

Review

Analyzing Access and Equity in Primary Education: Addressing Rising Dropout Rates Among Malawian Learners

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Abstract: With an emphasis on tackling the alarming increase in dropout rates among Malawian students, this study tackles the vital concerns of fairness and accessibility in Malawian elementary education. The study uses a qualitative method to clarify the opinions and experiences of significant stakeholders and to expose the complex interplay of factors that contribute to this pervasive challenge. Focus groups, in-depth interviews, and document analysis were used to collect qualitative data from a range of participant groups, including students, teachers, parents, and education officials, and to gain crucial insights into the state of education. With the use of these methods, the complexity of the problem was examined, and a thorough understanding of the challenges Malawian primary education faced was produced. According to the study's findings, the rising dropout rates are the result of a complicated web of circumstances. Due to the significant challenges faced by economically disadvantaged students in their educational endeavours, the subject of socioeconomic disparities has gained significant importance. There were also obvious gender differences, with early marriages and teenage pregnancies typically having an excessively negative effect on females. The opinions and firsthand accounts of Malawian students provided valuable insights into the challenges they encounter when trying to get into and stay in school. Firsthand narratives brightened the difficulties that learners encounter, including risky and lengthy travels to school as well as inadequate facilities and educational resources. The study evaluated the effectiveness of government initiatives and programs created to lessen the dropout pandemic.

Keywords: Learner dropout, Access and Equity in Education, Primary schools.

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Introduction

Learner dropout in schools has spread throughout the world, overcoming national borders and cultural circumstances. According to recent UNESCO (2023) figures, there are now 250 million children worldwide who are not in school, an increase of 6 million since 2021. Global education progress is still at a standstill, according to data produced by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Global Education Monitoring Report. This depicts a difficult situation with significant social ramifications. Early student exit from the school system stifles their potential for personal development

and socioeconomic mobility. Moreover, marginalised and vulnerable communities are disproportionately affected, and the issue is inherently related to systemic injustices. This problem widens social gaps and limits chances, perpetuating the poverty cycle. Not only does it result in lost human potential, but it also has negative economic effects on communities and governments since it reduces the pool of competent workers and creates societal expenses related to crime and unemployment.

In Malawi, the problem of the school dropout rate is a serious educational issue that has attracted notice lately. Dropout rates continue to be a concern despite admirable efforts to increase access to basic education and advance inclusive policies. Although Malawi government primary education is free, only 88 percent of the eligible 6-13-year-olds enrol (JICA, 2022). Those that enrol, drop out in large numbers resulting in a low completion rate. Even exceptional needs students frequently have no option but to drop out of school because they lack the resources necessary to learn in an educational setting or are unable to attend school at all. As a result, students frequently fall short of their academic objectives and miss a lot of school. Furthermore, the 2020 Education Sector Performance Report highlights that, as of 2019, the average dropout rate has reached a high of 3.2% (MoEST, 2020). Learner dropout rates quantify the percentage of students from a cohort enrolled in a certain grade during a school year who do not return the following year (UNICEF, 2022).

Definition of Access and Equity in Education

The Malawian government, working through the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, is fighting for improved access and equity for all students in the country. However, there are still many obstacles that need to be carefully considered and critically analysed to slow down the rate at which the issue is getting worse. The question of access and equity is vital to the study of education systems, according to a number of education experts, including Castelli et al. (2013). In addition, a number of academics have added to the discussion surrounding the terms "access" and "equity" in education, emphasising how difficult it is to have a clear understanding of these concepts because they are so complicated and can take many different forms.

Lewin (2015) defines "access to education" as timely enrolment and progress at an appropriate age, regular attendance, learning that complies with the requirements of national accomplishment, a secure learning environment, and equally dispersed learning opportunities. Schools usually have to provide additional services or remove any barriers—real or imagined—that would prevent some students from participating equally in specific classes or academic activities in order to expand this access. On the other hand, Sen (2009) defines equity in education as impartiality, justice, and fairness; it also has a connection to equal opportunity. UNESCO (2018) states that equity also considers the social justice consequences of teaching people about the impartiality, justice, and fairness of its distribution at all levels. Establishing and institutionalising policies that ensure all children can achieve these objectives is another requirement for equity. Equity is achieved when every student has access to the resources they need to graduate prepared for success.

