1%	72.0%
		Std. Residual	-.4	.3	
Yes		Count	10	11	21
		% within Do you think the funding received from CDF is sufficient to complete the community projects?	47.6%	52.4%	100.0%
		% within the Gender of the respondent	34.5%	23.9%	28.0%
		Std. Residual	.7	-.5	
Total		Count	29	46	75
		% within Do you think the funding received from CDF is sufficient to complete the community projects?	38.7%	61.3%	100.0%
		% within the Gender of the respondent	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Figure 7 Do you think the funding received from CDF is sufficient to complete the community projects?



The data were cross-tabulated to establish the thoughts of the respondents on whether funds allocated given to the CDF projects are sufficient to complete development projects within or on time. It was established that 72% majority of the respondents felt that the funds are not sufficient to complete most projects which are being initiated in communities this makes it a bit longer for a single project to be completed while 28% said funds are sufficient to complete the project. This makes it a bit longer for a single project to be completed. It was further established that of 72% that had an objection 64.8% male and 35.2% female felt that most community CDF projects seem to be receiving insufficient funds as such most projects are left uncompleted or take time to be completed. It was again established that 76.1% of male respondents disagreed with the fact that the current funding under CDF to community projects is sufficient while 23.9% supported that CDF projects receive enough funding to complete projects. While 65.5% of the female respondents also felt that CDF funding is not sufficient 34.5% agreed that communities do receive CDF funds that are enough for a particular project to be completed on time.

4.9.3 CDF helping to transform and improve the socioeconomic infrastructure of the community

The study sought to find out the views of the people on whether the CDF is helping in improving socio infrastructure of the communities. The table below shows the findings

**Table 19 CDF has helped to improve the social infrastructure of the community**

			CDF has helped to improve the social infrastructure of the community		Total
			Strongly agree	Strongly disagree	
Gender of the respondent	Male	% within the Gender of the respondent	78.3%	21.7%	100.0%
		% within CDF has helped to improve the social infrastructure of the community	66.7%	47.6%	61.3%
	Female	% within the Gender of the respondent	62.1%	37.9%	100.0%
		% within CDF has helped to improve the social infrastructure of the community	33.3%	52.4%	38.7%
Total		% within the Gender of the respondent	72.0%	28.0%	100.0%
		% within CDF has helped to improve the social infrastructure of the community	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The data were cross-tabulated by gender intending to establish opinions from the female and male respondents and the level of knowledge on social infrastructure development programs available in their respective communities. The study established that the majority of both males and females agreed that CDF is a key tool for social infrastructure development. 72% of the respondents stated and strongly agreed that proper implementation of CDF projects can help improve social services in the communities. While 28% strongly disagreed that CDF can surely help in improving socio infrastructure of the communities. It was further noted that 62.1% of female respondents strongly agree that CDF has helped improve socio-services in their respective communities while 37.9% did not agree. Again 78.3% of male respondents strongly agreed that CDF projects are helping in improving socio-infrastructure in their localities while 217% strongly disagreed.

#### 4.9.4. CDF projects are key in poverty eradication

The study further sought to find out from the community members whether CDF is helping in poverty eradication. The results are as indicated in the table below

**Table 20 CDF projects are key in poverty eradication**

			CDF projects are key to poverty eradication		Total
			Strongly agree	Strongly disagree	
The age range of the respondent	Above 56	% within the Age range of the respondent	65.6%	34.4%	100.0%
		% within CDF projects are key in poverty eradication	46.7%	36.7%	42.7%
	36-55	% within the Age range of the respondent	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
		% within CDF projects are key in poverty eradication	40.0%	30.0%	36.0%
	18-35	% within the Age range of the respondent	37.5%	62.5%	100.0%
		% within CDF projects are key in poverty eradication	13.3%	33.3%	21.3%
Total		% within the Age range of the respondent	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
		% within CDF projects are key in poverty eradication	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

From the results obtained 60% of the respondents strongly agreed that CDF projects are key in poverty eradication and 40% strongly disagreed to say CDF helps in eradicating poverty. The results further show that 46.7% of respondents above the age of 56 viewed CDF as key to poverty eradication and 36.7% strongly disagreed. It was established that 40% of the respondents of ages ranging from 36-55 strongly agreed that CDF is a key driver for eradicating poverty in communities while 33.3% of the same age range did not agree. Again those between the ages of 18-35 13.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that CDF is helping in eradicating poverty while 33.3 felt that CDF is not key in poverty eradication. This can be said that there is a significant relationship between CDF projects and fighting community poverty.

