

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DUAL-MODE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
CURRICULUM FORMALAWI PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

M. Ed. (SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION) THESIS

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**University of Malawi
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MAY, 2017

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Where other people's work has been used acknowledgements have been made.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my father, Wilfred Chapondanjoka Kakhobwe Phiri. He led a good foundation for my education through his support and vision. He has always wished that I should excel in my studies even to PhD level. I wish him God's blessings and abundant favour.

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the implementation of dual mode curriculum in Malawi Primary schools. After the introduction of dual mode curriculum in Malawi primary schools, that is, the teaching of two different types of syllabi; one syllabus consists of mono-faith Religious education and the other one consists of multi-faith curriculum, there has not been any study on the Malawi primary school dual mode curriculum. The researcher wanted to find out how the dual mode curriculum is being implemented, how the choices are made, the reasons for their choice and the challenges encountered due the choices made. The paper used qualitative paradigm and a multiple case study method for data generation. Four cases were used which were four schools and in each case three samples were identified. In each case there was one interview and two focus group discussion. The data was tape recorded and transcribed. Analysis was done based on the literature review and the four concepts chosen which are; Pluralism, Diversity, Globalisation and Political symbolism. The study has revealed that the dual mode curriculum of RE is being implemented through consultations between the school and the community more especially in pure government schools while in grand aided schools, the proprietors of the schools are the ones who decide for the school. Common challenges were lack of materials for teaching and learning and INSERT of teachers. Each choice had its own specific challenges. To improve the practice of this curriculum there is need to embrace a single mode curriculum, more especially multi-faith curriculum which takes care of pluralism, diversity and globalisation and not for just political symbolism.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AATR	African Traditional Religion
BK	Bible Knowledge
CCAP	Church of Central Africa Presbytery
DEM	District Education Manager
DTED	Department of Teacher Education
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
MANEB	Malawi National Examination Board
INSERT	In Service Training
PCAR	Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform
PEA	Primary Education Advisor
PSLC	Primary School Leaving Certificate
PTA	Parents and Teacher Association
RE	Religious Education
RME	Religious and Moral Education
RNPE	Revised National Policy in Education
SMC	School Management Committee
T/L	Teaching/Learning

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Chapter Overview

The chapter introduces the study on the implementation of the dual-mode Religious Education curriculum for Malawi primary schools comprising two syllabuses namely Bible Knowledge (BK) and Religious Education (RE). It first outlines the background of the dual mode curriculum which is currently practiced in Malawi primary schools. The background exposes the type of the RE curriculum during the colonial era and after independence as a single mode. Later, the chapter is outlining series of incidences towards the change from single mode to dual mode curriculum. Before that, the chapter spells out the difference between the single mode curriculum and dual mode curriculum. The chapter also discusses the difference between dual mode curriculum in primary schools and dual mode curriculum in secondary schools, how the curriculums are implemented more especially on the choice of a syllabus and the mode of teaching. Towards the end, the chapter presents the purpose of the study, the research problem, significance of the study and the research questions that prompted the researcher to engage into this type of study.

1.1 Background to the Study

Since the beginning of formal education in Malawi Primary Schools by the missionaries in the 1870s, Religious Education has been based on a single mode curriculum by teaching one faith, Christianity, at the exclusion of other faiths (Salanjira, 2003). When Malawi government took over the control of education in Malawi in 1964, single mode curriculum was the order of the day in the teaching of Religious Education. In the year 2000, dual mode curriculum came into existence (Salanjira, 2003). There are series of incidences that led to the birth of dual mode curriculum of Religious Education in Malawi primary schools starting from secondary schools.

The expression Dual-mode Religious Education curriculum is used in this study and in the context of Malawi's primary school Education to denote a curriculum based on two parallel syllabuses of teaching religion, namely, Bible Knowledge as a mono-faith syllabus and Religious Education as a multi-faith syllabus. Bible Knowledge is the teaching of one faith and usually uses an approach called confessional approach (Salanjira, 2003). In this approach the belief of the teacher or the community is passed on to learners. It is also referred to as dogmatic approach. Dogma is when beliefs are taught as facts. This was the approach used by early Christian missionaries with the intention of indoctrinating the learners into Christian faith. "This was also the system at first in Scotland as the teaching was confessional aiming at helping young people to come to a personal faith in Jesus Christ as saviour and Lord." (Bryce & Humes, 1999, p.66). This also is the essence why mono-faith RE still stands prominent in mission schools. The aim is to deepen the faith of learners in Christian realms. In addition, in Bible Knowledge the

content is from one faith, Christianity. Learners are given the opportunity to study the beliefs of Christians by using their holy book.

The other way of teaching Religious Education of multiple faith is known as anti-confessional or anti-dogmatic approach. This approach aims at providing learners knowledge and understanding of what Religion is, what religious people say and do, what it means to be a member of Religion and how it affects life. The approach is also termed as Phenomenological approach to the teaching of Religious Education (Salanjira, 2003). This is the modern way of teaching Religious Education for it aims at exposing the knowledge to learners. It ushers learners to religious diversity. This is one of the themes that help learners make sense of the world and give education relevance (Media education, 2012). The approach critically analyses the content thereby broaden the learners' understanding. Learners are given mandate to give in their ideas and making the lesson relevant to the present lives.

There are a number of incidences that led to the birth of dual mode curriculum of Religious Education in Malawi Primary Schools. In 1998, there was a revision of secondary school curriculum for all subjects. A national review of secondary school curriculum was instituted with the aim to make it more responsive to issues such as HIV/AIDS and religious pluralism (Matemba, 2007). Then books were printed for the revised curriculum. However, the Muslim community discovered that in one of the history books, they were misrepresented which resulted into the ban of the History book. The single mode curriculum of Religious Education which comprised of Bible

Knowledge (BK) was replaced by Religious and Moral Education comprising of Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion.

The replacement of Bible Knowledge with Religious and Moral Education (RME) in Malawi Secondary Schools alarmed the Christian-faith community leaders. This brought controversy as the Christian faith community leaders questioned the Ministry of Education on that curriculum change in teaching and learning of religion in schools. Catholics sent a memorandum of protest against the reform to the Ministry of Education denouncing the manner the syllabuses were imposed and Bible Knowledge being removed from the curriculum. What appeared strange to churches was the idea of the Koran being taught in their schools and in particular the provision that Muslims would be employed to teach the Islamic component. Churches were irked by the statement in the new syllabus that the religions chosen were all “major”. Churches observed that Christianity was the only major religion and would not be treated the same with others (Matemba, 2007). Therefore churches sought audience with the then State President Dr. Bakili Muluzi who also was a Muslim. They asked the government to change its decision to introduce RME curriculum. Then the President ordered the Ministry of Education to suspend the new curriculum and bring back BK until further consultations.

The move did not go down well with the Muslim community, they asked an audience with the President and gave him an ultimatum to change within 3 days and threatened of chaos in Malawi. The President, perhaps in appeasing the Christian community that forms a greater number of electorate, set up an office of Religious coordinator in the

office of President and Cabinet and a Christian priest was the coordinator. The coordinator was to oversee all issues relating to religion and the issue of RME. From that office, a National Consultative Committee was formed, comprising of officials from Ministry of Education, Catholic Church, Malawi Council of Churches, Muslim Association of Malawi, Seventh Day Adventist Church and representative from Traditional Religion (Matemba, 2007). The National Consultative Committee was led by Dr. Dan Chimwenje.

In trying to satisfy the wishes of the Christian community and addressing the frustrations of Muslims, Government reintroduced BK and revised RME (which seem to have been dominated by a 50% of Islamic faith in content) and included materials from other “minor” religions like Hindu, Bahai, in addition to Christianity, African Traditional Religion and Islam.

Thus, a common ground was reached and recommendations were made which led to the birth of dual mode curriculum in secondary schools. Bible knowledge was reintroduced and Religious and Moral Education was maintained. These two syllabi were to be used co-currently in Malawi Secondary Schools. All the disciplines were to be examined by Malawi National Examination Board (MANEB) at Junior Secondary school level .The RME was only taught at Junior Certificate of Education (JCE) level, while Bible Knowledge (BK) continued up to Senior Secondary School level.

At the implementation of dual curriculum in Malawi Secondary Schools, according to policy documents, learners were given a mandate to choose which subject to be learning. A learner would choose either learning Bible Knowledge of single faith which is Christianity or Religious and Moral Education which is of three different faiths namely; Christianity, African Traditional Religion (ATR), and Islam. Learners were given the mandate to choose basing on the fact that they are matured enough to make their own decisions (Mwatsika narration, 2012).

During the adoption of Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform (PCAR) by Ministry of Education to replace the old syllabus of 1991, Religious Studies was to be incorporated in Social Studies. Religious community reacted over that because they felt that some goals of education are not going to be attained fully. One of the goals of Malawi education was to build the citizens of Malawi on moral issues (Malawi Secondary schools syllabi). The religious community said the moral aspect in Malawi Education goals would be difficult to attain.

Since the policy was already established on dual curriculum for Religious Education following the commission of inquiry's recommendation, it was concluded that the same policy should be applied to Primary Schools on Religious Education curriculum. The then Religious Education which comprised of single faith, which was Christianity, was maintained and named Bible Knowledge. On the other hand, Religious Education comprise of Christianity, African Traditional Religion (ATR) and Islam for all primary schools, standard 1 up to 8. It is known as Religious Education (RE). It was also stated

that both curriculums should be examined during the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLC).The former syllabus of Religious and Moral Education was not examined during standard 8 examinations (Mwatsika narration, 2012).

The implementation of dual mode curriculum in primary schools is different from secondary schools. In Primary schools, the community around a particular primary school led by Parents and Teacher Association (PTA) were to be informed about dual curriculum by the Head teacher or Religious Studies teacher on the contents of both curriculums. He/she was to inform the community that Bible Knowledge comprises the teaching of one faith which is Christianity while Religious Education (RE) comprises of three different religions of Malawi namely; Christianity, Malawi Traditional Religion and Islam.

After the community around the school has been informed, they should choose a curriculum to be used in a particular school and the decision was to be communicated to the District Education Manager. Then the Manager`s office would supply relevant books for the chosen curriculum. This signifies that there is no uniform curriculum for Malawi primary schools. This system is similar with Britain`s Religious Education syllabus. Under 1998 Education Ref. Act, RE is taught in state or public schools based on an agreed RE syllabus. An agreed syllabus based on a consensus of various faith communities found in an area within which a public school is located is followed. This means that there is no uniform RE syllabus for all public schools in Britain (Salanjira, 2003).a

Although it was stated in the policy document on dual curriculum, other religious communities still gave a declaration that schools within their jurisdiction should take the curriculum according to their faith only. This is why in most Islamic Schools RE is favoured as it relevant to their faith because of the component of Islam. In Christian schools, Bible Knowledge is favoured where as in most public schools, RE is favoured (Matemba, 2005).

The methodology of teaching RE at first was a comparative mode between the three religions on the same theme. Later on, the mode of teaching changed to commonality but using the same thematic approach like festivals or rites of passage. This was done in order to avoid conflicts (Mwatsika narration, 2012).

With this background, I decided to explore how this dual mode curriculum is really implemented in Malawi primary schools as planned by the policy makers. Do schools really follow the document plan of policy makers or not? Who chooses that the school should learn BK or RE? What are pedagogical procedures used? What are the reasons for the choice and what are the challenges encountered.

1.2 Rationale for the Study

Religious Education is one of the subjects upheld by the community as they say it is a tool to curb and retain morality among the youth (Mwatsika, 2008). Religion and beliefs have become more visible in public life locally, nationally and internationally. The impact of Religion on society and public life is constantly brought to public attention

(Media education, 2012). Ladson-Billing and Tate, 2006 as cited by Salanjira, 2009 pointed out that “education scholars and researchers must undertake research that speaks to the pressing public issues related to education...constituting a possible basis for social justice, action and policy. It is also a subject that makes Religious community to have an eye over it”. This is reflected in the changes that occurred in the teaching of the subject, naming of the subject, the content of the subject matter and the introduction of the dual mode curriculum of Religious Education. In addition, the subject attracts the interest of politicians. This shows that the subject is very important and issues surrounding the subject have to be taken seriously. One of the issues was the introduction of dual mode curriculum in Malawi Primary Schools in the year 2000 which meant the teaching of Religious Education in two modes (Circular, 2000).

A school can either teach Religious Education comprising of one faith, Christianity, or Religious Education comprising of selected three faiths in Malawi which are: Christianity, African Traditional Religion (ATR) and Islam. The choice of the mode of the curriculum is solely in the hands of the community around the school depending on the politics of life in schools. Ball (1987), emphasises that what happens inside schools cannot be totally understood without accounting for the environment in which schools operate. “The daily political interplay among administrators, teachers, and students is simply not independent of external values, beliefs ...of schools.” (Ball, 1987. p. 247 as cited by Dickson Corbet). Since the policy makers issued a policy on the conduct of dual mode curriculum of Religious Studies, the questions are; how is the policy implemented

in the schools? How is dual mode curriculum implemented in the school? Is the policy really followed or is something differently done?

So far according to the literature made available, no scholar or researcher has shown an interest to find out the implementation of dual mode curriculum of Religious Education in Malawi Primary schools. Some scholars have just written on the implementation of dual mode curriculum in Secondary Schools in Malawi like Salanjira (2003). Matemba (2007) and Mphande among others. This is what has compelled me to have a thoroughful research on how dual mode curriculum of Religious Education is being implemented in Malawi Primary Schools.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Since the introduction of the dual mode Religious Education curriculum policy in Malawi primary schools in 2009, no study has been conducted to explore how it is being implemented in school. The policy gave mandate to community around a particular school to choose either the mono-faith or multi-faith RE syllabus to be studied by their children. The community was also given a mandate to decide on the syllabus to be offered (Mwatsika narration, 2012) which means that the choice of the minority is not been considered. “There is a possibility that the community with the majority of a particular faith community may likely opt for single faith in case of Christian community, and multiple faith in case of Muslim community, as was the case at the beginning” (Salanjira, 2009, p. 8), hence the essence may not be educational but making known of one`s faith.