Research Methodology

The study being qualitative research in nature employed three methodologies to achieve the objective of the study. These were interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. To successfully apply the interview technique, the researchers interviewed students, teachers, school administrators, education officials and parents who were able to disclose the difficulties in relation to obtaining education, perspectives on the classroom setting, financial constraints, and experiences in implementing policies. Focus group talks with these varied groups provided a comprehensive grasp of the complex problems pertaining to dropout rates, equity, and access in Malawian primary schools. Community members shared their thoughts on education equity and access as well as the community's role in addressing dropout issues. Parent associations collectively voiced their concerns and ideas regarding dropout rates and access to education. Learner groups shed light on peer relationships, educational experiences, and obstacles to continuing education.

Teachers' associations highlighted the difficulties faced by educators and provided suggestions for resolving dropout rates. A range of documents were analysed to gain crucial insights into the state of education. Government education policies were among the documents, providing insight into the official goals and plans for the education sector. Program evaluations showed the efficiency of initiatives aimed at addressing these issues, while educational reports and statistics provided data on enrollment, dropout rates, and educational outcomes.

Challenges with Access and Equity in Education

Malawi's education system still faces several obstacles in achieving fairness and access as the number of students leaving government public elementary schools keeps rising. There has been a consistent and notable increase in the number of school-age children and the growth of the educational system. The depletion of resources is not a new phenomenon; rather, it has long been present in the educational system. Therefore, access and equity are a resource utilisation stress tale as well as a success story of accommodation. Many of the educational system's resources are being squeezed by this rapid development, which also takes funds and attention away from initiatives to enhance governance, management, and quality (Ministry of Education, 2018).

i. The education system

The issue of learner dropout within the educational system is closely linked to challenges with equity and access. Unfair access, which is frequently caused by differences in wealth, prejudices against women, and geographical barriers, raises the likelihood of dropout for students from marginalised groups. The probability of dropout rises when children encounter obstacles to attending or remaining in school, such as limited financial resources, unfair treatment, and a dearth of educational resources in the area. Exclusionary practices and poor instruction can discourage students from staying in the system even more. As a result, the educational system is crucial to sustaining or resolving these issues, and lowering dropout rates depends on the implementation of fair policies, inclusive practices, and sufficient support networks. As such government ends up bearing the responsibility of guaranteeing that education is accessible to all and equitable. Moreover, learner dropout increases inefficiencies throughout the government budget and the educational system as a whole (MoEST, 2019). Consequently, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology's approach to controlling education across the country is disrupted.

ii. Learners problems

Early dismissal from school affects the pupils as well. Student dropout rates have the potential to limit students' educational opportunities and equity. They might not be able to find another opportunity to enrol in school because of several factors, such as financial constraints, being too old, and displaying little enthusiasm. Challenges associated with early pregnancy and marriage also affect girls (Chikhungu et al., 2020). Additionally, student dropouts prevent them from developing life skills. Primary education is very important because it gives pupils essential life skills like reading, arithmetic, and critical thinking—all of which are essential for human growth. It could be challenging for students who drop out of various school levels to take control of their lives and make wise judgments daily.

Parents suffer when dropout rates increase the personal expenses related to their children's education. Because of Malawi's persistently high rates of poverty of which over half (50.7%) live below the national poverty line and 20.5% are extremely poor the majority of them find it challenging to support their children's education (UNICEF, 2022). It also leaves them vulnerable to exploitation. Most children who drop out of school early are more likely to become young brides, be trafficked as children, or be used as slaves. According to projections by Human Rights Watch, for instance, one in two girls will marry before reaching eighteen by 2020 (Randolph, 2020). In Malawi, the majority of child trafficking is carried out inside and is driven by work. Boys from the southern parts of the country are particularly

vulnerable and often forced to work on the tobacco fields in the north. This has long-term effects on a child's chances and general wellbeing.

iii. Impact on Malawi government development

Malawian government is also significantly affected by learner dropouts in several ways. The nation's overall economic development has been impacted by the decreased literacy rate caused by dropouts. Lack of education has made it difficult for businesses to locate qualified staff, which can hurt the nation's capacity to draw in foreign investment. This proves to be a factor impeding the nation's progress. Furthermore, low student enrollment puts pressure on the educational system because fewer students means fewer resources can be maintained. This has resulted in fewer teachers and resources available for the ones that do remain, which has lowered the quality of education.