#### 4.9.5 The role of CDF in Decision-making and decentralization

The study further sought to find out from the community members whether CDF is helping them interact with their leaders and promoting decentralization. The results are as indicated in the table below

**Table 21 Role of CDF in Decision making and decentralization**

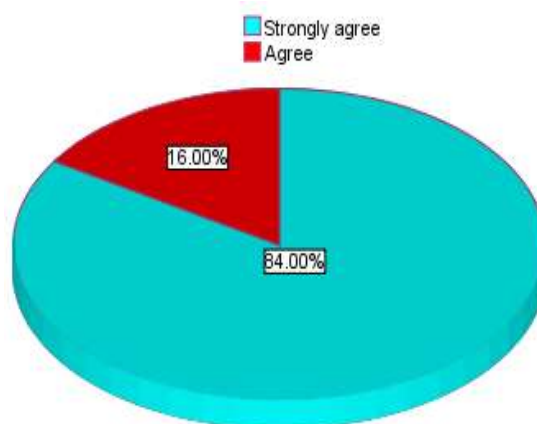
			Is CDF an effective tool for decentralized development?		Total
			Yes	No	
<b>CDF Projects helps community members to interact with their leaders in decision making</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>% within CDF Projects helps community members to interact with their leaders in decision making</b>	<b>42.4%</b>	<b>57.6%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
		<b>% within Is CDF an effective tool for decentralized development?</b>	<b>46.7%</b>	<b>42.2%</b>	<b>44.0%</b>
	<b>% of Total</b>		<b>18.7%</b>	<b>25.3%</b>	<b>44.0%</b>
	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>% within CDF Projects helps community members to interact with their leaders in decision making</b>	<b>38.1%</b>	<b>61.9%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>% within Is CDF an effective tool for decentralized development?</b>		<b>53.3%</b>	<b>57.8%</b>	<b>56.0%</b>	
<b>% of Total</b>		<b>21.3%</b>	<b>34.7%</b>	<b>56.0%</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>% within CDF Projects helps community members to interact with their leaders in decision making</b>	<b>40.0%</b>	<b>60.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	
	<b>% within Is CDF an effective tool for decentralized development?</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	
	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>40.0%</b>	<b>60.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

From the results obtained 40% of the respondents agreed that CDF is an effective tool for decentralized development programs while the majority of 60% did not agree with the fact that CDF brings about effective decentralization. When asked about whether CDF is helping community members to interact with their leaders, especially in decision making 56% of the respondents strongly disagree while 44% supported and strongly agreed. This means that there is a need do more awareness and civil education about decentralization policy and the roles that can be played by both community members and leaders. Decentralization promotes strategic interaction between community members and their leaders and this promotes transparency and accountability in any development programs being implemented in communities. An effective decision-making process for any community development program requires proper interaction between leaders and the communities they are serving.

**4.9.6 M & E of CDF projects affects the completion of CDF projects**

The study further sought to find them out from the members whether conducting monitoring and evaluation on CDF projects can affect the completion of the community projects

**Figure 8 M & E of CDF projects affects the completion of CDF projects**



The results obtained show that 84% of the respondents indicated to be strongly agreeing with the fact that monitoring and evaluation can affect the completion of the CDF projects in communities while 16% did not agree that M&E can affect the completion of the CDF projects. The findings showed that the majority of the respondents viewed monitoring and evaluation of the CDF projects as affecting their completion. Monitoring and evaluation of projects is felt significant for the successful completion of CDF projects. It is, therefore, necessary for CDF projects to be monitored at all stages.

#### 4.10 The accountability, transparency, and administrative mechanisms of Community Development Fund resources

This section examines the views of the key informants and the community leaders on the issues affecting the success of the CDF projects.