Another problem is that it is doubtful that school (teachers) especially in the very remote areas can grant the community around to choose the particular mode of curriculum as the community may be ignorant of the intentions of the policy makers. (Coleman, Graham-Jolly and Middlewood, 2003).

The choice of the school may also depend on the choice of the subject teacher or the choice of majority of teachers who may be biased towards a particular faith and that may affect the choice, hence a problem. They may do that to show their autonomy. If the community would be given chance to choose the mode of a curriculum for Religious Education, the autonomy of educators would be compromised, hence limiting the power and contribution of educators, to teaching and learning hence, the need to explore the implementation of the dual-mode RE curriculum in Malawi Primary schools.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the implementation of the dual-mode RE curriculum in Malawi Primary schools focusing on the choices which the schools are making between BK and RE syllabuses , reasons for that choice, and challenges faced in implementing the chosen syllabus.

1.5 Key Research Question

The study was guided by the following key research question. How is the dual-mode RE curriculum being implemented in Malawi primary schools?

Sub-research questions:

To explore this question deeply, the following sub-questions were employed:

1. What choices are schools making in implementing the Bible Knowledge and Religious Education syllabuses?
2. Why are schools making such choices?
3. How do schools experience the type of syllabus they are implementing?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study would fill the gap in the body of knowledge of the dual mode of teaching religion in Malawi schools. The findings of the study would also help policy makers, teachers and other stakeholders in education to understand the factors affecting the implementation of the curriculum in primary schools. It would also provide insights on the policy as regards its success and challenges.

1.7 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter one has spoken of the introduction to the study which has tackled mainly; Chapter Overview. The background of the study, Rationale of the study, Statement of the problem, Purpose of the study, Research key questions, Significance of the study, Structure of the thesis and Chapter summary. Chapter two will deal with literature review. The chapter will start with Chapter over view, then Contrasting views on the teaching of Religious Education in schools, followed by the Conception of Religious Education and lastly is the Conception Framework. The paper will proceed to chapter three which talks about Research design and methodology. This will include Chapter overview, Research approach, Research design, Research setting, Sampling procedures,

Data generation methods and instruments. Data analysis procedures, Data management, credibility and trustworthiness Ethical considerations, Limitation of the study and Chapter over view. Chapter four is on Presentation and Discussion of Research findings. The chapter will discuss these; Chapter overview, Choice of the study for Multi-faith RE and Mono-faith RE, Reasons for the choice for Multi-faith RE and Mono-faith RE, Challenges faced in the implantation of Multi-faith RE syllabus and Mono-faith RE syllabus, Discussion and interpretation within a framework of pluralism, diversity, globalisation and political symbolism, Synthesis of common challenges among the four cases then Chapter summary. Chapter five is on Conclusion, Implication and Recommendations. The chapter has included Chapter overview, Conclusion of the study, Implications of the study, Recommendations and Areas of further study. The thesis has ended with References, Appendices and List of Abbreviations and Acronyms.

1.8 Chapter Summary

The chapter has introduced the study by presenting the background to the study, rationale, purpose, research questions as well as significance of the study. Its main argument is that since the introduction of the curriculum policy based on Bible Knowledge and Religious Education syllabuses as two parallel syllabi of teaching religion in Malawi primary schools, no study has been conducted to understand how the policy is being implemented. The significance of this study lies in addressing this gap. The next chapter on literature review explores findings of studies, “ studies” of some scholars on dual mode curriculum and the concepts upon which the research was based, which are pluralism, diversity, globalisation and political symbolism.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter discusses the issues, trends, themes and debates reflected in literature on the teaching of religion in schools. The main argument in the literature review reflects a variety of contrasting views of scholars on the teaching of RE. The chapter continues with a discussion of the four concepts; pluralism, diversity, globalisation and political symbolism. Then ends with chapter summary.

2.1 Contrasting views on the teaching of religious education in schools

Some literature on the teaching of religion in schools reflects a variety of contrasting views on how and why Religious Education should be offered in public as well as private schools. One debate is that of teaching religion using confessional or non-confessional approach (Salanjira, 2009). Confessional approach is the teaching which aims at indoctrinating the learners to follow a particular faith. This is usually done in mono-faith RE teaching. Learners are made to believe what is taught and that they should apply it to their personal lives while with the non-confessional approach, learners learn in order to widen knowledge and understanding of different religions.

Another debate is that of mono-faith versus multi-faith of RE curriculum (Matemba 2005, Salanjira, 2009), Mono-faith RE curriculum is the curriculum that comprised of one type of faith. The focus is on one particular faith and mostly with the aim of evangelising or indoctrinating the learners while multi-faith RE curriculum comprises of different religions in one learning area. The aim is to diversify the knowledge and understanding of learners in terms of religion and religious beliefs.

Furthermore, the other debate is on teaching religion as religious activity or educational activity (Steyn 2004; Wolf, 2004). Religion as religious activity is when all what is done during the teaching, for example, role play and class discussions, just to mention but a few, aim at indoctrinating the learners by making them to believe the ideology, internalise and consequently make that as part of their lives. The essence of pure education (academics) is not considered. RE as an education activity is when the focus is not on a particular faith but all religions are considered at the same par. The aim is to widen understanding and knowledge of religions, learning what different people believe and how the faith affects their lives. This is also described as sacred versus secular activity (Hull, 2007). Religion as sacred activity is when the writings of a particular religion are taken as holy, the word of God or the word of a Transcend. Learners take the writings as they are without critical analysis. All the activities in the lesson lead to developing the faith of learners for a particular faith. While RE, as secular activity, takes the content as any other learning area. The aim is widening knowledge and understanding of different religions. Learners are given opportunity to discuss the writings of different

religions and critically analyse them in order to widen their knowledge and understanding.

There is also a debate, according to Wolf (2004), that RE should be purely educational activity and not devotional activity. Devotional activity means RE should not be taken for personal commitment to the Transcend or to that particular religion or for self consecration but it should be taken as educational activity. That means everything pertaining to the teaching of this RE should promote understanding and knowledge for the learners. Grimmit (2000) in his writing called “Pedagogies of RE,” discussed the relationship between religion and education and how they serve the learners. Religion serve learners in the area of personal commitment to a particular religion, it promotes the faith of the teacher or the institution and built the faith of the learners for a particular religion. While religious education serves learners in the area of knowledge and understanding of religions, learners are able to critically analyse the content and mostly this is a multi-faith RE.

“Religion and education have been recognised as an area of interest for philosophers of education who have endeavoured to bring their analytical skills to bear on the development of solutions for curriculum committees, parents, teachers and students everywhere” (Brooke, 2012, p. 2) These contrasting views are the ones that have necessitated differences in curriculums from one country to another, that is, some have maintained homogenous faith curriculum like Swaziland, while others have changed to heterogeneous faith curriculum like Botswana, or have made countries to take on board

different curriculums of RE that they should move concurrently like Malawi (Matemba, 2005). This is an indication that some scholars are pro-mono- faith curriculum and others are pro-multi faith curriculum.

2.2 The Conception of Religious Education

There are some scholars both national and international who conceptualise RE as the teaching and learning of religion based on one faith. These scholars advocate for mono-faith, as a type of RE. The scholars are biased towards one faith. Matemba (2008) denotes that Malawi is not ready for multi-faith religious education throughout the educational system as seen by lack of support for it by teachers, schools and general public. This was observed during the research of the teaching of RE in Malawi secondary schools. The research showed that Christian faith dominated the teaching of RE, hence the teaching of multi-faith RE may be considered as a challenge and threat to Christian faith. In Sweden, the bishops argued that denying the Swedens' access to Christian narratives impoverishes their cultural competence. The Bishops' perspective is that their culture is promoted by Christian narratives (Ballan, 2011). This was said when the state education system was believed that it had become a vehicle for promotion of diversity, pluralism and a pick and mix morality. One of the philosophers of Education, Paul Hirst said that religion may be a 'logically unique form of knowledge' and also doubted the possibility that religious knowledge could be totally reduced to knowledge belonging to other forms of knowledge (Hirst, 1975).

According to him, religious knowledge cannot be equated to other secular knowledge because it is a special knowledge, hence it should not be treated like any other knowledge. This shows that Hirst is biased towards mono-faith religion which mostly takes the knowledge for religious commitments and not for just knowledge. Hand (2006) was of a similar view as Paul Hirst, that it is logically impossible for a teacher to impart an understanding of religion in a simply secular manner and leave faith behind. This was because understanding a form of knowledge involves holding certain propositions of that form of knowledge to be true or false (Hand, 2006, p.15 as cited by Brooke, 2012). This shows that for teachers to teach religious education well, they have to be proponents of that faith. They need to take hold of the faith as they impart the knowledge. It seems therefore that Hand shows his bias towards mono-faith because it is usually mono-faith RE that accompanies a belief and not just common knowledge.

Some scholars both national and international are for pro-multi faith. Reading the contesting space in secondary school curriculum, Salanjira and Sooraj (2009) have positioned themselves as pro multi-faith religious education in which they are advocating that multi-faith Religious Education widens the knowledge and understanding of learners and the syllabus is meeting goals of education in Malawi. Brooke argued “it is logically possible for students to achieve an understanding of various religions without developing religious belief.” (Brooke, 2012, p. 2). Matemba, (2005) although he said that Malawi is not ready for a multi-faith Religious Education, in his contribution to British Journal of RE under Religious Education in the context of Sub-Sahara Africa: the Malawi example, in concluding his writing he quickly said that such a pull toward mono-faith is a worrying

trend because it does not reflect the religious diversity of our world. Warner in Matemba (2005) has suggested that Religious Education in our time should provide the platform where a multitude of voices can converse with each other. Marshall and Olva (2006) state that multi-faith traditional of the teaching and learning of Religious Education promotes open discussion drawn from many religions. Wolf (2004) and Whittaker and Byrnes (2001) maintains that the multi-faith RE curriculum is about teaching various religions by stressing the importance of tolerance, respect for persons and mutual understanding in a contemporary and diverse world. They emphasised that RE should be purely educational and not devotional and that it should promote learners understanding and respect for religious and non-traditions.

Ministry of Education 1982 (in Malawi) described Bible Knowledge as not having an open discussion notion as its aim. Also Steyn 2004 who advocates for Religious Education as an education activity argues that having the syllabus of different religions helps learners to know how religion affects the world and society in which we live. This is in line with the aims of education in Malawi (Malawi Syllabus). During the second education plan (1985-1995) syllabus changes were made, in Religious education the change was from Bible Knowledge to multi-faith syllabus. Educationists argued that BK was unsuitable because Malawi is a multicultural society and that BK had confessional and not educational aims which meant that a heterogeneous society needed heterogeneous Religious Education. This is similar to the views of Botswana government which decided to change RME from BK because it would help develop the character of school going adolescents since BK was viewed as inadequate in this regard

(Botswana government, 1977, p. 42). In RME, Christian influence is reduced since other religions are also taught.

Arweck (2014) in her “Religious diversity in United Kingdom” was of the view that education in schools through RE (multi-faith) can further community cohesion by teaching young people about religious diversity. There is unity in diversity as learners learn different religions and beliefs, they turn to understand one another and there is tolerance, hence unity. (Anker as cited by Arnessee, 2012, p.14) noted that “in the Norwegian curriculum for both primary and secondary education in general and in specific subjects, the aim of learning to respect is emphasised. Knowledge of “others” culture and religions contribute to achieve this aim.” The curriculum promotes learning of other religions, with this; learners build respect for one another and others’ religions. The teaching of multi-faith RE is also different as compared to mono-faith RE.

Many scholars advocated for a change in teaching RE from mono-faith to multi-faith such as (Sutchffe, 1984; Barnes, 2006; Grimmit, 2000; & Delport, 2005) amongst others. For example, the Revised National Policy in Education (RNPE) in Botswana adopted RE that is multi-faith in content and phenomenological in its methodology (Botswana government, 1994). Phenomenological approach is one which aims at helping students set aside their strong assumptions about different religions which would be mainly based on prejudice (Sutchffe, 1984). During 1960s and 1970s, a new chapter in the history of English RE begun. Christian confessionalism whereby children were nurtured in and encouraged to adopt Christian faith was swept aside (Barnes, 2006). It was replaced by a

phenomenological multi-faith RE which enabled learners both to gain an authentic understanding of religion and develop the virtue of tolerance.

Cooling & Grimmit (2000) advocated for constructivist approach to RE. The theory emphasises on the autonomy and creativity of the reader. It assumes that meaning is constructed primarily by a reader than the author. However, this may be in conflict with theologically conservative Christians who are sometimes suspicious of multi-faith RE because for them the Bible is definitely 'God's word' and they advocate for transmission approach to religious nurture. Multi-faith RE also goes together with neo-confessional didactic approach. Sutcliffe describes a neo-confessional approach as, "one where religions other than the central one are recommended to be taught as tolerated extras." (Sutcliffe, 1994, p. 249). Although content and spirit of curriculum were undoubtedly Christian in nature, references could be made to aspects of other religious forms in order to strengthen a point that was made in Christian religion. Multi-faith RE may go together with transformational approach.

Delpont (2005) argues that "transformation then becomes a daunting and complex undertaking because it urges individuals to depart from the security of the 'know and venture' into the 'vastness of the unknown'" (Delpont, 2005, p. 204). He also argues that on an occasion of change individuals are expected to change their thinking and how they view reality and that such change tampers with the individuals' identity. Any reform has to start with mindset otherwise any work tabled may be a loss.