Additionally, poverty and unemployment rates are higher among dropouts (UNICEF, 2022). People can overcome poverty with the aid of education, while those who drop out are more likely to have difficulty finding work and making a living wage. Dropout rates have also affected how well the government implements its educational policy objectives. The government may set goals to raise literacy rates or enhance equity and access to education, but when a significant portion of pupils consistently drop out of school, these objectives become more difficult to meet.

Why choose this perspective?

As defined by Constitute Project Organization's (2017) education is a fundamental human right for all people, regardless of their background, race, gender, or financial status. As such it is everyone's right to have access to and equity to high-quality education. An increase in student dropout rates indicates that there is a barrier obstructing some groups' access to equitable education. As such economic gains from education are also more significant for any nation's investment. This concurs with an argument by OECD (2022), that education has a crucial role in a nation's economic development and progress. Such high rates of school dropout can result in a shortage of competent workers, which impedes a nation's ability to advance economically and accomplish many other objectives. Therefore, countries may enhance their economies as they develop and increase their pool of qualified people by addressing challenges related to equity and access to education.

Getting an education is an additional means of reaching fulfillment. Education has inherent worth in addition to being significant from an economic one. Education may provide people with a sense of purpose, empowerment, and personal fulfillment. Everyone can benefit from these individual advantages, regardless of financial situation, when access and equity are encouraged (Donlevy, 2019). Thus, tackling the complicated causes surrounding learner dropout will encourage students to take their studies seriously. They will put in a lot of effort because they will recognise the value of education in their lives. As a result, taking these variables into account when researching is crucial to helping the Malawian government think through some pertinent areas they might want to reconsider or enhance as the country works towards a common objective, this can assist in achieving access and equity in education and lower student dropout rates.

Review of the past

From Malawi's history, the issue of access and equity in education about learner dropout has been a significant factor. Prior to independence in 1964, access to education was limited to children of European descent or the privileged elite (Kadzamira, 2003). Before Malawi received its independence in 1964 and after receiving its independence education was not free, it was paid for in all public government primary schools which was not easy for learners to have access and equity in education. The Malawi government's effort to increase access and equity in education came into the limelight in 1994 after the coming of multiparty democracy.

Malawi government through the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders was a leading figure in different initiatives to help provide better education in the country but worse still a lot of challenges kept on coming every year

with a lot of learners dropping out of school. Statistics from research have proved that despite enrollment changes in government primary schools dropout rate was a huge problem making the government worried more as they were trying to bring access and equity in education. For instance, the estimated national dropout rate in the year 2000 was 9.8% (Education Basic Statistics). The dropout rate for 2002 was estimated at 12% of the total school population (UNICEF, 2003). If a single cohort is tracked to the last class, the results are more terrible. For instance in Malawi out of 1.2 million children who started school in 1994, only 300,000 thousand reached the final class (Standard 8) (Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, 2002). This implies that from 1994 and 2002 (Standard 1-8) 75% of the cohort dropped out. In absolute figures, 900,000 children dropped out before reaching standard 8 (Naunje, 2004). This proves that access and equity have remained a challenge, as learner dropout surged in the past.

Results in the Comparative Education Field

According to findings from the field of comparative education, it has shown that student dropout rates are rising due to poverty and gender. Research has indicated that in Malawi, school dropout rates are significantly predicted by poverty and gender disparity (UNICEF, 2022). Because of early marriage, domestic responsibilities, and traditional gender norms, girls are more likely to drop out of school.

According to MoEST (2022), transportation and distance were also identified to be significant factors in learner dropout. Particularly in Malawi's rural areas, dropout rates and access to education are significantly impacted by the locations of schools and the accessibility of transportation. Low attendance and high dropout rates are frequently the outcome of schools that are difficult for kids to get to or that are far from their homes.