**Table 22 project team skills**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Project team skills contribute to the success of projects</b>	<b>3.37</b>	<b>.719</b>
<b>Project team selection has an impact on the success of CDF projects</b>	<b>3.38</b>	<b>.885</b>
<b>The project was implemented according to the original design</b>	<b>3.88</b>	<b>.342</b>
<b>Project on or ahead of schedule</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>.000</b>
<b>Project within budget</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>.000</b>
<b>Valid N (listwise)</b>		

The respondents were further presented with statements to rate on 4 points Likert scale seeking to establish whether the skills of the project teams affected the success of the projects. From the results obtained, project team skills affect the success of the project with a mean of 3.37 and a standard deviation of .719. It is also shown in the table above that project team selection has an impact on the success of the CDF projects with a mean of 3.38 and a standard deviation of .885. The project implemented according to the original design has an impact on the success of the projects with a mean of 3.88 and a standard deviation of .342. A project implemented on schedule also has an impact on the success of the project with a mean of 4.00 and a project implemented within the given budget has also an impact on the success of the project. This means that the majority of the respondents believed that the skills of the project team are determinants of the success of CDF projects and can help bring about effective cost, good quality, time well managed, and satisfaction to the project beneficiaries.

#### 4.9.2 Governance of the CDF projects

The study sought to assess the view of the respondents on the governance of the Constituency Development Fund in their communities

**Table 23 CDF projects governance**

		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	75.0	75.0	75.0
	No	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	

Project Governance is the set of rules, procedures, and policies that determine how projects are managed and overseen. These rules and procedures define how decisions are made during projects. As part of the oversight process, project governance also determines the metrics by which project success is measured. Project governance provides direction and defines decision-making procedures and metrics for validating impacts on the project. It also enables the project team. On governance, 75% of the respondents agreed that governance can affect the successful implementation of the CDF projects while 25% did not agree and did not see issues of governance in the implementation of the CDF projects.

**Table 24 Skills and project quality**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>The education level of project team members contributes to the success of CDF projects</b>	<b>2.12</b>	<b>.957</b>
<b>Carrying out project team training reduces the risks that the project might encounter</b>	<b>3.38</b>	<b>.885</b>
<b>Project team training is carried out to ensure that the project is of the desired quality</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>.894</b>
<b>Project team training is carried out to ensure that the project is of the desired quality</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>.869</b>
<b>Valid N (listwise)</b>		

The respondents were further presented with statements to rate on 4 points Likert scale seeking to establish whether the capacity of the project teams affected the quality of the projects. The findings indicated that the Education level of project team members contributes to the effective implementation of CDF projects (M=2.12, SD=0.957) and that offering capacity building to the project team contributes to the quality of projects (M=3.38, SD=0.885). The respondents also agreed to a large extent that project team members frequently take short courses on project implementation as shown by a mean of 3.50 and a standard deviation of 0.894. According to the respondents, project team training is carried out to ensure that the project is of the desired quality (M=3.50, SD=0.869) therefore Carrying out project team training reduces the risks that the project might encounter (M=4.00, SD=0.712).

#### 4.10.3 Stakeholder involvement

A meeting with two Assistants to the Members of Parliament indicated that the community stakeholders are being involved and consulted at all levels of project processes. They separately indicated that the process is done in line with CDF Operating Guidelines. They stated that the process is highly consultative and each year communities that have not benefitted from previous funding are deliberately prioritized in the next or current developments list. However, some community leaders had a different view on stakeholder involvement that they felt the involvement is usually not complete in the



sense that they are not involved in some critical areas of project management such as procurement of materials, and identification of the suppliers and contractors. They also revealed that they are not given proper information about project budgets such as approved and actual expenditures. This makes the issue of transparency and accountability difficult.

#### **4.10.4 CDF projects administrative mechanisms**

Respondents stated that they have going open meetings at the beginning of every year through Village Development Committee, and Area Development Committee meetings to give their views on what CDF projects should be carried out within their communities. It was revealed that decisions were usually reached through consensus and sometimes through open polls. Respondents also stated that although such meetings are held, there is a lot of influence from MPs and Constituency Administrative Assistants regarding what is identified as community needs. A major concern was raised regarding partisan influences mostly the ruling side. Some respondents observed that communities that are seen to belong to the MP's political party area of influence are given priority in the project approval process. This is attributed to the perception of CDF as 'MPs money' meaning that because the MP brought the money into the community can influence decisions regarding what projects to be done and where they can be located.