The change in the curriculum in Botswana had challenges because of lack of transformation. RE teachers' attitudes, beliefs and perceptions were not taken into consideration during the major curriculum shift. These aspects need to be considered on occasion of change (Sabini, Siepman&Meyerowitz, 2000). This is the case with Malawi because the change to dual mode curriculum failed to change the mind set of teachers over multi-faith RE. They harnessed Christian faith and as a result, faith played a bigger role in shooting down the dual mode curriculum, more especially the Multi-faith RE.

However, studies conducted in Malawi on RE focused on secondary education (Matemba, 2005; Salanjira, 2007, 2009; Mwatsika, 2008). There have not been any studies on Malawi Primary school curriculum for RE, hence the need to conduct this study.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The study has employed a conceptual framework based on a set of four concepts namely; pluralism, diversity, globalisation and political symbolism. This framework has been used to interpret the dual-mode RE curriculum policy which is being implemented in Malawi primary schools.

2.3.1 The Concept of Pluralism

Pluralism is the condition of society in which numerous distinct ethnic, religious and cultural groups coexist amiably within one nation as fellow citizens (Futrell &Geisert,

2001). Our grouping heterogeneity gives a realm to search for common ground as we prepare the citizenry of the future. Pluralism is a situation whereby one acts in plurality. “Plurality can be understood as multiplicity of ideologies or values in our society which make people experience the world as fragmentary and contradictory.” (Wardekker&Miedena as cited by Salanjira, 2003, p. 96). Malawi is a pluralist society encompassing people of different backgrounds in terms of social life. This means that the society is comprised of different sects of people. For instance Malawi as a nation is made up of different ethnic groups, hence a pluralist society. As having pluralist tribes, hence pluralist in culture and pluralist in perception of things.

Pluralism is also seen in politics. Since 1992 as Malawians opted for a multiparty democracy, that means there is pluralism in parties. This reflects different ideologies and interests in the society. Pluralism is also reflected in Religion. There are many religions in Malawi, some are termed major and others termed minor. The demarcation is not on the undermining perspective but on the population of people participating in a particular Religion. For instance; Christianity is termed one of the major religion with the population of about 70% (Salanjira 2009), seconded by Islam about 20%, then African Traditional Religion (A T R). The minor religions like Buddha, Hindu and Baha’I, just to mention but a few, have no statistics. Within the different religions, there are different groups with different names.

In the case of Christianity, there are many denominations such as Roman Catholic, Zambezi Evangelical Church, Assemblies of God, Anglican, just but to mention a few. It is the same with Islam, which has Sunni and Kadria sects. ATR also has different sects

such as Chinkhang`ombe cult, Makewana cult and M`bona cult. This is evidence enough that Malawi is a nation with pluralism in Religion. Religion is one of the things that affects one`s perspective, interest, behaviour and even choices in life; dressing, type of food, songs, marriage, career, way of life, type of schools and even the curriculum for studies. Religion and belief for many people form a crucial part of their culture and identity (Media Education, 2012). For instance, when dual mode curriculum was introduced in Malawi Secondary Schools, Mission schools (Grant aided) opted for single faith curriculum (BK) while Muslim Schools opted for RME because it is a multi faith curriculum.

British model of Agreed RE syllabus reflects a multi faith and pluralistic nature of the British society while giving due regard to the position of the Christian tradition while Indonesia being a Muslim dominated country, is known for its unique multi religious conception of national identity known as the Pancasila ideology. According to the Pancasila principles, Indonesian identity is bound together by the five beliefs in; ‘the One and Only God, just and civilised humanity, the unity of Indonesia, democracy guided by the inner wisdom of deliberations amongst representatives, and the realisation of social justice for all of the people of Indonesia’(Brian 2011).

Both David Mphande and Grimmit as cited by Mwatsika (2009, p. 3) agree that “a human being is born and lives among people of different social, religious and political backgrounds which means that a human being today lives in pluralist society,” therefore pluralism in curriculum is inevitable. However, if the community chooses a single faith

curriculum which is BK, it will not experience pluralism on the choice of the curriculum. While the community that chooses RE will experience pluralism in both the choice of the curriculum and the learning of the curriculum. This difference in content of the two curriculums poses a challenge to the concept of pluralism.

Peters and Hirst as cited by Salanjira (2003), spoke on the need to change the approach of teaching RE from confessional to non- confessional in serving a pluralistic and multi faith society. This will justify the curriculum on the educational grounds, thus the curriculum should contribute to the aims of the school by giving learners knowledge and understanding of the world and society in which they live. Non- confessional RE will do it while confessional RE will fall short of this. The choice of BK as a curriculum will reflect the beliefs of people which are deeply rooted in the lives of people. This is also reflected in British curriculum of Religious education, the Agreed curriculum, which no matter what choices are made, Christianity has to be taken on board.

2.3.2 The Concept of Diversity

Diversity is the situation whereby one is exposed to variety of knowledge. It is an expansion of knowledge into different realms. In this case, diversity is seen in being exposed to different curriculums of different religions. In this case, the first is the curriculum of mono-faith, called BK and the second is curriculum of multi- faith called RE. Diversity of curriculums in Malawi emanates from the fact that Malawi is a heterogeneous religious faith country hence the curriculum should accommodate the faiths of all. Cushner and McClelland (2003) say that whether individuals see themselves

as “religious” or not, religious references and illusions permeate their lives. Even those who profess to be agnostic or atheist have formed their spiritual values in expressing rebellion against varieties of formalised religion that exist or existed in their particular cultural worlds. In most if not all societies, religious references are used in everyday language; in families, schools and other institutions. They organise them around religious observances and places of worship and they exert influence in community affairs. Sometimes even money has religious symbols and languages on it, for example, United States of America. In part, this connection to religious ideas and symbolism emerges from a seemingly universal human need to be associated with spiritual dimension (Cushner, McClelland & Safford, 2003, p. 251).

However, this might pose a problem as no curriculum can appease everybody since each individual has his or her interests, values and ideologies. It is also a challenge because, in case of Malawi, there are other “minor” religions which are not accommodated like Baha’i, Buddha and Hinduism. Thus the rights of the minority are violated. On the issue of multiculturalism in America, Schlesinger as cited by Joan Timm, 1996, has asserted that (ethnic) ideologies have imposed ethnocentric, Afro centric and bilingual programs on public schools that are designed to hold minority children out of American society, in other words, condemning them to a caste system. Schlesinger (1991) in his essay published in Times magazine (July 8, 1991) claimed that diversity contains the possibility of “unhealthy” consequences. He saw the danger in multiculturalism, which is similar to multi-faith concept since it crystallises the differences, magnifies tensions, and intensifies hostilities. Schlesinger maintained that focus on the ideas of common culture is “urgent”

for continuance of natural cohesion. Conservatives who are critiques of diversity in (multiculturalism), focus on the right of individuals within America's free market economy and minimises the legitimacy of diverse group claims of inequalities in the system. Because individuals differ, conservatives believe that inequalities result naturally from differences not only in ability but also in effort (Timm, 1996, p. 225).

2.3.3 The Concept of globalisation

Globalisation has been defined differently according to one's perspective. There are about four types of definitions which have come out, according to Jan Scholte these are; "globalisation as internationalisation, globalisation as liberation, globalisation as universalisation and globalisation as westernisation." (Scholte, 2005, p. 54). Globalisation is one of the factors influencing changes in RE curriculum theory and practice. As a result of globalisation and developments in communication technology, people of different cultures are no longer living in isolation from one another, instead there is increasingly intermingling of people from a diversity of cultures within the same geographical area (Smart, 1998 as cited by Salanjira, 2003). These people of different cultures have also different values, ideologies and religions among others. Different people would like their views, values, ideologies even religion to be known by the society around and to be accepted in that particular society. These are some of the factors influencing a change in RE curriculum. People of each and every religion would like to be accommodated in the society, hence in the education of a particular nation.

Firstly, “globalisation in the sense of internationalisation and in the area of education can be examined on ontological and methodological grounds as international” (Scholte, 2005, p. 55). Since changes are taking place globally, nations are being influenced because we are living in a global world. As methods of teaching are changing, that affects nations. A change in the methodology, the naming and even the content of a particular learning area globally, influences nations. In this case a change globally in the methodology of Teaching RE and the content is due to changes taking place globally, in Scotland, United States of America, Canada, Botswana, and Nigeria among others.

However, globalisation as internationalisation is objected mostly by politicians. They argue that world social relations are organised and can only be organised in terms of country units, state governments and national communities. As such, there are other modes of organisations, governance and identity that exist and are highly valued by indigenous people or regionalists. Some nationals would resist changes coming in because of globalisation as a way of maintaining their identity and not wanting to lose their values. This is the reasons some countries are resisting change in RE curriculum of secondary schools, for example, Malawi and Botswana where multi faith was introduced but has been opposed. Swaziland and Zambia do not accept any changes but insist that RE should continue to be taught in the Christian confessional traditional way together with Zimbabwe and Lesotho (Matemba, 2009). This is happening because of Christian influence which is deep rooted in these countries whose nationals would not like to change and lose some values of Christianity. One of the values of Christianity is that it

forbids its followers to teach beliefs of other people, according to a survey carried by Matemba in 2006.

Secondly, globalisation as universalisation, in these lines global means worldwide and everywhere. “Globalisation as universalisation is assumed to entail standardisation and homogenisation with world’s cultural, economic, legal and political convergence.” (Scholte, 2005. p. 57). This ideology has influenced a change also in curriculum. This standardisation entails a change in the methodology of the teaching of RE, from confessional to non-confessional; change in content from homogeneous faith to heterogeneous faith, hence a change in RE curriculum. The world as a global world is striving for standardisation, uniformity in doing things. As countries are changing the type of curriculum from homogeneous faith to heterogeneous faith, many are following suit to respond to standardisation. However, standardisation which may be termed as uniformity or convergence may be in the other sense like retrogressing to the ideas of homogeneous life. Nelson stresses, “clearly there are disputes between uniformity and diversity which cannot be easily resolved and they made all the more intractable because the aim of both uniformity and diversity are considered by most people to be important and desirable yet there are huge differences in opinion over the most suitable balance of each” (Nelson, 2004). Like community and freedom, uniformity and diversity in Religious Education could be said to be at the same time “complementary and incompatible” (Bauma, 2001). Nelson (2004) further argues that it is probably fair to say that the tension between uniformity and diversity is universally felt by all teachers of RE to some degree, but the nature of the tension may vary according to the context.

Thirdly, “globalisation as westernisation is regarded as a particular type of universalism, one in which social structures of modernity is spread across all of humanity, in the process destroying pre-existent cultures and local autonomy.” (Scholte, 2005, p. 58). Current large scale globalisation has resulted mainly from forces of modernity like rationalist knowledge, capitalist production and bureaucratic governance (Giddens, 1990). These ideologies of modernity are influencing changes in curriculum of RE. Non-confessional method of RE teaching from confessional and heterogeneous faith from homogeneous faith are some of the modernity aspects in RE that are influencing changes in the theory, design and practice of curriculum of RE.

However, there some critiques of globalisation as westernisation for it is understood and often interpreted as colonisation, Americanisation and in the vocabulary of Iranian Ale Ahmad as westoxification. All these critics talk of globalisation as a hegemonic discourse, an ideology of supposed progress that masks far reaching subordination by the west (Petra & Veltmeyer, 2001). Some are seeing a danger of westernisation as a way of losing one`s identity and freedom. Even religious people like Christians have objected to a change to either non-confessional teaching of RE, for example, Swaziland and Zambia on the heterogeneous faith curriculum fearing that Christian values may be eroded and its heritage lost among the youth (Matemba, 2009).

2.3.4 The concept of political symbolism

Political symbolism is one of the ideologies that are influencing change in curriculum theory, design and practice. Following the background of change from mono- faith RE to multi- faith RE in Malawi, one would see that politics played a bigger part than the idea of fulfilling the aims of education. As a way of forcing Malawi government to bring RME which was new in the Malawi secondary school curriculum, the Muslim Association of Malawi used a political tool. The body warned that marginalisation of Islam might fuel political unrest in Malawi (Hussen as cited by Salanjira, 2003). The “unrest”, was clarified as the boycotting of political activities and children would stay away from classes for a week. Probably, in fear of losing the majority of the electorate, the Christians, the President, by then Dr. Bakili Muluzi allowed two types of curricula for Malawi secondary schools; BK and RME (Matemba, 2009). Curriculum is central to the production and maintenance of any political and social regime... (Weiner, 1994, p. 100). Politically, Malawi was a colony of Britain hence the curriculum theory, design and practice is similar to that of Britain. As Britain changed the curriculum from confessional to non- confessional and from homogeneous faith to heterogeneous faith, Malawi followed suit. One can conclude that colonial masters are still influencing education in their former mandates. Behind the curriculum, in many developing worlds, there is a heavy weight of a particular foreign political power. The control is usually in a form of releasing or withholding donation. Borrowing a policy and even involving international “powers” is a sign of political symbolism. Jansen argues that “construct of political symbolism on education policy in South Africa, is evidenced in the way policy invokes international precedence and participants on the development of various education

policies.” (Jansen, 2002, p. 204), say curriculum. On RE curriculum change, Malawi involved ideas from foreign countries, for example, Britain.

However, the change of curriculum may not only be because of political symbolism but pressure from international organizations on education policies, theories of globalization and the need to meet educational goals. Those who are advocating for multi- faith and non-confessional teaching argue that the mode helps the curriculum to meet educational goals.

2.4 Chapter Summary

The chapter has discussed the literature review in which it has shown different scholars; others opting for multi-faith RE while some scholars are opting for mono-faith RE. Different reasons have been given for their preference. The chapter has also discussed the concepts upon which the thesis discussion will be based. These are: Pluralism, Diversity, Globalisation and Political symbolism. The thesis will indicate whether multi-faith RE or mono-faith RE is in line with the concepts outlined. The next chapter will discuss the Research design and the methodology which the research employed. This is in accordance with the type and the nature of the thesis.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter describes and justifies the research design and methodology employed in this study. It first presents the research design followed by methodology. Issues of sampling and their justification are also presented including data generation methods and data analysis procedure. Data management, Credibility and trust worthiness of the study and Ethical considerations are also discussed. Last in this chapter is delimitation and limitations of the study.

