

Chapter 3

EDUCATION

3.0 Introduction

Education is known to be a major determinant of living standards. Information on education and literacy status is essential for planning and evaluation of existing policies. Low education levels accompanied by low literacy rates are some of the characteristics of developing countries like Malawi. The survey, collected data on education and literacy levels of household members. This chapter will therefore present information on literacy rates, education attainment and school attendance rates. Information on drop out rates including the reasons for dropping out will also be presented.

3.1 Literacy status of household members

Literacy is defined as the ability to read and write. Specifically this analysis classifies all those who can read and write in Chichewa or English or any other language as being literate. As table 3.1 below shows, close to 64 percent of the population in Malawi is literate. Among males, almost 76 percent is literate while half of females are literate.

Considering place of residence, urban literacy is much higher at about 86 percent compared to 61 percent for rural. At regional level, literacy rate is higher in the northern region at around 80 percent followed by the central region at 62 per cent and then finally the southern region at 61 per cent.

Table 3.1 also shows that literacy rate is increasing with increase in per capita expenditure quintiles. As may be noted from the table, literacy rate for the highest quintile is at eighty-two per cent. However, only half of the population aged 15 years and over in the lowest quintile is literate.

As discussed earlier, urban areas have registered high literacy rates compared to rural areas. At district level, it may be noted that excluding these urban areas, Rumphu has registered the highest literacy rate than any other district. However, there are also other districts such as Karonga and Nkhatabay that have equally registered high literacy rates of above 80 percent. On the other hand, Dedza, Nsanje, Machinga and Salima are the districts that have registered low literacy rates of less than 50 per cent.

Table 3.1 Literacy rate, proportion never attended school and reasons for never attending school by background characteristics, Malawi 2005 (15 years and over)