Malawi current situation

Research, reports, and up-to-date information found that learner dropout continues to be a serious problem in Malawi primary schools despite the high learner enrolment rate. Malawi has been facing substantial obstacles in the areas of equity and access to basic education, especially with regard to the growing number of students dropping out of school. Economic inequality has remained a significant barrier to entry, with many families unable to pay for the supplies, school fees, and uniforms that come with sending their kids to school. Children from low-income households are excessively impacted by this economic barrier, which has been made worse by the high percentage of poverty in the nation.

Gender disparity has also affected Malawian elementary education. Girls' educational possibilities are still being undermined by cultural norms, early marriages, and adolescent pregnancies, despite government efforts to achieve gender equality in schools. Female students tend to drop out at higher rates as a result of these difficulties.

In addition, there are still geographic differences in access to high-quality education between urban and rural communities. The absence of suitable school infrastructure and the necessity to travel great distances to go to educational institutions have deterred students from enrolling in and attending classes in isolated and underserved areas. Furthermore, there are differences in the quality of education; certain schools do not have enough resources for instruction or teachers who are qualified. As of 2022, there is still a high rate of learner dropout because of low teacher-to-pupil ratios, a lack of school supplies, and a shortage of textbooks and other instructional resources (Chimombo, 2009). Additionally, parents are still expected to pay extra for non-tuition expenses including uniforms, transportation to school, and donations to the school development fund (Grant, 2015). As parents had to support more children in their care, the financial load on them also increased. Since primary school was now accessible to everyone, parents were also burdened with supporting more children in school, which increased their financial burden. As a result, there was a rise in school dropouts, particularly among girls in upper elementary grades and those who had to transfer to a secondary school (Stoner et al., 2019).

The graph below displays trends in time of learner dropout between males and females in primary schools from 1973 to 2014, and provides additional information on the severity of learner dropout over time. This demonstrates how serious the issue was, its predictions, and how it has affected Malawi's access to and equity in education.

