

**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**FACULTY OF ARTS**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK**

**THE IMPACT OF MILLENIUM VILLAGES AS A STRATEGY OF EMPOWERING  
WOMEN SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY: A CASE STUDY OF MWANDAMA  
MILLENIUM VILLAGES, MALAWI**

**BY**

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A project paper submitted in partial fulfillment for the Degree of Masters of Arts (Rural Sociology and Community Development) In the Faculty of Arts of the University of Nairobi

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project paper is my original work and has not been presented for any other academic award at the University of Nairobi or any other institution.

**Gloria Lilly Phiri**

Signature

..........

Date

.....20/12/2013.....

## DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR

This project paper was submitted for examination with my approval as University of Nairobi supervisor.

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Signature

..........

Date

.....20/12/13.....

## **DEDICATION**

This project paper is dedicated to my husband Dr. Noah Antony Phiri and my children Beatrice, Anthony Jnr and Joshua whose love, support and encouragement have facilitated my success and wonderful time during my study. Their understanding has been amazing throughout my study period. God bless you all.

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

**CADECOM** – Catholic Development Commission in Malawi

**CGC** – Columbia Global Centre, Nairobi

**DAS** Development Assistance Strategy

**FGD** – Focus Group Discussion

**GBS** – Growing Sustainable Business

**GVH** – Group Village Headman

**IRS** – In-Door Spraying of pesticides for mosquito control

**MV**: Millenium Village

**MASEDA**- Malawi socioeconomic data

**MDGs**: Millennium Development Goals

**MDGS** – Malawi Growth Development Strategy

**MIPA** – Malawi Investments Promition Agency

**MP**: Millenium Promise.

**MPRS** Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy

**MTEF** – Medium Term Expenditure Framework

**MVP**- Millennium Villages Project

**NEPAD**: New Partnership for African Development.

**OAU** – Organization of African Unity

**PHC** – Primary Health Care

**SES**: Social Economic Status

**STA** – Senior Traditional Authority

**UN** United Nations

**UNDP**-United Nations Development Programme of the United Nations

**UNICEF** – United Nations Children Fund

**UNFPA**- United Nation Population Fund

**WALA**- Wellness and Agriculture for Life Advancement

**WB**- World Bank

**WEAI**: Women`s Empowerment in Agriculture Index

**WHO** – World Health Organization

**WEF** – World Economic Forum

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of the Millennium Villages Project (MVP) as a strategy to empower women socially and economically, a case study of Mwandama Millennium Villages, Malawi. The study attempted to establish the inequalities women experience in all aspects of life, for instance in agriculture, business, health, education, community development and leadership. The study was guided by the following specific objectives: To examine the approaches and new technologies of the Millennium Villages in meeting its objectives and guidelines of empowering women socially and economically, to assess how the MVP has empowered women socially and economically and To determine factors that are inhibiting and contributing to women's empowerment socially and economically through the MVP.

Systematic random frame was used to select the sample size and purposive random frame helped the study to select the population and target group. A sample size of 150 household respondents was drawn from the population of 8,500 households. Pair wise ranking was used in the group discussion to analyze the effectiveness, quality and satisfaction of women social-economic conditions. With the MVP strategies and approaches by the respondents, the research used a questionnaire guide to collect data from the study population. Household survey, group discussion and key informants were methods used in data collection.

Data was analyzed using SPSS and Microsoft Excel by using percentages, graphs and tables. The study connected the three theoretical models as related to women's empowerment, for example structural theory emphasized the general and traditional socialization of women where they are being viewed as weak vessels and that their role and position is to take care of the home and family.

The study revealed that women had low education levels because, traditionally they were not allowed to go to school and not allowed to take up leadership positions, In regard to education model women have acquired more knowledge in business and agriculture and health training programmes that have enlightened them and given them the chance to understand things they did not know about issues, needs and opportunities. In the liberal theory MVP is connected as the strategy that has liberated women in Mwandama Village from poverty, food insecurity and other social economic issues. The conceptual framework of the study agrees and connects MVP as a powerful strategy to enhance and empower the poor and women. The study revealed that the MVP project has met the needs of women and achieved its objectives and guidelines with the use of effective approaches and strategies in agriculture/business, health, education and community development.

The study also found out that the MVP has improved social –economic status of women. This was in relation to the findings of the social economic data that showed that, before the MVP there were no social services in the area such as schools, health and participation in the leadership position. In addition the study also showed that the MVP have very effective strategies in that women were satisfied with the quality of services offered which have contributed to the improvement of the living standards of the poor and women in Mwandama

Millennium Village. However, the study noted that, inequalities in cultural beliefs and poor local leadership are inhibiting factors to women's empowerment in the MVP.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Social economic status (SES) is defined and measured as a combination of education, income, occupation and opportunities to social amenities (Millennium Promise, 2006). The social economic status of women has importance on the well-being of future generations and it is the key factor in determining the quality of life of women, which has resulting effects on the entire generation.

Throughout both the developing and the developed world, women carry a disproportionately high burden of poverty. This poverty is experienced not just as material deprivation, but also as marginalization, which means that those living in poverty often have no or little opportunity to influence the political, economic and social processes and institutions, which control and shape their lives and keep them trapped in a cycle of poverty (Hoare, *et el*, 2009).

Furthermore, women have been viewed as primarily passive recipients' and beneficiaries of socio-economic services (Richardson, *et el* 1996). Traditionally, especially in Africa, women are put in subordinate and private role as compared to their male counterparts who are placed in the public domain having full control of the family resources. According to the Gender Forum in Nairobi for NEPAD (2000), the difference in positions and roles between men and women gives women a zero level of empowerment where women still remain and play the passive recipients of benefits, which are given from their husbands as heads of the family.

The problems affecting women are as old as human society itself. While men have, over the years have had social-economic ascendancy, all along, particularly in the third world women have been lagging far behind Richardson, *et el* (1996). Thus women's child bearing-rearing, and presumed nurturing capacity are explained in terms of their position and role as bearers of children while men's bread winning, together with their domination of economic social and political sphere are best explained negatively in terms of their roles in reproduction and positively in terms of their presumed gender, physical strength and aggressiveness (Richardson, *et el*. 1996). For example the family responsibilities of an African set up. (orphan sentence, need to connect with other ideas)

Much as there is constant effort from donors and governments as they spend more resources to uplift the status of women, their level of standards has not changed much. The reasons usually given include gender inequalities and discrimination, lack of participation in decision making, cultural beliefs, dependency on outside assistance and male counterparts have made the failure of most projects (Gnanadadon, *et al.* 2006).

There is therefore a great need to empower women all over the world especially in developing countries. From 1980s, the need and interest to empower the poor began partially recognized in 96 African countries. The UN International Research Institute did a survey which indicated that women were affected because many of the poor were women and were already faced by socio-economic biases which made them more vulnerable (Vickers, 1992). The Global Gender Gap Report (2012) from the World Economic Forum (WEF) emphasizes persisting gender gap divides across and within regions, and that many countries have made slow progress on closing gender gap much as this gender gap is closing narrowly in education and health, (the Gender Forum, 2012).

A series of global conferences over the past years drew their attention to improving the social economic and political issues that face women (Muteshi, 2006).

At the Millennium Summit in September 2000, the largest gathering of the world leaders in history adopted the UN Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to new global partnership to reduce poverty with a dead line of 2015, which became Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The millennium goals are global targets to addressing poverty in all dimensions including promoting gender equality and women empowerment. (World Bank Report 2000).

However, by early 2004 concerns had been raised that most African nations were off track to achieving the MDGs, so the Earth Institute at Columbia University, and UN Millennium Project (UNMP) established the MDGs technical support center in July 2004. The focus was on national, local and district level and this led to the broadening of their scope in order to provide advisory services, support and the implementation of the Millennium Villages. (MV)

In 2005, five years after the goals were established; an inspired group of people began to see that it was time to help mobilize the global community to fulfill these promises. Jeffrey D, Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University and special adviser to the UN Secretary-

General on the MDGs, teamed up with Raymond Chambers, a pioneer of private equity investing and a passionate Philanthropist, to establish Millennium Promise.

Millennium Promise (MP) is the leading international non-profit organization solely committed to accelerating achievement of the (MDGs) with the vision. Millennium Promise therefore operates 14 MV sites in Africa in 10 countries, and is working to mobilize a growing global alliance of public, private and nonprofit partners who share a commitment to sustainable development and scaling up effective ideas. The MVP is a holistic package of specific interventions for 79 villages in ten countries in sub- Sahara Africa, and Mwandama Millennium Villages in Malawi is one of them. The millennium villages are also found in Kenya (Sauri and Dertu), Tanzania (Mbola and Pemba Island), Rwanda (Mayanje), Uganda (Ruhira), Ethiopia (Koraro) , Mali, Ghana, Senegal and Nigeria. The MVP strategy to empower the poor is a ten year plan divided into two phases. The first phase was from 2006 to 2011 and second phase is from 2011 to 2015. The project aims to establish rigorous proof of concept for implementing the practical interventions needed to achieve the (MDGs) in rural Africa over a five year frame through using the (MV) as a strategy to empower the poor among them being women.

The millennium Development Goals Centre for East and Southern Africa has been supporting implementation of the MVP in countries of East and Southern Africa, through which inputs are provided to increase farmers' food security. The support to farmers living in (MVs) has resulted in huge increases in production to magnitude of more than 12 times that of the national maize production levels.

Unlike many other development initiatives, the MVP is not testing or introducing a single new intervention. In (MV) sites, dozens of science-based interventions range across five key sectors: agriculture, health, education, infrastructure including water and sanitation, and business development. The project leverages and develops systems and technologies for achieving the strongest combined results of these interventions. Gender equality and environmental sustainability run throughout all project activities. (Millennium Promise Report, 2011).



## 1.2 Problem statement

Women's empowerment is one of the concerns that the U.N Millennium Development identified as Goals (goal no. 3) in the UN (2000) declaration summit. The Millennium Village therefore is a UN Millennium Development Goal strategy aimed at empowering the poor in the rural African communities, majority of them being women. Four key guiding principles were agreed upon to facilitate the implementation of the MVs. One of these principles is to increase capacity and community empowerment in Africa through training and sharing knowledge with community's local African governments and NGOs, thus making it the drive of all principles in raising the living standards of the people, the community and the nation. The principle of empowerment is done through the integrated approach of improvement in agriculture, education, health care and in small businesses.

To address the issue of poverty and empowerment the project established rigorous proof of concept for implementing the practical interventions needed to achieve the (MDGs) in rural Africa over a five year frame through using the (MV) as a strategy to empower the poor among them being women.

A study made by Millennium Promise (2010) emphasizes that MVP has offered a bold, innovative model for helping and empowering rural African communities to lift themselves out of poverty. In the Millennium Promise (2011) review of its activities in all Millennium Villages in Africa, is an indication that the MV has seen promising results in the first phase of its mandate and management. For instance, there is an increased maize yield from 1.3 tons to 5 tons per hectare, improved drinking water with household usage increasing from 21% to 68%. Free health care for families, access to adult education classes for women and formulation of new business and reduced malaria prevalence, from 22% to 5%.

Despite the MVP strategy being described as an effective strategy in empowering the poor among them being women, Hoare, *et al*, (2009) explained that throughout both the developing and the developed world, women still carry a disproportionately high burden of poverty. This poverty is experienced not just as material deprivation, but also as marginalization, which means that those living in poverty often have no or little opportunity to influence the political, economic and social processes and institutions. These control and shape their lives and keep them trapped in a cycle of poverty. The report by Negash (2006) also states that, women still remain

disadvantaged when compared to men in virtually all aspects of life. He added that women are deprived of equal access to education, health, capital, decision making in the political, social and business sectors.

In addition, Negash (2006) highlighted some discrepancies between men and women in the contemporary world as follows; there are 135 million children in the world between 7 and 18 who are not receiving education, and of which 60% are girls, two thirds of 880 million illiterate adults around the world are women.

UN Human Development Report (2006) also states that, men are credited with three quarters of all economic activities in the developing countries, hence women actually perform 53% of the work and an estimate of \$16 trillion in global output is currently 'invisible' of which \$11 trillion is estimated to be produced by women. Statistics in the World Security Forum and UNDP Human Development Report say that women in Africa represent 52% of the total population, contribute approximately 75 % of the agricultural work, and produce 60 to 80 % of the food. Yet they earn only 10 % of all African incomes and own just 1 % of the continents assets. These statistics and numbers indicate tremendous challenges women face on their road to gender equality and empowerment.

Despite repeated efforts made by governments, NGOs, and multilateral development agencies, the majority of women in the developing world are still relegated to micro enterprises and informal task. The challenge will not only affect women but also the development of their nations. Until societies, governments, NGOs around the world come together and make concerted effort to empower and grant equality to women, women will never be empowered and progress in their social economic status and will continue to be hampered.

The aim of the study was to understand and assess the extent to which women are socially and economically empowered in the MVPs as agreed in the international convention and declaration through meeting and achieving Millennium Goal number 3. The study was carried out at Mwandama Millennium Village Malawi.

### **1.3 Research questions**

1 To what extent has the MVP met the objectives and guidelines of empowering women socially and economically?

2. What factors contribute to the success and failure of the MVP in Mwandama Millennium Village as a strategy to empower women in health, agriculture and education sectors?

## **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

### **Overall Objective**

1. To assess the impact of MVP as a strategy on women's social-economic status in Mwandama Malawi.

### **Specific Objectives**

1. To examine the approaches and new technology of the MV in meeting objectives and guidelines of empowering women socially and economically.
2. To assess how the MVP has empowered women socially and economically in Mwandama.
3. To determine factors that are inhibiting and contributing to women empowerment socially and economically through the MVP.

## **1.5 Scope and Limitations**

The study was carried at Mwandama Millennium Villages, which is 24 kilometers from Zomba town in Southern Malawi. The Mwandama Villages Project has a population of 8,500 households with 35,000 beneficiaries but only a sample of 150 respondents aged from 20 to 70 years old were interviewed in the study. The study would only look at women in the Millennium Villages thus the study would not be applicable to women outside the MV of Mwandama.

When examining the approaches and new technology of the MV project, the study restricted to examine the objectives and guidelines applied in the MV. On understanding the MVP as a strategy to empower women socially and economically the study was limited to evaluate appropriateness and effectiveness of quality of service delivery.

The study was limited to assess the agriculture/business, health, education, leadership and community development as contributing factors to women's social-economic empowerment.

However, the study determined cultural factors such as cultural stereotypes, gender discrimination, and gender inequality as hindrances to women's social-economic empowerment as revealed in the literature review.

In addition, at the time of the study the researcher was out of the country of residence to Malawi, consequently, issues of transport and movements in the time for data collection of the study abound.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

A series of global conferences over the past years made by organizations and institutions contributed to the other entities' and government's commitment to improving the social economic and political issues that face women (Muteshi, 2006). However, this study highlighted and assessed the impact of Millennium Villages as a strategy to empower women socially and economically.

The study generated knowledge and gathered new facts and information in regard to the area of study. The knowledge that was generated from the study can be used to evaluate the approaches and technologies used in the MVP in meeting its objectives and guidelines and can be a basis for future reference to other researchers in the same field of study.

### **1.7 Definition of Terms**

**Empowerment:** this is the process through which men and women are mobilized to identify and understand and overcome the structural and underlying forces of under development thereby achieving equality of welfare and equal access to and control over resources.

**Gender equality:** It is the result of the absence of discrimination, on the basis of a person's sex in opportunities and allocation of resources or benefits. This means there is no discrimination on grounds of a person's sex.

**Gender relations:** It deals with how people relate on a daily basis. These are ways in which a culture or society defines rights, responsibilities and identities of men and women in relation to one another.

**Gender discrimination:** the systematic, unfavorable treatment of individuals on the basis of their gender which denies them rights, opportunities of resources.

Gender Equity – sharing of resources in a proportional way men and women; boys and girls, without any pre-conceived ideas.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature of the impact of Millennium Villages Projects as a strategy to empowering women socially and economically in relation to Millennium Development Goal no 3. (Improve inequality and women's empowerment). The areas examined include, background of Millennium Villages in Africa and Malawi in particular, factors, organizations contributing to women's empowerment and factors hindering women's social-economic empowerment and framework and theories explaining women empowerment.

### **2.1 Background of Millennium Villages in Africa**

Empowerment has become a popular concept in the international development course although it is not well understood on how and at what level this empowerment is expected to be. However, the need to empower women responds to the growing recognition that women in developing countries lack control over resources, self-confidence and opportunities to participate in decisions making Akerker(2001) also defines empowerment as encouraging and developing the skills for self-sufficiency, with a focus on eliminating the future need for charity or welfare in the individuals of the group. Akerker (2001) states that empowerment should involve the sensitization of women to positive self-image which is the conceptualization of development process to understand the structures of inequality of the institutionalized discrimination against them.

### **2.2 The international decade for women (1975)**

Muteshi (2006) highlighted that, in the 1975 the United Nations declared the year as the international decade for women. This decade played a major role in highlighting and publishing the important role of women in economic and social development of the countries and communities they represented. This decade was dominated by researchers to move away occupation and the role of women within the family towards understanding the complexity of women employment. This initiative prompted debt research analysis and movement building and boosted the work of activist worldwide. This is the period that legitimized women's claim for equality and social change and all levels from the household to the state. The research that was done involved both waged workers in the formal and informal section (urban and rural) who

assisted in identifying both the importance and diversity of employed women especially those from low income categories.

The millennium development goals (MDGs) are commonly described as a 'roadmap for world development by 2015. MGDs are global (international) goals agreed to address extreme poverty in its many dimensions (physical, social, cultural, political, economic, basic rights and environmental) to promote development and improve living standard of the people especially women. The Declaration asserts that, every individual has the right to dignity, freedom, equality, a basic standard of living that includes freedom from hunger and violence and encourages tolerance and solidarity. The MGDs were made to operationalize these ideas by setting targets and indicators for poverty reduction in order to achieve the rights set forth in the Declaration on a set fifteen-year timeline. At the Millennium Summit in September 2000, the largest gathering of the world leaders in history adopted the UN Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to new global partnership to reduce poverty with a deadline of 2015 which became Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Millennium Goals are global targets to addressing poverty in all dimensions including promoting gender equality and women empowerment. World Bank Report (2000) stated that the MDGs aims were to reduce global poverty and ensuring environmental sustainability and their objectives were (1) Improving the welfare of all people (2) help them realize their human potential (13) Reduce insecurity (4) Increase opportunity (5) ensure that current benefits are secured, sustained and augmented for future generation. The MDGs have eight goals which are aimed at creating an enabling environment that facilitate socio-economic development and promotion of human rights in member countries. The following eight MDDs are

#### **The MDG's set specific targets for**

- Improving income
- Poverty reduction
- Education improvement
- Improve status of women
- Improvement in health
- Improvement in environmental conditions

- Improvement in global development co-operation
- Global partnership to reduce poverty, wealth creation and connectivity

However, by early 2004 concerns had been raised that most African nations were off track to achieving the MDGs, so the Earth Institute at Columbia University, and UN Millennium Project (UNMP) established the MDGs technical support center in July 2004. The focus was on national, local and district level and this led to the broadening of their scope in order to provide advisory services, support and the implementation of the Millennium Villages. (MV). The Millennium Promise, (2006) states that MVP is the product of a partnership between the Earth Institute at Columbia University, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Millennium Promise, which was designed to help African communities lift themselves out of poverty. The project aims to establish rigorous proof of concept for implementing the practical interventions needed to achieve the MDGs in rural Africa over a 10-year period. The Millennium Centre for East and Southern Africa in Nairobi has been supporting implementation of the MVP in countries of East and Southern Africa through which inputs are provided to increase farmer's food security. In West Africa, the Centre is in Dakar, Senegal. The support to Farmers living in the MV has resulted in huge increase in the production to the magnitude of more than 12 times than that of the national maize production. The MVP is a holistic package of specific interventions for 79 villages in ten countries in sub-Saharan Africa some of them found Mwandama in Malawi, Kenya (Sauri and Dertu), Tanzania, Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, Mali, Ghana, Senegal and Nigeria. During the implementation of MVP four guiding principles were agreed upon:

Promote sustainable, scalable, community-led progress towards the achievement of the MDGs through the use of scientifically validated interventions –one village at a time.

Ensure African ownership of the MDGs and work in partnership with African governments and regional groups.

Increase capacity and community empowerment in Africa through training and knowledge sharing with local African governments, NGOs and village communities.



Partner with the public and private sectors, innovative NGOs , universities and leading experts and the international donor community throughout Africa and the world to continually improve and coordinate development strategies.

The four principles aim at achieving the same strategy and that they are interdependent, the driving principle of all is the third principle number; Building capacity and empowerment which is so much related to goal number 3 of which the study is interested in. To facilitate the rolling out of the MVP projects the principle number one, two and four play a major role of ensuring the African ownership of the MDGs, which work in partnership with African governments NGOs and regional groups.

### **2.3 Rolling MVP at a national level: Malawi MDGs Background**

Malawi therefore is one of the countries in southern sub-Saharan Africa who is a signatory to UN declaration on MDGs. It has two Millennium Villages, Gumulira in Mchinji district and Mwandama in Zomba District. The MVPs were set by Millennium Promise and UN as a strategy to eradicate poverty in-order to achieve the MDGs. Malawi is a land locked country, which is ranked among the world's most poorest and densely populated country with a population of 16 million and one of the least developed countries and of which 2/3 thirds of the population live below poverty line. Malawi is boarded by Tanzania in the North, Zambia in the East, Mozambique in the East and South and Zimbabwe in the West (Appendix 5). Malawi has twelve tribes and its main local language is Chichewa and formal language is English. The economy of Malawi is predominately agrarian type of agricultural with about 80% of the population living in rural areas. CIA (2013) states that Malawi had high yields from agriculture which resulted from government benefits after fertilizer subsidies were offered to farmers in 2006, which accounted for one-third of GDP and 90% of export revenues. The performance of the tobacco sector is key to short-term growth as tobacco accounts for more than half of export earnings (67%).