3.1 Research approach

The study employed a qualitative research approach. A qualitative study employs largely an investigative process where the researcher gradually makes sense of a social phenomenon by contrasting, comparing, replicating, cataloguing and classifying the object of study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The intent of qualitative research is to understand a particular social situation, event, role, group or interaction (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 1987). In this case; it is the social situation which needs to be understood. The research design took the form of qualitative paradigm. This is because the research is a social science research and required interpretive data and views of individuals. People

have consciousness. They see, interpret and experience the world in terms of meanings; they actively construct their own social reality (Haralambos&Holborn, 1994). Another reason is that the research involved field work. “The researcher physically went to the people, setting, site or institution....record behaviour in its natural setting.” (Merriam 1998, as cited by Creswell, 1994, p. 145). The qualitative approach is in line with the design of the study which is case study. The focus of qualitative research is on participants’ experiences, and the way they make sense of their lives (Fraenkel&Wallen, 1990). By choosing this approach, the aim is therefore to understand multiple realities. This study aimed at using multiple cases that involved also triangulated data collection. Therefore qualitative research design was paramount to this study.

3.2 Research Design

The study used a case study design. A case study is described as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon with its real- life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (Yin, 1991, p. 231).

Multiple cases were used to explore the implementation of the dual-mode RE curriculum in Malawi primary schools. Four primary schools were sampled in this study. The case study took the mode of a collective study which include a number of single studies investigated jointly for the purpose of inquiring into an issue (Sarantakos, 2005, p. 211). The issue in this study was how dual mode curriculum is being implemented in Malawi primary schools. I chose the methodology of case study because the purpose for this

study was to investigate the underlying choices by the schools and how dual mode curriculum of Religious Education is implemented in Malawi primary schools as contemporary phenomenon.

The study was conducted in real life context because it was done in primary schools where either BK or RE syllabus is being implemented. It was a collective study because multiple cases were selected and studied. In this case four cases were chosen for the studies which were typical cases of schools implementing BK or RE. Two schools were for BK and another two were for RE of which three schools were Malawi Government schools usually called Local Education Authority (LEA) schools while one was a grant aided Mission school and commonly called as Full Primary (F.P) school. I used multiple cases in my research because Mertens (2005, pp. 238-239) states “ researchers need to base the design on either a single or multiple cases and establish the boundaries as clearly as possible in terms of who is included....” Multiple cases would help in conducting a comprehensive examination through cross- comparison of cases (McNamara, 1998). The research was based on four case studies named; multi-faith RE1, multi-faith RE2, mono-faith BK1, and mono-faith BK2.

In connection to qualitative research, I used typical case sampling. This is a method that is used if the researcher`s goal is to describe a typical case in which a program has been implemented (Mertens, 2005, p. 319). In this case it is the program of dual mode curriculum of RE which is implemented in Malawi Primary Schools since 2009. The typical cases are schools opting for either mono-faith BK syllabus or multi-faith RE

syllabus. Two schools were for multi-faith RE, and the other two were for mono-faith BK. Among the four case studies, three were from Government institutions and one was from Religious institutions, grant aided school.

3.3 Research Setting

The study was conducted in Blantyre urban schools and in communities around the chosen schools. The schools were chosen from the urban because the cities are places where people of different religious orientations merge. The research is tackling issues concerning religion, more especially, Christianity, African Traditional Religion and Islam in the area of curriculum implementation. The presence and influence of members of these religions may play a part in the choice of the curriculum of Religious Education in Malawi Primary Schools.

Blantyre urban is one of the places where you find people from different religious orientations; Christianity, African Traditional Religion, Islam among others. The place is a commercial city, hence a converging place for people from different religions. The research targeted primary schools from Blantyre urban. The schools are divided into administrative zones and there are six zones. Only three zones were chosen. It was planned that each zone would have a representative school but things changed because the schools following a multi-faith RE were few as compared to those following a mono-faith BK, therefore one zone provided two schools while two zones provided one school each. My research concentrated on these schools.

Two schools in one zone were of same category, government schools. Another zone provided a government school commonly called Local Education Authority (LEA). The last zone provided a school which was at a religious campus, and is a grant aided school commonly known as full primary school (F.P.). The research also targeted the community around the chosen schools. This was done to find out whether the community was involved in the choice of the syllabus implemented at the school and whether such a choice was due to their religious influence or not. Primary School Education Advisors (PEA'S) helped in providing information of the schools which were following mono-faith syllabus and those following multi-faith syllabus. These were the representatives of the Malawi government in the zones on Education matters including policy issues. One of the challenges I faced was the availability of PEAS in their educational zones. To curb the challenge I used the teachers who are zonal coordinators to give me information of schools following multi-faith RE and mono-faith RE syllabi respectively.

The other challenge encountered was the readiness and availability of teachers, head teachers as well as community members. When I arrived at some schools, I found that teachers and community members were busy with other meetings or tasks and others were not even present. As a result, I would meet some teachers after classes when they were tired. Other participants were unwilling to provide information. Others were so open that they would dominate the discussion.

To mitigate the challenges, I had to go back and make other proper arrangements with head teachers to organise their staff and community members. Other participants were encouraged to provide information willingly upon hearing that their views may change things in the curriculum as well as how the curriculum is managed. Those who were closed up I had to encourage them to give in their views and those who were dominating I had to control them so that other people would have chance to give their own views.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

One primary school was sampled in an educational zone and the research focused on Religious Education primary school teachers on how they choose Religious Education curriculum which they use in their respective schools and why they decided to choose that particular curriculum than the other. The choice of these teachers was because they are the direct implementers of RE curriculum. Teachers were taken from standard 1 to 8, therefore there were about 7 to 8 teachers on each focus group discussion. However in one zone, two schools were sampled because RE was taught also as in some zones there were no schools which followed a multi-faith syllabus. There were three samples, head teachers, teachers and community members. These were parents or guardians whose wards were learning at that particular primary school. About 4 to 7 community members were interviewed per school. Head teachers in sampled schools were interviewed because they are the ones spearheading the implementation of the RE curriculum in primary schools. One head teacher was interviewed.

The schools in zones were chosen based on convenience sampling. Convenience sampling also means that the persons participating in the study were (are) chosen because they are readily available (Henry, 1990). These were schools convenient to the researcher in terms of transport. For the community members, I chose those near the school for convenience sake. The Primary school Education Advisors (PEAS) in each zone were sampled out to provide information in the zones concerning which schools were following which particular syllabus hence I also used purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling was used because the PEAs were the ones who provided me with appropriate information hence I chose them with a purpose. He/she is the highest education representative readily available in the particular zones. Head teachers were chosen as the leaders of implementers of the syllabus in a particular school and teachers were sampled as the implementers of the curriculum at the grassroots level. Teachers were chosen by head teachers from any class from those available at that particular time. Hence, convenience sampling.

Also snow ball sampling was used. Snowball sampling is used to help the researcher find out who has the information that is important to the study. The researcher starts with key informants who are viewed as knowledgeable about the program (Mertens, 2005, p. 319). In this case I started with head teachers and RE teachers in the selected schools. Then I asked the head teacher as a key informant to give names of other people who had also knowledge in relation to the implementation of the program, thus dual mode curriculum of Religious Education. This is in accordance with Mertens (2005, pp. 319-320) that states “the researcher asks key informants to recommend other people to whom he/she

should talk based on knowledge of who should know a lot about the program in question.” These were parents or guardians who attend school meetings with some members of the school management committee (SMC).

3.5 Data generation methods and instruments

Multiple methods of collecting data were used in carrying out this research. These were focus group discussions of teachers and parents or guardians of the learners and interview for the school heads. Each group was interviewed once, that is of teachers and parents or guardians respectively. Also head teachers of a sampled schools were interviewed once, respectively. The discussions of teachers took about 1 hour to 1 ½ hours while discussions of parents took about 30 minutes to 1 hour. The focus group discussions and interviews all took place at a particular sampled school. Head teachers were firstly interviewed, except in one school where the head teacher was occupied, followed by focus group discussion of teachers then focus group discussion of parents and guardians. The schedule was like this because head teachers are the ones heading the implementation of a curriculum, teachers are implementers and guardians are called by teachers to choose and sometimes monitor the implementation of a curriculum in schools.

Head teachers, parents and teachers were used in this research because they were eligible to give the required information towards the implementation of dual mode curriculum in Malawi primary schools.

Focus groups are so essential for exploring a topic in depth, through group discussions, for instance, about reaction to an experience or understanding common complaints (McNamara, 1998) and in this case it was the implementation of dual mode curriculum which was a contemporary phenomenon, the discussion was a tool to hear their reactions, understanding common complaints as well as appreciations. Interviews with head teachers were that of face to face.

Focus group discussion of RE teachers was used because these teachers were the implementers of RE curriculum at the school. The focus was RE curriculum only hence RE teachers were the appropriate participants. The challenges encountered were firstly, not all teachers were willing to provide information. Secondly, sometimes it was difficult to find enough teachers present. However the challenges were overcome by encouraging them to provide the information willingly for betterment of our curriculum and our profession. Apart from that other arrangements had to be made for another meeting with RE teachers in order to have a good column.

Another focus group discussion (FGD) made was for the community, these were parents or guardians whose wards were learning at a particular primary school and members of the school committee. The community was involved in my research in order to find out whether the members of the community were really involved in the choice of the Religious Education curriculum as per stipulations of Religious Education implementation policy. Also their involvement helped in hearing their reaction towards

the syllabus being implemented at the school. The method had challenge, which is the coming of parents to the meeting. Mostly those who were readily available were the members of school committee. Data was still corrected since members of school committee were also parents of the wards at those particular schools.

In addition, face to face interview was used for the head teachers. This was done to generated an in depth data concerning curriculum implementation. Head teachers were taken as leaders of curriculum implementation at the schools. These definitely have enough information how dual mode curriculum was implemented at their respective schools. The challenge with these heads was that some were busy with other duties hence deputy heads were used in some cases to provide the information since they had also the information.

In all the two focus group discussions and the face to face interviews, a tape recorder was used to generate data and later on each data was transcribed in readiness for data analysis. In some sites I was taking down notes.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedure

Qualitative data generated from RE teachers, community members and head teachers was first transcribed. Each case was transcribed. Then the four cases were analysed by looking upon common things and differences based on the choices the schools were making on the curriculum, the reasons for their choice and challenges relating to their choices. Then the analysis was done based on the literature review and the concepts

which are; the concept of diversity, (Lynch, et al. (Eds.) (1992), concept of pluralism, (Futrell & Geisert, 2001), concept of globalisation, (Scholte, 2005) and concept of political symbolism, (Jansen, 2002) as discussed in chapter two. The analysis followed case study procedures.

As data was transcribed, there was case description which was done for each case. Partial data analysis was employed. Analysis was done as data generation proceeded. “A degree of analysis of recorded data is part of the research process that is employed in all types of case study.” (Sarantakos, 2005, p. 214). Major analysis was done after case descriptions. In analysing, common things and differences were identified across the four cases, also in the two cases of the same category like multi-faith RE and mono-faith BK. Also differences were noted on the same.

In the process of analysing the data I encountered a number of challenges. Here are the challenges and how I mitigated them. In the course of using these multiple cases, I was found in the situation of which I had generated a lot of data. In each case I had three samples, and then from the four cases that I used that means I generated data from twelve samples. In addition, the focus group discussions I used, especially of teachers, comprised of eight teachers in average and to take the views of all teachers in all four cases, was not any easy task. Other big challenge encountered was to transcribe the data from the twelve samples I generated. This was the situation because I had to tape record the data which I generated from all the twelve samples hence a challenging task. In order to mitigate these challenges of too much data, I had to summarise the findings from each

case hence having manageable data. On the issue of transcribing there was no another way I would do but to give myself ample time to transcribe. This was the case because I would not use someone else to help as the tape recorder I used was not clear enough for someone to use.

3.7 Data Management

There were two types of data that was generated. The data which was generated from two types of focus group discussions was done through tape recording. The two types of focus groups are; of teachers and guardians/parents of learners. Tape recording was done to make sure that I should not miss any information from participants and that I should not waste much time writing while the interviews were in progress, because that would have prolonged the interviews hence boring to participants. Then the data was transcribed on the computer and was stored in word format in the computer with labelled. Data was stored so that it would be used in the chapter of findings and discussion. Also data was stored for future reference.

The actual voice of the participants was stored in a tape. That was the same with the data generated through face to face interview. The other data from face to face interview was generated through writing on the writing pad with a pen. Then the data was rewritten on the computer and was stored in the word format in the computer with again a labelled file.

3.8 Credibility and trustworthiness

The researcher ensured trustworthiness through triangulation. According to Hamersley (2008), triangulation refers to the use of more than one approach to the investigation of a research question in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings. This study employed triangulation of sources for data generation. These are two types of focus group discussion and a face to face interview. The focus group discussions were for teachers of RE of the selected schools and another one was for the community members whose wards were learning at those particular schools. That was to ensure the authenticity of the data. The face to face interview was for the head teachers of the selected schools. All multiple sources aimed at minimising chances of generating wrong and bias information.

Furthermore, this face to face interview which is an in-depth interview enabled the researcher to generate 'rich' data. This is data that is detailed and varied enough as it provided a full and revealing picture of the reality of what is going on. This reduces the possibility of researcher's biasness and duplicity of information.

Also, "the trustworthiness of the study is there because the research tool (for focus group discussion) being used is consistent and stable, hence predictable and accurate." (Kerlinger, 2005, p. 154). The instrument is reliable because the questions used in all the four cases gave similar results hence the instrument is trustworthy or reliable.