Again the study revealed that there are many instances where projects that are implemented are different from those that had been identified and prioritized by the community, pointing to high influence from elected officials in the project selection process. There was a consensus among the respondents that this happens because, after the open meeting to identify projects, no further consultations are held with the community before projects get approved.

#### **4.10.5 Possible challenges that affect effective CDF Implementation**

The study further sought to establish possible challenges that local community communities or structures encounter concerning CDF implementation and management. Information gathered via interviews with the local key informants show that a total of five key challenges were established and listed. The respondents stated that the CDF program is facing several challenges ranging from high expectations from the community over the funds allocated, to poor flow of information within the project stakeholder cycle. Political interference and the coming of constituency Administrative Assistance are confusing with the current government structures and policy gap in general.

The study revealed that most community leaders preferred old CDF guidelines to the revised one saying in the old CDFs they could see their involvement in the implementation and management of CDF projects unlike the current which most of the information and roles are conducted by the CAA and the MP which in most case do not involve the local leaders and community receiving prioritized projects. It was revealed that in most cases project information is not being shared with the community communities as it used to be previously. In terms of the information gap, the study revealed that most community structures such as ADC, VDCs despite being the ones submitting development needs to the council do not receive feedback on how much the cost of the project being implemented, procurement process is best known by the MP, CAA, and the council, this has high potential mismanagement of the community resources.

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## **5.0 Summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The key actors in the implementation of Constituency Development Fund projects are the community, the Member of Parliament, the ADC, and the Local Authority as indicated in the revised operating guidelines. The implementation of the CDF revolves around the agency and activism of local communities which must own the process and outcomes of implementing interventions financed by the CDF. The Village Development Committees and other structures perform roles that reinforce community ownership and accountability of the funds. Community transformation often works with specific groups of the population, especially those that are directly affected by the process. The actual process of transformation can inherently empower individuals and communities to understand their situations and gain increased control over the factors affecting their lives. This can, in turn, enhance people's sense of well-being and improve their quality of life.

The constituency Development Fund is among the decentralized delivery mechanisms, in Malawi that were put in place to further increased and improved service delivery to the communities of the republic of Malawi. The Fund, therefore, is supposed to comply with all decentralized frameworks that the country has been able to implement. One of the frameworks is the Local Government Act (LGA) 1998 which was approved to further the constitutional order based on democratic principles of accountability, transparency, and participation of citizens in decision-making and development processes.

The research was conducted to answer the question as to whether Community Development Fund initiative in Malawi, which is integrated into the country's Decentralisation Policy, is a tool for community transformation. The findings of the research affirm the fact that the Community Development Fund can indeed and can be a positive means for enhancing community transformation agenda and subsequently national socio-economic development by supplementing the development efforts of district councils. For this to be achieved, several apprehensions need to be addressed and factors in terms of the administration, management, and implementation of the Fund need to be reviewed. The need exists to strengthen and streamline the administrative processes of identifying and implementing Community Development Fund projects by clearly defining the roles and expectations of all concerned designated stakeholders.

## **5.2 Discussions of findings**

### **5.2.1 The degree of community participation in the identification, prioritization, and implementation of CDF-funded projects**

Going by the findings of the study it can be determined that community participation plays an effective role in the identification, prioritization, implementation, monitoring, and control of community projects. Thus the study established that effective community participation is crucial in enhancing the effective and timely completion of community projects. The study can conclude that community participation plays a positive role in enhancing the timely completion of Constituency Development Fund-financed projects. Participation is both a right and empowerment process in the development process, however, community members in Mzimba and Nkhata bay Districts have been locked out of the mainstream CDF projects management at the fund's management and procurement levels which contravenes both the law and the spirit of the CDF guidelines which aimed at addressing inequalities in development and funding projects with immediate socioeconomic impacts on the livelihoods of the people through a participatory process.

The results show that identification, prioritization, and implementation of projects with all the stakeholders involved are important in ensuring that the project is completed successfully. Therefore, if there is no involvement of all stakeholders in the identification, prioritization, and implementation of the CDF projects their completion may be affected negatively. The results from the study indicate that respondents strongly agreed that planning and identification of projects affect project completion. This shows that the majority of the respondents were in favor of involving stakeholders in the identification, prioritization, and implementation of CDF projects to be important in Malawi.