Women make up a substantial proportion of the agricultural workforce and thus experience changes in rural development. In spite of this, rural women are constrained by unequal access to productive resources and services and inadequate infrastructure. These limitations impose huge social, economic and environmental cost on agricultural productivity, society and rural development. The MDG 3 promotes gender equality and women empowerment and Malawi

targets this goal by eliminating gender inequality in educational levels, literacy rates, wage employment and agricultural participation.

Ngwira, et al (2004) in her Gender Strategy Assessment Report stated that Malawian women operate from a very disadvantaged position at all human dimensions of life. Women constitute approximately 51% of the Malawian population and 80 % are mostly rural dwellers engaged in agricultural production, the backbone of the Malawian economy. Rural women are also highly represented in the micro and small enterprise subsector. The majority of them are engaged in small income generating self-employment in agricultural and non-agricultural activities with low prospect for growth. Furthermore, they face constraints in access to credit, land, labor, appropriate technology and structures and processes that increase agricultural productivity.

Malawian women bear children at 19.1 years being the median age at first birth. Most of the families are female headed and have large family sizes of about 4 to 6 children (5.7). In addition, 17% of current married women are in polygamous families and earn less than a dollar a day. About 48.6% of women are literate compared to 72% literacy level for men and have poor access to maternal health delivery and productive resources in Malawi (Ngwira et al, 2002). They also face exclusion from decision making in the household and in public spheres. This makes rural women less endowed in terms of resources and capabilities to achieve a decent living.

Muteshi (2006) said that, the 4th UN Conference on Women 1995, Beijing Platform for Action aimed at the adoption for women's economic and political empowerment as one of the strategies for advancing the agenda of gender equality. Since then Nations have adapted one strategy or the other in an attempt to empower women for rural development, Malawi's effort in accelerating its economic growth has resulted in the development of strategic programs that include women and girls rights; access to and control over resources and benefits and participation in decision making.

The 2010, UNDP report says that, the implementation of MDGs in Malawi was done through medium term strategies which were then translated into annual budgets (In Malawi, the MDGs are operationalized through Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MDGS) II). The first three year strategy was the Malawi poverty reduction strategy (MPRS) which was implemented from 2000 to 2005, but did not perform so well. Following the failure of the Malawi Poverty

Reduction strategy implemented from 2000-2005, the government realized the need to formulate a viable implementation strategy in order to achieve their goal of poverty reduction. This strategy ought to emphasize on economic sectors as a vital step for sustainable poverty reduction. This therefore led to the formulation of an improved framework for implementing MDGS II known as the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MDGSII).

Unlike (MPRS), MDGs focused on wealth creation and sustainable human development. To ensure smooth implementation of strategies, the government uses Medium term expenditure Framework (MTEF) to allocate and distribute funds which are further monitored and evaluated for efficiency.

Furthermore, the Development Assistant Strategy (DAS) is used by the government to increase alignment of Malawi's development partners to the MDGs who are the major financiers of the MDGs. The DAS sets out the policy and strategies for increasing efficiency and effectiveness in the mobilization and utilization of such aid in achieving the development results set out in the MDGs. In addition to the other partners and strategies, the Malawi government in conjunction with UNDP, and MDG Centre supported the implementation and monitoring of the MVP designed to achieve the MDGs. The UNDP is the UN development Network, an organization advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge experience and resource to help people build a better life .In Malawi the UNDP helps the government to roll out its objectives by supporting the government with development resources and work closely with other partners to build the national capacity to combat the widespread and deep-rooted poverty in Malawi. More than two thirds of the population lives below the national poverty line. The government of Malawi launched the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy in 2006 as policy framework to reduce poverty through economic growth and empowerment of the poor and achieve the MDGs. UNDP supports national development efforts addressing Pro-poor policy, Economic and Social Empowerment, Monitoring and Evaluation. Women's empowerment and gender equity is one of the agenda for UNDP.

## **2.4 At the Regional and Local Level: Mwandama Millennium Villages Project in Zomba District, Malawi**

Mwandama is the oldest and leading MV villages in Malawi and also one out of 14 villages in Africa located in the Southern region of Malawi in Zomba district aimed at achieving the MDGs strategy. The region is characterized by the native vegetation of the Miombo woodlands (Fig 3 – Fig 3 shows means of transport before and after MVP – please check). It is intensively cultivated by smallholders growing maize, pigeon peas, cassava and groundnuts. Mwandama Millennium Village has a population of 35,000, with 8,500 households and most of the people are small sale farmers. Nearly 90 % of the people of Mwandama lived below the poverty line--less than \$1 a day. . Children also had to travel long distance to get to school and for water which was often muddy and undrinkable. The Millennium Village Project in Mwandama Village started in 2006. The project offers a lot of services as one of the Millennium Development Goals strategy to empower the poor and women through the four main target areas defined by MDGs namely; health, agriculture ,education, water, sanitation and energy in-order to improve living standards. Some of the achievements as stated by the Millennium Promise 2010 are as follows:

- Average maize yields increased more than fivefold, from 0.8 to 4.5 tons per hectare
- The new grain bank won a contract to supply maize to WFP, earning its members \$47,500 in 2010.
- A mobile bank serves the community, offering savings accounts and small loans.
- Household access to improved drinking water has more than doubled, with near universal coverage.
- Chronic malnutrition (stunting) among children under two was reduced by approximately one-third and universal coverage of measles immunization was achieved.
- 85% of pregnant women are now tested for HIV/AIDS, nearly a fourfold increase.
- Two mobile phone towers have been constructed that will increase coverage across Mwandama.

## **Agriculture and business**

The Millennium Villages Project has contributed to accelerate its efforts to promote sustainability. Mwandama, Malawi is leading the way by creating rural cooperatives designed to help member farmers transition from subsistence to commercialized agriculture after receiving the inputs of fertilizer and improved seeds from the project, production of maize, the staple food group has doubled from 0.8 tons to 4.5 tones. Farmers have also begun to diversify their crops including vegetables and tomatoes to sell to local market Agriculture being the main economic activity in Mwandama, cultivating activities usually takes place at Miombo woodlands. The main cultivators are smallholders who grow maize, pigeon peas, cassava, groundnuts, soya, sweet potato and tomato. The communities in Mwandama are also involved in livestock keeping. There is also a tobacco plantation that surrounds the seven villagers which acts as a source of income for many villages who earn about \$0.50 per day. Six producing and Marketing Cooperatives are also developing in the region. In addition, a mobile bank serves the community, offering savings accounts and small loans Millenniums Promise (2007)

## **Health**

The Millennium village in Mwandama has built 4 village clinics and is offering mosquito nets to the population. Other services offered include, child immunization, laboratory services, access to anti-retroviral drugs for HIV/AIDS victims, and family planning services. There has been an addition of 34 trained community health workers-The communities de-worming service is being carried out at clusters in primary schools, where an estimated 2,000 people have been treated i.e. Millennium goal promise (2006).

## **Adult and formal education**

In Mwandama adult education classes are so much focused for women starting business. The Millennium Villages Project launched the program with the multinational firm Unilever and the Growing Sustainable Business (GSB), an initiative led by UNDP and the parastatal institution Malawi Investment Promotion Agency. The idea was simple: to allow women to buy Unilever products at preferential prices and sell them door to door within their community, in a country where over 80% of the population lives in rural communities that are not easily accessible by

major distributors of consumer goods. Once a week, the Unilever truck rumbles into the village. Women gather around and choose their goods at a wholesale price with a 4% discount. They carry their products back home and cater for their customers while keeping an eye on their fields and broods.

The Millennium promises Report (2010) states that almost 60 women have been trained on business management and group dynamics, known as 'village sales agents and most of them have set up small shops, own and other valuables. Adult learning is not the only education in Mwandama, formal leaning both for primary and secondary level are also found in the area. Even though, there was an introduction of free primary education in Malawi in 1994 that led to increased enrolment rates, studies have generally shown that only 30 percent of those children actually completed primary school. The challenge to achieving the universal primary was lack of infrastructure such as classrooms and toilets in many parts of the country. Regular school attendance has been difficult to maintain for many children due to long distances to nearby school. As a result, many children did not enroll in school at all. Even those who managed attended with difficulties especially during the afternoon and this greatly affected the performance of the children. Now the MVP in Mwandama has built 14 more primary schools and an MV school feeding launch program is in full effect for all the 14 primary schools. The program has led to increased performance and attendance. Millennium promise (2010)

### **Community development**

Mwandama is also blessed with several Non- Governmental Organisations that include Millennium Villages Project, WALA, CADECOM, and Save the Children UK. These organisations are mainly involved in Agriculture, environment, Water and Sanitation, Infrastructure, Health and Nutrition, Entrepreneurship and Education. Profound infrastructure which consists of an effective road network that connects the villages to the main road, markets and towns and a connection to the National Electricity Grid has enabled Mwandama Village to be accessible. Moreover, water facilities are spread out in the area culminating to a 96% coverage rating mostly using boreholes and gravity fed piped water. Furthermore, two mobile phone towers were constructed and these increase coverage across the area. The community also

possesses a Grain Bank which is used to store grain that is later sold to local communities. Mwandama Village is also privileged with the existence of 2 secondary schools namely S.t Anthony and Maera Community Day Secondary Schools and an extra 14 primary schools. Health service facilities include Mwandama and Maera Health Clinics, Namadzi Health Centre and the Thondwe Outreach Clinic.

These are also the collaboration of local cooperatives and various raw materials are also sold to local processors and small holders and large scale farmers. Another potential business includes ecotourism where villages can create unique tourism assets like food, music, dances, housing, religion and other expressions of culture.

### **Leadership and Governance**

The Millennium Village has strategized the need to empower the entire community, including women and vulnerable groups, by building local technical, administrative, and entrepreneurial capacity. In conjunction with improved health and education, this transformation encourages women and men to establish their own businesses through formation of clubs to enhance their business opportunities and to explore income-earning possibilities beyond farming. These have enhanced their solidarity, team work and active participation in the MVP.

## **2.5 Factors and organizations contributing to women's empowerment**

### **Empowering Women through Education**

Martens (2012) agree that “

Education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process. “Martens (2012) added that Education is important for everyone, but it is especially significant for girls and women. This is true not only because education is an entry point to other opportunities, but also because the educational achievements of women can have ripple effects within the family and across generations. Investing in girls' education is one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty. An investment in secondary school education for girls yields especially high dividends. Girls who have been educated are likely to marry later and to have smaller and healthier families. Educated women can recognize the importance of health care and know how to seek it for

themselves and their children. Education helps girls and women to know their rights and to gain confidence to claim them. However, women's literacy rates are significantly lower than men's in most developing countries. The education of parents is linked to their children's educational attainment, and the mother's education is usually more influential than the father's. An educated mother's greater influence in household negotiations may allow her to secure more resources for her children. Educated mothers are more likely to be in the labour force, allowing them to pay some of the costs of schooling, and may be more aware of returns to schooling and educated mothers, averaging fewer children, can concentrate more attention on each child.

Marten (2012) emphasises that closing the gender gap in education is a development priority. The 1994 Cairo Consensus recognized education, especially for women, as a force for social and economic development. Universal completion of primary education was set as a 20-year goal, as was wider access to secondary and higher education among girls and women. Closing the gender gap in education by 2015 is also one of the benchmarks for the Millennium. Therefore the UNFPA (United Nation Population Fund 2010) supports and advocates widely for universal education and has been instrumental in advancing legislation in many countries to reduce gender disparities in schooling. The 2003 UNFPA global survey showed that most programme countries formally recognize the importance of reducing the gender gap in education between boys and girls. For instance UNFPA is committed to actions to attack poverty and powerlessness, especially among women. About half of the UNFPA programme countries have developed strategies to provide women with economic opportunities. The Fund has supported economic empowerment and micro-credit initiatives in Bangladesh, Chad, Kenya, Morocco, Palestinian women's centers, Tajikistan and elsewhere. UNFPA also supports skills training for who have been marginalized by this debilitating injury of childbirth. UNFPA strongly supports addressing the feminization of poverty through the integration of gender concerns in macro-economic policy and in poverty reduction strategies.

UNFPA (2012) has also been supporting a variety of educational programs, from literacy projects to curricula development with a focus on reproductive and sexual health. Because of the sensitivity of these issues, the focus and names of the educational programs have gone through a number of changes over the past decades. Gender issues now receive more attention than they



did in past programs, and instruction methods have changed, from a didactic approach to one emphasizing student participation and communications skills. Chege *et al* (2006), Comments that basic education provides girls and women with an understanding of basic health, nutrition and family planning, giving them the power to decide and make choices over their own lives and bodies. It provides a foundation for formal education for those willing to continue with their education (Chege *et al* (2006).

UNDP (2010) focuses on gender equality and women's empowerment not only as human rights, but also because they are a pathway to achieving the MDGs and sustainable development. The goal of the UNDP is to coordinate at global and national efforts and to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into poverty reduction, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, and environment and sustainable development. Through the global network, they work to ensure that women have a real voice in all governance institutions, from the judiciary to the civil service, as well as in the private sector and civil society, so they can participate equally with men in public dialogue and decision-making and influence the decisions that will determine the future of their families and countries. Since the Earth Summit twenty years ago, UNDP international community has made historic achievements in advancing human development, including gender equality. Even though, the world continues to face considerable social, economic and environmental challenges, and progress continues to be threatened by persisting gender inequalities.

UNDP helps countries to mainstream attention to gender issues such as HIV and health into action on gender equality, poverty reduction and the broader efforts to achieve and sustain the Millennium Development Goals. This includes working with countries to understand the social and economic factors that play a crucial role in impacting health, and promoting specific action on the needs and rights of women and girls and its mandate is to address women's needs, encourage girl child education and work towards the achievement of MDGs 2, 3, 4 & 5.

NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa Development (2009)) is also one of the mechanisms through which the provision of support for Africa's development is made in order to promote women's empowerment. In such a context, African leaders found it necessary to transform the

focus of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) from political liberation to economic development. Hence, throughout the 1980s and 1990s African governments went on to design a series of pan-African development approaches which they felt were relevant to the needs of their people.

The goals of NEPAD Support activities aimed at empowering African women and improving their lives. NEPADS work aims to enhance the roles and rights for women on the continent. NEPAD is working on a holistic approach to gender mainstreaming and women empowerment which are integrating and delivered into programs and processes. The NEPAD Spanish Fund for African Women Empowerment is the program that was created in 2007 following the signing of a memorandum of understanding between NEPAD and the government of Spain. The Spanish Fund contributes to the eradication of poverty and the economic empowerment of women through financial and technical assistance to projects that support gender equality and the improvement of women's economic, political and social empowerment. The program works towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Africa by 2015 and considers gender equity, equality and women's empowerment as a pre-condition to sustainable growth and development. Key areas supported by the Spanish Fund include education, health, promotion of economic fabric as well as social and political participation, with a particular emphasis on sub-Saharan Africa. The agreement with the Spanish government runs for five years and is worth 50 million euros. The primary areas of intervention are:

- Women's economic empowerment;
- Strengthening civil society and community-based organizations;
- Strengthening institution

The NEPAD/Spanish Fund for the empowerment of women aims at providing financial support to projects carried out by women in Sub-Saharan Africa and concretely promoting gender equity and the autonomy of women, while increasing women's ability to contribute in accelerating the process to reach the Millennium Development Goal (MDG), mainly goal number 3.

Through funded projects, as detailed above, significant progress towards the program's objectives has been achieved, including:

- An increased number of women and girls trained in economically viable vocational skills such as ICT, leather making, needlework, baking, catering, brick making and others, including more than 2 000 trained in Kenya, Namibia, and Ethiopia.
- The creations of employment opportunities, through public-private partnerships, that have seen 72 people find employment in Gambia, Ethiopia and Kenya.
- Improved income-generating activities for women through support in agro-processing (45 machines), sub-awards (53 women), and business management training (600 women entrepreneurs in several countries including Kenya, Mali, Namibia, DRC, Angola and Mozambique).
- Successful projects such as a tourism venture being run by women of a small community on Inhaca Island in Mozambique. So far three travel tours from South Africa have been arranged.
- An increased number of women receiving agricultural assistance to boost production and promote food security. 7,456 women (including women groups) in Gambia and Malawi received agricultural inputs (fertilizer and seeds) to boost production, for example.
- Increased research on issues affecting women entrepreneurs: Nine research studies have been carried out on challenges facing women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia and Senegal to inform policy and programme development. In Ethiopia a tangible result of this is a Women's Bank (Enat Bank) being established?
- Microcredit schemes have been set up in Kenya, Liberia, Angola, Niger, Senegal, Ghana and Sierra Leone to provide women with access to loans for establishing small businesses.
- An increased number of women and men have been reached with HIV and health services, including 360 women and men trained as community educators on HIV prevention in Niger.
- Increased awareness on gender-based violence and creation of mechanisms to address gender-based violence. 1,637 women and 271 men have been trained in gender-based violence awareness and prevention in Kenya and Namibia. Two safe houses have been constructed in Liberia. In Angola 308 women and men have been sensitized through their participation in the "16 days of activism on domestic violence". In Cape Verde the fund is supporting the National Plan against Domestic Violence; media campaigns on TV and radio have been produced. In both countries, a Draft Bill Law against Domestic Violence has been drafted and is in the process of approval by their respective governments.

- Increased educational support for girls to remain in school: 310 pupils in 31 primary schools and surrounding communities reached with formulated school improvement plans to address some of the challenges facing girls within primary schools in Malawi.
- Skills development for women leaders in business and civil society: 300 women business leaders in Mali trained in leadership and entrepreneurship skills, 120 women leaders from civil society organizations in South Africa trained in leadership and management skills.
- In many countries women are also responsible for agricultural production and selling. Often they take on paid work or entrepreneurial enterprises as well.

### **The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture**

Hall (1992) recognized that women can be empowered economically when they are engaged in productive activities that will allow some degree of financial activity, for instance empowering women through income generating activities. This can be accompanied by necessary skills such as marketing, accounting and sufficient funding. Dikumarti (1999.4) states that when a woman attains economic independence she naturally becomes the mistress of her own body and author of her own decisions. In nearly every country, women work longer hours than men, but are usually paid less and are more likely to live in poverty. In subsistence economies, women spend much of the day performing tasks to maintain the household, such as carrying water and collecting fire wood.

Ngwira *et al* (2004) in her report says that there are wide gaps in women and men's economic opportunities in terms of labor force participation, earnings and control of productive assets. Of the 6.8 million people aged 10 years and over, 66% are economically active. A person is considered economically active if he/she performs work for a wage, salary, profit or other income (NSO, 2000:73). 83% of the economically active persons are in agriculture and related activities. Women dominate the agricultural sector: 97% of rural women are engaged in subsistence farming. Men dominate in the production, services, operation and laboratory, and administrative occupations. This trend conforms to gender role expectations as well as patterns in women's educational attainment. These jobs require specific kinds of training and levels of education that most women do not have.

Marten (2012) reported that all societies' economic policies, such as those that enslave women in low-wage jobs under dangerous conditions, and development strategies, like those that take land out of subsistence farming and put it into cash crops, have a profound effect on the health status of women and their families. Mothers, many of whom are single heads of households, are burdened not only with economic problems but also with the consequences of civil conflict and environmental degradation. They are often ignored by male-dominated health and social services delivery systems or denied equal access to services.

WEAL (2010) also states that women play a critical and potentially transformative role in agricultural growth in developing countries. The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) measures the empowerment, agency, and inclusion of women in the agriculture sector in an effort to identify ways to overcome those obstacles and constraints. The Index is a significant innovation in its field and aims to increase understanding of the connections between women's empowerment, food security, and agricultural growth. It also measures the roles and extent of women's engagement in the agriculture sector in five domains: (1) decisions about agricultural production, (2) access to and decision-making power over productive resources, (3) control over use of income, (4) leadership in the community, and (5) time use. It also measures women's empowerment relative to men within their households. The WEAI is a composite measurement tool that indicates women's control over critical parts of their lives in the household, community, and economy. It allows chances to identify women who are disempowered and understand how to increase autonomy and decision-making in key domains. The WEAI is also a useful tool for tracking progress toward gender equality, which is one of the Millennium Development Goals WEAL (2012).

### **Women empowerment in Primary Health Care (PHC)**

Martens (2012) and Martens "highlights that the happiness of mankind will be realized when men and women coordinate and advance equally". He added that the main task constitutes saving the lives of millions of women and female children throughout the world, who die every year.

WHO (2012) report emphasised the strategy for achieving the goal of "Health for All" emerged in 1978 at a historic conference in Alma-Ata in the former Soviet Union. The conference was sponsored by the United Nation Children's Fund (UNICEF) and WHO. In order to improve the

standards of health care, the WHO facilitated the World Health Assembly, where representatives of member countries met to exchange information, share experiences, consult about health issues, and devise global strategies. Even though the WHO has done a lot to improve the health of people especially women, very little has been done in terms of its delivery of services and approaches.