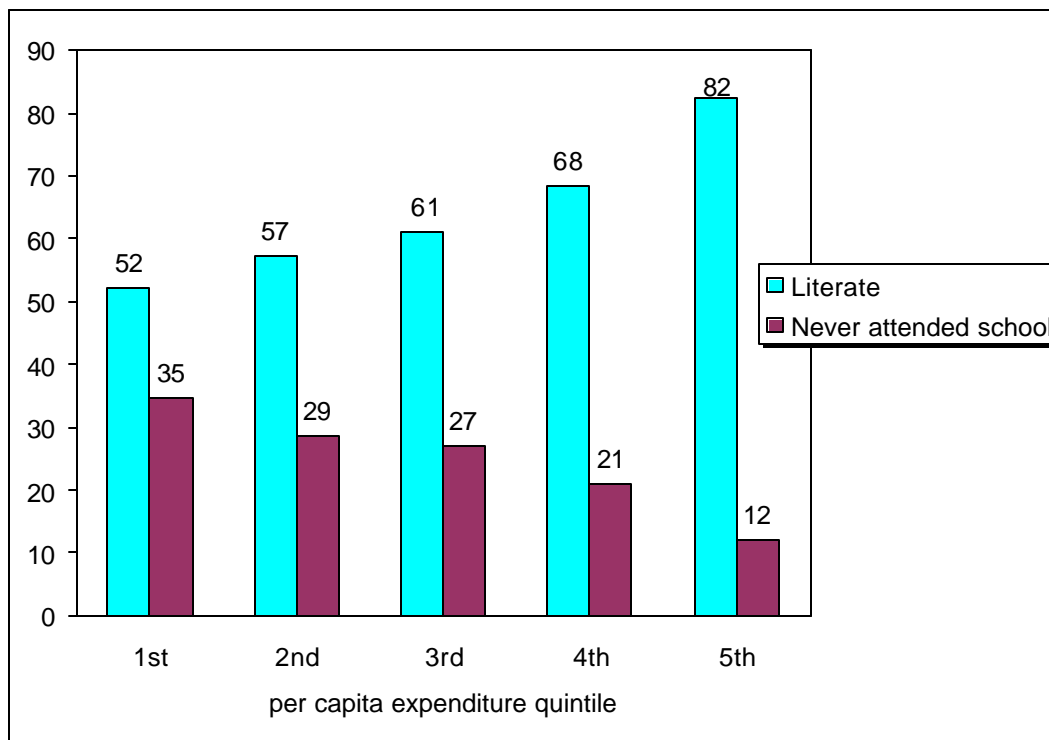
Background characteristics	Proportion Literate	Prop. never attended school	Reason for never attending school					Total
			No money for fees/uniform	Orphaned	Disabled /illness	Not interested/parents did allow	No school nearby & other reasons	
Malawi	63.9	24.9	44.9	21.4	14.6	12.8	6.3	100
Sex								
Male	75.8	15.8	47.2	16.4	14.8	14.1	7.5	100
Female	52.4	33.6	43.8	23.6	14.5	12.2	5.8	100
Place of residence								
Urban	85.6	8.5	61.6	19.7	6.0	4.1	8.6	100
Rural	60.9	27.2	44.1	21.5	15.0	13.2	6.2	100
Per capita expenditure quintiles								
1 st	52.1	34.8	45.4	18.9	14.9	14.6	6.1	100
2 nd	57.2	28.6	44.5	21.7	13.5	14.1	6.1	100
3 rd	61.0	26.9	44.9	21.9	14.8	11.9	6.5	100
4 th	68.3	20.9	46.0	21.3	15.1	11.9	5.8	100
5 th	82.4	12.1	43.0	24.3	15.0	10.4	7.4	100
Northern Reg.								
Chitipa	77.1	14.3	5.2	41.2	10.3	35.1	8.2	100
Karonga	83.0	9.8	20.3	34.4	9.4	32.8	3.1	100
Nkhata Bay	81.8	8.9	61.5	23.1	3.8	9.6	1.9	100
Rumphi	89.3	4.9	26.5	23.5	8.8	23.5	17.6	100
Mzimba	74.5	13.6	47.1	12.3	17.6	18.2	4.8	100
Mzuzu City	88.5	3.1	21.1	26.3	10.5	21.1	21.1	100
Central Region								
Kasungu	67.8	23.2	71.5	6.8	9.6	7.0	5.1	100
Nkhotakota	70.5	19.1	22.9	30.0	15.7	17.9	13.6	100
Ntchisi	59.9	25.2	45.4	20.7	13.2	13.8	6.9	100
Dowa	60.6	23.7	33.4	24.4	19.7	14.1	8.4	100
Salima	48.2	45.7	32.3	31.2	20.5	12.5	3.4	100
Lilongwe Rural	56.8	26.3	47.2	23.7	18.3	7.6	3.3	100
Lilongwe City	82.8	9.7	49.6	25.6	9.8	5.3	9.8	100
Mchinji	59.1	31.8	65.2	12.7	15.8	2.3	4.1	100
Dedza	49.4	31.4	47.3	21.7	15.1	10.7	5.2	100
Ntcheu	65.2	22.3	41.7	24.4	20.3	5.3	8.3	100
Southern Reg.								
Mangochi	50.9	45.6	35.4	12.8	7.2	31.5	13.1	100
Machinga	49.0	37.0	41.2	33.1	10.1	9.1	6.5	100
Zomba Rural	61.9	26.0	60.8	20.6	4.8	10.3	3.4	100
Zomba Munic.	83.9	9.8	64.5	25.8	1.6	-	8.1	100
Chiradzulu	69.8	10.3	49.2	33.8	10.8	1.5	4.6	100
Blantyre Rural	67.5	18.4	25.9	46.4	16.1	9.8	1.8	100
Blantyre City	88.2	8.2	83.2	6.9	3.0	2.0	5.0	100
Mwanza	67.5	22.6	37.0	20.7	35.6	4.4	2.2	100
Thyolo	53.5	44.1	56.9	11.9	15.4	10.9	4.9	100
Mulanje	75.3	17.1	69.6	6.9	8.3	5.5	9.7	100
Phalombe	53.6	29.5	44.7	34.0	14.5	3.8	3.1	100
Chikwawa	50.2	35.3	28.8	19.5	26.1	22.4	3.2	100
Nsanje	49.1	37.5	29.6	31.8	24.3	8.6	5.6	100
Balaka	63.2	22.6	49.6	31.4	6.6	4.4	8.0	100

3.2 Proportion never attended school

Other than finding out if a person can read and write, the survey also gathered information on whether an individual has ever attended school or not. As table 3.1 above indicates, nearly one in every four persons in the country has never attended school. The case is less severe amongst males than females. Only sixteen percent of men have never attended school whilst the situation is at thirty-four percent for females.