In addition trustworthiness of the study is shown in the usage of verbatim quotations in chapter 4 for the findings. This shows that the researcher had an interface with participants during the study.

Lastly the researcher went back to some interviewees to check back whether what the researcher wrote after the interview was true and was what actually the interviewee said.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

I sought permission from the District Education Manager, Blantyre urban to visit the selected schools in the different zones. Consent was given by the chief PEA of Blantyre urban schools. Permission was granted by the issue of the introductory letter. I also visited the zonal PEAS in the chosen zones somehow notifying them of my presences in their zones and to get information. The head teachers of the sampled schools were first approached before meeting the teachers and parents of the learners. The head teachers were the ones organising the teachers and the members of the community for focus group discussions separately.

The participants were told that the research was about how the two types of syllabi of RE in Malawi primary schools were implemented. How the choice was done, why the choice was made and the challenges encountered. The participants were told that data generation would take maximum one hour since tape recording was used. Participants were encouraged to give their views because the information which they would give would contribute in the change of a curriculum and they shall be happy to see that the

information they gave had brought change. Many participants conceded to the view and gave information willingly. One of that participants commented that people had been coming to generate data but nothing was done but this time they are expecting to see their views being taken into consideration.

The information which was generated from the interviewees and focus groups was and would be treated with maximum confidentiality as the issues are sensitive since they have strings of politics, government and religion attached. Information generated would solely be used for academic purposes. Names of interviewees and schools will not be seen, letters and numbers will be used respectively instead. For example the schools are named multi-faith RE1, multi-faith RE2, mono-faith BK1 and mono-faith BK2. Teachers were labelled TR 1 or TR5. Community members were labelled PARENT 1 or PARENT 2 etc.

3.9.1 Access negotiation to research site

In gaining access I asked permission to relevant authorities such as District Education Manager for Blantyre urban with a backing of a letter from the head of department of Curriculum and Teaching Studies, Chancellor College. (See Appendix 1). The reference is used for the reader to verify the fact. The DEM referred me to the chief PEA who gave me a letter, granting me permission to visit the schools in Blantyre urban. He also provided me with a list of schools for each zone including names and phone numbers of the zonal PEAS for each zone. The PEAS in the zones provided me with information of which schools were teaching multi-faith RE and which ones were teaching mono-faith BK. PEAS and Head teachers accepted me upon producing a letter of permission from

the chief PEA at the DEM's office. Individual consent was sought to all those taking part in the case study. Other schools were visited first before the day of data collection to meet the appropriate people and establish the contacts while in other schools the same day of asking permission was the day data was collected.

3.10 Limitation of the Study

The first limitation was that the time frame was short so much so that I did not saturate the data generated. However due to triangulation of methods of data generation, I was able to come up with credible and trustworthy information. The other limitation was that the sample was small for I was not able to travel to areas like Mangochi district where there are numerous Muslims, and Nsanje where there are many people belonging to ATR mostly of M`bona cult. Nevertheless the small number of sites I travelled to provide the much needed data because of triangulated data sources. The availability of some participants at an appointed time was another challenge. I had reschedule meetings in order not to lose generating data from such participants.

3.11 Chapter Summary

The chapter has explored the research design and methodology. It has shown that the research used qualitative research approach because the study is a social science research which required interpretive data and views of individuals. Method of data generated and analysis resonate with qualitative paradigm. The research methodology was case study of multiple cases. Multiple cases helped in conducting a comprehensive examination through cross-comparison of cases. The sampling procedures were used. Data generated

procedures were interview of one on one and Focus group discussion. Data analysis was on commonalities and differences in the four cases. Ethical considerations were incorporated. Limitation of the research was included also. The next chapter will discuss the presentation and discussion of research findings from the four cases which were sampled.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.0 Chapter Overview

The chapter presents and discusses research findings from four cases of primary schools offering religious education in Malawi. The study was an exploration of how the dual mode RE curriculum, comprising Bible Knowledge (BK) and Religious Education syllabi (RE), was being implemented in primary schools. The BK syllabus is mono-faith in nature while the RE one is multi-faith (Salanjira, 2009). The four cases are presented as Case -1: Multi-faith RE School -1; Case- 2: Multi-faith RE School-2; Case- 3: Mono-faith RE school-3; and Case- 4: Mono-faith RE School-4. For each case, the presentation is divided into three sections: firstly, the choice between mono-faith and multi-faith RE; secondly, reasons for the choice of the RE syllabus; and thirdly, the challenges faced in implementing the chosen RE syllabus. This is followed by a comparison between the multi-faith and mono-faith RE schools.

Yin, (2003) as cited by Baxter and Jack (2008) suggests six methods of reporting findings in a case study. These include: linear, comparative, chronological, theory building, suspense, and unsequenced. In this thesis, a comparative method has been chosen. This is

because multiple cases were used and there was a need to find commonalities and differences.

The discussion is also done in relation to literature reviewed on RE and within a conceptual framework comprising the concepts of pluralism, diversity, globalisation and political symbolism as described and justified in Chapter 2 section 2.1- 4.

4.1 Case Study 1-4: Multi-faith RE School -1 and 2/Mono-faith RE School-3 and 4

These were the cases of schools which are offering either a multi-faith syllabus or a mono-faith syllabus of religious education in Malawi. This section presents a description of how these schools choose their curriculum choice of RE

4.1.1 Choice between mono-faith and multi-faithRe syllabus –school 1

This case chose to teach the RE syllabus which is multi-faith as opposed to the BK syllabus which is mono-faith. This choice was described by the head teacher that the choice was made by teachers and was supported by the community at a meetings as this:

Looking upon our community that it is a mixed community in terms of religions and that we have learners of different faith, I thought that it is good to offer RE to our learners than BK which will cater for one group. (Multi-faith RE 1- Head teacher, School 1)

The decision of the choice was echoed by one teacher in a Focus Group Discussion as follows:

At first we were teaching RE with three religions that is before PCAR came with BK and RE. Before this RE of three religions, the syllabus by then was just called Religion and it was only based on the Christian religion. The matter of the choice was first discussed among teachers and they preferred RE syllabus. The issue was brought to the community that also saw the importance of teaching RE. Then the community endorsed RE as a syllabus to be taught. (Multi-faith RE 1 FGD-Teacher-2, School 1).

The choice of teachers and the community on multi-faith RE as compared to mono-faith-RE might be because of the understanding of diversity in education. Mono-faith RE seems to limit the knowledge of the learners as they are exposed to just one religion. The community as well as teachers seem to understand that diversity of knowledge would widen understanding of issues among the learners, for example issues of peaceful coexistence. Misunderstandings of issues of religion have given spark to disparities in different countries and societies. This has effects on RE curriculum implementation.

4.1.2 Choice between mono-faith and multi-faith Re syllabus –school 2

Case Study 2 chose to teach RE based on multi-faith as opposed to mono-faith syllabus according to the Malawi primary school dual mode RE curriculum. This is what one teacher said during focus group discussion:

We choose RE because this is a mixed community. People are of different religion. That is why we choose RE which has different religions Christianity, Islam and ATR. Teachers firstly chose RE then brought the matter to the parents who endorsed the teaching and learning of RE (Multi-faith RE 2 FGD-Teacher 6, School 2).

It seems teachers understand the concept of pluralism that as the community is pluralist in nature, hence the multi-faith syllabus as it has a number of religions encumbered in it. By endorsing multi-faith RE syllabus by parents, it seems they had the knowledge of moving with the concept of pluralism. This accommodates the likes of many and of different concepts hence bringing in satisfaction and peaceful co-existence in the community and among learners as interests of different groups are taken on board.

4.1.3 Choice between mono-faith and multi-faith RE syllabus –School 3

This case made the choice to teach mono-faith RE syllabus as opposed to the multi-faith syllabus according to Malawi primary school dual- mode RE curriculum. This mono-faith syllabus covers content from one religion which is Christianity. The case was a government school and was teaching mono-faith RE. The background of their choice was that at first they were teaching RME as the case in all primary schools in Malawi. Teachers were having problems with RME in teaching Islamic section. Then they were sending their concerns to relevant authorities. They believe that the change of curriculum from RME to RE with two syllabi was due to their raised concerns as per the following views of a teacher during focus group discussions:

At first the content was huge, we had to teach Islam, ATR and Christianity within the same subject, and we had no knowledge of the content of Islam. The teacher's guide would contain Christianity, ATR and Islam we were combining and because of our complaint, that we would not understand other content, and the idea of choosing came from the headquarters, then we were communicated. (Mono faith RE 1, FGD-Teacher 2, School 3).

It seems the teachers lack an understanding of diversity in knowledge. The choice of a single faith would narrow the knowledge of learners while the choice of multi-faith is diversifying the knowledge there by increasing understanding of issues, for example, the way people live.

This case is a government school and it happened to choose mono-faith RE syllabus. The choice came after having an open day with parents and children. After the meeting many parents and children chose mono-faith RE as a learning area.

4.1.4 Choice between mono-faith and multi-faith syllabus - School 4

This case made the choice to teach BK based on the mono-faith as opposed to the type of Syllabus which is called a multi-faith syllabus according to the Malawi primary school dual-mode RE curriculum. This mono-faith syllabus covers content from one religion, namely, Christianity.

4.2 Reasons for the choice between multi-faith and mono-faith syllabus

4.2.1 Reasons for the choice of the multi-faith syllabus –School 1

Case study 1 chose to offer multi-RE after considering the faith composition of members of the community in which the school was located. The community was multi-faith in the sense that it was made up of members from various faith backgrounds namely Christians, Muslims and African Traditional Religion as major religions. As such, the school opted for the multi-faith RE syllabus. This reason for this choice was highlighted in Focus Group Discussion with teachers as follows:

We first discussed as teachers and we brought the matter to the community and they choose RE. We had a meeting with the community and they choose RE [as a multi-faith syllabus]. This is a mixed community; we have Christians, Muslims and people of ATR, it was proper to choose RE [a multi-faith syllabus] in order to cater for different Religions. (Multi-faith RE 1 FGD- teacher 7, School 1).

Thus, the multi-faith syllabus was chosen over the mono-faith one to cater for learners of different faiths. It was done to accommodate learners from different faith backgrounds. This was an acceptance of religious diversity and pluralism. Here diversity is exposed because there is variety of knowledge. Knowledge is expanded into different realms, in this case, into different knowledge of religions. As earlier pointed out in chapter 2, section 2:1, pluralism is the multiplicity of ideologies or values in our society which make people experience the world as fragmentary and contradictory (Wardekker&Miedena, as cited by Salanjira, 2003, p. 96). As a multi-faith community, a multi-faith RE syllabus would help learners to have peaceful co-existence in their community. This was observed by one of the teachers as follows:

RE [multi-faith RE] is the syllabus that will help the learners to appreciate other religions; hence peaceful coexistence. Learners will understand other religions. In Malawi we live as a mixed community and is different with other countries like Nigeria whereby there are particular religions in other areas. By knowing other religions we can live harmoniously. (Multi-faith RE 1 FGD-teacher 3, School 1).

The choice which the school had made reflects the need to meet education goals in Malawi. Any subject that does not meet education goals is taken as not eligible and not meeting educational standards. The choice of multi-faith RE is helping in meeting education goals because it is diversifying knowledge of religions thereby increasing understanding on religious issues. One of the aims of the school curriculum is to help

learners develop knowledge and understanding of the world and the society in which they live (IPTE, MIE RE, 2008). Learners will be in a position to understand the society because of diverse knowledge of religion since religion determines the way people live.

4.2.2 Reasons for the choice of the multi-faith syllabus -School 2

Case Study 2 chose to offer multi-faith-RE after considering the faith composition of members of the community in which the school was located. The community is a multi-faith and the school opted for the multi-faith RE syllabus after parental consultative meeting. This is what a teacher in a focus group discussion said:

We choose RE because this is a mixed community; people are of different religions that is why we choose RE which has different religions Christianity, Islam and ATR. (Multi-faith RE 2 FGD-Teacher 6, School 2).

The choice in this case seems to denote the knowledge and understanding of the concept of pluralist society which has pluralist interests and desires. The choice of pluralist religions would accommodate the interest of the majority thereby peace and harmony prevails.

This school chose RE, a multi-faith syllabus [and] then the school started teaching RE. This was done after the teachers had explained to the community that government schools have a choice between RE with three religions that is Christianity, African Traditional Religion and Islam and Bible Knowledge of one religion which is Christianity. The parents chose RE to bring equality among learners; that not only one

faith should be taught but different faiths, hence accommodating the interest of many.

Here is what the parent said during focus group discussion:

Everyone learns this RE; Christians, Moslems, they learn together. There is no division. At first Muslims were learning on their own and Christians on their own too. (Multi-faith RE 2 FGD-Parent 4, School 2).

Since different religions are learnt under one umbrella name “multi-faith RE” learners acknowledges one another’s’ faith hence living in unity and harmony. It appears the parent has an understanding of globalisation as universalisation is assumed to entail standardisation and homogenisation with world’s cultural, economic, legal and political convergence (Scholte, 2005, p. 57). In this case standardisation is demonstrated as multiple religions that are converged into one name called multi-faith RE syllabus hence standardisation.

Teaching one faith as in mono-faith RE meant favouring one faith over others. The community is a multi-faith community and the school is a government school, therefore teaching multi-faith RE was better than BK.

4.2.3 Reasons for the choice of the mono-faith syllabus - School 3

Case 3 chose to offer mono-faith considering the faith of the majority of community in which the school is located. The community had many Christians and therefore the school opted for mono-faith BK syllabus. This was stated by one of the teachers in a focus group discussion as follows:

I think the choice of BK is because many parents in this area are Christians. That determined their choice of choosing BK (Mono-faith RE 2-FGD-Teacher5, School 3).

For instant here the parents chose BK because majority has to rule that's why there was this idea of choosing and the choice should be done by the community that they may choose between BK and RE for their wards. Here parents chose BK that is why it was adopted as a choice subject. (Mono-faith- RE-FGD-Teacher 2, School 3).