The study further revealed that the effort of involving the community members in the selection and prioritization of the development projects for their particular communities is being put in place. As is evidenced in this study the majority of the respondents said that community members are to some extent given an opportunity to participate in selecting and identification of development projects in their respective societies. This significantly speaks well of one of the key principles and objectives of the operating guidelines for the CDF.

The study also revealed that the majority of community projects are identified by the community members through VDCs and ADCs, while a few projects are extracted from the DDPs and it was reviewed some projects funded under CDF are being suggested by the MPs. The revised operating guidelines for the CDF and other relevant local development policies encourage the holistic involvement of community members in the identification, prioritization, and implementation, of community development projects. This model brings about community empowerment; helps build the capacity of the communities and enhances effective community participation.

It was also indicated that the majority of the respondents stated that people in the communities have no opportunity in determining the location of the projects. Effective community participation in this regard can be transparently achieved by also involving the people in the community in determining the location since they are the best to allocate the place for the project which can also be cost-effective in the implementation of the projects.

It was again noted that there is high political involvement in the implementation of Constituency Development Fund projects from the Members of Parliament, Ward Councillors, and Ruling party leadership. The results of the study point out that there is high political involvement in CDF project management. It was also noted this involvement affects the implementation and completion of most CDF projects in communities. Concerning the level of influence and involvement that politicians have in the administration, management, and utilization of the Fund; research findings further show that the MP has been given a lot of power. This is apparent from the widely held view of CDF as MP's money, sourced by the MP. The research reveals that MPs and councillors use this view to enhance their popularity as opposed to enhancing their constituents' understanding of the objectives of CDF. This too much political bureaucracy has potential elements of segregation in terms of CDF resource distribution within the constituencies in that more developments are being implemented or allocated to places where these political leaders have influence or more votes.

In terms of monitoring and evaluation of community development projects; the results from the study indicated that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that monitoring and evaluation affect the completion of the CDF projects. The findings show that the majority of the respondents viewed monitoring and evaluation of the CDF projects as affecting their completion. The CDF projects which are not monitored and evaluated are unlikely to be completed successfully. Monitoring is assessing a project from initiation to its implementation geared to specific aims against agreed-upon limits, specifications, and requirements. It provides management and the main stakeholders of a development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of expected results and progress for the use of allocated funds. Monitoring is an endless and regular review and management of the initiatives to ensure that inputs work schedules, deliveries, target outputs, and other necessary actions continue consistent with the project. It involves the continuous method of gathering information at systematic intervals about ongoing initiatives regarding the type and their performance.

### **5.2.2 The scope of awareness of community members on CDF operating guidelines and policies**

It can be pointed out that community awareness and knowledge of Constituency Development Fund operating guidelines are considered unsatisfactory in most cases and that the designated governance system structures should influence individual members' local structures of the community to have increased knowledge of Constituency Development Fund policies. The members of particular communities are expected to be active in all phases of the development projects to ensure that the objectives of the project are met using resources allocated for them within a given time. Again awareness and knowledge of basic project management should be emphasized to steer community development projects effectively. Given the findings of this study, it is to suggest that the Malawi government and stakeholders need to strengthen policy awareness programs at all levels in communities to equip community members and structures with policy awareness and knowledge of project management that would help them obtain livelihoods from various local projects.

With regards to the level of community awareness about the CDF operating guidelines, the research findings from the community responses indicate that the majority of community members are not aware of the availability of CDF operating guidelines. This means that there is a huge knowledge gap among the community members on how the Fund needs to be executed and this has the potential for misinformation. Community awareness determines the level of access and participation or involvement avenues, project identification and prioritization, monitoring and control, and management besides broadening the understanding of socio-political entitlements of the community in CDF projects.

The study also established that awareness of the project cost and amount disbursed to the community remains a huge concern. The study further established that the information about the project transaction is known or limited to a few individuals which have great potential for speculations of abuse or initial mismanagement of project resources. It was established that the majority of community members raised a concern that most CDF projects are implemented in communities without the information properly shared with the community on how much is costing the project and how much has been disbursed to the particular constituency. This shows a substantial contradiction of the revised CDF guidelines that promote transparency and accountability and empowerment in the management of CDF-related funds.