Primary health care (PHC) stresses prevention rather than cure. It relies on home self-help, community participation, and technology that the people find acceptable, appropriate, and affordable. It combines modern, scientific knowledge and feasible health technology with acceptable, effective traditional healing practices. Of special importance for women is that the effectiveness of PHC depends very much upon community acceptance of the primary health care workers, most of who are women. The United Nations agency responsible for international health is the World Health Organization (WHO), which was founded in 1948 and now has more than 170 member countries. The WHO constitution defines health as "a state of physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." Many organizations are now adding to this definition a fourth dimension of health - spiritual wellbeing. The next challenge for WHO is to recognize that a major obstacle to enjoying the right to health is being born female. The WHO constitution states: "The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, and political belief, economic and social condition."

Urban (2003.66) therefore stresses the need to include women in matters that concern their lives. He added that women's empowerment in developing countries is a very essential element in building lasting positive positions when addressing issues of human rights. The issue of women's empowerment goes together with the implementation of the MDGs especially MDG number 3, which emphasises that gender equality is the central issue to development and the attainment of the other MDGs.

### **Leadership**

Women's equal participation and leadership in decision-making processes at every level and every sector is therefore a fundamental attempt to eliminate gender-based poverty. However the involvement of poor people in the local associations and intercommunity cooperation

mechanisms can contribute to social empowerment by providing their skills, knowledge and self-perception. Local associations also act as farming cooperatives, or microfinance group Ngwira et al (2003)

## **2.6 Factors inhibiting women social and economic empowerment**

Much as social- economic empowerment plays greater role to women's empowerment, there are many barriers to women's empowerment and equality where cultures of certain nations and societies view women as second class position. Many women feel marginalized and discriminated by the following factors in their societies such as cultural beliefs, role conflicts, gender inequalities, unequal distribution of resources and dependency on their male counterparts and in other places in Africa. Broadbent (2000) commented that Africa's women need to be actively – and more effectively – engaged in economic, social and political life and that expanded land and property rights for women, gender-sensitive economic governance, more effective international support for gender equality and better access to investment and trade opportunities are key pillars for economically empowering African women – and thus increasing their contributions to faster growth, development and poverty reduction on the continent.

Broadbent, 2010) adds that much as the African continent is well endowed with abundant resources such as natural, cultural and human, however, its people remain poor – and those most severely affected by poverty are African women. Part of what makes them poor is social inequalities and the lack of opportunities they face solely because of their gender. Although gender inequality exists in most societies around the world to differing extents, the combined devastating effects of discrimination and lack of opportunity affect African women in multiple ways, from their economic standing (income levels, rights to own property, access to finance), to their social wellbeing (access to health services and education) and to their prospects for better living conditions (heavy household work burdens, ability to secure employment or be self-employed). Discrimination based on gender stereotype surface in many ways in the community. It can occur in the content of complements or criticism .This is where assumptions are made about the role of men and women or boys and girls. From early childhood our culture teaches us to accept certain roles for boys/ men and girls/women (World Bank report (2012). For example,

the home (domestic domain) is regarded as a place for a woman who is also regarded as inferior to a man, while the public domain is for men. World Bank report (2012).

Ngwira et al (2003) in the strategic gender assessment report in Malawi found that the result of women deprivation is experienced differently in a population based on gender inequalities especially in factors such as economic, health, education and agriculture and leadership.

### **Economic inequalities and inhabitants**

Most women across the globe rely on the informal work sector for an income. If women were empowered to do more and be more, the possibility for economic growth becomes apparent. Eliminating a significant part of a nation's work force on the sole basis of gender can have detrimental effects on the economy of that nation. Research into the impacts of interventions aimed at increasing access to economic opportunities mostly exists in relation to women's empowerment, and even then the impacts are rarely expressed in terms of 'power relations'. In this review the bulk of the interventions presented are aimed at women (who are also often further marginalized by their location and class. (Wikipedia.2013)

A study done by World Economic Forum, in South Africa showed that an increase in women's income was accompanied by more money being spent on children's education (World Economic Forum, 2012). The study showed that Women's empowerment and gender equality has proved to have contributed to increased economic growth and gender inequality in Africa which estimated to have reduced GDP growth in the region by almost 1 per cent each year. There is proof that women's economic empowerment can impact upon poverty reduction, as the pattern of consumption in the household as women tends to be more child- focused and oriented to meeting basic needs. World Economic Forum (2012).

Negash, (2006) states that ,although, in the 21st century, women enjoy more freedom and power than ever before, however, they are still disadvantaged when compared to men in virtually all aspects of life. Women are deprived of equal access to education, health care, capital, and decision making powers in the political, social, and business sectors. Negash, (2006) argues that when men are credited with performing three quarters of all economic activities in developing countries, women actually perform 53 percent of the work, according to the United Nations



The 1995 UN Human Development Report, states that "an estimated \$16 trillion in global output is currently 'invisible,' of which \$11 trillion is estimated to be produced by women." Negash, (2006) adds that women are segregated into low paid, low status forms of work and that studies have shown that while there are many women entrepreneurs running micro-enterprises, chiefly in the informal economy, women are not well represented in medium and large businesses. The larger a business is the less likely that it is owned by a woman (World Economic Forum, 2012).

Female economic power also enhances the "wealth and well-being of nations." Women who control their own income tend to have fewer children, and fertility rates have shown to be inversely related to national income growth (Nagash, 2006). Women are also more able and generally more willing than male counterparts to send daughters as well as sons to school, even when they earn less than men. In turn, a woman's level of education affects her decision-making process when it comes to questions about contraception, age of marriage, fertility, child mortality, modern sector employment and earnings (Negash, 2006).

The status of women is intimately connected with their economic position which in turn depends upon rights, roles and opportunities for their participation in economic activities (Aleem, 1996). The economic status of women is now accepted as an indicator of a society's stage of development. However, all developments do not result in improving women's economic activities. Patterns of women's activities are affected by prevailing social ideology and differ according to the stage of economic development.

Leger, (2006) agrees that unequal gender inequalities and discrimination still exist in our societies. While most researchers now generally agree that the economic problems women face are a consequence of the inequality which has rendered the women powerless to act.

Aruna et al, (1996) stated that dependence of women on their husbands or fathers was the basis of their lowly position in society, and suggested that if, only women could be helped to be economically independent, most, if not all their problems would be over. He added that, much as there was a consistent call for women to involve themselves in "income-generating projects" and both governmental and non-governmental organizations spend a lot of resources on creating projects to put some cash into the hands of women, this has not changed any social economic status of women because men still remain the controllers of the economy.

**Aruna et al (1996) added to say that, lack of control over productive resources such as land and property; precise data is lacking, but it is estimated that women hold the titles to less than 2 per cent of land in Africa. Clearly, not owning one's business premises or farm is a major impediment to economic advancement for women.**

### **Educational inequalities**

Education is the most single most important instrument through which a human resource can be fully developed. It is very well said that knowledge is power. Education enables people acquire basic skills and inculcate abilities which are helpful in raising social and economic status of the person. Women's education has assumed special significance in the context of planned development because the efforts of planned developments are to bring those in main stream who are left outside. For some reason or the other it is true that the female education is constrained by socio-economic conditions (American Psychological Association, Task Force on Socioeconomic Status, 2007).

As described earlier, in the majority of poor nations, mothers, not fathers, have the most influence on their children. Mothers are the ones who dictate the decisions on whether or not children are sent to school, what school they go to, and how much time they spend working for the family. Until women are given the same opportunities that men are, entire societies will be destined to perform below their true potentials (Negash, 2006).

Ngwira (2003) highlighted in her strategic gender report done in Malawi that there is an **association** between literacy and a household's poverty status. The 1998 Integrated Household Survey has shown that completion of eight years of schooling is generally sufficient to relatively raise an individual's welfare above the poverty line. However, very few attain that level of education (16.2% of males and 6.2% of females (NEC, 2000).

Ngwira (2006) added that, although the enrolment of women is getting better in adult learning programs, according to World Bank (2004) and UN Development Report, it is believed that close to 18% of Malawian adults are still illiterate. The Strategic County Gender Assessment Organizations in Malawi that deal with adult and continuing education, says that 87% of these illiterate persons are women (Ngwira et al (2006)

Johnson (2004) highlighted that much as in ten years of implementation of the Beijing platform, noticeable progress has been made in education and training for women and girls. However,

there are still major constraints on equal access to education for men and women. Cultural practices and stereotypes have a negative influence on access, maintenance and development of girls across the whole school curriculum.

Aleem, (1996) states that much as today women's education is gaining far greater importance than before and that there are better higher education facilities for women in big cities and towns there is only a rapid expansion of higher education facilities in urban areas yet in rural areas, the growth of women's education is still very slow.

### **Health inequalities**

Much as there is good delivery of health care to all to ensure equal benefit to women and men and measures to address the productive health rights of women there are differences in access to quality affordable health care especially for poor and rural women. Furthermore, although there is government commitment to specifically address maternal care, health, cultural and religious practices present many obstacles to achieving reproductive health; for example, access to family planning, abortion also remains illegal and unsafe abortions continue to polarize society and be un-addressed ([millenniumvillages.org/millennium promise](http://millenniumvillages.org/millennium_promise)).

No one can deny the fact that health is wealth. Development and health are intrinsically interrelated. Without a certain level of economic and social development it is difficult to provide basic health care, one does not have the adequate energy to contribute positively to society.

The concept of health covers complex human conditions. Prevention is better than cure and, therefore, preventive health care is as important as curative health care. Health is an integral part of development. People are both the means and ends of development. The human energy generated by good health can sustain economic and social development and these in turn can be harnessed to improve the health of people, especially women.

Aleem (1996), therefore highlights that health is crucial to women's development. A comprehensive integrated approach to health issues might have significant impact in improving the female health status. Family planning and nutrition therefore play an important role in enhancing the health status of women. Health status of women in turn affects their health and productivity

## **Gender inequalities in agriculture**

Fineland *et al* (2010) highlighted that, though farming is often thought of as a male occupation, women play a central role in agriculture worldwide, both constituting a large proportion of the agricultural labour force (43% of farmers in developing countries), and depending heavily on agriculture for their livelihoods (60% of economically active women in sub-Saharan Africa and nearly 70% in South Asia work in agriculture). These figures are likely to underestimate women's work in agriculture because they are less likely to declare themselves as employed in agriculture in labour force surveys, and because they tend to work longer hours than men.

Shamim, (1996), observed that while rural women have become marginally visible in anti-poverty programs, they have yet to recognize adequately in agricultural development, land reform or rural industrialization programs. Women's access to productive resources such as land and credit must be ensured. Women need better access to organizations and mobility within the labour market. They need to be viewed as critical agents in achieving development goals rather than being viewed as mere beneficiaries of the programme. Women's components of development packages are prone to the normal ills of all government programs and therefore efficient management strategies are to be evolved for better implementation of such programs. While all these activities help women to cope with the situation, on their own they would not do much to empower them to change social systems.

Shamim (1996) added that studies of agricultural productivity consistently find that women tend to have an average of 20 - 30 % lower productivity than men; this difference is overwhelmingly attributed to differences in input levels.

UNDP Human Development (Report, 2010,) states that women in Africa represent 52 per cent of the total population, contribute approximately 75 percent of the agricultural work, and produce 60 to 80 percent of the food. Yet they earn only 10 percent of African incomes and own just 1 per cent of the country's resources, UNFPA (2012). The need for women's unpaid labour often increases with economic shocks, such as those associated with the AIDS pandemic or economic restructuring. Yet women's voices and lived experiences – whether as workers (paid and unpaid), citizens, or consumers – are still largely missing from debates on finance and development. Poor

women do more unpaid work, work longer hours and may accept degrading working conditions during times of crisis, just to ensure that their families survive.

UNFPA (2012) states that the differences in the work patterns of men and women, and the 'invisibility' of work that is not included in national accounts, lead to lower entitlements to women than to men. Women's lower access to resources and the lack of attention to gender in macroeconomic policy adds to the inequity, which, in turn, perpetuates gender gaps. For example, when girls reach adolescence they are typically expected to spend more time in household activities, while boys spend more time on farming or wage work. By the time girls and boys become adults; females generally work longer hours than males, but, earn less income and have less leisure, recreation or rest time.

FAO (2010) argues that closing the gender gap in access to productive resources could increase agricultural output in the developing world by 2.5 - 4% and reduce the number of undernourished people by 12 - 17%, with higher gains corresponding to countries where the gender gap is wider and where women are heavily involved in agriculture. Such a reduction in gender inequality in agriculture would also have important benefits for poverty reduction and achieving gender equality. It is difficult to make broad generalizations about gender in agriculture due to the variation in gender roles, farming systems, and other factors across geographic and cultural contexts.

### **Inequalities in leadership**

#### **Social exclusion and Lack of participation**

Throughout both the developing and the developed world, women carry a disproportionately high burden of poverty (UN, 1995). This poverty is experienced not just as material deprivation, both also as marginalization, which means that those living in poverty often have no or little opportunity to influence the political, economic and social processes and institutions which control and shape their lives and keep them trapped in a cycle of poverty.

For poor women this experience of marginalization is effectively doubled i.e. not only do they belong to communities that exist on the edges of society but they are also often denied a voice

within the states markets, communities, and households in which they live, dominated as they are by men and male interests. Joanna, (2006), commented that the lack of voice, functions are critical factors in the maintenance of gender hence effectively blocking women's access to decision-making and agenda-setting process beyond opportunities of leading these processes. This situation contributes to an invisibility of women as public actors.

## **2.7 Theoretical Framework**

### **2.7.1 Structural functionalism- theory**

These are two theories in one, the structural theory and functional theory. This is a theory developed by Talcot Parsons. According to his views, society is made up of people who are in a functional relationship, who interact on a regular basis for the maintenance of the whole. This society is structured by norms such as values and beliefs that make the whole system to function. He relates to biological organism which has different parts but functioning for the structure of the whole organization. However, when it comes to society he said that men and women are seen in playing different roles in the family but aiming to make family unit function as a whole even though they play different roles. Sociologists therefore argue that if women are overburdened with roles and obligations, it is not a sign of dominance but it's functional. However, feminist criticize the theory as it attempts to maintain the men's status quo and these views are patriarchal where they are structured to favor men and inhibit women's empowerment and recognition. Structural functionalism oppose gender empowerment particularly empowerment of women.

It also fails to recognize that women are overburdened with roles. It can be criticized to support status quo. It only assumes that as long as there is order in society, it does not matter whether the women are dominated. The theory is criticized for reinforcing or supporting patriarchal. If the men were the dominated ones they would not allow the situation to remain the same. Sociologists criticize the theory for its failure to acknowledge social change. eg. social changes that forced women to join labour force.

### 2.7.2 Liberal feminism

Meena R. (1992) liberal feminism sees subordination is deeply rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that block women's legal entrance and access in the public world. These relegates women to the domestic (private) sphere and are excluded from public life from the world, the world of knowledge, resources, job opportunities, travel etc. It is based on the argument that women are less physically capable and intellectually weaker which biologically has been found not to have any basis at all. However, under patriarchy even men, especially of lower social standing could face similar dilemma e.g. illegitimate sons. Consider also that in most communities, first born sons have power than others. This power can be and has been abused to deny younger sibling's access to a parent's assets. Liberal feminism argues for the tapping of the full potential of women rather than relegating it to the kitchen.

### 2.7.3 The education empowerment Model: Wallerstein, Sanchez, -Merki and Velarde (2005)

This model was developed with the emphasis of the use of skill and knowledge development that helps youths to engage in social action and change that further leads to individual empowerment and community organizing. It borrows from Paulo Freire who depicts that education that liberates is one that has elements of listening, dialogue, critical reflection and reflective action. It encourages adults learning through individual participation and therefore enables individual behaviour change and group efforts for social change. The main expected outcome of nay programme that utilizes this model is to allow the transition of youth from reflection to action by engaging in community action projects.

Example includes Akina Mama wa Africa (AMwa) in Uganda, the young Women's Leadership Institute (YWLI) 1999, in Kenya. The AMwa, has ran the African Women's Leadership Institute (AWLI) for the past 13 years using their model. AMwa conducts a two weeks leadership training while focusing on feminism and human rights personal empowerment, strategic thinking skills and transfer of skills and knowledge in various ways. In Kenya the YWLI's programme encourages nurturing young women's leadership development and creating a safe space for dialogue on sexuality and reproductive health rights and further offers a feminist internship programme. A good illustration is the Binti project (2007), innovated by Esther Wambui which

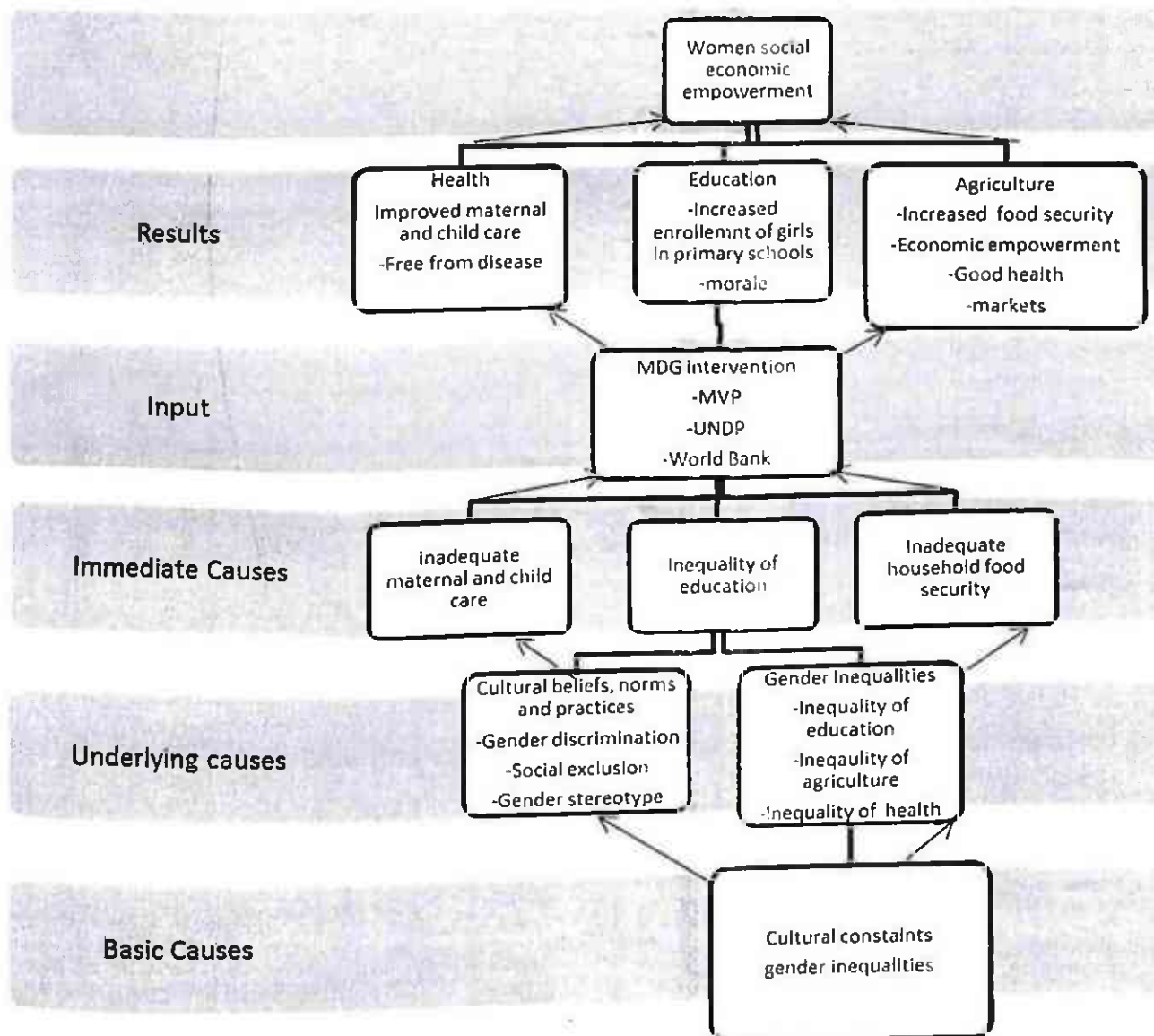
has been incorporated into YWLI programs. Binti, uses football to share challenges, in Kawangware, (a low income settlement in Nairobi), address problems of early pregnancy, drug abuse, child prostitution sexually transmitted infections, early motherhood and sexual abuse that are barriers to education of girls and young women. The use of girls' soccer has also been used in Botswana's South East district council to facilitate youth HIV prevention. It recognizes youth as an integral resource in the community.

All these projects have a positive impact on individual, organizational and community level where young women are empowered and understand their human rights. However examples of YWLIs are very few and the government needs to invest more in such programs for effective sustainable women development empowerment.



## 2.8 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



### 2.8.1 Discussing the Conceptual Framework

#### Basic causes of lack of women's social-economic empowerment

Lack of socio-economic empowerment starts from community and local level where cultural constraints and gender inequalities exists in African society. Cultural beliefs, norms and values that favor men and put women in subordinate position hence result in women's extreme poverty and unequal distribution of resources.

## **Underlying causes**

The gender inequality affects women's economic status in all dimensions of life such as Agriculture (economic) education and health.

## **Immediate causes**

Inequalities lead to inadequate food which will lead to high maternal mortality rates and lack of access to quality education. Therefore inequalities facilitates the recurring cycle of poverty and lack of empowerment.