The Choice of mono-faith RE shows that the people around case three have their own values and would like to maintain their values and identity. This is the case of those opposing globalisation as a means of universalism. Different people have their own values hence universalism defeats the issue of personal value and identity. Different countries or communities have their own identity and mostly would like to maintain that. This, as stated by Matemba in his contribution to a British journal that some nationals would resist changes creeping in because of globalisation as a way of maintaining their identity and not wanting to lose their values (Matemba, 2003). Christianity has taken roots in some communities and they would want to lose the value of Christianity which among others maintains that Christianity is the only true religion and forbids teaching other faiths as per survey done by Matemba in 2006. Many people around the case are Christians. A teacher during focus group discussion said:

Though few can choose RE but they may be defeated by the majority. Majority of the people are Christians possibly that contributed to their choice of curriculum. (Mono-faith RE 1-FGD – Teacher 6, School 3).

For instant here the parents chose BK because majority has to rule that's why there was this idea of choosing and the choice should be done by the community that they may choose themselves between BK and RE for their wards. (Mono-faith RE1-FGD-Teacher 2, School 3).

Globally, democracy entails the rule of the majority. The choice of the majority is the one that is followed. This is why the rule of the majority prevailed.

Second, the subject is chosen because it offers continuity from primary school to secondary school, as one teacher stated:

There is continuity to secondary schools when we are teaching BK than when teaching RE. BK starts from Form 1 up to Form 4 while RME starts in Form 1 but ends in Form 2 not reaching Form 4. (Mono-faith RE-1-FGD-Teacher 4, School 3).

This resonates with what Matembasaid, that some nationals would resist changes coming because of globalisation as a way of maintaining their identity and not wanting to lose their values. This is the reasons some countries are resisting change in RE curriculum of secondary schools like Malawi, Botswana where multi faith was introduced but has been opposed (Matemba, 2009). Secondary schools in Malawi are offering BK although some may want to choose RME, it has no continuity, it ends at junior secondary school level. Another reason was that BK is a bit easier for learners to understand than RE. This is because the wording for mono-faith RE is simpler than that of multi-faith RE especially on the section of Islam. Islamic faith contains words which are commonly used either in Swahili or Arabic languages.

4.2.4 Reasons for the choice of the mono-faith syllabus – School 4

Case 4 choose to offer mono-faith RE considering the type of the case. The case is a mission school hence eligible to teach mono-faith syllabus. This is what some of the teachers said:

This school is a Presbyterian school we suggested that we should take BK since the school is a Christian school. (Mono-faith RE 2-FGD-Teacher 2, School 4).

BK should be taught by those teaching in catholic and CCAP school so they knew that it will be BK but those in government schools were the ones who had to call the community on the decision.(Mono-faith RE 2-FGD-Teacher 4, School 4).

The reason for the choice is in agreement with what was already stated by Matemba in chapter 2 sub section 2:4. This is happening because of Christian influence which is rooted in other countries. Nationals would not like to change and lose some values of Christianity. One of the values of Christianity is that it forbids the followers to teach beliefs of other people, according to a survey carried by Matemba in 2006.

The choice of teaching BK was made by the proprietors of the school. The school was communicated during PCAR orientations by the PEA that all Mission schools should be teaching BK and Government schools have a choice to choose between teaching BK and RE but the choice should come from the parents. This why the school is teaching BK syllabus as it was stated by the other teacher:

This was discussed when we were doing PCAR training, they said that mission schools, will be teaching BK. It was a directive, they said BK should be taught by those teaching in mission schools so we knew that it will be BK but those in government schools were the ones who had to call the community on the decision of either BK or RE.

(Mono Faith RE 2-FGD-Teacher 3 and 4, School 4).

It seems mission schools do not want to lose their values and identity despite the global call of diversity and globalisation as internationalisation and universalism. The main aim

of establishing mission schools in Malawi was for evangelisation as stated by church history. Faith played a major role in the teaching of mono-faith syllabus as stated by one teacher in a focus group discussion:

The reason is that mission schools should be learning BK and they do not want other religions to interfere with their religion. BK should be taught by those teaching in Catholic and CCAP school so teachers knew that it will be BK. (Mono-faith RE 2-FGD-Teacher 4, School 4).

Thus the mission schools do not want that learners in their schools internalise other beliefs than their own. A global change that is affecting curriculum change does not affect the values and the identity of Christian faith.

4.3 Challenges faced in implementing the mono-faith and multi-faith RE syllabus

4.3.1 Challenges faced in implementing the multi-faith RE syllabus –School 1

A number of challenges in the implementation of the multi-faith RE were experienced by Case study-1. The challenges emanated from both teachers and learners. The challenges affected mostly the teaching and learning of the subject. Because of such challenges, many teachers said they would prefer teaching BK as mono-faith syllabus to RE as a multi-faith syllabus.

One of the challenges was that the multi-faith syllabus has terms which teachers were not familiar with, especially in the content of Islam. The teachers claimed that they lacked knowledge and understanding of some terms which made teaching difficult. For example, this is what one had to say:

I am a Roman Catholic. I find it difficult to understand some of the Islamic words. When I ask Muslim learners they are shy to explain the words (Multi-faith RE 1 FGD-Teacher 6, School 1).

Another teacher also made this observation:

I am a Roman Catholic, I find it difficult to understand some of the Islamic words. When I ask Muslim learners they are shy to explain the words.(Multi-faith RE 1 FGD-Teacher 6,School 1).

Even pronunciation of Islamic words may be difficult to us even to learners (Multi-faith RE 1 FGD-Teacher 5, School 1).

The difficulty of dealing with some Islamic terms was further corroborated by another teacher who commented that:

Language is a problem. During training at college we learned more of methodology but now the real words which we now meet when teaching, the meaning of those words and the pronunciation of the words is a challenge Also what is in the books and what is on the ground there is a contradiction. We do not know who are called to write the books. Those writing should be the people who really know the things. (Multi-faith RE 1 FGD-Teacher 6, School 1).

The challenge of difficult or unfamiliar Islamic words was compounded by the fact that Teachers' Guides for the multi-faith syllabus do not provide a glossary of meaning of the terms. Thus, teachers had problems in teaching, just as learners in the subject. The situation was also complicated by the fact that the school had no Muslim teacher who could help to interpret some of the terms as used in Islam. It was, therefore, noted that both teachers and the learners were not adequately furnished with enough information in this subject area. One insight from this case is that RE teachers were not adequately prepared to teach multi-faith RE syllabus during their initial teacher training program. Another challenge was that RE primary school teachers did not have in-service trainings, which would help them to share experiences, learn and discuss how they would go about teaching the subject. During their initial teacher training at the college, concentration was

on methodology than the actual content on Islam. Thus, multi-faith syllabus lack experts in Islam compared to other subject areas. Lack of in-service training for RE may reflect lack of interest in the subject by subject experts or policy-makers. This problem is negatively affecting curriculum implementation since teachers lack new ideas. The absence of a forum to share ideas has the potential to demotivate subject teachers.

The other point is that some learners, especially those of Christian faith background tended to negatively view the concepts of other faiths and as lies according to members of that religion. They did not accept what the teacher told them as a correct concept. For example, Christian learners reacted to the concept of Muslim on how the earth was created. When the teacher was teaching creation as a concept for Christians, the learners accepted but when teaching the same creation for the concept of Islamic faith, learners of Christian faith, who are in majority objected and shouted that, what the teacher was teaching them was a lie. Islamic concept of creation states that the world was made from water and seven worlds were formed and seven universes while man was not made straight away perfect, the perfection came little by little. The concept states that man was created in four stages in order to reach the state of perfection. The concept has some notions from Darwin which says that man developed little by little from smaller animals like fish to bigger animals like monkeys. This is because different human skulls in different generations show differences in the shapes of skulls from primitive to advanced human being, hence a proof that human beings developed in stages. Another Islamic scholar supported the idea because of the biological evidence of the development of man from the embryo in the woman's womb.

Christian concept of creation from Christian Bible states that the world was created by separating water from the land by God through words only. All the rest of creation including man was made in six days. Man was made after all the other natural things on the sixth day. He was made from the soil, breathed air in him and he became a perfect human being straight away. The woman was made later from the rib of a man (Genesis 1:1-28). Thus, learners' views tended to regard a teacher teaching a religion different from their own as not telling the truth. This was an example of learners understanding concepts from another religion using the standards used in their own religion and is described as ethnocentrism (Kottack, 1991). But when a teacher is teaching content from the faith of the learners, he/she is viewed as teaching the truth.

Ethnocentrism is the tendency to believe that one's ethnic or cultural group is centrally important. And that all other groups are measured in relation to one's own. The ethnocentric individual will judge other groups relative to his or her own particular ethnic group or culture, especially with concern to language, behaviour, customs and religion. The concept was also coined by William G. Sumner, upon observing the tendency for people to differentiate between the in group and others. He described it as often leading to pride, vanity, beliefs of one's own group's superiority and contempt of outsiders. This challenge of ethnocentrism was observed by one teacher as follows:

When teaching about one faith, for example Islam, Christian learners are not attentive. They make noise and they laugh, when it is time for Christian part Muslims make noise. (Multi-faith RE 1 FGD-teacher 1, School 1).

Another teacher of the same school observed this:

The problem is coming from home. Whatever their parents tell them about their religion is what they believe, keep and follow. What we tell them, they do not take that; they cannot change overnight. They base their beliefs on what their parents tell them and what their religious leaders tell them in churches or Mosques. If at home and in the church they had learnt harmonising situations things would be alright. For example, as I was teaching about creation in Christianity they followed but in Islam they shouted “you are lying” if they do not believe what I was telling them that means learning is not taking place. (Multi-faith RE 1 FGD-teacher 7, School 1).

From above extracts the issue of diversity is not told to the learners, that is why it seems learners are rigid to a particular knowledge. Apart from that, it seems learners are ignorant of the essence of learning a particular learning area. Although in colleges, teachers learnt the goals of education, it seems this knowledge is not transferred to the learners. It looks like teaching starts without telling the learners the aim or goal of education for the particular learning area, what the teacher and the nation would like to achieve at the end of the course. It appears learners are ignorant of the aims of education. Had it been that they had such knowledge they would be eager to accept diverse knowledge. For example, one of the goals of education is to equip the learners with skills, and help them acquire values and attitudes which enable them to become valuable members of the world and the society in which they live. (IPTE, RE, 2008). If learners have diverse knowledge of religion, this goal will be achieved. They would become valuable members in the society, who would consequently understand one another’s religion wise and co-exist in a society peacefully.

4.3.2 Challenges faced in implementing the Multi-faith RE Syllabus –School 2

A number of challenges in the implementation of the multi-faith RE were experienced by Case-2 as indicated by teachers and learners and mostly in the teaching and learning of the subject. Due to these challenges many teachers prefer teaching mono-faith RE to multi-faith RE. The following are some of the challenges experienced:

Firstly, teachers experience challenges as regards availability of reference books, especially on the part of Islam. Since in Islam women do not handle Quran and in urban schools there are more female teachers than male teachers, hence a problem. Related problem is that the Quran is in Arabic language which is difficult to comprehend. In addition, in the Quran there are big and unfamiliar words which give teachers as well as learners problems to understand and internalise them. Even the teachers' guide does not provide a glossary of Islamic terms. Thus, teachers and learners have problems in the teaching, learning and assessing process.

Secondly, the section of ATR has also limited resources. Sometimes it is difficult to find a resource person for ATR or to get information from ATR people. Often times, ATR textbooks are not available. In addition, the learning area lacks refresher courses and inset trainings for this RE. Other subjects have inset trainings but not with Religious Education. The learning area seems to lack experts. ATR has been included on the curriculum but has no experts to follow its implementation.

Thirdly, learners have problems to understand multi-faith RE because of unfamiliar words especially on the part of ATR and Islam. Because of this many learners have less interest in the learning area that is RE.

Furthermore it was noted that during examinations many learners shift instead of writing RE they write BK despite being enrolled for RE. They do that because they find out that BK is simpler than RE. In addition, Muslim learners are shy and they are not free to talk of their religion because of their minority they think their friends would laugh at them. This happens despite being encouraged by the teachers.

However, the choice of RE is good as compared to BK because it is giving opportunities to learners to have knowledge of different Religions; Christianity, African Traditional Religion and Islam within one learning area. This was observed in one of the teachers' focus group discussion as follows:

The point of choosing is not alright they would say all should be taking RE because in RE there is knowledge of other religions but in BK is only Christianity.(Multi-faith RE 1 FGD-Teacher 6, School 1).

RE is a full subject because it has got other element in this case ATR and Islam rather than having only one type of faith (Mono-faith RE 1 FGD-Teacher1, School 3).

It seems the teacher is in agreement with the writing of Salanjira (2009) that the choice of the subject should be in agreement with the aims of education that is to increase understanding and knowledge.

4.3.3 Challenges Faced in implementing mono-faith RE Syllabus –School 3

First, lack of inset trainings have made the teaching to be a problem and they lack new teaching skills, sharing experiences and motivation as it is done in other subjects. The subject is lacking the ownership by experts as manifested by teachers' lack of interest in the subject by teachers.

Second, the subject would have been interesting if the learner's books were accompanied by pictures of Bible stories. Pictures would facilitate the teaching by motivating the learners, enhance understand and bringing stories into real life situations.

Also shortage of teachers is contributing to the problems in the teaching of RE. This is because one teacher is taking all subjects per class hence one becomes tired then just prefers to teach only 3 Rs neglecting other subjects including RE. In addition to this, mostly RE is placed at the end of the daily time table. This affects the teaching and learning of the subject since teachers and learners are usually tired.

In addition, teachers observed that learners of Muslim faith do not concentrate when learning BK. They concentrate on what they learn after classes, that is, madras.