The guideline state that CDF & WRF projects shall be implemented transparently and the funds shall be well accounted for this include known to the community. Implementation of CDFWRF will put in place mechanisms through which information about CDF & WRF activities and processes in the communities is disseminated and the people who bear direct responsibilities for the management of CDF and WRF regularly explain their activities and decisions regarding CDF and WSF to the beneficiary communities. It further states that CDF & WRF projects will foster community empowerment through participatory project management including key decision-making in procurement and financial management. The study also revealed that most community members are not aware of the total CDF that comes from the central government to their constituencies. This shows that there is a significant gap of knowledge among the general population of the communities in Malawi on the amount of CDF allocated by the central government.

In terms of the general opinion of the community members on what could be potential challenges affecting the effective implementation of CDF projects in Malawi. The study established that the majority agree that there are challenges in the management and implementation of CDF projects. The following were the challenges that were identified by respondents; "late and inadequate disbursement of project funds, political interference, lack of involvement of the community members in the planning and identification of some projects, corruption and lack of proper monitoring and evaluation systems."

### ***5.2.3 The level of impact of Community Development Fund-funded projects on the social economic welfare of the community members***

It is worth noting that CDF-funded projects are meant to help rural communities. These funds are meant to mediate the social needs of rural local communities in all socio-economic sectors of the particular society. However, these CDF projects are yet to stand the test of time due to the concerns of the actual management of funds and lack of transparency and accountability in project costs, etc. This inability of the CDF projects to stand the test of time may be attributed to inappropriate resource utilization, mismatch of projects objectives and funder's priority, and lack of community involvement among other challenges.

Nevertheless, recently good progress has been made in terms of the impact of CDF on the socio-economic welfare of the communities. It was established that community members can identify development projects being implemented in their respective communities. Respondents stated that they have seen the road, school block clinic construction and renovation projects, and some confirmed construction of new bridges and renovation of the old bridge being implemented in their locality. On whether the CDF released to the communities is enough to complete a particularly given project; it was established that the majority of the respondents felt that the funds are not sufficient to complete most projects which are being initiated in communities this makes it a bit longer for a single project to be completed.

On the other hand, the study established that the majority of respondents agreed that CDF is a key tool for social infrastructure development and strongly agreed that proper implementation of CDF projects can help improve social services in the communities. Again results obtained indicate that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that CDF projects are key in poverty eradication. The results further show that the majority of individuals age 56 and above strongly viewed CDF as key to poverty eradication. However, the majority of the youth aged 18 to 35 of age felt that CDF is not key for poverty eradication. All in all, it can be said that there is a significant relationship between CDF projects and fighting community poverty.

In terms of CDF being an effective tool for decentralized development programs; the majority did not agree with the fact that CDF brings about effective decentralization. When asked about whether CDF is helping community members to interact with their leaders especially in decision-making again the majority of the respondents strongly disagree. This means that there is a need do more awareness and civil education about decentralization policy and the roles that can be played by both community members and leaders. Decentralization promotes strategic interaction between community members and their leaders and this promotes transparency and accountability in any development programs being implemented in communities. An effective decision-making process for any community development program requires proper interaction between leaders and the communities they are serving.

### ***5.2.4 The accountability, transparency, and administrative mechanisms of Community Development Fund resources***

Constituency Development Fund operating guidelines state that CDF projects shall be implemented transparently and the funds shall be well accounted for. Implementation of the Constituency Development Fund will put in place mechanisms through which information about Constituency Development Fund activities and processes in the communities is disseminated and the people who bear direct responsibilities for the management of Constituency Development Fund are regularly explaining their activities and decisions regarding Constituency Development Fund to the beneficiary communities, and

Constituency Development Fund projects will foster community empowerment through participatory project management including key decision making in procurement and financial management.