## **Input**

MDGs have established interventions in Millennium Villages in order to eradicate inequalities amongst women. The intervention is being rolled out to local communities through related partnerships with UNDP and World Bank to meet the MDGs objectives. The three approaches and technologies used e.g. (A). Agriculture, the provision of subsidies like fertilizer, improved variety of seeds, agricultural technological support, Agricultural management systems and practices, and conducting more quality research on good agricultural practices.( B) In education (1)Free education at both primary and secondary levels. 2-Gorvenment allocation of land to aid the poor and the disadvantaged e.g. orphaned.3-Promote education by training more teachers (. 4) gender awareness and sensitization to accommodate both men and women in the education system.(5) Create awareness to those who are so much rooted into culture practices that hinder girls from access to education. (C) Health (1)-Improve clinics in poor communities'( 2)-Increase number of medical personnel.(3)- Provision of advanced technology equipment such as malaria diagnostic machines , and cancer equipment (4)- Providing the community with material support such as mosquito nets .ant-retro vial (5 ) -Provide health services such as immunizations child care martial care de-worming family planning (6)-Formal training to be provided to the health workers.( 7)- Educational programs on health care, nutrition and disease prevention measure such as measles, intestinal worm's, diarrhea sexually transmitted diseases, skin infection, and others- Initiate scho

**Results/ outcomes**

After the MVP intervention, which are still continuing till 2015, profound outcomes are seen already and some consolidations are expected. They include increased food security, increased access to quality education, maintaining girls in class, gender equality, transfer of knowledge, increase in per capita income, boost of morale, increased enrollment of women in education and women's social economic empowerment

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology used in the study. It describes the research design, research instruments, target population, sample size, procedures including the validity and reliability of those instruments.

### 3.1 Research design

The study used evaluative survey design with both qualitative and quantitative data approaches. The purposive sample design was used to collect qualitative data and get informative information as it enabled the researcher to explore a wide range of factors on the impact of Millennium Village as a strategy to empower women socially and economically. The quantitative data was used for collecting the demographic data while qualitative data will be used to collect information regarding the social economic status of the women. The study included interviews, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews. The direct observations was also be used in the study to check behavior and socio-economic status of the respondents in this study.

### 3.2 Study Site Description

Mwandama is located in the Southern region of Malawi's Zomba district. It lies 24km from the town of Zomba, and rises 900 – 1200m above sea level. Rainfall ranges from 700 to 1200 millimeters per four month growing season. The climate presents generally favorable working conditions with the weather usually changing along with the seasons .The major economic activity in the area is agriculture with the educated few migrating to towns for employment or alternatively finding work with non-governmental organizations working in the area. The region is characterized by the native vegetation of the Miombo woodlands. It is intensively cultivated, both by smallholders growing maize, pigeon peas, sweet potato, cassava and groundnuts, and by the commercial estate owners growing tobacco, macadamia, lavender trees and maize.

Agricultural produce farmed in the area by the communities also include soya, sweet potato, tomato, and nuts. Nearly 90 % of the people of Mwandama used to live below the poverty line i.e. less than \$1 a day, hence the choice of the villages to be uplifted economically. The people of these 114 villages, numbering more than 35,000, have all-season earth roads that connect to the

tarmac road that connects Zomba and Blantyre cities. There are 14 Primary Schools in the project area. The people used to get muddy water that was undrinkable. The study selected Mwandama Village because it meets the researcher's criteria and target group. Mwandama Village is one of the places which experienced severe droughts and regarded as one of the poorest sites selected by MDG Centers as a place that needed to be uplifted through appropriate objectives and principles through the MDGs strategy. The Millennium Village Project in Mwandama Village started in 2006. The project offers a lot of services as one of the MDGs strategy to empower the poor and women through the main target areas defined by MDGs namely; health, agriculture, education, water, infrastructure, sanitation, gender and energy in order to improve living standards of the people. (Millennium Promise, 2010)

### **3.3 Study Population**

The study population found that the majority of the tribes that respondents came from comprises of 4 main tribes in Mwandama and these are, Lomwe, Yao, Mang'anja and Ngoni. As a result the languages spoken are Yao, Lomwe and Nyanja (Chichewa), with the use of the English language restricted to the educated that are rising in number. The Mwandama area has one Senior Traditional Authority (STA), (Mlumbe), 4 Group Village Headmen (GVHs): Sitima, Sikamu, Issa and Kutambala. There are 114 Village Heads (VHs), 27 female village heads with the rest of the villages headed by males. Mwandama Millennium Village has a population of 35,000, with 8,500 households and most of the people are small scale farmers. This study targeted female farmers supported by the Millennium Village strategy.

### **3.4 Sample Size**

The study used purposive sampling frame because this method gave the researcher a chance to choose or handpick individuals to be included in the study and research topic. It also helped the researcher to choose the relevant person who could provide relevant information regarding the research topic (Abugah 2009). Key informants were used to get the list of the population to facilitate this procedure.

However, systematic random procedure was used to get the sample size from the household. This procedure is sometimes called interval random sampling. The sample size was calculated by using the  $k$ th, person of unit.

The formula is  $k = \frac{\text{Size of household}}{\text{Desired sample size}}$

Therefore, the total households for Mwandama are 8,500 and the desired sample size of 150 was used to yield a k as follows;

$$\frac{8500}{150} = 57^{\text{th}}$$

Selecting was done at every 57<sup>th</sup> person and the list of agriculture inputs distribution was used in the systematic sampling frame.

Respondents were purposively distributed into four Millennium Villages project locations and a sample of 80 out of 150 respondents were drawn from Mwandama, because they are the oldest MVP and the first beneficiaries of the project, then 35 respondents were drawn from Mainga/Mswaswa Village, 10 from Katete and 15 from Mkurugwa area. The word Mwandama belongs to chief of the village Mwandama who was one of the first persons to come up with the idea of initiating the project after his retirement as a civil servant. The other villagers were included when the target group of the project was increased to 5,000 from 240 as mentioned by key informant Chief Mwandama. Because the MVP started at Mwandama village, the name was maintained even after other villages were included. A register of input beneficiaries was used for systematic sampling frame to get sample size which was drawn from all the four Villages. Both the List of Agriculture input beneficiaries and 4 clusters were purposively selected and used by the researcher to produce an appropriate random sample size of Mwandama. This sampling procedure enabled the researcher to select the required sample from the population whilst retaining the principle of randomness. It did not involve giving all possible combinations of persons in the population the same chance of being included in the sample. (Howard, 2001)

### **3.5 Units of Observation/Analysis**

The unit of analysis, also called the unit of statistical analysis, refers to those units that we initially describe for the purpose of aggregating their characteristics in order to describe some larger group or abstract phenomenon (Mungenda 2003). Units of analysis are therefore the individual units about which or whom descriptive or explanatory statements are to be made. In this study unit of analysis is the impact of the MVP as a strategy to empower women socially and economically while the unit of observation are women in the MV of Mwandama in Malawi.

Women under MVP intervention in Mwandama Millennium Village remained target group of the study.

### 3.6 Sources of data

Two types of data will be collected; primary and secondary data.

Primary data refers to the information a researcher obtains from the field (non-empirical data) especially from the subjects of the study of the sample (Mungenda 2003). In this study the data was collected from women, and household survey, interviews, group discussions and questionnaires guide were the methods used to collect the primary information.. Secondary data refers to the information a researcher collects from articles books casual interviews. This data were collected from key informants, documents and video tapes of previous meetings for all events which happened in Mwandama for the three seasons. Key informant interview were used to collect in-depth information.

### 3.7 Data Collection Methods and Tools

**Table 1: Data collection tools**

Research Method	Research tools	household	Sample size	Sampling method
Household Survey	Questionnaire	8,500	150	Systematic sampling frame
Key Informant Interviews	Interviews guide		12 4- staff of MV 2 Gov. officials 2Community leaders 2Community Development Facilitators	Purposive sampling
Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	Guiding questions		12 persons will be used in FGD) 8 from mwandama 4 from mainga and 4 from mkumugwa to answer questions from the following sectors.; health, education, agriculture/business development and on leadership	Purposive sampling
Direct observation				

### **. a. Household survey**

Household survey was used to collect data from the households in order to determine the current status or social phenomena of the population. The study investigated the impact of the Millennium Village in Mwandama village, Malawi. Data on demographic and social-economic characteristics was also captured at household level. A semi structured questionnaire was used in collecting both demographic data and social –economic characteristics from women under study in the Millennium Village. A sample of 150 respondents was drawn from a total household of 8,500 using systematic sampling frame and then purposive sampling was used to get respondents from the four clusters for household survey.

### **b. Key informant interviews**

Key informants are people who know more about the community. They are people who have a particular knowledge on the nature of the problem or subject. The 10 key informants under this study were interviewed in a face to face interview. These are people who were actively working with the community at the time of the study in facilitating all MVP strategies. The key informants involved in the study were from the following positions, the Team Leader of the MVP, the Community Development and Gender Coordinator who was also Acting Education Coordinator, the Agriculture Coordinator, the Business Coordinator, Health and Nutrition Coordinator, Chief Mwandama and woman village head.

The key informant interview was used to get qualitative data from the information on primary data and the past history of the implementation and approaches of the programme and socio-economic status of women of the MVP in Mwandama MV. Purposive sampling frame was used to allow the study get cases that had the required information with respect to the objectives of the study.

### **c. Focus group discussion (FGD)**

This method was developed by Robert Merton a sociologist. It is a qualitative data collection method. The method group discussion to brainstorm the guiding questions of the study and the group was divided into groups to discuss the topic for in depth information, and pair wise



ranking procedure was used the effectiveness quality and satisfaction of the MVP strategies and approaches. A normal focus group is supposed to have 6 to 12 people however the study had 4 groups from different clusters and each had a total number of 4 respondents apart from Mwandama cluster which had a bigger number of 8 respondents. The descriptive data was collected from women in the FGD. The method was also used to collect data on the coverage, strength and weakness of the program of the MVP. Additional information on women's status, beliefs and cultural practices that can affect and inhibit the empowerment of social-economic status of women was collected during FGD.

A purposive sampling frame was used for the convenience of the study and 12 women were selected from 3 clusters to discuss issues on education sector, health sector, Community development, leadership/governance and agricultural/business sector.

#### **d. Direct observation**

Direct observation means studying events, objects, processes, people and behaviors systematically as they occur. Direct observation will be used by the researcher to collect primary data. During field research, observed phenomenon will be recorded using an observation checklist.

#### **Training**

Three field assistants were trained with a diploma certificate and knowledge of the Millennium Village Strategy. Two days training was conducted. The training covered the following areas; background and the objective of study; field study ethics, methods of interaction, team spirit, selection of households and respondents, understanding sections of the questionnaire, and data collection techniques. The training was done in two days and on the third day there was pre-testing of data collection tools.

### **Pre-testing study tools**

Pre-testing was done on the third day of training. A total of ten households in an area selected from a similar population were pre-tested. This was done to avoid inclusion of pre-test sample in the main study.

### **3.9 Validity and Reliability**

(Abugah, 2009) defines validity as the scientific term to refer to the quality or trust worthiness of the data. Reliability is measured by the degree at which an instrument of the research would yield the same results after the repeated trials. Questionnaires and rating scales was used to collect valid information from the study. Questions were pretested for the content of validity and reliability of the study.

### **3.10 Data Analysis**

Data was analyzed using SPSS and excel worksheets for qualitative and quantitative data. Descriptive data was involved by using percentages graphs and tables to analyze the characteristics of the study population. The descriptive data was collected from key informant (KII) and FGD. Rating Scale of measurement method was used to establish the relationship between various independent and dependent variables and was also used for inferential statistics. Rating scale was also used to establish the factors affecting and contributing to women's empowerment in the MV.

### **3.11 Ethical consideration**

To ensure that the study followed principles to prevent unethical risk to the study subjects, application was made to the Mwandama Millennium Village and entire international and regional MDG center's for approval, which was granted and a letter of recognition from the department of social work. Faculty of arts, University of Nairobi was used to apply legal clearance and acceptance from MDG centers and local authorities of the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1 Introduction

This section covers the presentation, analysis and discussions of findings in relation to the assessment of the impact of Millennium Villages Project: case study Mwandama Millennium Village, Malawi. The section covers the socio-demographic data and the specific objectives of the study. The following are the objectives.

1. To examine the approaches and new technology of the MV in meeting objectives and guidelines of empowering women socially and economically.
2. To assess how the MVP has empowered women socially and economically in Mwandama.
3. To determine factors that are inhibiting and contributing to women's empowerment socially and economically through the MVP.

**Table 2: Response turn out rates**

Categories of respondents	Expected number of respondents	Actual number of respondent	Percentage of turn out of respondents
Household survey	150	150	100%
Key informants	12	10	83.33%
Focus group	16	16	100%
Total	174	176	98.85%

The study collected information from household survey, key informants and focus group discussion (Table 2). In the household survey all 150 respondents were present for the interview, 10 respondents' for key informants showed up while the remaining two who were government officials did not make it because they were away for official duties. In regard to focus group discussion all the 12 respondents were present and were interviewed. The absence of the two key informants did not affect the results of the study.

#### 4.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

The demographic information in this study comprises of distribution by location, sex, age group, tribe, religion, household size, number of children, marital status, level of education, household headship, occupation and main source of income (Table 3).

**Table 3: Distribution of response per location for focus group discussion**

Area	No of respondents per cluster
Mwandama Cluster	8
Katete cluster	4
Mkurugua cluster	4

The respondents of this section were purposively selected according to their clusters (Table 3). Mwandama MV had most women respondents than in the three MVs because it is the first and oldest MVP and therefore benefited most from the MVP with Eight women, four women from Mkurugua, and four women from Katete.

**Table 4: Age group of respondents**

CHARACTERISTIC	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
<b>Age group of respondents n =150</b>		
21-30 years	48	32.0
31-40 years	39	26
41-50 years	31	20.7
51-60 years	16	10.7
61-70 years	14	9.3
Above 70years	2	1.3

Ages of women in this study were grouped from 21 to 70 years as being normal age group for adult women who have benefited from the MVP. Most respondents were aged between 21 and 50 years, comprising 78.7% of all respondents.

The study reveals that fewer women were aged above 50 years (21.3%), implying that fewer older women are active in the project activities. In addition, this may be indicative of the low life expectancy. The fact that most of the women were 50 years and below implies that most women in the project are in their active life stage'; hence, contributing to, and benefiting positively from the project.

**Table 5: Sex of respondents**

SEX	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Household survey	150	0	150
Key Informants	10	8	2
FGD	16	0	16
Total	176	8	168
Percentages	100%	5%	95%

After the interview with key informants, the study observed that there was need to include sex in the socio-economic data as more male keys informants were interviewed, even though the study did not include men as target group. Nevertheless, the study revealed that the majority of respondents were female (95%) and only few were male (5%) which concluded that females were still the main target group of the study. (Table 5). This also implies that most in high position in the MVP are men and it would therefore be advisable to have women in senior positions too in the project for gender balance purposes and for providing role models especially to girl child in the project areas.

**Table 6: Tribes of respondents**

Tribe	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yao	46	30.7
Chewa/Nyanja	47	31.3
Lomwe	50	33.3
Ngoni	7	4.7

Respondents in the MVP were fairly distributed among the tribes in the area (Table 6) suggesting that the programme is not tribal such that it accommodates everyone despite where and which tribe one belongs to as shown in Table 6. The group even includes Ngoni's who are from distant parts of Malawi. It also shows that the projects focus really meant to reach the targeted group by selecting those who met the criteria of the project objectives.

**Table 7: Religious affiliation of respondent**

Religion of respondents	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Christian	133	88.7
Muslim	17	11.3

In regard to religion, most of the respondents were Christians (88.7%) with few Muslims (11.3%). (Table 7) The findings indicate that Christianity and Islam are the two dominant religious groups in the area. The study analysed religion because it is one of the social factors that has both positive and negative influence on social-economic development of the community and individuals hence can also contribute or hinder women's empowerment. During interviews, some women especially from Muslim community said that their religion does not allow them to participate in the development activities such as going for business trainings.

**Table 8: Household size**

Household size	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
0-4 people	75	50
4-8	66	44
8-10	6	4
Above 10	3	2

Half of the respondents interviewed had small family sizes (Table 8) (0 to 4 people) which is reasonable for an African household size, however 44 % of the households had family sizes of 4-8; implying a good proportion of the household's size. This may be as a result of following family planning with the coming of the MVP. The figures on household size agree with the report by the CIA fact book (2013) for Zomba district, which states that the average household size is;

**Table 9: Respondents highest level of education**

Respondents highest level of education	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Primary	93	62
Secondary	11	7.3
None	46	30.7

In regard to education level of the respondents (Table 9), more than half of the women (62%) attended primary and only (7.3%) attended secondary education while the rest never attended school at all (30.7%). The results support the findings by the study done by Ngwira et al (2003). The level of education of the respondents indicates that they did not go far with learning. This may imply that level understanding the practices and new technologies of the MVP during training may need to be packaged well according to their level of knowledge for example use of participatory approaches.

**Table 10: School going and non going children**

<b>Number of children</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
School going	127	84.7
Non- school going	23	15.3

A percentage of 84.7% respondents said their children go to school (Table 10) and very few (15.3%) were not attending school because they were either too young, sick or school dropouts. This is in agreement with a report by MDHS and CIA (2013) from 2006 to 2008 which indicated that nationally, there has been an increase in primary school net enrollment since 2006 from 73% to 87.2% in 2013. Although most respondents were not very educated, it is apparent that they value the importance of education, hence sending their children to school. The increase in school attendance among dependents could be due to the projects school feeding program.

The study also showed that the majority of the dependents were school going children showing that the children and parents benefit a lot from the MVP through the education component of the project. The MVP has introduced Community Education Workers concept where volunteers from the Cluster go door to door encouraging parents to send their children to school particularly girls, which may be attracting children, thus providing a strong education opportunity to the children.

**Table 11: Marital status of respondents**

<b>Marital status</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
Single	6	4
Married	107	71.3
Divorced/separated	26	17.3
Widow	11	7.3



The study noted that majority of the women in the project (71.3 %) are married respondents (Table 11) followed by those who were single, divorced and widowed (28.7%). This may indicate that married people benefit a lot from the Millennium Villages Project, for example, they benefit from Agriculture and Education which have helped in empowering both family and children.

**Table 12: Household headship**

Household headship	Frequency	Percentage
Female headed	33	22%
Single Parent	24	16%
Male headed	93	62%

Most households were found to be male-headed (62%), while female-headed households were only 22% and 16% were female single parents. This is where most families are dominated by men in decision making for instance; control of resources, which are provided by the project like farm inputs according to what women expressed during data collection of this study. Women under this study added that culturally, women in the area are not much valued as important to go to school or be part of the decision making. From Muslim households for example, almost all women interviewed were found not to have attained any education; furthermore, schools were far from the households before the MVP was initiated. The acquisition of a moderate education for the children would translate into securing a better life for the whole family in the near future as part of MVP impact.

**Table 13: Occupation of respondents**

CHARACTERISTIC	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
<b>Occupation</b>		
Farmer	140	93.3
Small Business	10	6.7

The findings of the study also show that, over 90% of women are farmers or engaged in farming (Table 13), this can be explained by the fact that the project has a big agricultural component. In addition the higher number of respondents being farmers as their main occupation might also be explained in line with the low education level among women in the MVP. This could explain that the higher percent of respondents are peasant agriculture. Acquisition of a moderate or higher education could increase a person's probability of acquiring more formal employment. The rest of the women were doing small scale business enterprise (6.7%) such as beer brewing, selling fish, selling firewood, selling scones, cakes (mandasi), maize and vegetables.

**Table 14: Respondents source of income**

CHARACTERISTIC	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
<b>Source of income</b>		
Farming	127	84.7
Employed	8	5.3
Small scale business	13	8.7
Other	2	1.3

The majority of respondents (84.7%) have farming as their main source of income (table 14) this implies that farming is the main source of income. Farming has been intensified with the MVP support through Agriculture Strategy and Approach of providing inputs such as fertilizer and seeds. This also implies that farming/agriculture is the main strategy for empowering women economically. It can be concluded therefore that farming in Mwandama MVP is the backbone of peoples' livelihoods and source of income. Apart from Agriculture, small business comes second as a source of income which is shaping up in the village. The common businesses found in the area are baking scones, making orange-potato juice and owning a shop. Sources of income are a major determinant of social-economic status of women in the MVP.