4.3.4 Challenges faced in implementing the mono -faith RE Syllabus –School 4

A number of challenges in the implementation of the mono-faith syllabus were experienced by Case-4, coming from teachers, head teacher even parents in the teaching and learning of the subject. Here are some of the challenges registered:

First, the school lacked the supply of Bibles. Although the school is teaching BK they are not supplied with the Bibles, only the teachers' guides are available. If teachers use their initiative of finding Bibles, sometimes they find other versions and not the recommended one; of Good News version which are compatible to the syllabus. Also, teachers' guides do not have the content, that is, stories of the Bible only references of verses, hence a need for a Bible for one to have the content. This was stated by a teacher in a focus group discussion:

Although Bible Knowledge was said to be taught in schools but we have no Bibles. The recommended Bible is good news Bible, and it happens that I have King James Version at home so for one to read to learners, they may not understand (Mono-faith RE FGD-Teacher 2, School 4).

This is political symbolism as stated by Jansen, (2002) that government introduces policies which are like symbols but the government does show political will to implement the policy. The Malawi government introduced the policy of dual mode curriculum of RE yet no effort is made to supply the schools with materials, for example, Bibles for the smooth implementation of the curriculum. Another challenge is that Muslim teachers have problems with the teaching of BK, this is because the teachers' guides do not contain much of the content but only references of verses. Hence, the Bible which provides more content is needed. Most of these Muslim teachers are glued to their faith, they are not comfortable to use the Bible. This is what Muslim teacher had to say:

Mostly when you are teaching you refer to the Bible as a reference. As a Muslim I do not know much of the Bible but I do not have options but to read the Bible so that I can explain well. I have a Bible I have no option more is verses Mono-faith. (FGD-Teacher 6, School 4).

The third challenge is that some learners, especially Muslim resist the teaching and learning of BK to the extent of going out of class during the lessons. Some learners force themselves to learn for the sake of examinations.

When you come to BK those learners from Muslim, they also hate that they do not want to hear such things because they always adore the Mohammad side so it brings some problems
(HT-mono-faith 2- school 2)

Here we teach BK, so when we are teaching, learners of other religions they do not like the teaching of BK. It is different from what they learn at their mosque. Acceptance is a problem, yet when it comes to the examinations they are supposed to write BK(HT-mono faith 2-school 2)

Furthermore, parents are not happy with the teaching methods of today. BK includes the method of making learners independent, providing more activities and research, hence learning by themselves. However, with a strategy of mostly using group work, parents are unable to monitor the progress of their wards. By making one learner write for a group, it is to the advantage of the one learner who writes in her/his notebook because he/she would use that for independent study and revision later on while the rest have nowhere to refer to, hence the performance of the rest is negatively affected. The following are the views expressed by some parents:

When they are learning they are put in groups and others do not understand because they learn in groups, they discuss in groups
(Mono-faith RE 2- FGD-Parent 4, School 4).

In groups only one learner writes in his or her notebook and present to the class and when studying only that individual who wrote and presented will study at home because he/she has the material, the rest will not remember. (FGD-Parent 2, School 4).

Another challenge was that BK is good to Christians and not to learners of other faiths such as Islam and African Traditional Religions because it concentrates on one faith. As a result, many learners of other faith shun the subject and it is loved mostly by those who are of Christian faith as it was said by one head teacher:

It is the school which is now catering learners of different religions; some are Christians and others from Islam. When we teach learners of other religions do not concentrate. Here we teach BK and when we are teaching, learners of other religions do not like the teaching of BK (HT-Mono-faith RE 2 School 2)

The other thing here is that there is high dominance of cultural practices. For them to take BK they found that it is an offence, it offends their cultural behaviour, because sometimes when you come to school you find a group of people coming from one village especially T/A (name withheld) they sing their traditional songs when they are going to a maize mill and back, they beat the drums and the learners respond to those songs so they move out of the classes so the whole school gets disturbed. (HT-mono-faith RE 2-School 2)

In addition, with BK, learners have knowledge of Christianity only and not the other religions. The essence of diversity in knowledge is not there. Learners are limited in knowledge in terms of religions.

4.4 Discussion and interpretation within a framework of pluralism, diversity, globalisation and political symbolism

This section discusses and interprets the findings from the four case studies presented above within a conceptual framework of pluralism, diversity, globalisation and political symbolism as discussed in chapter 2 section 2. The findings reflect some commonalities and differences between schools offering the multi-faith and those offering the mono-

faith curriculum option. These are based on the RE curriculum choices which the schools made, the reasons for their choice and challenges faced in implementing their curriculum choices. The discussion and interpretation follows a comparative approach (Yin, 2003; Baxter & Jack, 2008).

One insight from the findings is that the four cases reflected two types of schools of thought on what type of RE should be offered in schools in Malawi. These are schools that are for heterogeneous RE or multi-faith RE and those that are for homogeneous RE or mono-faith RE. (Matemba, 2005). It is argument of this study that these two types of schools reflect an acceptance or rejection of religious pluralism, diversity within the context of globalisation. However, the lack of curriculum support for the multi-faith RE option from the policy-makers reflects a form of political symbolism. This is because it was the government, through its policy-makers, that came up with the dual-mode curriculum of mono-faith and multi-faith RE to make it look good in the eyes of the proponents of mono-faith RE and those supporting multi-faith RE (Mwatsika, 2012). The lack of support for the implementation of the multi-faith curriculum option may indirectly reflect that the government is not willing to see its effective implementation.

The schools that chose multi-faith RE sought to widen pupils' knowledge and understanding of religions (Sookrajh&Salanjira, 2009). It also reflects an acceptance of the concept of diversity. Thus, the schools chose multi-faith RE in order to let learners be exposed to diverse knowledge, ideas and concepts from the three main religions of Malawi, Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religions (Ministry of Education,

2008). Through these three religions, multi-faith RE has the potential to create a platform of discussion of religion in diversity and as an important dimension of human and social life. This resonates with Warner's (2003) view that Religious Education in our time should provide the platform where a multitude of voices can converse with each other. Thus, learners of different faiths such as Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion have a space to share ideas and reflect on their religious commonalities, experiences and differences. Furthermore, learners have a chance to know how religion affects people's lives in the world and society in which they live (Steyn, 2004). It can be argued that the schools offering multi-faith RE realise that the teaching of different religions to learners is critical in the process of creating a society which embraces co-existence among people of different religions. A teacher in a multi-faith RE 1 pointed out that the teaching of multi-faith RE syllabus has an advantage to learners as compared to mono-faith syllabus as follows:

RE is the syllabus that will help the learners to appreciate other religions hence peaceful coexistence. Learners will understand other religions. In Malawi we live as a mixed community and is different with other countries like Nigeria whereby there are particular religions in other areas. By knowing other religions we can live harmoniously (Multi-faith RE1-FGD Teacher 7, School 1).

The same teacher went on to remark that:

This is a mixed community we have Christians, Muslims and people of ATR it was proper to choose RE to cater for different Religions (Multi-faith RE1-FGD- Teacher 7, School 1).

Furthermore, it can be argued that the choice of multi-faith RE by the two cases was in line with the concept of pluralism. Futrell and Geisert (2001) describe pluralism as the

condition of society in which numerous distinct ethnic, religious and cultural groups coexist amiably within one nation as fellow citizens. Pluralism is the wind that is crossing the world affecting nations, societies, down to individual human beings. Many countries are responding to this wave of pluralism showing that it is a global issue. Thus acceptance of pluralism is a recipe for peaceful coexistence.

Another insight from the findings of those schools offering multi-faith RE is the realisation of globalisation. Globalisation is used here in the sense of internationalisation as conceptualised by Scolte, (2005), and entails nations taking education internationally. What other nations are doing internationally is affecting education ontologically and epistemologically. The world is becoming a global village hence education is considered internationally. Globalisation has not left a stone unturned for different quarters of lives even in education in general, in; content, teaching, learning and assessment of Religious Education in particular. Jansen in Coleman, Graham-Jolly and Middlewood (2003, p. 44) observes that “state education’s external legitimacy requires it to invoke the language of globalisation; global connectedness and economic competitiveness.”

Thus, as the world is becoming a global village, with people from diverse religious backgrounds intermingling within the same geographical space, the content and the methodology of teaching Religious Education need to change to reflect that reality; a global change from mono-faith to multi-faith teaching of religion in schools. The multi-faith approach entails new teaching which is non-confessional. Ballan (2011) observes that educational departments globally are passing laws advancing non-confessional

teaching. For example, Sweden passed a new education law stipulating that public schools must teach their subjects in a “non-confessional” and “objective” manner. The law applies to all schools, including independent Christian and Muslim schools because they too, receive funding from the state (Ballan, 2011). This means the teaching should not aim at concertingto leading the learners to confess a particular faith (Hull, 2007). This was also recognised by Government of Malawi which in its 1985-1995 Education plans. Malawi government observed that BK was unsuitable for Malawi as it is a multicultural state, hence multi-faith would be proper and in addition, BK had confessional and not educational aims. During this study, some teachers expressed similar sentiments against mono-faith RE in the dual-mode RE curriculum as follows:

Schools should be taking RE. Because in RE there is knowledge of other religions but in BK, it is only Christianity. This choice of neglecting other religions is not good, its bias. Learners are deprived of their freedom. (Mono-faith-RE1-FGD-Teacher 6, School 3).

Another teacher also commented that:

RE is a full subject because it has got other religions in it. (Mono-faith RE 2-Teacher 1, BK2-FGD, School 4).

The views by the two teachers reflect that in line with globalisation, there is a need to move towards standardisation in content and methodology. Although content may be a problem as faiths differ from one society to another but a non-confessional methodology can fit in all nations. Globalisation in this sense would mean universalisation or uniformity of the approach to RE (Scolte, 2005). However, the notion of uniformity in approach could be seen to be in conflict with the concept of diversity and pluralism because standardisation may imply uniformity and convergence.

Nevertheless, the introduction of dual mode curriculum in Malawi primary schools is just a political symbolism. This is so because the syllabi are not well supported in human resource more especially on capacity building. This was echoed by different teachers in different focus group discussions. These are some of the extracts:

Another challenge we face is lack of INSERT as a result we fail to do well in other areas. Training would help us share experiences and learn methodologies of teaching the subject. Even these Islamic words we may not face problems. (Multi-faith RE-2-FDG –Teacher 4, School 2).

A teacher from another case called RE 1-T-FGD also emphasised on the need for INSERT and said:

Another thing is that this subject RE should have some INSERTS to discuss the problems we face and how to overcome them. Mostly we rush for Mathematics and science because they are difficult and we overlook other things... but we never had an inset for RE (Multi-faith -RE1-FGD-Teacher 5, School 1).

Another teacher also commented on the need to have INSERTS as follows:

INSERTS are organized by the office then they can organise someone to teach us on Islamic words. With this we can lessen the problems when teaching Islam (Multi-faith RE1-FGD- Teacher, 2, School 1).

Even teachers from cases of mono-faith RE saw the need of having INSERTS for RE as expressed by Teacher 7 and 1 in the mono-faith RE 1 case:

Apart from that there are no INSERTS or workshops for the subject. Automatically the subject goes down. We teach basing on the knowledge of the college work. Sometimes we are guided by teachers' guides. (Mono-faith RE 1 -FGD- Teacher 7, School 3).

Yes, we have INSERTS for Life skills, mathematics, English and other subjects not BK. (Mono-faith RE1-FGD-Teacher 1, School 3).

The introduction of dual mode curriculum is just a political symbolism, this is so because there is no effort from the government to include RE curriculum when planning for capacity building of teachers on different curriculum. Only RE is excluded. This shows that the teaching of RE was there for appeasement purposes not for reality. If it was not for political symbolism, seriousness would be seen. This was echoed by Matemba that for government wishing to satisfy the wishes of the majority [Christians] and the frustrated Muslims, introduced Bible Knowledge and RME in Malawi secondary schools (Matemba, 2008).

Another thing that shows that the teaching of RE is just a political symbolism is that the dual mode curriculum is not supported even in terms of materials for teaching, learning and assessment for example, Bibles, Qurans even printed charts. This was stated by a number of teachers. For example, a teacher from multi-faith RE 2 stated that,

Apart from that we lack reference books. For Christianity we have bibles but for Islam we do not have a Quran, according to the beliefs women are not supposed to handle the Quran. (Multi-faith RE 2-T5-FGD- Teacher 5, School 2).

Teachers from mono-faith RE had the same concern of lack of material support despite the introduction of the dual mode curriculum as stated by this teacher from mono-faith RE 2 FGD:

Normally we let learners read the passage in their groups then ask them questions on how they understood the passage in their groups but this time the teacher with one bible you read the passage alone and ask learners to answer questions in groups. (Mono-faith RE 2-FGD-Teacher 4, School, 3).

Another teacher supported the point that they do not have Bibles at their school as follows:

Although bible knowledge is said [claimed] to be taught in schools but we have no Bibles. The recommended Bible is good news Bible, and it happens that I have King James version at home so for one[me] to read to learners, they may not understand.(Mono-faith RE1 -FGD- Teacher 2, School 3).

Although other well-wishers supplied them with Bibles, but they do not match with the syllabus of Bible Knowledge and even the Christianity part in multi-faith RE. The intention of the Bibles by the Gideon International is different from the school's intention of Bibles, as these teachers said:

We receive Gideon bibles but they are in Chichewa yet in std 5-8 we teach in English, to use Chichewa bible is awkward. (Mono-faith RE 2 - FGD-Teacher 1, School 3).

Gideon International gives New Testament Bibles yet our curriculum has started from the Old Testament.
(Mono-faith RE2- FGD- Teacher 4, School 3).

We have [Bibles] but T/L Aid is not the bible only for example other subjects e. g Mathematics we are supplied with T/L Aids. With BK we do not have those supplies. Had it been we have charts like those found in churches which they use to teach children, learners would have interest. Even the teacher would be motivated to teach when he/she sees the charts. But they just bring teachers guides. (Mono-faith RE1- FGD, Teacher 2, School 3).