The Constituency development fund was created by Parliament in 2006 to among other things help to spread rural development in the country evenly. The constituency development fund is in line with the fiscal decentralization processes in the country and involves the transfer of funds from the Central Government to Local Authorities. The constituency development fund is therefore subject to public funds management laws and procedures. The constituency development fund seeks to provide MPs and their constituent communities with the opportunity to make choices and implement projects that maximize their welfare in line with their needs and preferences. The fund, therefore, exists to respond to immediate and short-term community development needs.

On governance, the majority of the respondents agreed that governance can affect the successful implementation of CDF projects. Project Governance is the set of rules, procedures, and policies that determine how projects are managed and overseen. These rules and procedures define how decisions are made during projects. As part of the oversight process, project governance also determines the metrics by which project success is measured. Project governance provides direction and defines decision-making procedures and metrics for validating impacts on the project. It also enables the project team.

In terms of skills, the project team can help in promoting transparency and accountability or being a mechanism for the effective and successful implementation of CDF projects. The results indicate that the majority of the respondents agreed that project team skills affect the success of the project. It revealed that project team selection has an impact on the success of the CDF projects. A project implemented according to the original design has an impact on the success of the project. A project implemented on schedule also has an impact on the success of the project and a project implemented within the given budget has also an impact on the success of the project. This means that the majority of the respondents believed that the skills of the project team are determinants of the success of CDF projects and can help bring about transparency and accountability, effective cost, good quality, time well managed, and satisfaction to the project beneficiaries.

### ***5.3 Suggestions and Recommendations***

Community members have a right to all pieces of information on any projects taking place in their localities, MPs, councillors, VDC, ADC members, and technocrats or any development stakeholders, need to exercise their constitutional obligations to inform community members on how much funds are being allocated, material and service procurement process, the amount disbursed and used on any CDF project. Further, authorities and all stakeholders need to ensure that all channels of project selection, identification, prioritization, and implementation are always open, for transparency and accountability to take its scope. Lack of compliance contravenes CDF guidelines.

There is a need for regular sensitization of community members on their role in the participatory development process. Additionally, the council, VDC, ADV, and development partners should use their leadership roles to nurture citizen collaboration and planning. Vigorous awareness creation and sensitization of the community to participate in the development process plays a key role in changing the perception of citizens about their participation in community development projects.

There is a need to institute legislation to control Constituency Development Fund. The Constituency Development Fund Guidelines that are presently in use are not enough and do not provide for proper involvement of community structures, utilization, and management of the Fund. The legislation should propagate the procedures, rules, regulations, and mechanisms for the administration, management, utilization, monitoring, evaluation, transparency, accountability, and auditing of Constituency Development Fund projects.

The Constituency Development Fund legislation once enacted should be clear on the quality of projects by specifying the minimum quality of materials to be used. It should be clear on the procurement procedures and explicitly stipulate requirements for bills of quantity and on the use of expert advice. The Constituency Development Fund should provide adequate resources for project evaluation and monitoring throughout the entire project life to ensure that projects are being implemented properly.

The study suggests that there is a need for periodic monitoring and evaluation of Constituency Development Fund projects. This will provide a basis for accountability in the use of development resources and strengthen transparency. It will also help to strengthen project design and implementation to ensure project sustainability and achievement of Constituency Development Fund objectives. Lack of monitoring is a health breeding ground for incompetence and bad workmanship. Monitoring promotes the realization of acceptable government standards. Any deviation can be noted on time and corrected timely.

View of the objectives of the Constituency Development Fund, it is intended to deliver development to the community. To ensure full participation of the community, there should be capacity building, awareness, and sensitization programs, tailored towards transforming the mind-set of communities so that they are directed towards more sustainable projects.

The study recommends that improvement in skills can facilitate the performance of the Constituency Development Fund-funded project. There is a need to have skilled local project managers for instance the Constituency Administrative Assistant must have basic skills that can help to ensure that there is efficiency in the performance of the Constituency Development Fund-funded project. The local project managers should be engaged in the planning and implementation of Constituency Development Fund projects.

This research recommends that the various institutions involved in decision-making on Constituency Development Fund funding at both national and constituency levels should endeavour to put in place more efficient mechanisms geared towards improving its performance. These should be aimed at not

only ensuring better cost estimates for infrastructural projects but at developing a more robust and effective funding system that would ensure prompt, adequate, and sufficient disbursement of funds to earmarked projects. A new framework for communicating Constituency Development Fund development plans should be developed; the framework should provide scheduled ward and constituency planning meetings with an avenue for feedback. The framework should also provide for performance criteria whereby all key players in the CDF can be subjected to an end-of-year public or community evaluation process. It is also recommended that there should always be strict adherence to planned activities in the implementation of CDF.