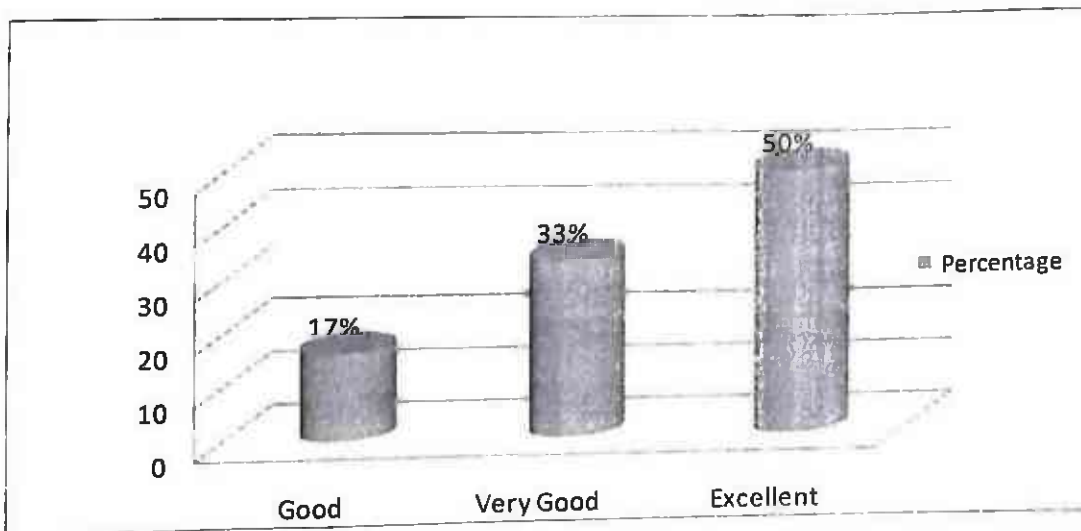
**4.2 To examine the approaches and new technologies of the MVP of empowering women socially and economically**

In examining the approaches and new technologies of the MVP in meeting objectives and guidelines of the MVP, the study looked into the following factors: objectives and guidelines of the MVP. Key informants were asked to answer the following questions; 1. How much does this

project meet the needs of women's socio-economic empowerment towards using MVP strategy? 2.a At what scale would you rate the achievements of the objectives? 2.b Depending on choices of objectives achieved list factors that contributed to their success. 3.a Rate the extent to which the quality of standards has improved or offered the MVP intervention. 3.b if your answer is poor state the problems associated with the empowerment of socio-economic status of women's of the strategy in the MV and state your coping mechanism and suggested solutions.

The key informants under this study were interviewed in a face to face interview, and it is good to note that they were answering questions according to their roles and job responsibilities at Mwandama MVP. Project meeting the needs of women's socio-economic empowerment

**Figure 2: Overall rating of the MVP by key informants**



The key informants were asked to comment on whether the MVP strategies and approaches had met the needs of the women social-economic status using a rating scale of poor (1), not good (2), good (3), very good (4) and excellent (5). In response, all the key informants commented that the MVP strategies have met the needs of women's social-economic status at a rate of 3 to 5 as shown in Figure 1 and that the MVP has greatly uplifted their standards of living both at an individual and community level.

### **Objective number one: Poverty reduction and increase income**

This is an objective being driven by the agricultural/business sectors in the MVP. Agriculture therefore, was rated as one of the achieved objective in the MVP at a rate of 62% (Figure 3). The study shows most respondents are engaged in farming and the most favourable activity is farming which has improved food security, level of income and raised the living standards of people in Mwandama Millennium Villages including women. However, key informant (Agriculture Coordinator) mentioned that, reduced soil fertility has been a problem in some parts of Mwandama Millennium Villages. This is in line with a report produced by CIA 2013(0 that many parts in zomba has unfavourable soils. Nevertheless, introduction of manure by the MVP's agricultural extensionists to the farmers in Mwandama MVs e.g. Mbeya (Figure 5), and Chimato manure has led to use of manure by farmers to improve fertility of the soils. The Mbeya/Chimato manure has 20% chicken manure, 20% of maize husks and 10% maize stalks and half a pail of ash. The three components are mixed and socked in a bag for a period of 21 days to let the essential elements mix and decompose. The decomposed and mixed substance is later applied to the planting holes before real planting time comes or soon after the germination of the seeds. The respondents suggested that the use of manure should fully be adopted so as to sustain farming even in the absence of the use of fertilizer as a coping strategy, see Figure 4 below.

**Figure 4: Mbeya manure preparation**



**Objective number two (Education improvement)**-key informants said that education has improved with a rate of (56%) in the sense that there is increased number of school enrolment especially for girls at local level. No comment on challenges and coping strategies was given by the key informant education coordinator.

However, the women in focus group discussion supported the key informants that MVP objective on universal education has been met especially for formal education but pointed out that there are some challenges faced by girls for example there are some cases where a number of girls dropped out of school due to early pregnancies, sexual abuse, and increased low self-esteem. According to women in the group discussion they felt that the challenges have reduced the achievement of this objective in the MVP. The respondents also added that depression and fear that stemmed from cultural practices and beliefs are also some inhibiting factors towards meeting the objective of improving education. The coping strategy from focus group discussions on this issue involved community policing, the selection of secret community women leaders in the MVP to help and advice girls on issues concerning various challenges faced by them. Other suggested solutions by women were to report on intimidation and sexual abuse cases to the police and addressing cultural awareness issues faced by the community.

Education on parenting is also another suggested issue which would help to educate women on sexual abuse and girl child protection.

In the line of adult learning, key informants reported that MVP trained some women on leadership, agricultural practices and rendered to them skills through offering voluntary work on cooking school feeding meals. The main challenge as indicated by focus group women faced in the line of adult learning was that there is no existing pro adult education in the area much as some few members have undertaken business training. There were no suggested solutions by the key informants as to how to improve the situation to achieve this goal, but women in the focus group discussion requested whether is possible to introduce formal adult learning.

### **Objective number three: improve gender equality and empower women**

Key informant respondents commented that women have been empowered at a rate of (44%) in all different areas of their work with the MVP strategy e.g. agriculture, health, education,

business and leadership through, participation and involvement. The women participation in agriculture has improved and 40% of women occupy leadership positions. For instance, in the field of health, women are the majority receiving maternal and childcare in the community than men. No comment was given on the challenges and coping strategies on the objective by the key informant. On the other hand, women in the focus group discussion expressed concern that gender inequalities still exist in local leadership and within family systems because of intermarriages which lead to two different cultural beliefs and practices in the family thus making it difficult for family members to cope with.

#### **Objective number 4, 5 and 6 Improve health (Health Sector)**

Key informants expressed that the MVP has achieved the three related to health objectives number 4, 5 and 6 which are; reduced HIV and AIDS prevalence, reduced maternal and child mortality rate at a (92%). Improved health has been the most achieved objective both at national and local level. The study did not get any data on health, however the study done by Zomba National Assembly on social services in Zomba reveal that infant mortality rate in Zomba district was 106.3 and 86.0 for male and female respectively in 1999, as compared to 88.5 and 2.5 for 2006 indicating an overall improvement in the living standards. This is in relation to the Malawi Nation Newspaper for September 24<sup>th</sup> 2013, which indicated that Malawi is on the path in achieving goal number 5 (health). The success of health in MVP has profoundly contributed to improved social and economic standard of women. The key informants (Health and Nutritionist and Community Health Worker highlighted the following factors to have contributed to its success as stated: provision and encouragement on the use of mosquito nets and availability of good health facilities such as malaria test kits. Vitamin and mineral supplements to tackle under-nutrition and make children stronger, availability of HIV tests and counseling services, good pre and post natal care, immunization to prevent disease and lower incidences of tuberculosis, integrated approach of different sectors working together, collaborating to enhance good health, e.g. the agricultural sector and the education sector. This is further emphasised by the existence of a Nutritionist in the program who is educating women on good diet. The women are now very productive both in farming and house chores as maternal and child cares have improved greatly

### **Objective 7 and principle number 1: Improve in global development and co-operation**

Much as the study did not focus on this indicator, the key informants commented that global partnership is one of the objective as being achieved in MVP and Malawi as country. This is in support of findings that Malawi is in the path to achieving goal number 7 of MDG. The findings are in relation to observation made in the Malawi National Newspaper (Sept 24<sup>th</sup> 2013). The key informants highlighted that one of the MVP principles was to partner with the public and private sectors, innovative NGOs, universities and leading experts and the international donor community throughout Africa and the world to continually improve and coordinate development strategies.

This study gives good observation on the teamwork done by the MVP staff during data collection at Mwandama Millennium Villages. The MVP has well-structured and well developed partnership system at international, national and local levels. During data collection time the study observed a series of meetings taking place at Mwandama Millennium Villages Centre. One was a Coca Cola Global Hand Wash, which was launched by MVP staff from headquarters in Nairobi and Mwandama Villages in conjunction with Coca Cola partners. They are also in partnership with other organizations such as Unilever, co-operatives for boosting up businesses in the area. The MVP also works hand in hand with national ministries such as agriculture, health, gender, forestry, education and lands to facilitate their activities in the area. Most women have mobile phones as Airtel mounted two towers in the project area and network coverage is excellent.

At the local level the MVs at Mwandama work and make interactions with the community every week, more trainings workshops and meetings with local leaders take place in the area. At the time of data collection there were several meetings regarding environmental and business issues taking place in different clusters. The key informants did not give any suggested challenges and coping strategies to this objective.



### **Objective number 8: Improve environmental conditions**

The respondents stated this objective has been achieved even though the study did not focus on the environmental sustainability as an indicator worth still the study observed that the MVP is facilitating the environmental sustainability programmes through agriculture sector which is working in line with Ministry of Forestry. At the time of data collection, several planned activities by agriculture sector were done to demonstrate nursery beds for afforestation to improve the vegetation cover. Soil erosion is also protected through use of manure and good agricultural practices.

The study shows that most objectives were achieved at Mwandama MVs. It is good to note that the objectives of the MVP are the same as those for the MDGs. In the MVP the objectives act as indicators interventions and approaches of the project. These project objectives operate interdependently and they are intertwined such that one objective influence the other. For example increased food security will enhance better income and good health hence reduce gender inequalities. In this study observation has been made that the MVP is closely monitored and their outcome are well analysed so it offers a consistent and coordinated framework. It has a systematic scientific and technical support that has made most objectives to be met and at the same time helped to improve and empower the rural poor women socially and economically as indicated by the key informants. For instance goal number one, reduce poverty and hunger has been achieved wonderfully at the Mwandama through agriculture with the coming of the Millennium Village. People in Mwandama were not able to harvest and store enough food for more than six months but now they are able to sell maize that contribute to grain bank and support the school feeding programmes.

The study show that goal number two has been achieved and benefited women socially and economically in the sense that women education is viewed and connected so much in relation to the skills acquired from training in small scale business which has provided them knowledge motivational skills and boosted their morale. In addition to adult training the availability of formal learning education provided by the MVP in Mwandama has improved educational status to their children. This is in agreement with the education model of empowerment which

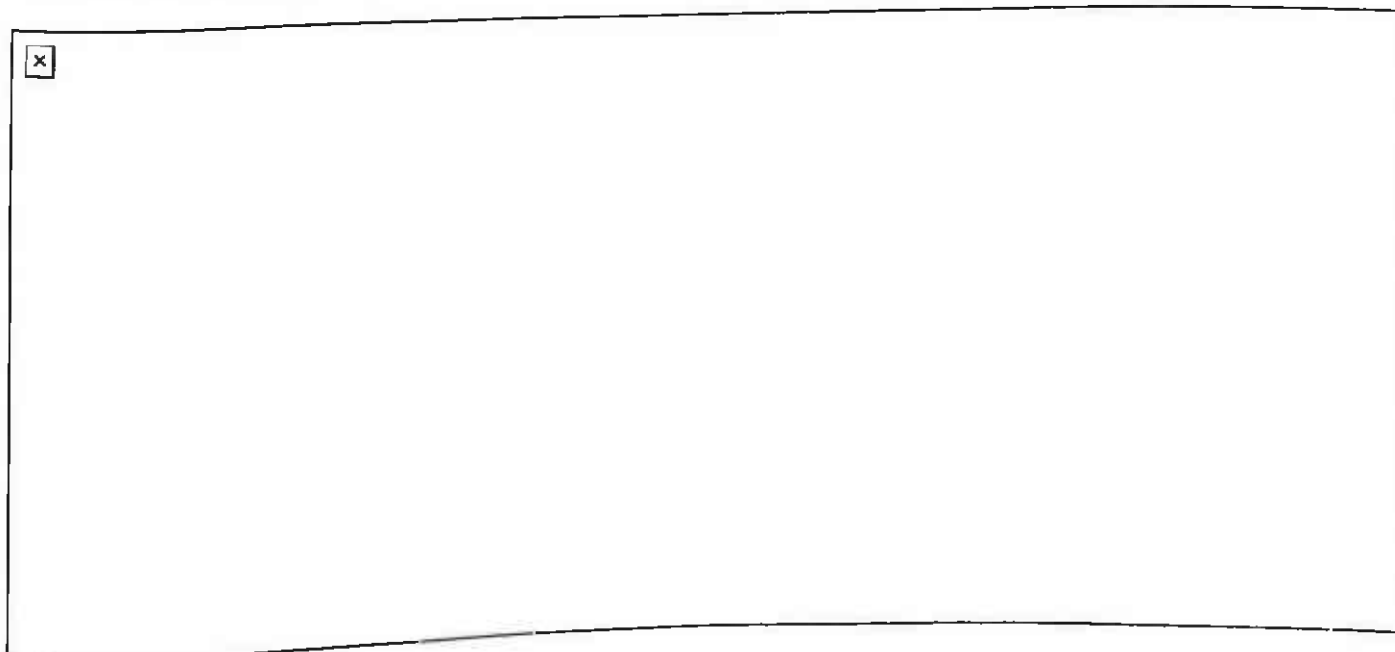


emphasis the use of skills and knowledge development through education that help young women and youth to engage into social action and change that further leads to individual empowerment and community organization.

In regard to goal number three improve gender equality the study noted that the MVP has done a good job to empower women in all dimensions health education food security and increase women's participation in leadership. During Data collection women in the leadership positions were interviewed and witnessed that MVP has made them to get the leadership position otherwise culture could not allow them to change their position in the society as women who should not participate in private domain and get involved in decision making. This is a sign that women are involved in decision making in the project.

While objectives such as improve health, improve global partnership, and improve environmental sustainability have proved to be the most achievable objectives both in the MVP, local and national wide. Reference is made from the Malawi National Newspaper that Malawi is in the path to achieve the above four Millennium Goals by 2015.

**Figure 5: Improvement of quality of services offered by MVP**



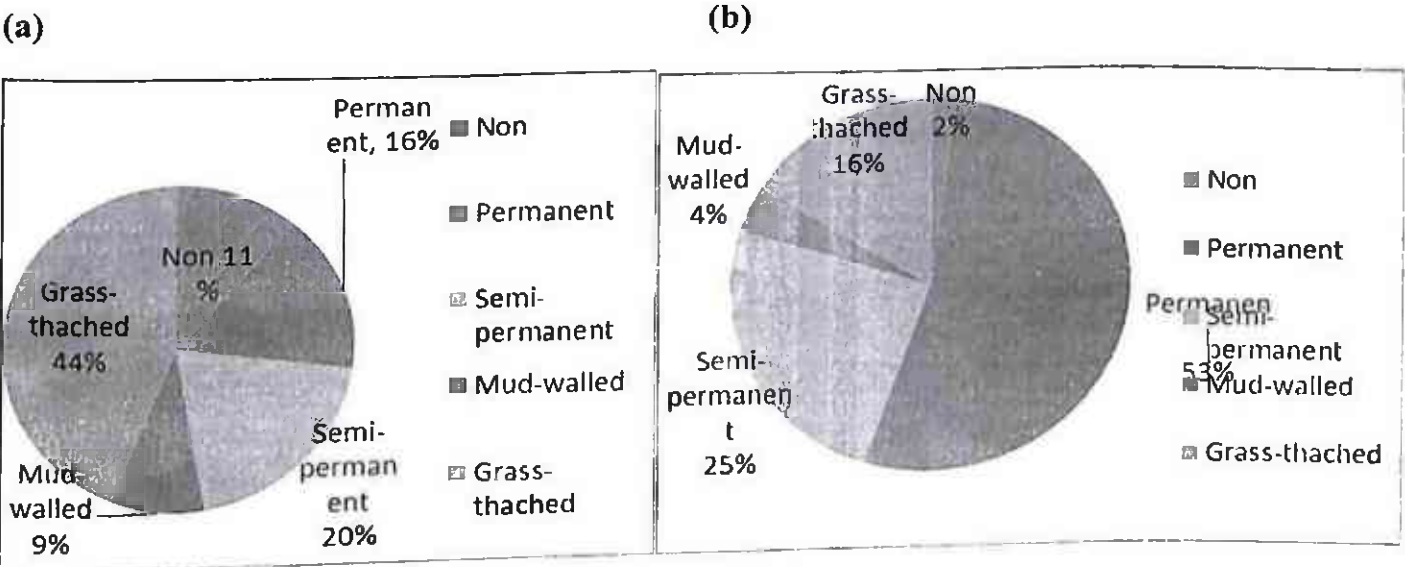
The Figure 5 above elaborates the percentage of improvement of quality of services offered by MVP. The study reveals that majority of respondents rated health (92%) as offering the best services followed by agriculture at (86%), education at 70%, community development at 67% and leadership 55%. All key informants stated that they did not face any challenges as most of the objectives were achieved. However, the respondents in agriculture stated that the main challenges faced by them are the same as those stated in the objectives above including their coping mechanisms.

According to the findings of the study rated by key informants regarding the quality of services the most effective sectors were agriculture and health which are deemed to provide high quality services. This is in agreement with the Reports produced by MVP in 2006 which constitute a first assessment on the background of Mwandama Millennium Village which further stated the absence of nearby schools, hospitals and profound roads. The area was dry and the occupants harvested very little as a result of insufficient rainfall. During the data collection period, it was observed that there was a substantial improvement on the relative development at Mwandama which also confirmed the provision of quality services by the MVP to the area.

#### **4.4 Assessing how the MVP has empowered women socially and economically**

On understanding how the MVP has empowered women socially and economically the following indicators were used; appropriateness and effectiveness of service delivery on the social economic status of the respondents. In level (2a ) the women under study were responding to questions regarding their social- economic status in the following areas: property of ownership, assessing social services, community development and leadership. In level (2b) the respondents were asked the following questions (1) comment on the effectiveness of the MVP, (2) Rate the quality of services in the following sectors; agriculture, health, education, community development and leadership/governance.(3) if answer is not improved to comment on how the MVP had to improve its services.(4)To rate the level at which the MVP has satisfied their needs.

Figure 6: Types of houses (a) before and (b) after MVP

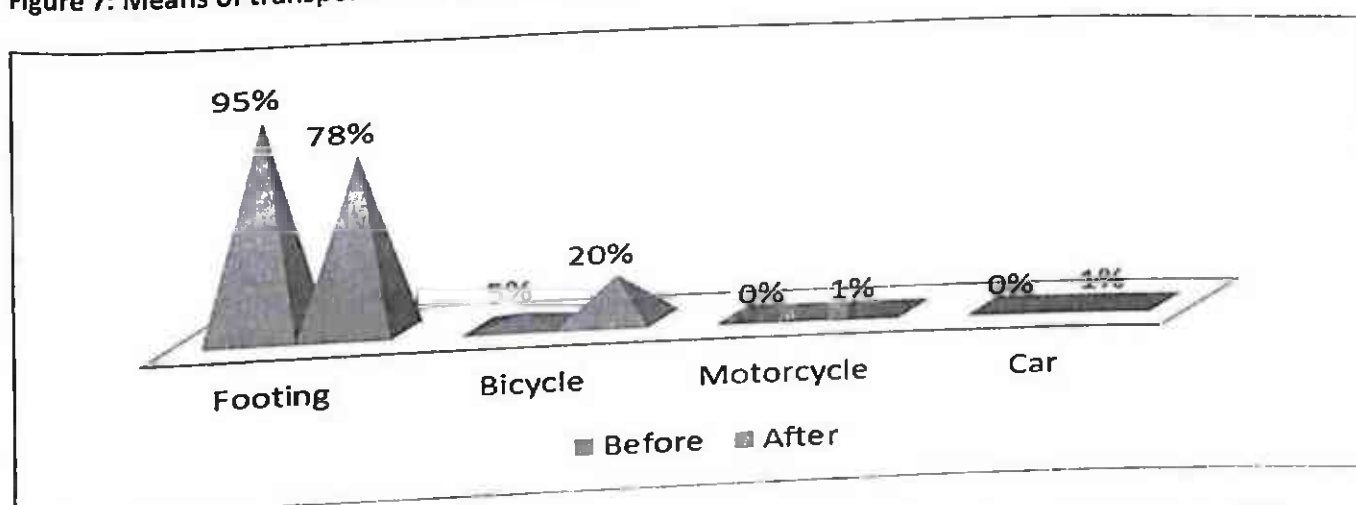


The research revealed that most respondents had thatched houses (44%) which are not permanent (temporary) before the MVP (Figure 6a). This is an indication that women’s settlements were poor before the MVP and their income capacity was very low. Not having proper housing is an indication of high poverty levels.

However, after the establishment of the MVP many respondents admitted to a rise in their economic status signified by their ability to build better houses (Figure 6b). A total of (53%) of respondents said that now they have a permanent home while the rest agreed to have the following types of houses; 25% semi-permanent, 16% thatched and 4% mud-walled. The change in type of house indicates that the MVP has contributed to the rising of living standards of the

community including women. It is apparent that the MVP empowered women and enabled them to have permanent structures.

Figure 7: Means of transport before and after MVP



The main means of transport (Figure 6) before the MVP at Mwandama Millennium Villages was footing (walking) (95%) only few (3%) had bicycles and there was no one with either a car or motorcycle. However, after the Millennium Village Project although majority (78%) are still footing, the number of respondents with bicycles rose to 20 % from 5.3% and 1% had a car and motorcycle each. It is apparent that effective means of transport is still an issue to be addressed by the government in line with the Ministry of Transport and Communication since access to markets and other social amenities is a problem.