Taking into consideration place of residence, it may be noted that urban areas have very low proportions of people who have never attended school. Only 8 percent of the population aged 15 years and over has never attended school in urban areas while 27 percent has never attended school in rural areas. By per capita expenditure quintiles, only 12 per cent of the population in the highest per capita expenditure quintile has never attended school. As table 3.1 reveals, the proportion is increasing as we are moving from the highest expenditure quintile to the lowest quintile to an extent that at 35 per cent, the lowest quintile has almost triple the proportion of persons who have never attended school compared to the highest quintile.

Figure 3.1: Proportion of literate persons and those who have never attended school by per capita expenditure quintiles (15 years and over)



As figure 3.1 above shows, in terms of per capita expenditure quintiles, low literacy rates are associated with high incidences of persons who have never attended school and visa versa.

At regional level, the southern region has the highest proportion of people who have never attended school. Close to 29 percent of the population in the southern region has never attended school while in the central region, close to 25 percent has never attended school. The situation is much better in the northern region whereby only one person out of ten is likely to have never attended school.

At district level, Salima, Mangochi and Thyolo are districts with the highest proportion of persons who have never attended school registering 46, 46 and 44 percent respectively. On the other hand, after registering the highest literacy rate, Rumphu district has also registered the lowest proportion of people who have never attended school. As table 3.1 above shows, only 5 percent of the population in that district has never attended school.

3.3 Reasons for never attending school

The survey gathered information on why the above-discussed persons have never attended school. As table 3.1 above reveals, the most common reason for having never attended school is lack of money for fees and school uniform. Almost 45 percent of persons aged 15 years and over who have never attended school reported that lack of money for fees and uniform was the main reason for never attending school. The second highest reason is that the respondent was orphaned with 21 percent of the respondents reporting this. Fourteen percent reported as being disabled or having a long-term illness. The least reported reason is that there was no school nearby and other reasons. As may be noted from the table above, the pattern of the reasons for never having attended school are almost similar across social economic background characteristics.

3.4 Highest level of education completed by household heads

The percentage distribution of household heads by highest level of education completed. From table 3.2 below, it shows that almost 28 percent of household head have not acquired any certificate of education. More female household heads (52%) have no education compared to male households (21%). Only 9 percent of urban household heads have no educational qualification compared to 31 percent in the rural areas. In terms of per capita expenditure quintiles, 41 percent of household heads in the lowest quintile have no educational qualification. The proportion is declining as expenditure quintiles are increasing. As table 3.2 below shows, 15 percent of household heads in the highest quintile have no educational qualification. In terms of the three regions of the country, the southern region has the highest proportion (32%) of household heads who have not acquired any formal qualification followed by the central region (28%) and then finally the northern region at 12 percent. In terms of district specific areas almost half of household heads in Salima have no any educational qualification. On the other hand, Chiradzulu district has only 11 percent of households who have no educational qualification. Of the three urban areas of the country, Mzuzu city has the least proportion (4%) of household heads who have no educational qualification while Lilongwe city has the highest (11%).