There is a need for capacity building of traditional leaders on CDF with emphasis on the roles of the central government, local government, community development committees, and communities and ensure that trained leaders can sensitize people in their localities. There is need to conduct workshops on Basic Participatory Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation of CDF Projects for Ward Councillors, CBOs, ADCs, and VDCs and conduct budget tracking training for community members who will in turn form CDF Budget Tracking Team for transparency.

Finally, there is a need for all consultations on which projects could be included in the district budget to be approved need to be done on time so that projects, based on communities' priorities are included in the district budget for approval. The Constituency Development Fund guidelines stipulate that Members of Parliament, at least once a year, need to organize a meeting with chiefs, councillors, and ADCs within their constituencies to identify and prioritize projects that meet the immediate social and economic needs of the people that can be funded through Constituency Development Fund. These include ongoing projects. Further, the CDF guidelines point out that selected projects should be in line with priorities in the District Development Plans. Further, the guidelines say that MPs, Councillors, and Area Development Committee members need to familiarize themselves with key priorities in the District Development Plans.

#### **5.4 Areas for Further Research**

This research is not conclusive and it is recommended to conduct further studies especially to find out the efficiency and utilization of twenty-five percent that comes from community contribution and how it affects the quality and sustainability of Constituency Development Fund-funded projects. Further studies need to be conducted to establish how are Constituency Development Fund project plans fit into District Development Plan and national development plans Further study can also be carried out to establish whether Constituency Development Fund fits into Malawi's Decentralisation Policy. Again, further studies need to be conducted to determine the most effective participatory structures to optimize the representativeness of Constituency Development Fund service delivery needs.

#### **5.5 Conclusion**

Although it is understood that CDF is one Fund with significantly competing needs from the many communities within the constituencies, proper management and better coordination between community structures or stakeholders, district council and line ministry structures can lead to greater effectiveness. According to (Simpson, 2007) community development is a process in which efforts of people in the community are united with legislative authorities to improve the political, economic, social, and cultural conditions of communities. Through this, communities are integrated into the development life of the nation thus enabling them to contribute fully to national development progress. This type of development is what is envisioned in the Malawi 2063 development agenda, decentralization Policy, Local government Act, and the objectives of the Constituency Development Fund.

As things stand, however, Constituency Development Fund is being used to enhance the interests of Members of Parliament. Therefore, the recommendations given in this study suggest possible ways through which the Constituency Development Fund can be transformed to achieve its intended goal of being a tool for community transformation. It is important to note that when communities rely too heavily on politicians, to bring development they relinquish control of their natural and material resources and more importantly may not have a voice in their future. The Constituency Development Fund project purpose should be a source of inspiration and motivation for stakeholders and communities

Subject to the stated objective of the Constituency Development Fund in the Republic of Malawi and based on the findings of this study, Constituency Development Fund has the potential to be an effective tool for community transformation. The Fund can help to improve access to socio-economic services in communities by allocating public development funds directly to communities to be used on projects identified by the particular community. To grow the potential of the Constituency Development Fund and achieve holistic long-term development, there is a need for stricter adherence to the provisions of the CDF Guidelines with proper integration of other local government and decentralization Policies accompanied by increasing the knowledge levels of the primary owners of the Fund, that is, the members of the community for whom development is intended to address their development needs.

Constituency Development Fund is just one of the many decentralized delivery mechanisms, in Malawi that were put in place to further increased and improved service delivery to the people of Malawi. Constituency Development Fund, therefore, is supposed to comply with all decentralized frameworks that the country had been able to put in place. One of the frameworks is the Local Government Act 198 which was deliberately established to further the constitutional order based on democratic principles of accountability, transparency, and participation of citizens in decision-making and development processes. Grassroots participation in planning, implementation, monitoring, and delivery of services furthers, therefore, the realization of the right to development, as without the participation of citizens, and this right cannot be achieved.

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