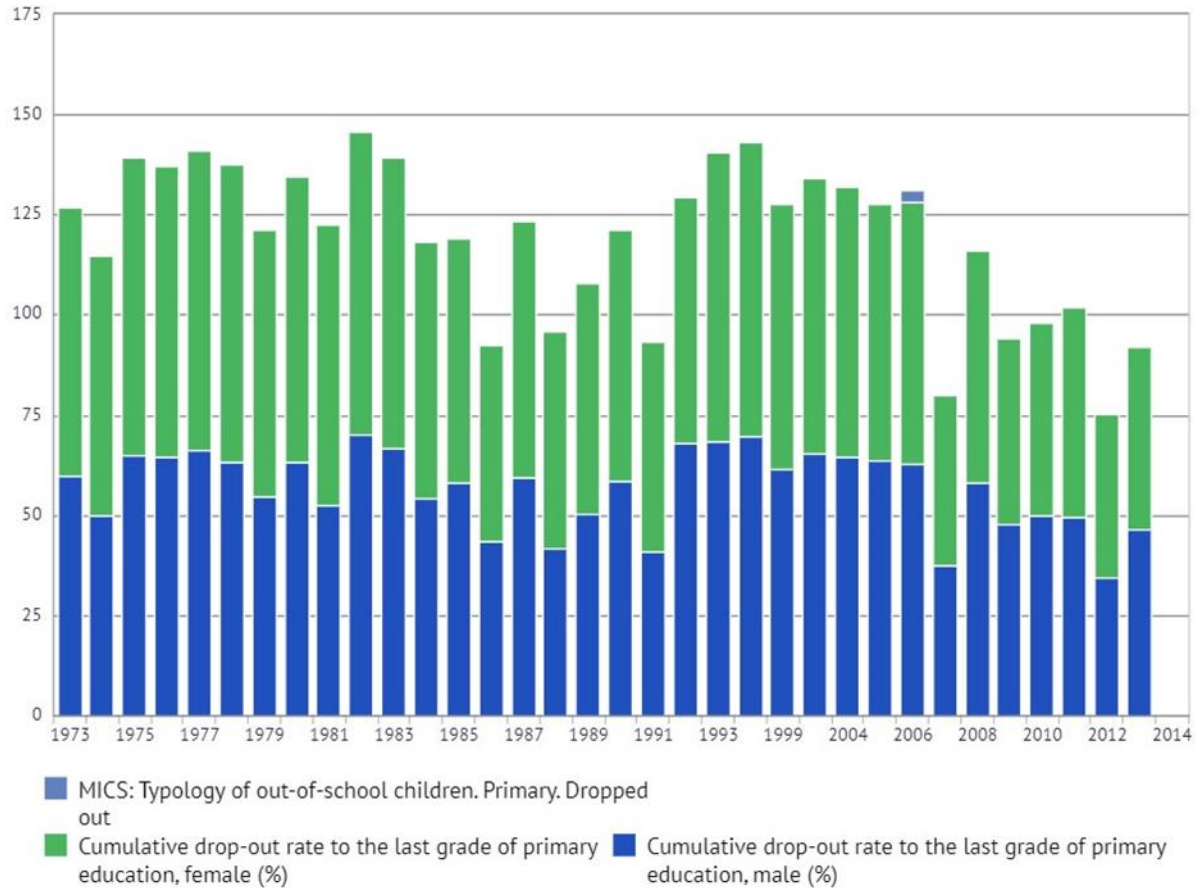


Fig. 1: The graph illustrates Malawi's dropout rate between males and females in primary school. (1973-2014)

Though the Ministry of Education receives a lion's share in the National budget like the allocation of MK462 billion (approximately US\$ 565.5 million) for the 2022/2023 financial year, the sector's allocation represents 16.3% of the national budget which is lower than the 2021 allocation of 16.5%. Basic education got the largest share at 45%. The rest, secondary education, higher education, and management as well as administration got 19%, 26%, and 3.6%, respectively (JICA, 2022). Although such is a case about 70% of the Ministry of Education's budget goes to salaries and 10% was allocated for development. This leaves little for construction, maintenance, as well as the purchase of teaching and learning materials and in the end, affects a lot of things as learners dropout is among it.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also compromised access and equity to education. As many as 20,000-40,000 girls dropped out of school because of pregnancies and early marriages for staying at home and the curriculum could not be completed on time due to pandemic-related school closures. The pandemic put more pressure on the already resource-constrained schools as the ministry tried efforts to enforce measures through distancing and double shifting as dictated by the need to prevent the spread of the virus in schools and communities (JICA, 2022).

A variety of cyclones have also affected Malawi in recent years. The current storms, which include Tropical Cyclone Idai in 2019 and the most recent cyclones, ANA and Gombe in 2022, have severely damaged school buildings and other supplies. Mulanje, Nsanje, Chikwawa, Phalombe, Zomba, Machinga, Thyolo, Chiradzulu, Blantyre, and Mangochi are among the areas most severely affected. Specifically, 476 schools and around 398,908 students were impacted by tropical

storms. Simultaneously, individuals from the surrounding community sought sanctuary in certain schools, leading to additional disruptions in the educational process (MoEST, 2022). This has also led to a rise in learner dropout rates. And if that weren't enough, on March 11, 2023, cyclone Freddy made landfall in Malawi. It is believed to have broken all previous records for intensity, duration, and resurgence, and it has forced over 1.5 million people to flee their homes in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Malawi. According to Action Aid International (2023), the cyclone in Malawi caused havoc in communities, leading to the declaration of a state of calamity in 14 districts that were badly impacted. The storms caused over 500,000 people to be relocated, over 500 people died, and over 500 more people were still missing. In every impacted district, there was damage to public infrastructure, including main and district highways, schools, and health facilities. The Ministry of Education likewise was placed in this situation. Managing the circumstances of the students in this impacted district also placed strain on the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology. Rescheduling the calendar was attempted by the Ministry of Education, but it was not proven to be a sufficient solution (Save the Children, 2023). The government's lack of preparation was blamed for how severely this had impacted. This hasn't stopped the Malawian government from implementing several measures to increase equity and access to education to lower the dropout rate and raise educational standards.

Theories used to minimize learner dropout

History has proved that access and equity remained a challenge, as learner dropout surged in the past. To address these issues, Malawi's government, with the support of international organizations, launched several initiatives, comparative education analysis and different methods to improve access and equity in education to reduce learner dropout in the public government primary schools.

i. Access Theory in Education

According to access theory, it's critical to remove obstacles standing in people's way of getting an education and to ensure that everyone has equal access to education. Several variables, such as location, economic standing, gender, race, and ethnicity, can make it more difficult for someone to receive an education. By putting laws and efforts in place targeted at lessening the impact of these factors, governments and educational institutions can attempt to expand access (Castel et al., 2013). Creating more schools in rural areas, offering financial aid and scholarships, and supporting affirmative action policies to broaden the variety of student populations are a few examples of these kinds of projects. Access theory works to guarantee that everyone has the chance to reach their full potential and make a positive contribution to society by advocating for everyone to have access to education. This has had a significant effect on them and increased the number of students quitting school.