Table 3.2 Percentage distribution household heads by highest educational qualification acquired by background characteristics -Malawi 2005

Background characteristics	None	Primary	Secondary and above	Total
Malawi	28.2	54.8	17.0	100
Place of residence				
Urban	9.2	43.8	47.0	100
Rural	30.8	56.3	12.9	100
Sex of household head				
Male	21.1	59.0	19.9	100
Female	52.2	40.6	7.2	100
Per capita expenditure quintile				
1st	41.0	54.0	4.9	100
2nd	33.8	58.1	8.1	100
3rd	29.0	58.5	12.5	100
4th	22.7	56.6	20.7	100
5th	14.9	46.9	38.2	100
Northern Region				
Chitipa	18.8	59.6	21.7	100
Karonga	12.1	63.2	24.7	100
Nkhata Bay	10.9	69.3	19.7	100
Rumphi	7.9	60.7	31.4	100
Mzimba	12.3	71.9	15.8	100
Mzuzu City	3.8	48.8	47.5	100
Central Region				
Kasungu	28.5	55.6	15.8	100
Nkhotakota	22.9	58.3	18.8	100
Ntchisi	29.6	54.2	16.3	100
Dowa	27.7	57.1	15.2	100
Salima	49.8	39.3	10.9	100
Lilongwe Rural	28.4	60.3	11.2	100
Lilongwe City	10.8	48.3	40.8	100
Mchinji	40.0	45.4	14.6	100
Dedza	32.7	60.6	6.7	100
Ntcheu	24.8	65.1	10.1	100
Southern Region				
Mangochi	48.5	41.9	9.6	100
Machinga	44.4	47.6	8.0	100
Zomba Rural	32.5	54.6	12.9	100
Zomba Municipality	16.0	39.7	44.3	100
Chiradzulu	10.9	76.6	12.6	100
Blantyre Rural	22.1	62.1	15.8	100
Blantyre City	7.5	38.6	53.9	100
Mwanza	24.2	63.8	12.1	100
Thyolo	47.1	37.7	15.3	100
Mulanje	22.3	64.9	12.7	100
Phalombe	31.8	56.8	11.4	100
Chikwawa	30.8	60.0	9.2	100
Nsanje	31.7	58.3	10.0	100
Balaka	31.3	60.4	8.3	100

At national level, slightly above half of household heads (54%) have primary education qualification. In urban areas, 44 percent of household heads in urban areas have primary school certificate compared to 56 percent in rural areas. More male household heads (59%) have a primary school certificate compared to female household heads (41%). As table 3.2 above shows, there is no any specific pattern being followed in terms of expenditure quintiles. The lowest quintile has 54% of household heads with no education and the highest has 47 percent. However, the highest proportion of household heads with primary school qualification has been registered in the 3rd expenditure quintile at 59 percent. Of the three region of the country, the northern region has the highest proportion of household heads with primary education (65%) followed by the central region at 56 percent and the finally the southern region at 52 percent.

Seventeen percent of household heads have reported having secondary education qualification or above. More urban household heads (47%) have secondary education compared to rural household heads (13%). More male household heads have a secondary education qualification (20%) compared to female household heads (7%). Only 5 percent of household heads in the lowest expenditure quintile have a secondary education qualification compared to 38 percent of those in the highest expenditure quintile. Of the three regions of the country, the northern region has the highest proportion of household heads (23%) with secondary education followed by the two other regions both registering 16 percent.

Table 3.3 Percentage distribution of pupils attending school by type of school being attended by background characteristics, Malawi 2005.