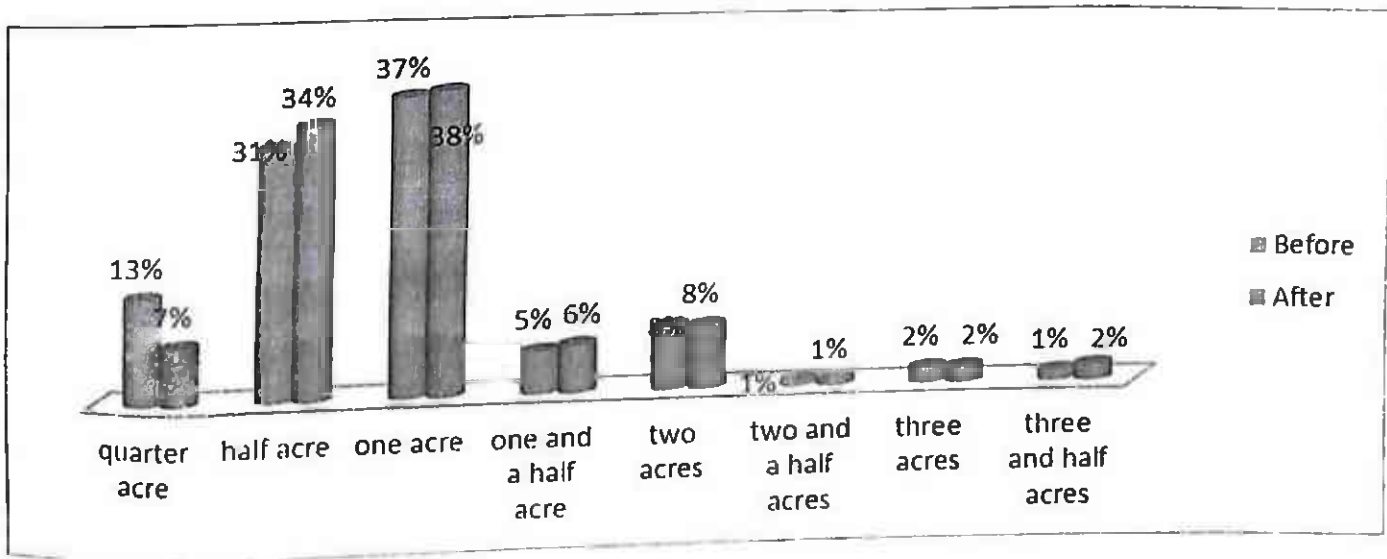
Table 15: Source of information before and after in the MVP

INFORMATION	Radio	Television	Mobile phones	Letters	Newspaper
BEFORE MVP	7%	0	3%	83%	0
AFTER MVP	13%	1%	74%	17%	1%

Majority of women respondents (Table 15) said that before the MVP they used letters (83%) as a main mean of communication and few had radios (7%) and phones (3%). However, after the MVP (74%) have phones, (17%) still use letters (13%) have radios and (1%) have televisions which are a remarkable improvement. The figures indicate that level of income has improved among the women in the MVP where now women have better access to information through phones and radios.

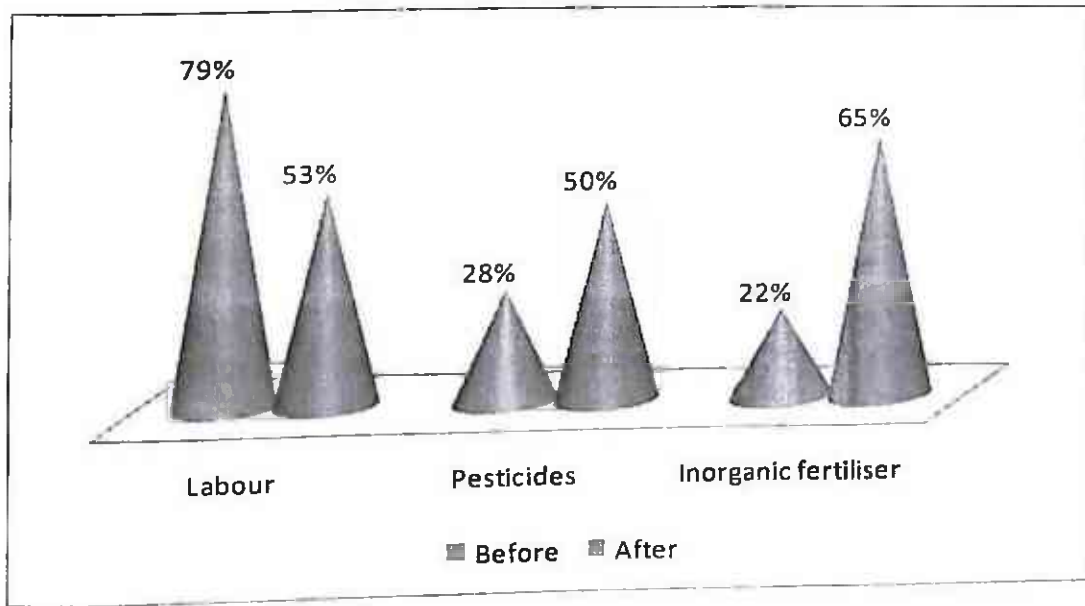
**a. Agriculture/ farming**

**Figure 8: Land holding size before and after MVP**



The total land size before and after the MVP is presented in Figure 7 .The findings revealed that 37% of respondents had a total land size of one acre, followed by half an acre while the rest had less than an acre before and after the MVP. This Means that the total land holding did not change. The research observed that land is an issue in terms of farming for one to sustain food security for the growing population. Mwandama MVP is experiencing land issues due to being surrounded by the commercial and private owned estates and hills. The findings of land problems of land are in line with the study done by Zomba assembly in 2009 that land is a problem in Zomba district especially in the area of chief Mlumbe where Mwandama is situated.

Figure 9: Use of farm inputs (self-labour, pesticides and inorganic fertilizer) before and after MVP



Self-labor was more available before the MVP with (79%) than after MVP at (53%) (Figure 8). This implies that most respondents were able to hire labor after MVP. In the case of pesticides and inorganic fertilizers the women used more pesticides (50%) and inorganic fertilizer (65%) during MVP compared to 28% and 22%, respectively (Figure 8) before the establishment of MVP. The majority of the women who used pesticides mostly used maize storage pesticides such as Super Actellic dust in order to kill *Sitophilus* maize weevils and large grain borer, *Prostephanus truncatus*.

It is evident from the data collected above that agriculture is the driving vehicle and the mother of all the other sectors in the Millennium Villages and is regarded as the main source of income. This is supported by a report by the Zomba assembly (2009) which further emphasises that the main source of income is subsistence farming. It is also clear that the agricultural sector has contributed to improvements in food security in the area through offering subsidies to farmers such as fertilizer and seeds. The study also noted that women are active participants in agriculture and food production which implied that women still play a major role in the contribution of social and economic development in their communities. This observation is in line with the study of Fineland, *et al*, 2010, who highlighted that, though farming is often thought of as a male occupation, women play a central role in agriculture worldwide, both constituting a large proportion of the agricultural labour force indicated by (43%) of farmers in developing



countries, and depending heavily on agriculture for their livelihoods (60% of economically active women in sub-Saharan Africa).

The study noted that, in Mwandama women played multiple roles such as farming, business, family care and community development. These multiple roles press high demands and pressure on women's time which severely constrains their ability to respond to economic incentives and participate in the market economy. This statement and observation criticises the structural functionalism theory which does not recognize that women are overburdened with roles but only assumes that as long as there is order in the society it is normal. In addition to multiple roles assumed by women at Mwandama MV, the focus group discussion also expressed concern over land ownership and control intending to the challenges over the benefits of their labour. Furthermore, cultural beliefs seem to have affected women's participation; men were taking big shares of the produce and leaving little for women to take to their homes. Most women benefiting from the project were married and they raised concerns regarding their male dominated households that limited their freedom in decision making and control over resources provided by the project like farm inputs. These cultural beliefs need to be addressed in order for women to fully benefit from such initiatives.

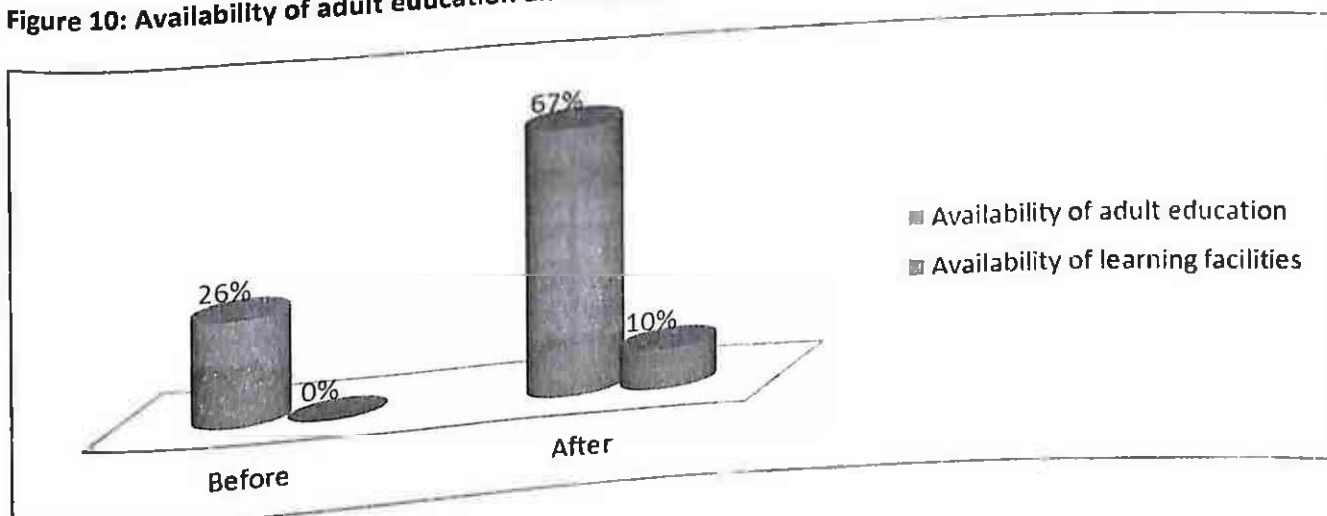
The study reported small land holding sizes among respondents before and after the MVP. This means that the total land that they possess is not enough to sustain their families and the future generation. Land size is an issue in terms of farming for one to sustain food security for the growing population. Such is the case in Mwandama cluster which is surrounded by commercial and private owned estates. In southern Malawi, where Mwandama is part, the human population is high and land is an issue. The land that is available is also surrounded by some hills thus making vast amounts of the land inhabitable.

However, respondents had some coping strategies regarding land shortage issues such as obtaining farming land by letting the land from other neighbouring villages and surrounding estates. This helps them to produce more for their livelihoods and economic development. A number of factors might have contributed to the success in agriculture. These factors include; MVP's collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, which provided and

assigned technical staff specifically for the farmers in the MVP and provided training in modern agricultural practices e.g. the demonstrations on bed and land preparation, and on application of pesticides. In addition, there is training of lead farmers who in turn train others in the community and also facilitate them on the preparation and use of manure like Chimato and Mbeya, pest controlling used in storage and Grain bank management. The MVP is also doing research on diversification of crops, water harvesting and animal husbandry, and facilitation of environmental management such as environmental conservation, terracing, encouraging irrigation and development of national disaster management policies on issues of drought and soil erosion. The MVP is also facilitating the establishment of forestry nurseries in line with the Ministry of Forest and Forest Committee to improve the environmental forest cover.

In addition, the MVP's agricultural staff led the activities and assisted the farmers in formulating exit strategies of the project as it phases out in 2015. For instance, the building of shops for income generating activities, the acquisition of a lorry to support the transport sector, and the construction of a maize mill and grain bank for maize storage to enable the maize to be sold at a profitable price later in the year. This further contributed to school feeding programmes. In addition, it was clear that MVP services were of very high quality and that all MVP objectives were achieved e.g. eradicating poverty and hunger implying that MVP greatly improved food security among women, and overall in the community. It can also be implied that the success of the agricultural objectives also empowered women socially and economically.

**Figure 10: Availability of adult education and training**





Adult education was not available to most people before MVP. Only 26% of the women indicated its availability (Figure 9). However, when MVP came, adult education became more available as reported by 67% of the women. There were no learning facilities before MVP but these became available after MVP although only 10% reported their availability (Figure 9).

**Table 16: Formal education before and after MVP**

<b>SCHOOL UNIFORMS</b>	Money spent on uniforms	Teachers availability	Desks	Books	
<b>BEFORE</b>	Less expensive	Less available	Less available	Less available	
<b>AFTER</b>	More expensive	More available	More available	More available	

The study shows that many parents spend more money on uniforms (Table 16) after MVP (because MVP does not buy uniforms, it is supposed to be parent's contribution). However, on the contrary, school teachers, desks and books are more available at present than before the coming of MVP at Mwandama. It should also be noted that some respondent's children (about 10%) are being supported by MVP in all their school expenditure including scholarships provided to those who highly excel and are selected to government secondary schools.

The formal education achievements have been due to the school feeding program, which has increased school attendance, school enrolment and an increased number of enrollments for girls. The feeding programme is strongly being supported by the agriculture and health sectors, which provide maize and soya beans for the meals while the health sector provides education on how to prepare the meals, have balanced diet and sometimes provide supplements of vitamins. In addition good roads and the shortness of distance to school have contributed to easy movements to school and improved school attendance such that the findings of the study coheres with that of the Millennium Promise 2010. All this relates to formal learning for children.

One woman from Mainga expressed the benefit of schools after the MVP and stated that;

“Children have a school feeding program, which is mainly composed of porridge, a mixture of maize and soya and there is also Likuni Phala (mixture of groundnuts/maize/beans). Hygiene is also taught in schools on how to wash hands after visiting the toilet and before eating. Sanitation has also improved with access to clean toilets due to availability of water tanks instilled in all MVP schools. In addition, the MVP has improved our children’s Secondary School education for both boys and girls. The MVP supports quite a good number of our children in the community. They give them school fees; transport money and pocket money. The MVP has also introduced the program called connect to learn where 57 girls are selected to two secondary schools i.e. St. Anthony and Maera. The girls have benefited most from this project (connect to learn - CTL) as they also obtain free sanitary pads, computers and bicycles e.g. girls in Katete school.”

However, there are some challenges faced by girls as they attend school such as intimidation as they walk to school and bullying by boys. To cope with these challenges the respondents said they have formed the community policing where secret women were chosen to give girls advice on the issues concerning them.

Regarding education of women, most women had attended school up to primary school level which is attributed to gender stereotypes, intimidation and favouritism of the boy child as being the reason for not going very far with school especially before the MVP. They commented that gender inequalities still exist in the community as girls are bullied and sometimes forced into early marriage at a tender age. This is an indication that much as the MVP and the government put more effort to empower girls through various strategies, culture seems to still hinder the empowerment of women and the girl child in the country as the case for Mwandama. Moreover, the Project is aggressively addressing these issues within the coming 2 years before 2015.

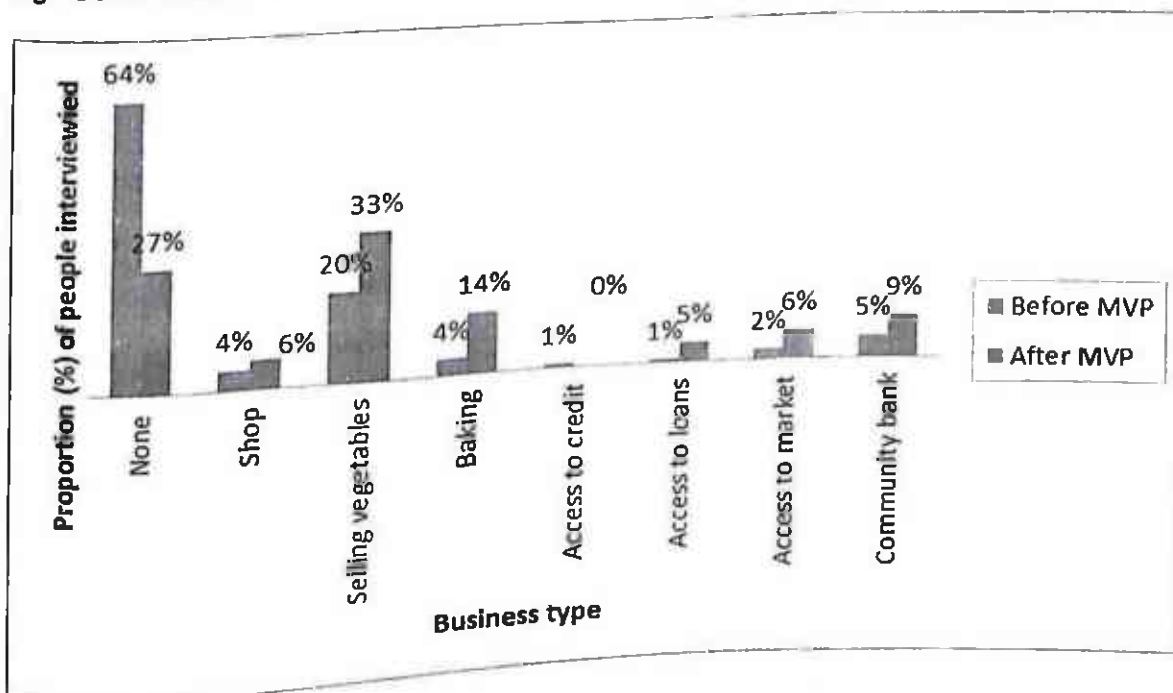
Although, no statistical data was given on the entire level of education for Mwandama Millennium Villages for a clear picture of how many girls in the area were likely to benefit from the program, the results of this research are similar to findings of the study done by Malawi National Demographic Data (2010). It denotes that many girls are going into early marriages so as to seek financial security and that the majority end up at primary school level.

When it comes to adult training facilities, many respondents said they did not undertake any form of training before the MVP. Only 1% said they had acquired some training through school (Sukulu ya kwacha). However, after the MVP, 5% of women have been trained on business and they are now business trainers in the MVP. The women were trained on baking skills and juice making. Moreover, about 25 men and women were trained by the MVP but during the time of data collection, the study observed that most women who hold leadership positions in the community have also maintained their business. They have also formed themselves into women groups to embrace their economic status.

Majority of women were not involved in business activities because they said they had problems acquiring leadership positions since the main business is community group business. Lack of capital, frustration and the saturation of markets were among the main hindrances towards their success in business.

Much as key informants admitted that women's education has improved, they did not comment on the suggested solutions to the problems faced in adult learning but respondents in the group discussion suggested that the government should provide pro- adult education in the area to enhance their knowledge and understanding in all levels of their socio-economic areas.

**Figure 11: Sources of income before and after MVP**



Most respondents (64%) did not have any source of income before MVP, however only 27% of the interviewed women had no source of income after the formation of MVP (Figure 10). In addition a number of women who had shops increased from 4% to 6% (figure 8). Other notable changes were increase in number of women selling vegetables, which increased to 33% from 20% after or during MVP. Over 14% of women were baking as a source of income during MVP from 4% (Figure 10) and (Figure 11) below. Other notable increases are access to loans, access to markets and using community banks all of which increased during MVP (Figure 10) the number of women using banks rose to more than double which was before MVP (Figure 10). Finally, a few women now have access to credit which was almost impossible before MVP. There are 33 Village Savings and Loan Schemes only for women and managed to save at that village level, USD 16,900.0

**Figure 12: Picture of community oven for making bans and scorns**



Most respondents were not involved in any business before the MVP. However, through the MVP's facilitation there were more women who were involved in various businesses during MVP. It is apparent from the results that during the MVP many women had various sources of income such as business, access to bank loans, selling vegetables and access to markets for their main produce (maize). Access to credit had actually reduced during MVP which implies that women became so empowered that they could not go for credit from their neighbors, which economically is informal. This further suggested that they opted for more formal sources of income for their enterprises, and most of all went for marketing of their main produce.

The study found that this MVP business strategy was one of the economic strategies through which women are empowered by the introduction of group member savings strategy, the

presence of the mobile Opportunity Bank and availability of credits and loans offered by the MVP. This helped them to develop a culture of saving and they learnt financial management skills. The findings of the study are in line with the Millennium Promise report 2010, which stipulates the success of business in Mwandama Millennium Villages. Business is coming up so strongly in the area. Such that the study supports the survey by Muteshi, 2006 denoting that business is one of the best strategies which will enhance economic opportunities for women's economic enhancement and raise their standards much that women are also good business entrepreneurs because of their social interactions.

However, some women are not engaged in business because of cultural issues, especially for women from Muslim community who are not allowed by their husbands to participate in business trainings. Lack of capital and markets was also a concern expressed by the women in focus group discussion which may have contributed to women not going for businesses. In regard to observations made from the study many respondents want to surmount the obstacles of doing business as in other parts of the world. They fill negativity would not assist them get out of poverty. Most women appreciated what MVP has done for them. Below is a testimony of one of the women, Mrs Smoke.