The quality of teachers has also been considered as an influence. Higher instruction quality also has a substantial impact on lower dropout rates. Teachers who are well-qualified, motivated, and appropriately compensated provide students with instruction of a higher caliber and maintain their engagement in the learning process (Hoque & Mahanta, 2021). This has not been the case in Malawi, where a variety of grave problems have left instructors demotivated.

The condition of the school's infrastructure was found to be another factor connected to learner dropout. Research has shown that upgrades to school infrastructure have a major positive impact on reducing dropout rates. A school's learning environment is generally improved by having enough resources, such as electricity, water, and hygienic conditions. This increases enrollment and decreases the dropout rate.

ii. Equity theory

According to equity theory, students should have equitable access to resources and chances for academic performance regardless of their socioeconomic status, gender, colour, or other demographic characteristics (Lewin, 2015). This actually means that inequalities in educational resources, including money, the caliber of teachers, instructional materials, and technology access, should be eliminated by educators and legislators. They should also create policies and plans to help students who encounter obstacles to their academic performance, like those who are learning English

as a second language or come from low-income homes. We can guarantee that every student has an equal chance to realise their full potential and accomplish their academic and professional goals by advocating for equity in education. A society that is more just and equal may result from this in turn.

iii. Human capital theory

According to the human capital theory, investing in education and training can significantly enhance an individual's skills, knowledge, and abilities, ultimately leading to increased productivity and the possibility of earning higher pay. Furthermore, to stay up to date with changes in the labour market and technological breakthroughs, human capital theory highlights the significance of ongoing education and lifelong learning. A foundation for comprehending the financial advantages of education for both people and society as a whole is provided by the human capital theory (Naunje, 2004). Economic development and expansion are facilitated by investments in education. To guarantee that all students have access to high-quality education, the Malawian government has made investments in the field of education.

Approaches used to minimise learner dropout

i. Free primary education

The Malawian administration employed the theories of equality and access to lower the rate of student dropout. The Malawian government instituted measures, such as free elementary education, to guarantee equal access to education for all students, irrespective of their financial status. Because several students left school early due to a lack of funds, free elementary education was instituted. Furthermore, a short time after Malawi established a multiparty system of governance, the country's high percentage of illiteracy was seen, and it was thought that this was a significant contributing reason to Malawi's poverty. In 1994, for example, 50% of men and 70% of women, or 52% of the population, were illiterate (Malawi Ministry of Education & UNICEF, 1998).

According to the World Bank (2020), the government expected that by making education free for elementary school students, access to education would rise, participation disparities would disappear, and people would recognize the value of education more broadly. Since the implementation of FPE, elementary school enrollment increased dramatically, with a 50% increase in just the first year (Kadzamira & Rose, 2003). But providing free education to everyone was a huge undertaking, made more so by the fact that one of the world's poorest states was involved (World Bank, 2020).

ii. 'School in a bag', buddy systems and catch-up clubs

"School in a bag," buddy systems, and catch-up clubs were some other strategies used to address learner dropout. These were tested in Malawi and Lesotho, and the results increased learning and decreased dropout rates in these two nations' schools (Jere & Tofaris, 2017). Researchers from the UCL Institute of Education and their colleagues in Southern Africa employed these flexible learning tactics to guarantee that underprivileged children—especially those impacted by HIV/AIDS—stay in school and make progress in their education. Working with communities in locations where HIV/AIDS was very prevalent and school dropout rates were high, the team designed and tested the intervention model in 20 primary schools in Malawi and 16 secondary schools in Lesotho between April 2007 and July 2010. Reduced dropout rates were observed in both countries' schools, especially for older students. This trend was mediated by enhanced supervision and support as well as beneficial ripple effects within the school community.