Background characteristics	Primary				Secondary			
	Govt.	Private & other	Religious	Total	Govt.	Pvt. & Other	Religious	Total
Malawi	81.3	1.6	17.1	100	64.5	29.9	5.6	100
Sex of household head								
Male	81.0	1.8	17.2	100	63.0	31.2	5.8	100
Female	82.2	0.7	17.1	100	69.7	25.5	4.8	100
Place of residence								
Urban	80.8	9.1	10.1	100	41.6	51.2	7.2	100
Rural	81.4	0.6	18.1	100	76.4	18.9	4.8	100
Per capita expenditure quintile								
1st	83.6	0.1	16.2	100	86.7	8.0	5.3	100
2nd	82.6	0.2	17.2	100	80.8	18.6	0.6	100
3rd	83.8	1.1	15.2	100	74.6	21.6	3.8	100
4th	80.1	0.9	18.9	100	72.9	21.3	5.8	100
5th	73.6	7.4	19.1	100	49.6	43.0	7.4	100
Northern Region								
Chitipa	75.3	0.3	24.5	100	71.4	28.6	-	100
Karonga	95.0	1.8	3.2	100	76.9	23.1	-	100
Nkhata Bay	99.7	-	0.3	100	90.6	9.4	-	100
Rumphi	83.3	-	16.7	100	68.8	12.5	18.8	100
Mzimba	53.0	0.1	46.9	100	79.5	11.4	9.1	100
Mzuzu City	88.3	2.6	9.1	100	39.3	60.7	-	100
Central Region								
Kasungu	93.7	0.6	5.7	100	65.7	29.9	4.5	100
Nkhotakota	87.5	0.6	11.9	100	67.4	27.9	4.7	100
Ntchisi	77.2	1.5	21.3	100	82.9	14.3	2.9	100
Dowa	58.2	0.8	41.0	100	84.2	7.9	7.9	100
Salima	97.4	1.9	0.7	100	75.0	21.4	3.6	100
Lilongwe Rural	93.1	1.1	5.8	100	69.4	22.2	8.3	100
Lilongwe City	73.0	14.1	12.9	100	38.1	55.7	6.3	100
Mchinji	98.7	1.3	-	100	60.0	36.7	3.3	100
Dedza	77.2	-	22.8	100	85.3	11.8	2.9	100
Ntcheu	99.4	0.3	0.3	100	82.5	15.8	1.8	100
Southern Region								
Mangochi	62.0	0.5	37.5	100	77.8	15.6	6.7	100
Machinga	60.3	-	39.7	100	76.7	23.3	-	100
Zomba Rural	85.2	-	14.8	100	81.0	11.9	7.1	100
Zomba Municipality	88.8	8.3	2.9	100	29.3	60.9	9.8	100
Chiradzulu	64.0	1.3	34.7	100	85.3	14.7	-	100
Blantyre Rural	60.9	1.9	37.2	100	69.7	27.3	3.0	100
Blantyre City	78.5	9.3	12.1	100	52.5	37.4	10.1	100
Mwanza	79.2	-	20.8	100	76.9	15.4	7.7	100
Thyolo	99.2	0.8	-	100	79.6	16.3	4.1	100
Mulanje	89.1	0.4	10.6	100	70.8	20.8	8.3	100
Phalombe	100.0	-	-	100	94.7	5.3	-	100
Chikwawa	97.9	-	2.1	100	88.5	11.5	-	100
Nsanje	94.6	1.2	4.2	100	81.5	18.5	-	100
Balaka	53.3	-	46.7	100	59.3	37.0	3.7	100

3.5 School attendance by type of school being attended

Primary education:

Government is the main provider of primary education in Malawi. As table 3.3 reveals that four out of five pupils attending primary education are in government schools. The next highest providers of primary education are religious institutions. The survey reveals that almost seventeen percent of pupils attending primary school are in religious institutions. Not much differences have been reported between male and female-headed households.

Like the national rates, the rural-urban areas have almost the same figures in primary schools. However, if we consider per capita expenditure quintiles, it may be noted that the highest quintile has the highest rate of people attending private school than any of the quintiles. At regional level, the northern region has relatively higher rate of pupils attending primary education from religious institutions followed by the south and then lastly the central region.

Secondary education:

Although government is still the dominant provider of education in secondary education, the rate is slightly lower compared to that of primary education. As may be noted from table 3.3 above, government is now providing secondary education to 65 percent of all the pupils attending secondary education relative to 80 percent in primary education. The situation has also changed for private schools. More secondary school pupils are attending private schools relative to those in primary education. Nearly one in every three pupils attending secondary education are at private institutions. The rate of pupils attending government schools is higher in female-headed households relative to their male counterparts. On the other hand, the rate of pupils attending private schools is higher in male relative to female-headed households. Almost half of the pupils attending secondary education in urban areas have reported to be in private secondary schools compared to 19 percent in rural areas. Likewise, the highest per capita expenditure quintile has also registered the highest number of pupils attending private schools while the lowest quintile has registered the highest number of pupils attending government schools.

Like the national rate, all the three main regions of the country have reported that nearly thirty percent of the pupils in secondary education are in private schools.