"I am a widow. My husband died in 1979. He left me when I was 3 months pregnant with twins. I suffered a lot to support my children both with school and up keep. With the coming of the MVP, I ventured into the business of making scones and selling them both as individual and group business ventures (Appendix 7) of baked scones. I am a trainer and I train ladies and other people outside the MVP. We have a community oven brought by the MVP, where I go and train ladies how to bake bans. From this business I make K2000 every day and I am able to feed my children. I even pay school fees for my twin sons. I am very much motivated and have high self-esteem to carry on. I wish the MVP could continue their services for ever. I have opened a bank account and I am also in the community group saving systems. As a group we contributed money and save weekly then loan to others at a very low interest rate (as low as 10%). Then we divide the total portion at the end of the year and each individual invests in different businesses. We also learn business management skills such as book keeping, budgeting and saving skills in the course of the business explained Mrs. Simoko

**Table 17: Access to health services before and after MVP**

HEALTH	Availability of clinics	Health workers	Medication
BEFORE MVP	0%	1%	1%
AFTER	67%	40%	93%

Availability and access to clinics and mobile clinics has remarkably improved (Table 17) after MVP from 0% to 67%. Additionally, majority of respondents have access to medication illustrated by the 93% in the study since the establishment of MVP at Mwandama Village. Health workers are also available but however they are inadequate for the large population at Mwandama as indicated by 40% in the findings (Table 17) above. Before MVP, women from Maera Sector used to travel 11 km to Thondwe and Namikango Health Clinics for deliveries and more often than not, were delivering children on the way. Maera Health Clinic has solved the problem.

A 60 year old woman from Mwandama Millennium Villages cluster shared her experience as follows;

“We suffered a lot when one of the members fell ill especially during maternal delivery, the hospitals were far and the nearest hospital was at Thondwe which was 12 kilometers away. We didn’t have proper transportation and unfortunately this sometimes resulted in stillbirth or maternal death due to uncontrolled internal bleeding.”

Many members have acknowledged that with the coming of the MVP women have profound access to maternal and child care facilities as illustrated in the speech below:

“Here at Mwandama cluster there is a lorry that is able to provide transport to the main hospital at Zomba in time of emergency. The MVP has improved the women’s lives and productivity of their homes in both social and economic terms. There is health education and nutrition care programmes in the area and we thank Jeffrey Sacks for bringing the project in our area. The project has also provided 24 hour ambulance service both at Mwandama and Maera Health Clinics.”

However, the study made an observation that the clinics have few beds for maternity i.e. only two beds are available which pose work stress on patients and nurses who find it challenging to serve patients especially women in labour. In addition, during the women’s group discussion at Katete and Mainga, the respondents were reminding the MVP and the government to build a

better clinic for them because what they have now is a mobile clinic which is not efficient as it only comes once a month and does not solve emergency cases in the area.

**Table 18: Infrastructure, energy, water and sanitation before and after MVP**

INFRASTRUCTURE	Schools	Safe drinking water	Access to road network	Access to electricity	
BEFORE	1%	1%	1%	0%	
AFTER	93%	89%	89%	52%	

According to the results illustrated in (Table 18) most respondents said that there was no proper infrastructure in the area as evidenced by a percentage of 99%. However, after the MVP the majority of respondents said availability of schools is most appreciated (93%), seconded by safe drinking water (89%), thirdly access to road networks with 89% and lastly availability of electricity (52%).

Mwandama Millennium Villages is naturally dry, rocky and hilly in most of the places. The place used to be affected with repeated droughts and that was why the people in Mwandama never used to have good harvest. Transport and infrastructure, such as roads, schools were poor in Mwandama. The findings of the study in Table 3, shows that the respondents said development has relatively improved after the MVP. The most improved areas were in the area of roads, construction of bridges and availability of schools. A good road networking is found in the area even though there is a bit of a challenge during rainy season as the roads become muddy.

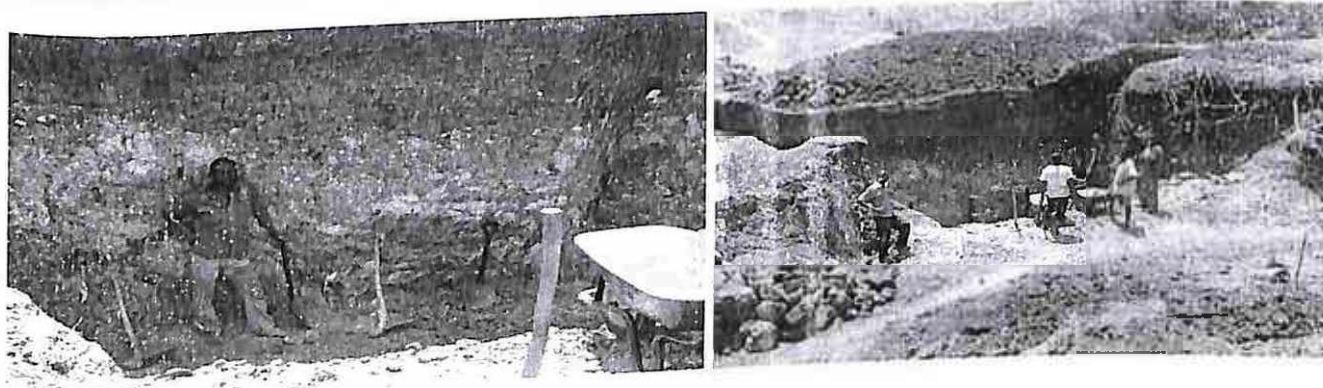
Mwandama had no clinics and now the 4 functional health clinics have improved the situation. Before the project came in, there were no boreholes. Women were walking long distances to fetch water from the muddy rivers thus exposing themselves and their families to water-borne diseases. The project has drilled 82 boreholes where water samples are collected every year to check on the quality. Community Policing has been set up in the area because of theft of some



parts of boreholes and the community is urged to report such cases to police. In addition most of the respondents said they did not have electricity in their homes. Electricity has been installed at the Grain Bank. MVP purchased a transformer and 6 houses have been connected at their own expense. The people are urged to utilize the transformer. In places where the transformer is far, MVP has established a Cooperative on solar lamps and this has assisted many households by avoiding fires through tilly lamps and candles

In regard to sanitation the MVP has been facilitating programmes of digging pit latrines and water tank fitting especially in schools and clinics. At the time of data collection, the MVP staff also participated in the Coca-Cola global project launch to embrace the idea of sanitation in the area. The MVP is also in partnerships with other NGOs and various organizations as a coping strategy in the development sector to maintain roads and boreholes. The Figure 12 below shows some of the construction of bridges in the area.

**Figure 13: Construction of bridges in Mwandama MVP**

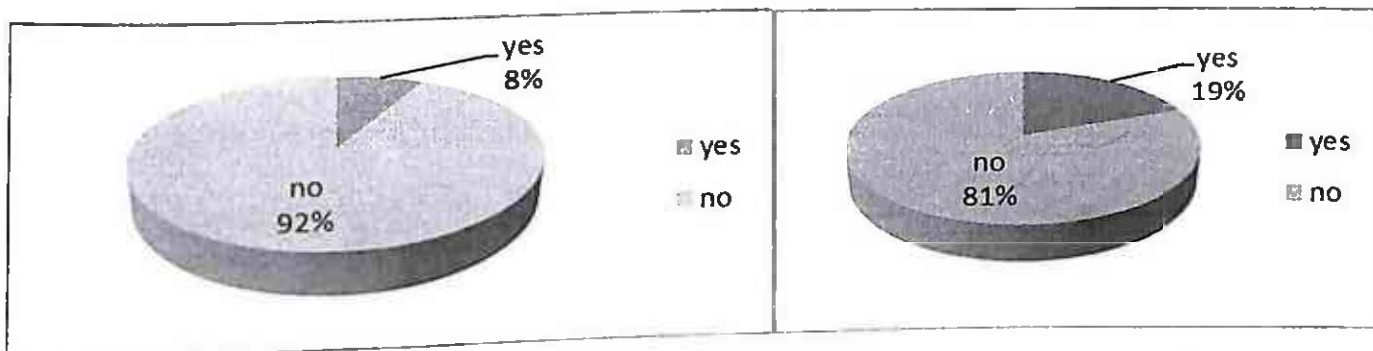


Source: Management meeting September 2013.

Excavation at Chigumukire construction site showing a river base for the foundation , courtesy of Seed Company of Malawi who provided the funds to construct the bridge as part of Global Partnership in development.

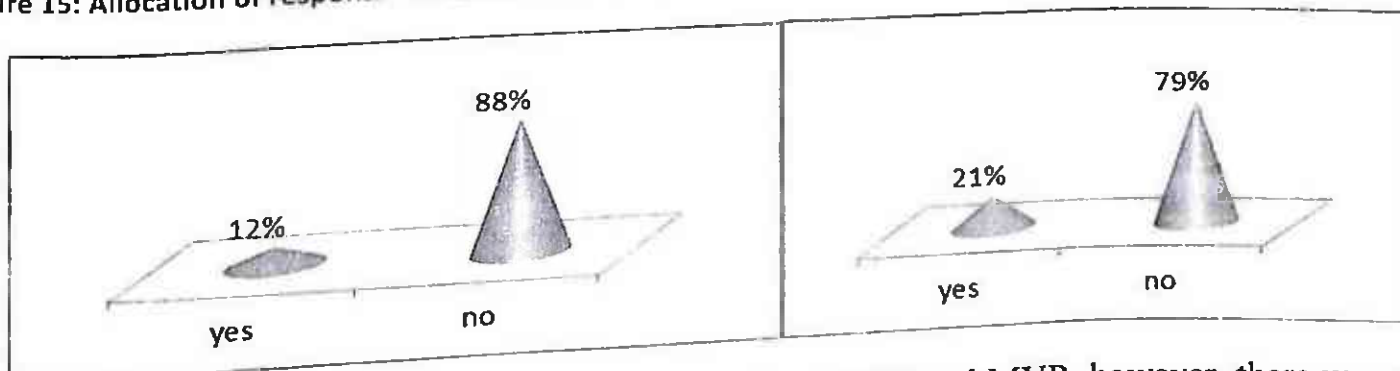


Figure 14: Level of participation in leadership (a) before and (b) after MVP



The study illustrates that majority (92%) of women did not participate in the leadership/governance position before the MVP (Figure 13), while only few (8%) were involved in the leadership. On the other hand the number of women increased to 19% after the MVP and 81% (Figure 13) are still not involved and participated in the leadership/ governance.

Figure 15: Allocation of responsibilities and roles (left) before and (right) after MVP



Fewer women had responsibilities and roles before (12%) and MVP; however, there was an increased number of women with responsibilities and roles indicated by 21% after and during MVP

During the study in Mwandama Millennium Villages, it was observed that there is a democratic type of leadership as both men and women have been given opportunities to participate and take leadership roles (Figure 14). The study also indicated that women were able to take part in leadership positions in the fields of business, agriculture, health and education. During data collection some women who occupied leadership positions were interviewed, for example, in Mwandama cluster, a chairlady and a secretary for a women's business group. According to findings from respondents, 21% of leadership positions in Mwandama Millennium Villages have been taken up by women. This implies that women's participation in leadership position has

dramatically increased at the community level and that MVP has contributed to this success in the area.

One of the respondents who is the secretary of a women's business group said

"I am a secretary in our women's group at Mainga. I feel good that I have a position in the MVP. Before the MVP I did not have any position. Men including my husband could not allow me to stand and talk before them. We were not able to participate and make decisions even for myself. My self-esteem is high at present and I am able to express myself in public for myself and on behalf of others. The only challenge we have is that men still view us as subordinates. I remember that some men resigned from positions because they could not cope with being summoned by ladies to do certain things especially in the area of business. The leadership role works better in women's groups than those mixed with men. However, I am ready to work for my community despite the challenges we face."

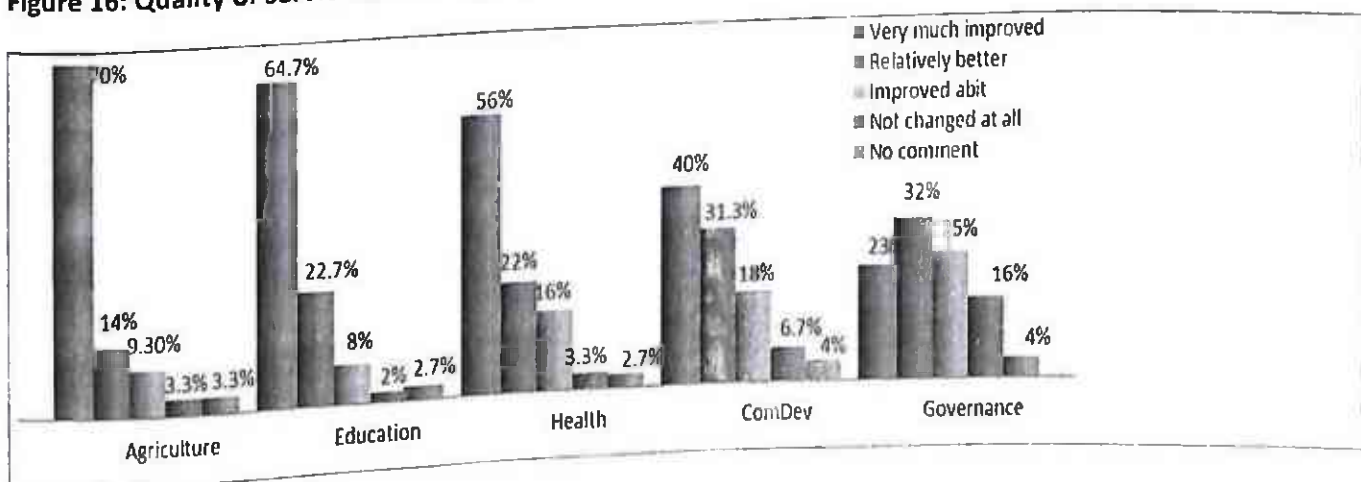
Even though women in Mainga have positions and have participated in the leadership and governance in the MVP, some of the respondents in group discussion expressed disappointments with community leadership especially in business and agricultural sectors. They said there is intimidation as they are not allowed to express their views because of cultural stereotypes of being women. Furthermore, favoritism in choosing leaders and lack of unity within the leadership structure are also some challenges women experience in the community leadership and governance. This statement is in support of the Conceptual framework that indicated that the women empowerment is hindered from the community level. The findings also agree with the study done by Joan (2006), who commented that intimidation, lack of voice and access to decision making are the main blocking elements in empowering women. The respondents suggested that increasing leadership training and creating a different approach of addressing cultural issues is needed to eliminate the intimidation faced by women. Otherwise, there is a danger that women's empowerment will not bear fruit if cultural issues and poor governance are not resolved even after the MVP which has proved to have empowered women in some social-economic areas.

**Table 19: Views on the effectiveness of the MVP**

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Very effective	39	26.0%
Effective	78	52.0%
Less effective	19	12.7%
No comment	14	9.3%
Total	N= 150	100.0

Women were asked to comment in general terms on effectiveness of MV project. Table 19 above, shows the percentages of their comments depicting that half of the respondents (52%) expressed that the MVP strategies and approaches were effective and a further 26% thought that they were very effective. However, few commented that they were less effective. The study therefore concludes that the MVP strategy is very effective in overall.

**Figure 16: Quality of services offered by MVP**



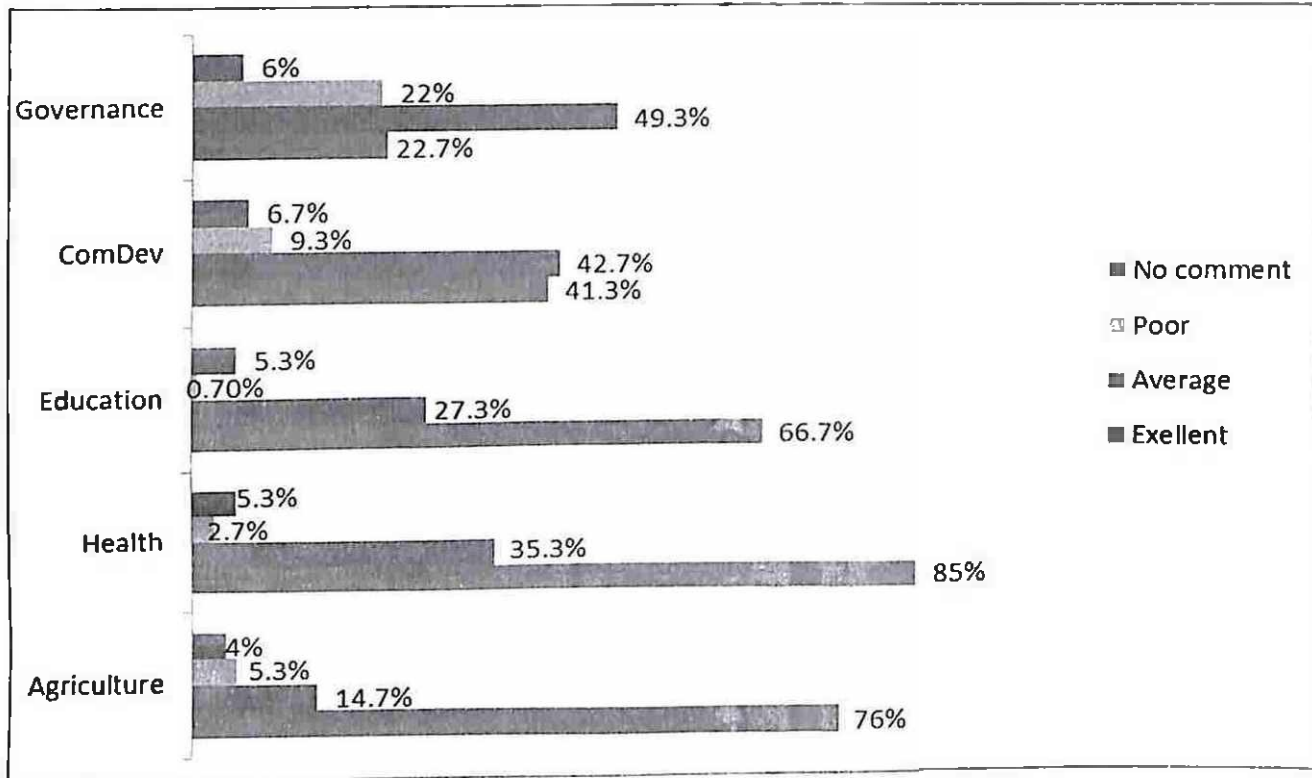
Quality of services offered by MVP in various sectors was rated using the rating scale shown in Figure 15 above ranging from not changed at all to very much improve. The results show that agriculture sector (70%) followed by education (64.7%) and health (56%) was found to have very much improved.

The findings on figure above, show that women expressed that the quality of leadership and governance has not improved much considering that the community leadership to most members is seen as oppressing and not accommodating their views. The women said that there are some group meetings where the youth were not involved. The respondents however suggested some areas of improvement in leadership such as civic education on leadership and good governance to be seriously be conducted in the area which can be of importance to educate women on issues relating to empowerment.

Both the focus group discussion and key informants rated agriculture, education and health as the best sectors that have given better services. Nevertheless, some women in the focus group discussion highlighted areas of improvement in agriculture sector for instance; the number of bags to contribute to the grain bank should be reduced to less than three bags which can be affordable to many.

In regard to community development, the members felt that the leaders should consider involving the youth in the running of the project in order to generate new ideas and insights. It was observed by the respondents that there is need for other people such as the youth to be included in the running of the project not necessarily involving family members but not regarding the rest. Generally the women felt that water maintenance needs to improve as well as facilities which already exist in the area.

**Figure 17: Satisfaction of respondents regarding approaches and strategies of the MVP**



Women expressed high satisfaction with MVP strategies and approaches (Figure 16) mainly relating to health (85%), agriculture (76%) and education (66.7%) and least on local governance (41.3%) and community development, (22.7%).

Women under this study showed dissatisfaction on how the local leaders govern the people, as the respondents felt that they are being oppressed and intimidated sometimes when trying to express their contributions and ideas. Those who felt dissatisfied also said that there is no unity in the local leadership as expressed by the respondents during the focus group discussions.

The reason why agriculture sector has not come strongly was not due to services from the MVP but it was due to lack of enough land. Majority of the respondents do not have adequate land (1/2 to 1 acre per household) of which the three bags of maize to return are too much for many as small scale farmer.

In regard to health sector women were very much satisfied with MVP approaches and strategy in meeting their needs. There has been a major advance in the kind of health care even though some women requested for good facilities to come closer to the people in other areas like Mainga, Mkumugwa and Katete. These areas were mostly covered by mobile clinics that come only once a month in the areas making essential health services not available to many all the time.

#### **4.5 Determining contributing factors to women's socio-economic empowerment**

##### **Introduction**

Determining contributing factors and hindering factors to women's social economic empowerment was used to find (level 3a) the contributing factors to women's empowerment such as Agriculture/business, health, leadership, education and community development. In level (3a) the respondents were asked the following questions; What they understand about the MVP, Whether they understand the objectives of the MVP, in what way does the MVP address the community needs, and to give suggestions, what are your roles in the MVP, and how they are involved in the MVP .In level (3b) determining factors hindering women's social-economic empowerment includes, cultural stereotypes, gender discrimination, and gender inequalities challenges in what they understood regarding the MVP project and respondents were required to responded to the following questions: To list the challenges in opportunities and resource distribution/sharing in the following areas economic/business, social, political/leadership and culture.(1b) what recommendations would they give to improve the challenges mentioned in question(1a)

The respondents said that they had knowledge about the MVP and moreover they are also members in the MVP. In addressing the objectives of MVP, most respondents were aware of the MVP objectives and therefore reported that the MVP's objective was to change the lives of communities through the provision of quality schools, health services and improved food security. This statement is in agreement with the Millennium Promise objectives stated in their 2010 report.