iii. Expansion of school feeding programs

The goal of the school feeding program expansion in Malawi's elementary schools was to give students who attended classes wholesome meals. Children from extremely low-income families who are malnourished are the program's target population. This can guarantee that kids eat at least one healthy meal a day, which can encourage parents to keep their kids in school. The school feeding programs enable more kids to consistently attend school while also helping to improve the health and academic performance of the students (World Food Program, 2021). To reach more schools and

kids nationwide, the Malawian government has been attempting to grow the program. Partnerships with numerous international donors and organizations, such as the World Food Programme and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, have helped to finance this expansion.

iv. Provision of financial incentives

The Malawian government (2022) instituted several monetary incentives aimed at motivating families to continue sending their kids to school. The cash transfer program is one such incentive that offers direct financial assistance to families with school-age children who enroll and attend classes on a regular basis. The Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP), sometimes referred to as "Mtukula Pakhomo" in Chichewa, serves as an essential, non-conditional safety net for the poorest and most disadvantaged Malawians. This program helps ultra-poor families meet their basic needs and develop resilience by giving monthly cash transfers to over 1.3 million people annually. The ultimate goal is to support education-related expenses like school fees, uniforms, and transportation costs and lift people out of poverty (UNICEF, 2022). Increasing school enrollment and reducing hunger and poverty were the program's primary goals. The initiative has improved kids' learning outcomes, decreased dropout rates, and increased school attendance. To improve access to education and assist families that might not be able to pay for school tuition or other educational expenses on their own, the government established a number of educational grants, scholarships, and loan programs.

v. Community-based interventions

Through the communities, the Malawian government also carried out a number of community-based interventions, encouraging local participation and decision-making through initiatives including community mobilisation and awareness-raising. These have a significant impact on raising awareness of the value of education. According to Tawanda et al. (2021), other factors that contribute to a nation's lower learner dropout rate include counselling for families and individuals facing difficulties, engaging extracurricular or co-curricular activities, encouraging parental involvement in school matters, and community and school leadership working together to monitor students.

Suggestions to solve the problems

It is critical that the Malawi government, through the Ministry of Education, consider many variables while resolving these concerns. We can increase access and equity in education in Malawi by implementing these ideas and lowering the learner dropout rate. Malawi's government should put measures in place that encourage free and compulsory education for all children (MoEST, 2022). This will ensure that all students, regardless of socioeconomic status, have access to a high-quality education. Taking this into account has a positive impact on lowering learner dropout.

The government must also expand education investment by investing more money in the education sector. This will assist the government in providing additional resources to schools such as learning resources, teacher training, and the construction of more schools in rural areas to lessen the distance pupils travel when attending distant schools. Furthermore, investments might be provided at the district and community levels to assist with the construction of schools in the communities.

The government, through the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with partner groups, schools, and other stakeholders, can also implement mentorship programs that will benefit learners in a variety of ways. A mentorship program could be implemented to assist students who are on the verge of dropping out. Mentors could help these youngsters stay in school by providing guidance and support. These kinds of programs will help students make great life decisions while also keeping them occupied and focused on the future.

Another key strategy is to provide more jobs for individuals. Poverty is a major contributor to Malawi's high dropout rate. The government should prioritize poverty reduction by boosting work possibilities, expanding credit availability, and encouraging entrepreneurship. The introduction of social cash transfers was a laudable move, but it cannot fit all families, leaving them on the verge of being unable to finance their children's attendance at school.

The government needs to motivate teachers more. By giving teachers enough compensation, resources for professional growth, and training, the government should boost their motivation. This will raise the bar for student success and enhance Malawi's educational system. Comparative education research indicates that a high percentage of school dropouts can also be attributed to teacher quality. Considering this matter will also advance educational equity and accessibility while assisting students in avoiding dropping out.

Conclusion

To minimize learner dropout rates in Malawi government primary schools, the government is taking initiatives to increase access and equity in education. However, it is unclear how effective these initiatives have been in addressing the root causes of the dropout problem. The government's reliability in providing necessities and programs must be clearly stated to assist in delivering more realistic solutions to Malawi's difficulties. Furthermore, more data and evaluation are required to establish how far Malawi has progressed and what additional efforts are required to ensure that all learners have access to and equity in excellent education.

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