3.6 Primary school net enrolment ratio

Net enrollment ratio is defined as the currently enrolled school going age population expressed as a percentage of the school age population. Like many countries in this region, Malawi follows an eight-four-four formal education system. The first eight years are for primary education while secondary and tertiary each lasts for four years. Lasting for eight years, each year is referred to as standard one to standard eight. The official entry age for primary education is six. This entails that thirteen is the right exit age for primary education in Malawi.

Table 3.4 includes information on primary school net enrollment ratio. The results show that in Malawi, the net enrolment rate is at 80 percent. The rate is higher among girls (81 percent) compared to boys (79 percent). By sex of household head, the net enrolment rate is slightly higher in pupils from male-headed households (80%) relative to those from female-headed households (79%). The rates are however higher in urban centers (87%) compared to rural areas (79%). Net enrolment is also varying across per capita expenditure quintiles. The lowest expenditure quintile has registered a net enrolment ratio of 72 percent while the highest quintile has registered a rate of 86. As may be noted from the table, net enrolment is gradually increasing from the lowest quintile to the highest quintile.

Looking at the three main regions of the country, the northern region has the highest net enrolment rate at 87 followed by the center at 80 and then the southern region at 78. This entails that in the northern and central regions, nearly four in five children of primary school going age are indeed in school. At district level, Chitipa has registered the highest net enrolment rate of 91 percent followed by Karonga at 90 percent. On the other hand, Salima and Nsanje have the lowest net enrolment rate both registering 68 percent each. In terms of urban specific areas, Zomba Municipality has the highest net enrolment rate at 91 percent followed by Mzuzu city at 90 and the Lilongwe city and Blantyre city at 88 and 83 percent respectively.

Across sex of pupil, girls have consistently registered higher net enrolment rate relative to boys. This is true if we consider sex of household head, place of residence and per capita expenditure quintile. At regional level, the northern region is the only region that has net enrolment rate at par between boys and girls both registering 87 percent. At district level, Chitipa, Karonga and Nkhata Bay in the northern region and Ntchisi and Mchinji in the central region and Machinga, Zomba rural and Nsanje in the southern region are the only districts that have registered the highest net enrolment rate for boys relative to girls.

Table 3.4 Primary school net enrolment and gross enrolment rate by sex of pupil by background characteristics, Malawi 2005.

Background characteristics	Net enrolment rate			Gross enrolment rate		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Malawi	78.5	81.4	80.0	112.9	106.1	109.5
Sex of household head						
Male	78.9	81.5	80.2	111.7	105.8	108.7
Female	77.3	81.0	79.2	117.1	107.3	112.1
Place of residence						
Urban	86.2	87.3	86.8	122.4	111.1	116.3
Rural	77.8	80.8	79.3	112.0	105.6	108.8
Per capita expenditure quintile						
1st	71.4	72.3	71.9	100.6	94.9	97.8
2nd	76.5	82.5	79.6	107.6	107.2	107.4
3rd	80.7	83.2	82.0	117.3	107.5	112.3
4th	82.0	84.1	83.0	121.3	108.7	115.0
5th	84.7	87.1	86.0	122.1	115.6	118.8
Northern Region	87.4	87.1	87.3	124.1	117.5	120.6
Chitipa	91.5	90.8	91.1	134.2	123.5	128.8
Karonga	92.0	87.1	89.5	130.1	110.5	119.8
Nkhata Bay	81.9	81.2	81.5	100.0	103.4	102.0
Rumphi	85.7	90.8	88.2	134.1	126.4	130.3
Mzimba	85.7	86.4	86.0	121.5	122.0	121.8
Mzuzu City	88.8	91.1	90.0	128.0	116.9	122.1
Central Region	78.1	81.9	80.0	111.8	108.9	110.4
Kasungu	84.1	86.5	85.2	123.0	119.8	121.5
Nkhotakota	79.2	88.4	83.6	110.0	116.1	112.9
Ntchisi	78.6	77.0	77.8	123.3	103.3	112.4
Dowa	80.5	85.1	82.7	115.2	111.8	113.5
Salima	65.9	70.4	68.1	93.9	92.8	93.4
Lilongwe Rural	76.8	80.8	78.8	109.1	108.1	108.6
Lilongwe City	86.7	89.5	88.2	119.6	114.5	117.0
Mchinji	80.0	77.3	78.7	124.3	109.1	116.9
Dedza	73.2	77.9	75.5	100.4	103.6	102.0
Ntcheu	77.2	84.5	80.8	110.3	107.8	109.1
Southern Region	76.8	79.4	78.1	111.2	100.4	105.7
Mangochi	70.0	79.4	74.7	100.7	93.8	97.2
Machinga	75.1	74.5	74.9	97.4	97.4	97.4
Zomba Rural	89.1	85.5	87.2	131.5	110.6	120.5
Zomba Municipality	88.0	93.5	90.9	130.1	121.5	125.6
Chiradzulu	80.4	85.0	82.8	120.6	113.3	116.7
Blantyre Rural	86.1	80.0	82.6	131.9	102.1	115.0
Blantyre City	84.2	82.3	83.1	122.5	103.2	111.5
Mwanza	82.3	82.3	82.3	121.9	99.0	110.4
Thyolo	68.7	76.0	72.6	97.0	95.8	96.4
Mulanje	81.8	88.2	85.4	116.5	107.9	111.6
Phalombe	68.0	74.4	71.2	98.7	91.0	94.8
Chikwawa	72.1	74.4	73.2	104.8	96.1	100.5
Nsanje	69.5	66.4	68.1	109.1	88.1	99.3
Balaka	77.6	79.3	78.3	107.8	104.9	106.6