Respondents had to also comment on how the MVP has addressed their needs and they responded by stating that there was improved extension services in agriculture and provision of farm inputs. They added that health workers conduct spot checks to improve hygiene and sanitation. MVP is also paying school fees to girls in secondary schools. The respondents were also asked about their roles and involvement in the MVP and the study found out that most of the respondents in the group discussion were community trainers. In Mwandama cluster the MVP trained some women who were training their fellow women in orange sweet potato utilization while in Mkumugwa and Katete they were training women in baking. In addition, some respondents confirmed to having occupied some leadership positions.

**Table 20: Challenges to women in opportunities and resource distribution/sharing in MVP with suggested solutions**

Sector	Challenges	Suggested solutions
Economic/ Business	Capital, Transport/accessibility	Increased access to money lending institutions to venture into better business
Social	Housing, and transport	Increase access to money lending institutions to build better houses. And buy bicycles for transport.
Political/Leadership	Oppression, lack of leadership qualities	Advocating for change in the community leadership and behaviour change.
Culture	intimidation in initiation ceremonies, business and community leadership	Negotiation and advocacy should be encouraged to reduce the exorbitant culture.

1. Social:

a. Housing; this is in relation to those women who do not have better or permanent housing. They asked the government and MVP to increase access to financial lending institutions so that they can build better houses since their capital acquired from small scale businesses is insufficient to do so.

b. Water; the respondents from places such as Maingo and Katete would like to remind the MVP and government to repair boreholes that were not functioning at the time of study and to install some where they are not available.

## 2. Business

The study found that many small scale businesses were staggering in their progress and needed additional funding. The women at Mwandama suggested that the government and Mwandama should increase more lending institutions to increase their access to capital so as to carry out more investments. The money lending institutions should also soften their credit lending policies towards small scale businesses that are segregated by most of them. This way, business owners can improve their business performance and generate more revenue.

Transport: The findings in women focus group discussion and on social economic data analysis also shows that Mwandama Millennium Village has no proper transportation system. Better roads have been constructed by the MV and a Lorry has been provided to help transport the sick to the hospital but however this has not fully eradicated issues of transport in Mwandama. The women expressed concern on access to markets as a challenge by small scale entrepreneurs. They suggested that there should be increase in the source of income or capital to enable them improve their business performance by buying bicycles or some other affordable means of transport in order to effectively dispose of their produce at the market.

## 3. Leadership;

Much as the study interacted with majority of women, some of them pointed out that they faced challenges in the community leadership in the MVP during the study. The women expressed that there was the existence of oppression, lack of leadership qualities and favouritism in choosing leaders. They also suggested that there should be an advocacy body to address issues of leadership and behavioral change.



#### 4. Culture

Culture is different in each and every community. In Mwandama, culture is so much controlled by religion and leadership. Women in the focus group expressed their concerns and stated that intimidation exists in the community. Women are not allowed to actively participate in the project especially in business or take up leadership roles because of their gender. Young girls are also forced into early marriages at an earlier age than the right age due to some cultural beliefs, customs and practices. They suggested that negotiation and advocacy will discourage culture that perpetuates intimidation and oppression.

The findings of the study show that the MVP Strategies and approaches are contributing factors to women's empowerment (Table 20). The strategies include agriculture, health, education and community development. Women under the study stated that the MVP strategies are very effective and are possible approaches to help in improving their living standards. Meanwhile, the women were asked to list any challenges faced in the areas of economic business, social, leadership and culture. In their response, they stated that the challenges they face do not necessarily mean that the MVP strategies have not been successful but need to increase their support and improvement on the weak areas illustrated above.

## CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Introduction

This chapter highlights the summary, conclusion, lessons learnt and recommendations of the study.

### 5.1 Summary

The findings of the study found that most respondents were between 20-50 years of age. This implies that all respondents were mature of Africa adult age with families and spouses. This was relevant to the study because they had experience to provide information on their livelihood and how the MVP has impacted or affected their livelihoods. The study also observed that respondents over 60 years of age did not actively participate in the project indicating that life expectancy is very low in the area. The study noted that there were several tribes in Mwandama millennium village as indicated in the report by MV in 2010 but in this study most respondents were from Nyanja, Yao and Lomwe and a few from other tribes such as Ngoni and Manganja. This shows that the MVP strategy includes all tribes and stick to their objective of targeting the poor.

Religion was also analysed in this study. The aim of analyzing it was to find out whether religion had any positive or negative influenced on the women's social economic empowerment. The study therefore realized that culture is a stumbling block in women's empowerment in all aspects and areas targeted by the MVP. In agriculture, for instance women are still active participants and provide more labor than men. Sexual division of labour is still gendered and women still remain with a heavy load and burden in production sector. In health, women are told not to sleep under mosquito nets because some beliefs say that when a woman sleeps under a net will not get pregnant and men will not be able to perform in the home. Again young girls are encouraged and forced into early marriages as they said that bleeding for a long time will make them anemic and will never have a man to marry if they marry late. Islamic households married women did not go to school, in addition they are not allowed to participate in trainings and meetings.

In this study most of the women interviewed were married and few were single, widowed/separated and their average households size of majority of responds were 50% and only (44%) were between (4 to 8%). The study findings also indicates that majority of respondents had a primary school education (62% ) and only few reached secondary level and (30.7%) didn't attend at all.. The respondents did not have their own indigenous education especially girls though boys go for circumcision. However, few respondents attended "sukulu ya kwacha" (adult formal learning). Formal education was seen to be very low among old women in Mwandama although in all the 14 Primary Schools, there are now more girls in school than boys. This will have a positive impact in the future generation.

The study findings also showed that women were culturally not allowed to head households because they were regarded as vulnerable and hence needed male protection all the time. The study however observed and noted that Zomba district where the study area is sited is a matriarch type of headship where women are heading the family. The problem noted in this study is that much as culturally women are heading the home they are not particularly in charge of the home and resources, men were still decision makers on matters that affected the households. The man still controls the home and male dominance continues to exist. Intermarriages on different culture also become a challenge of retaining a family due to cultural beliefs challenges.

In the social economic survey most respondents were able to have better settlement, access to better roads, access to information and technology, access to credits and loans, access to good health care and education after the implementation of the MVP. In regard to the effectiveness and appropriateness of the MVP meeting the needs of the people, the study has shown that the MVP is an effective strategy and approach therefore the study recommends further implementation of new MVP sites in the country and other parts of Africa. The findings indicated that the MVP has meet most of its objectives despite challenges in community leadership and cultural constraints hindering the progress of the MVP. It is concluded that agriculture was the main engine driving/ supporting other sectors.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The results of study have shown that Millennium Villages Project is very effective to empower and improve the lives of women in the developing nations of Africa. The strategy is really holistic as it touches all human dimension of life such as food security, health, education, forestry/environment, business and developments. It is a very systematic approach as they are guided by the objectives guidelines and supported by effective interventions , which worth to be continued and expanded to other areas within the country and other countries of Africa. However, the government has to work on new strategies and approaches of reducing cultural constraints that limit women empowerment in the MVP and work on the facilitation of developing good and effective leadership as the move on to 2015.

## **5.3 Lessons Learnt and Best Practices**

- The MVP strategies and approaches have proved to be very effective according to this study therefore there is need to expand its scope even as it is planning to phase out in 2015 so that poor people including women in other parts of the country should benefit.
- Teamwork, creativity and commitment contributed to success of the activities in most sectors of the Millennium Villages ( both among MVP staff and the women business groups)
- Skills on reporting, accountability of resource use, training and capacity building sessions with women and also including the youth and their group leaders should be encouraged
- school drop outs incidences need to be addressed by training of different girls and women group's leaders on issues pertaining to group dynamics, leveling expectations among group members.
- The data collection was very helpful for an in- depth analysis and for future learning and the due processes.
- The life skills training and nurturing of talents for example in business, agriculture, also impacted positively the livelihoods in the various communities (clusters) where some women have begun their own enterprises.
- The issue of behaviour change and positive character formation has to be tackled effectively through activities like, group forums, coaching sessions, engagement income generating and training activities.

- The young girls can actually be a front for community development exhibited in the areas of business and agriculture.

More funding is needed by the government to encourage more business to empower the community especially the poor among them being women.

MVP project has also to emphasize and embrace on individual business and savings as over pull of non-committed and non-motivated members and that access to group bank in time of personal emergencies is difficult.

More marketing strategies have to be developed to create markets in the area e.g. each section within the Cluster to come up with their own unique sells so that they cross market to each other.

A lot of emphasis has to be put on having fundraising activities e.g. coming up with traditional dance show at the Zomba area by using tribal dances, creating market for eco-tourism and an archive for traditional collections.

The MVP has to develop more motivational skills to encourage women trainers and attraction within the time period. Need for more training on Leadership to men to ensure women participate fully in in the business activities.

#### **5.4 Recommendation to the government**

Government of Malawi with line Ministry of Health to increase number of clinics and beds built in MV clinics since two beds are not enough. The MVP has done its part and now government has to expand the way it wants. Most of the time the hospital is usually full and expectant mothers have to wait for each other and this overworks the nurses and puts patients at risk.

The Government in line Ministry of Gender to come up with strategies of improving self-esteem to girls not sponsored by MVP. There is danger of imbalance existing between MVP sponsored and non-sponsored children. A recommendation is made to Government of Malawi to come up with post literacy education for adult learning. Government has to scale up what MVP has done in other sites such as the Rural Growth Centres in all the regions of the country.

### **Recommendations for future research**

1. There is need for more research to be done to come up with different cultural approaches and strategies to reduce cultural constraints otherwise culture takes deep root in limiting women's empowerment and participation in economic programs
2. More time is required to do more research to understand deeply all the benefits and future impacts of all activities of MVP

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APPENDICES

**APPENDIX 1 QUESTIONNAIRE**

**LEVEL 1: Key informant questionnaire**

**Key Informant will be responding to (Guidelines and objectives of the MV)**

**The following key informants will include**

The MV team leader

The MV staff

The Traditional Village Chief

Head of Agriculture extension

Zomba district Agriculture Office

Millennium Village project community development facilitator

District community development coordinator

Dear Key Informants,

My name is Gloria Lirly Phiri. I am a master's student at the University of Nairobi carrying out a study on the impact of Millennium Village as a strategy to empower women socially and economically. Case study "Mwandama Millennium Village", whose purpose is to assist the researchers in getting information intended for the study.

I would to kindly request for your time to answer a set of questions that will assist me in my research work. Please note that your response will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for the purpose intended.

Level of education.....

Position held.....

Sex .....

**LEVEL 1A**

1. How much does this project meet the needs of women’s socio-economic empowerment towards using MVP strategy?

Poor =1 [ ] Not Good =2[ ] Good =3 [ ] Very Good=4 [ ] Excellent=5[ ]

2. At what scale would you rate the achievement of the following objectives?

Objective	Poor 1	Not Good 2	Good 3	Very Good 4	Excellent 5
Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger					
Achieve universal primary education					
Promote gender equality and empowerment of women					
Improve maternal health					
Reduce child mortality rate					

Key:

- 1-Poor
- 2-Not good
- 3-Good
- 4-Very good
- 5-Excellent

b. Depending on choices of objectives achieved list factors that contributed to their success.

.....

.....

.....

3. a. Rate the extent to which the quality of standards has improved or offered the MV intervention.

Quality of services	Poor	Good	Very good	Excellent
Agriculture and Business				
Health				
Education				
Leadership position				
Community development				

Key: 1= Poor    2= Very good    3= Excellent

a. If your answer is poor, state the problems associated with the MVP strategies in empowering women socially and economically in the Millennium Village and state your coping mechanisms and suggested solutions

Strategy	Problems	Coping mechanism	Suggested solution
Agriculture and Business			
Health			
Education			
Small business enterprise			
Leadership Position			
Community Development			

## Questionnaire for women focus group discussion

Date of interview:

Time:

**Women in the Millennium Village Project will be the main respondent.**

Dear respondent,

My name is Gloria Lirly Phiri. I am a master's student at the University of Nairobi carrying out a study on the **impact of Millennium Village as a strategy to empower women socially and economically Case study: Mwandama Millennium Village**", whose purpose is to assist the researcher in getting information intended for the study.

I would to kindly request for your time to answer a set of questions that will assist me in my research work. Please note that your response will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for the purpose intended. Thank you very much for your support.

### LEVEL 2: Household Biographical Data

1. Location

2. What is your Age range?

20-30 [ ] 31-40 [ ] 41-50 [ ] 51-60 [ ] 61-70 [ ]

3. Sex

Male [ ] Female [ ]

4. Tribe .....

5. Religion .....

6. What is your household size? .....

7. Number of children?

School going [ ] Non-School going [ ]

8. What is your level of education? (tick as appropriate)

Primary [ ] Secondary [ ] College [ ] University [ ] others

9. What is your marital status? (tick as appropriate)

Single [ ] Married [ ] Divorced [ ] Separated [ ]

10. What is the nature of household headship? (tick as appropriate)

Female headed [ ] Single parent [ ] Male headed [ ]

11. What is your occupation?

Farmer .....

Carpenter .....

Clerk .....

Brick layer.....

Others specify.....

12. What is your main source of income?

.....

a. Farming [ ] Small business enterprise [ ] Self-employed [ ] other [ ]

](specify).....

b. What was your main source of income before the Millennium Village Project?

.....  
.....

**LEVEL2A: Household Socio-Economic Data**

**Social Economic status**

Asset	Before	After
<p><b>2. Property of ownership</b></p> <p><u>a. Type of house</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Permanent</li> <li>-Semi-permanent</li> <li>-Mud walled-</li> <li>-Grass thatched</li> </ul> <p><u>b. Means of transport</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Footing</li> <li>-Bicycle</li> <li>-Motorcycle</li> <li>-Car</li> </ul> <p><u>c. Sources of information</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Radio</li> <li>-Television</li> <li>-Phone</li> <li>-Letters</li> <li>-Newspaper</li> </ul>		
<p><b>3. Accessing social services</b></p> <p><u>Agriculture/ Farming</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Total land (Acres)</li> <li>-Inorganic fertilizer</li> <li>-Oxcart</li> <li>-Plough</li> <li>-Pesticides</li> <li>-Labour</li> </ul>		
<p><b>4. Education</b></p> <p><u>a. Adult Learning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of adult learning/training facilities</li> </ul>		



<p><b>b. <u>Formal Education</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Amount spent on uniforms</li> <li>-Availability of teachers</li> <li>-Availability of desks</li> <li>-Availability of books</li> </ul>		
<p><b>5. Business.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Saloon (plaiting)</li> <li>-Shop</li> <li>-Selling vegetables</li> <li>-Baking</li> <li>-Pottery</li> <li>-Knitting</li> <li>-Access to credit</li> <li>-Bank account</li> <li>-Access to loans</li> <li>-Access to market</li> <li>-Brick making</li> <li>-Others</li> </ul>		
<p><b>6. Health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Availability of clinics</li> <li>-Number of health workers</li> <li>-Availability of medication</li> </ul>		
<p><b>7. Community Development</b></p> <p><u>Infrastructure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Availability of schools</li> <li>-Safe drinking water</li> <li>-Access to a road system</li> <li>-Access to electricity</li> </ul>		
<p><b>7. Leadership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Level of participation and decision</li> </ul>		

making -Allocation of responsibilities and roles		
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**Level 2B: To understand how the MVP has empowered women socially and economically**

1. Comment on the effectiveness of the MV strategies?

.....

.....

2. How do you rate the quality of services in the following sectors of the MV?

Factors	Not changed at all	Improved a bit	Relatively better	Very much improved
Agriculture/ Business				
Health				
Education				
Community development				
Leadership/ Governance				

3. If the answer is not changed at all for the above question, comment on how the MV has to improve its services?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

4. At what level has the MV satisfied your needs?

	Excellent	Average	Terrible
<b>Agriculture/ Business</b>			
<b>Health</b>			
<b>Education</b>			
<b>Community development</b>			
<b>Leadership/ Governance</b>			

**Questionnaire for group discussion**

**Level 3: Women’s focus group discussion (Factors affecting and contributing to women’s socio-economic empowerment in the MV)**

My name is Gloria Lirly Phiri. I am a master’s student at the University of Nairobi carrying out a study on the impact of Millennium Village as a strategy to empower women socially and economically. Case study “Mwandama Millennium Village”, whose purpose is to assist the researcher in getting information intended for the study.

I would like to kindly request for your time to answer a set of questions that will assist me in my research work. Please note that your response will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for the purpose intended.

**Level 3A: Determining contributing factors to women’s socio-economic empowerment**

1. What do you understand about the MV project?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

a. What are the objectives of the MV?

.....  
 .....

2. In what way does MV address the community's needs?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

b. Give your suggestions.

.....  
 .....

3. What are your roles in MVP?

.....  
 .....

a. How are you involved in the MVP ? Explain.

.....  
 .....

**Level 3B: Determining inhibiting factors to women's socio-economic empowerment**

1. a. What are the challenges in opportunities and resource distribution/sharing?

Sector	Challenges
Economic/Business	
Social	
Political/Leadership	
Culture	

c. What recommendations would you give to improve the challenges above?

.....

.....

.....

.....

**APPENDIX 2. TRAINING TIMETABLE**

**DAY ONE**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Teaching methods</b>	<b>Teaching aids</b>	<b>Facilitator</b>
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9:00-12:00	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Background &amp; objective of the study</li> <li>-Understanding sections of the questionnaire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Lecture</li> <li>-Discussion</li> <li>-Demonstration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Copies of Questionnaire</li> <li>-Flip chart</li> </ul>	Investigator
12:00-1:00	<b>L U N C H</b>			
1:30-4:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Questionnaire translations and coding</li> <li>-Interviewing techniques</li> <li>-Understanding of FDG and key informants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Demonstration and lecture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Copies of questionnaire guide and questionnaire</li> </ul>	Investigator
<b>DAY TWO</b>				
10:00-4:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Visiting and selection of households</li> <li>-Use of systematic sampling frame</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Practical exercise and demonstration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Print out of random sampling table</li> <li>-Use of village MVP</li> <li>-List of registered famers in all four villages</li> </ul>	
4:00-5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Administration of instruments to each other</li> </ul> <p><b>Methods of</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Discussion and lecture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Questionnaire guide</li> </ul>	

	<b>interaction</b> -Team spirit -Field study ethics -Community entry process -Establishing rapport with respondents			
<b>DAY THREE</b>				
9:00-12:30	-Pretest of questionnaire	-Field exercise	-data collection tools -materials -sampling table	

**APPENDIX 3: BUDGET**

ACTIVITIES	ITEM DESCRIPTION	DAYS	UNIT COST (Mkw)	QUANTITY	TOTAL (Mkw)
Training	Enumerations	3	500	3	1500
	Stationary -Papers		1,300	1 PACKET	1300

	-Pens		60	10	600
	-Photocopy of questionnaires		15	160	2400
	Vehicles/fuel		20,000		20,000
	Researcher /Food/lunch		7,000		7,000
Pre-testing	Enumerations	1	-		
	Researcher		-		
	Transport		-		
	Community leader		-		
	Systematic table sample		-		
Community mobilisation	Researcher	5	7,000		7,000
	Field assistant		7,000		7,000
Survey	Research		7,000		7,000
	Research assistant		7,000		7,000
Supervision	Air ticket	1	100,000		100,000
<b>Total</b>					160,800

#### APPENDIX 4 DATA ANALYSIS MATRIX

Data/variables	Activities/mc	Tools/instruments	Resources
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	Method	for data collection	Human resources	Equipment/reagents/facilities
<b>Specific objective 1: How the MV has empowered women socially and economically?</b>				
<b>Household Biographical data</b> <b>Level 1A</b> Age Tribe Religion Household size Number of children Marital status Level of education Household headship Occupation Source of income	Household interview	Questionnaire	Investigator/researcher and field assistants	
<b>Socio-economic status</b> <b>Level 1B</b> <b>8. Property of ownership</b> <b>a. Type of house</b> Permanent Semi-permanent Mud walled grass thatched <b>b. Means of transport</b> Footing Bicycle Motorcycle Car <b>c. Sources of</b>	Household interview	Questionnaire	Investigator	

<b>information</b> Radio Television Phone Letters Newspaper				
<b>9. Accessing social services</b> Total land Inorganic fertilizer Oxcart Plough Pesticides Labor				
<b>10. Education</b> Availability of learning services				
<b>11. Business</b> -Selling Vegetables/fish/maize -Baking -Shop -Livestock keeping -Access to credi -Access to loan -Access to market -Bank				
<b>12. Health</b>				

-Availability of clinic -Availability of health workers -Availability of medication				
<b>13. Community Development Infrastructure</b>				
<b>14. Leadership</b> Level of participation and responsibilities and roles				

**Specific Objective 2: Factors affecting and contributing to women's socio-economic empowerment in the MVP**

Agriculture/business	-Focus group discussion -Pairwise ranking	Questionnaire guide	Investigator/researcher and field assistants	
Health				
Education				
Community development				
Leadership				
Governance				

**Specific objective 3: Guidelines and objectives of the mvp**

Agriculture/business	-Key informant Questionnaire guide	Interview	Researcher	
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	-Interview			
Health				
Education				
Community development				
Leadership				
Governance				

**APPENDIX 5: GANTT CHART**

ACTIVITY	Period 2013											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec

Proposal preparation													
Submission for grading													
Submission to board of post graduate university of Nairobi													
Acquire research permit													
Data collection process													
Data entry and cleaning													
Data Analysis													
Submit first draft to supervisor													
Presentation in the department													
Submit second draft to supervisor													
Review of comments													
Submit final draft for examination													
Defense													
Graduate													