3.7 Primary school gross enrolment ratio

Gross enrollment ratio is the ratio of all persons currently in school to those in the official school going age group. As previously stated the official age of entry into primary school in Malawi is 6 years. By the time the child reaches 13 years, it is expected that he/she should have finished with primary education. From the definition of gross enrolment ratio above, gross enrolment ratio for Malawi is at 110. The ratio is higher in female-headed households at 112 relative to male-headed households at 109. By place of residence, urban areas have also registered the highest gross enrolment ratio at 116 compared to rural areas at 109. By per capita expenditure quintile, the lowest quintile has the lowest gross enrolment ratio while the highest quintile has the highest ratio. As may be noted from table 3.4 above, the ratio is gradually increasing as we move from the lowest quintile to the highest quintile. Across the three main regions of the country, the northern region has reported the highest gross enrolment ratio at 120 followed by the central region at 110 and then the southern region at 106.

Across sex of pupil, it may be noted that boys have a higher gross enrolment ratio of about 113 compared to girls at 106. As may be noted from table 3.4 above, this is true almost across all socio-economic background characteristics.

3.8 Dropout rate

Dropping out of school is one of the major contributing factors to low education. The dropout rate is the percentage of those who were in school the previous year but did not enroll in the following school year. It is also important to present the reasons for dropping out in order to come up with correct interventions.

Table 3.5 shows that the dropout rate for Malawi is almost 5 percent. It is slightly higher in female-headed households than male-headed households. In terms of rural-urban distribution, dropout rate is lower in urban centers relative to rural areas. Of the five expenditure groups, the lowest quintile has the highest dropout rate at 6 percent. However, it may be noted from table 3.5 below that there is no any specific pattern in terms of dropout rates by per capita expenditure quintiles.

Table 3.5 Dropout rate and reasons for dropping out by background characteristics, Malawi 2005

Background characteristics	Drop out rate	Reason for dropping out of school					Total
		Acquired all education/Too old	No money for fees/uniform	Married/became pregnant	No longer interested	Had to work home & other reasons	
Malawi	5.1	6.7	28.3	11.0	32.0	22.1	100
Sex of household head							
Male	4.9	7.8	25.9	12.3	32.5	21.6	100
Female	5.9	3.6	34.9	7.3	30.7	23.4	100
Place of residence							
Urban	4.1	17.8	28.9	18.9	13.3	21.1	100
Rural	5.3	5.1	28.2	9.8	34.7	22.2	100
Per capita expenditure quintile							
1 st	6.0	4.2	30.4	6.0	37.5	22.0	100
2 nd	5.0	2.3	21.8	13.5	43.6	18.8	100
3 rd	4.6	6.5	26.8	11.6	34.1	21.0	100
4 th	5.0	8.8	32.1	8.0	28.5	22.6	100
5 th	4.7	11.7	29.7	16.6	16.6	25.5	100
North							
Chitipa	3.0	7.7	15.4	7.7	61.5	7.7	100
Karonga	2.9	18.2	-	9.1	36.4	36.4	100
Nkhata Bay	4.2	-	30.0	10.0	20.0	40.0	100
Rumphi	1.5	-	50.0	50.0	-	-	100
Mzimba	3.8	6.9	20.7	27.6	37.9	6.9	100
Mzuzu City	3.2	33.3	13.3	13.3	13.3	26.7	100
Centre							
Kasungu	3.6	7.1	35.7	10.7	25.0	21.4	100
Nkhotakota	3.5	-	28.6	7.1	35.7	28.6	100
Ntchisi	4.7	-	35.7	-	42.9	21.4	100
Dowa	6.4	2.4	42.9	4.8	35.7	14.3	100
Salima	1.3	-	-	20.0	40.0	40.0	100
Lilongwe Rural	5.4	3.8	26.9	5.8	30.8	32.7	100
Lilongwe City	4.5	16.7	23.3	16.7	26.7	16.7	100
Mchinji	6.7	4.2	37.5	33.3	8.3	16.7	100
Dedza	10.0	3.6	25.5	10.9	38.2	21.8	100
Ntcheu	6.9	8.3	41.7	2.8	30.6	16.7	100
South							
Mangochi	3.4	15.4	23.1	11.5	30.8	19.2	100
Machinga	7.1	5.1	15.4	7.7	33.3	38.5	100
Zomba Rural	5.2	-	48.3	13.8	27.6	10.3	100
Zomba Municipality	8.3	8.0	32.0	32.0	4.0	24.0	100
Chiradzulu	4.9	5.9	41.2	5.9	23.5	23.5	100
Blantyre Rural	4.8	-	26.7	-	33.3	40.0	100
Blantyre City	3.1	20.0	45.0	10.0	5.0	20.0	100
Mwanza	5.5	7.7	15.4	23.1	46.2	7.7	100
Thyolo	2.2	8.3	16.7	16.7	41.7	16.7	100
Mulanje	4.0	8.3	41.7	-	37.5	12.5	100
Phalombe	7.3	13.6	4.5	9.1	45.5	27.3	100
Chikwawa	6.4	-	29.0	6.5	38.7	25.8	100
Nsanje	10.8	4.4	17.8	8.9	46.7	22.2	100
Balaka	7.2	-	33.3	-	38.1	28.6	100

At regional level, the central region has the highest dropout rate at nearly six percent while the northern region has the lowest dropout rate at three percent. At district level, Nsanje and Dedza have the highest dropout rates of above 10 percent while Rumphi and Salima have the lowest rates of less than two percent.

3.9 Reasons for dropping out

As table 3.5 above reveals, the most common reason for people to dropout of school is that they are no longer interested in school. About 32 percent of all the people who reported to have dropped out of school reported this as the reason for dropping out. The second highest reason is that the respondents had no money for fees and uniform. About 28 percent of the respondents reported this as the reason for dropping out of school. Although the percent distribution of people who dropped out of school in male-headed households have followed the nation rates, the case is slightly different in female-headed households whereby many people have reported that lack of money for fees and/or uniform is the main reason for dropping out of school. The second highest reason given by respondents in female-headed households is that they are no longer interested in school. As earlier indicated, there is no particular pattern in terms of reasons for dropping out across the five per capita expenditure quintiles (see table 3.5 above). In terms of the three main regions of the country, it may be noted that the northern region has reported “people –no longer interested in school” as the main reason for dropping out of school while the central region has reported lack of money for fees and uniform as the main reason for dropping out of school. Like the northern region, the southern region has also reported lack of interest by the respondent as the main reason for dropping out of school.