Another mono-faith RE teacher commented on the need to be supplied with supplementary teachings and learning materials to supplement the Bibles as it is the case in other learning areas:

TR2: T/L Aid is not the bible only for instance other subjects for example mathematics we are supplied with T/L Aids. But with BK we do not have those supplies. Had it been we have charts like those found in churches which they use to teach children, learners would have interest. (Mono-faith RE1 -FGD- Teacher 2, School 3).

All the concerns of different teachers on lack of teaching and learning materials when other subjects have got all the support from the government shows that the RE curriculum is there for political symbolism. The government is not committed to its own policy. Coleman said that “a head teacher from a certain school in Durban indicated that OBE really just need extra reading materials that is the real stumbling block.” (Coleman in Coleman, 2003, p. 139). OBE in South Africa failed because of lack of materials among other things. If this case is not seriously considered, dual mode curriculum would also fail. This applies to the teaching and learning of RE in Malawi primary school. Apart from the fact that primary schools in Malawi follow OBE system of curriculum, government is not supporting the curriculum adequately, as a result the teaching and learning process is not effective.

This lack of materials also affects the implementation of the dual mode curriculum in the sense that new methodology of teaching and learning of participatory approach is not seriously followed. What is happening now is that teachers are going back to the old system of teaching and learning with teacher centred approach, hence is digressing from quality teaching and learning. As this teacher 5 of mono-faith syllabus stated:

In participatory it is wrong to read the passage for the learners but the learners should read for themselves.... but we are forced to do that because of the problem of the bibles. (Mono-faith RE 2- FGD- Teacher 5, School 4).

Other teachers, on lack of materials as compromising the teaching and learning of the mono-faith RE had this to say:

When we [as teachers] read and explain that means we are going to old system. New system of teaching is that of participatory approach whereby learners are involved in the teaching and learning process (Mono-faith RE2-FGD-Teacher 2, School 4).

But we are forced to do that because of the problem of the bibles. That is to read the passage and explain it. Normally learners are supposed to be in groups and discuss the passage the teacher should just consolidate (Mono-faith RE2-T5-FGD- Teacher 5, School 4).

Even in teachers guide they write a little about the story [Bible story] so one needs a bible to have full understanding of the passage. (Mono-faith RE2-T4-FGD- Teacher 4, School 4).

This old system was that of teaching using teacher centred approaches while the new system of teaching and learning using participatory approaches which are also called learner-centred approaches as it is the case in other subjects.

Class allocation is one of the things that are also showing political symbolism. There is no seriousness in class allocation for good implementation of the curriculum. One teacher per class is negatively contributing to the teaching and learning process some subjects for example mono-faith RE or multi-faith RE. One of the mono-faith teachers said this:

If the government can allow us to be two or three teachers per class, education can go up and every one can work hard on the subject he/she has for learners to do well, as our friends in secondary schools do and even BK can be taught well for it is a good subject, it has good topics. They [those in authority] usually say the number of teachers is alright yet it is not alright (Mono-faith RE1- FGD- Teacher 7, School 3).

The same teacher also commented that the system of one teacher per class has negative impact on the teaching and learning of other subjects mono-faith RE inclusive as the subject is mostly put at the end of daily class time table.

Teachers mostly are tired to teach all the subjects and mostly BK is placed at the end of the time table, learners do not learn the subject because of overworking, one teacher per class, the teacher is tired and he/she does not teach the subject. (Mono-faith RE1-T7-FGD- Teacher 7, School).

However teachers are optimistic that this research will bring a change to the problems they are facing as indicated by a teacher from mono-faith background. Some have been coming to find out how we are using the books and when we give our views we find out that those ideas are not implemented. This time we shall be happy if this research of BK will change things, our views being taken care of. (Mono-faith RE1-FGD-Teacher1, School 3).

4.5 Synthesis of common challenges among the four cases

One common challenge faced by both multi-faith and mono-faith syllabus is lack of expertise support. The syllabi seem to have no experts compared to other syllabi of other learning areas who frequently conduct INSERTS to boost the teaching of those areas but this is not the case with mono-faith BK and multi-faith RE. Many government schools who choose Multi-faith RE are returning to mono-faith BK defeating the purpose of education goal. This shows that there is no encouragement and guidance from experts. A teacher from multi-faith RE-School- 1 expressed a need for INSERTS as follows:

Another challenge we face is lack of in service trainings as a result we fail to do well in other areas. Training would help us share experiences and learn methodologies of teaching the subject. Even with these Islamic words we may not face problems. (Multi-faith-RE2-T2-FGD-Teacher 2, School 2).

Even mono-faith RE teachers expressed concern over the teaching of the subject because of workload, one teacher per class and that BK is not considered much as it is usually put at the end of the time table when teachers are already tired. The problem of lack of inset trainings is contributing to improper teaching and lack of interest by teachers. This was observed during different focus group discussions by teachers:

Teachers mostly are tired to teach all the subjects and mostly BK is placed at the end of the time table, learners do not learn the subject because of overworking, one teacher per class, the teacher is tired and he/she does not teach the subject. Apart from that there are no insets or workshops for the subject. Automatically the subject goes down. We teach basing on the knowledge of the college work. Sometimes we are guided by teachers guide (Mono-faith RE1- FGD- Teacher 7, School 3).

We have inset for Life skills, mathematics, English and other subjects not BK. It seems it is the only subject that is neglected in terms of curriculum refresher courses (Mono-faith RE1-FGD- Teacher 2, School 3).

If education stakeholders in Malawi would let the subject die then some goals of education will not be realised. Learners will not understand how different people understand the world and the society in which they live. Steyn (2004) advocates for Religious Education as an education activity that is having the syllabus of different religions which helps learners to know how religion affects the world and society in which we live. Peaceful co-existence may be a challenge as one of the major causes of wars in the world is the issue of religion. For example, war in Central African Republic (war between Christians and Muslims). In Nigeria, Bokohalam an Islamic extremist group fight Christians. Palestine-Israel war is also a religious issue but in the face of land.

In most cases where there are Muslims and Christians there is a cold war of faith. This is manifested in the RE classrooms. This is what a teacher from multi-faith RE said:

When teaching one sect for example Islam, Christians are not attentive they make noise and they laugh when it is time for Christian part Muslims make noise (Multi-Faith RE 1-FGD-Teacher1, School 1).

To curb this conflict, Religious Education should play a role, more especially a multi-faith RE, for it will accommodate different faith. Different people still consider that Religious Education is essential in a society as it meets education goals in different areas. This goal of education of equipping learners with skills, and help them acquire values and attitudes which enable them to become valuable members of the world and the society in which they live, will help learners understand one another and respect one another as regards different faiths thereby peacefully co-exist. The promotion of teaching multi-faith RE is in line with diversity. Learners will have a diverse knowledge in the area of religion rather than one kind of religion. Diversity widens knowledge, let alone understanding of issues of religion thereby promoting peaceful co-existence among people of different faith. The need for the teaching of multi-faith RE cannot be overemphasized in a global world where people of different cultural and religious background are supposed to live together and interact, hence the need to understand one another in the area of religion thereby understanding how people live. Life of a people in terms of behaviour, dressing, the type of life being lived, the type of food taken, in fact the whole social life is determined by religion.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented, discussed and interpreted the research findings from the four cases. It has focused on the choices made. The major insight is that in the three schools, the choice was made by the community in conjunction with teachers while in one case it was the proprietors of the school. It has also discussed reasons for choices and challenges faced in implementing the curriculum choice. Its main argument is that the introduction of dual mode curriculum of Religious Education has met challenges in its implementation. Will it survive? Unless it receives much support from the government and the experts of the curriculum. The subject should not be taken for political symbolism. The curriculum is important because it compliments some goals of education. Dual mode has not been a strange thing in education circles. In secondary schools, there has been a dual mode in sciences, pure science and general science and it worked because it had support though with other challenges. The factor of faith which mostly determined the choice of the mode of the RE curriculum in the cases observed is not an issue to deter the implementation, after all the introduction of the dual mode was made to solve the issues of faith. Malawi is a global world hence a need for diverse knowledge in terms of religion. A pluralist society needs pluralist knowledge of religions. The next chapter will discuss the conclusion, implication and recommendations of the study based on the findings.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Chapter overview

This chapter presents conclusions, implications and recommendations based on the findings of the study on the implementation of the dual-mode RE curriculum in Malawi primary schools. It covers conclusion based on the research questions of the study, implications for RE curriculum policy and practice, recommendations and areas for further study.

5.1 Conclusions of the study

Firstly, the purpose of this study was to explore how dual mode curriculum is being implemented in Malawi primary schools. This was based on how the choice of the curriculum was done. That includes the ones choosing and the procedure which was followed. Then, the reasons for their choice of a particular syllabus and later, it was the challenges encountered because of the choice. This thesis was based on the following research questions. The main research question was, “How is the dual mode RE curriculum being implemented in Malawi primary schools?” The other questions are: What choices are schools making in implementing the multi-faith RE and mono-faith RE syllabi? Why are schools making such choices? What challenges are the schools encountering with the type of the syllabus they are implementing?”

On the question of how the dual mode RE curriculum is being implemented in Malawi primary schools, it can be concluded that it is implemented according to the policy of Malawi government which stipulates that public schools which are government schools have a mandate to choose between the multi-faith RE curriculum and mono-faith RE curriculum. The choice should be made by the communities around the schools not by the teachers and head teachers of the schools only.

On the other hand private schools which are Grant aided mission schools will not have choice but to teach mono-faith RE according to proprietors' decision. Government schools choose between mono-faith RE and multi-faith RE through the communities around the schools. Grant aided schools had no choice but to teach mono-faith RE. However, some members of the community and teachers in grant aided schools preferred the teaching of multi-faith RE because it accommodates diverse of faiths. On the question of what choices are schools making in implementing the multi-faith RE and mono-faith RE syllabi, it can be concluded that most government schools opted for mono-faith RE, few schools which the researcher had found had chosen multi-faith RE. Two government schools from different educational zones chose multi-faith RE. The schools chose multi-faith RE after teachers and head teachers had embraced the concept and it was delivered to the community around the schools through representatives who endorsed the teaching of multi-faith RE. In these cases, the survival of multi-faith RE rests in the hands of head teachers who had conceptualised the goodness of teaching multi-faith RE. On the other hand, one case which is a government school chose mono-faith RE. The choice came about when both wardens of the learners and learners chose mono-faith RE during open

day activities. The other case is a mission school, the school had no choice but to teach mono-faith RE as it was decided by the proprietors of the school. Thus, in the researcher's view the learners are deprived of diversity of knowledge.

On the question of why schools are making choices between mono-faith and multi-faith RE, it can be concluded that the cases had their own reasons for the choice. Those cases which had opted for multi-faith RE did that because the school happened to be in a mixed community with people of different religious orientations; Christianity, Islam, African Traditional Religion just but to mention a few. The teaching of multi-faith RE would cater for the interest of different people than the teaching of mono-faith which would accommodate the interest of one group of people. The teaching of multi-faith RE would help in the peaceful co-existence because learners would have knowledge and understanding of different faiths, hence would accept one another in one's faith. The case which chose mono-faith RE despite being a government school did that because many people around the school are of Christian faith hence they opted for the mono-faith RE.

The other reason is that mono-faith RE has continuity to secondary school curriculum for both junior and senior classes. The case which is a mission school was teaching mono-faith RE because the proprietors of the school had already directed that the school should be teaching mono-faith RE. The reason was that the schools were opened for education as well as to spread the faith. This is done through, among others, the teaching of mono-faith RE.

In reference to the question of challenges schools are encountering with the type of the syllabus they are implementing, it can be concluded that the cases had their own challenges. Challenges encountered by the multi-faith RE schools, were that; the implementation of the curriculum was a challenge because of the component of faith. Teachers and learners failed to understand some Islamic words even to pronounce them. Teachers would not find meanings of words even in the glossary of learners' books as well as teachers guides. MANEB examinations results were not good in these schools because learners would not do well because of multi-faith RE especially the component of Islam. Availability of Quran was a challenge with attachments that women are not supposed to hold a Quran and that the book is mostly in Arabic language. Teachers lack adequate knowledge to handle the subject as mostly at the college it was methodology and there were no enough books for the content of other religions such as Islam and ATR. Lack of INSERTs contributed negatively to the teaching of multi-faith RE as teachers lacked new skills and knowledge hence demotivating them.

The teaching of mono-faith RE has also the challenges such as lack of required Bibles. Although the curriculum of RE dual mode was instituted, there has been no supply of Bibles of recommended version for study in schools. Learners who are not of Christian faith together with their parents are not happy with mono-faith RE. Teachers who are of Islamic faith are not happy to teach mono-faith RE. Lack of INSERTs makes teachers lack new skills, knowledge and motivation hence negatively affecting the good implementation of the curriculum.

In summary, it can be concluded that the implementation of dual mode RE curriculum in general is having problems because of lack of government support for curriculum in terms of resources. The experts of the subject are not interested to closely monitor the implementation of RE curriculum and even advise and encourage the implementers accordingly. The introduction of the curriculum seems to be there for political symbolism. Teachers seem to start teaching the content of RE curriculum without discussing the aims of teaching RE as a result learners do not find it worthy learning the lesson. The essence of the teaching of RE curriculum is not disclosed among learners, therefore to learners the subject is not important because to them the curriculum will not help them for their immediate challenges.

5.2 Implications of the study

The findings of this research have implications for the policy as well as for practice of RE curriculum. The formulation of dual mode RE curriculum was a beginning of a good move towards education as multi-faith curriculum has a greater part in fulfilling educational goal of Malawi. It also gives room for diversity and pluralism, hence meeting the global standards. However, the introduction of dual mode has not been seen as of assistance to education sector and more over to implementation of RE curriculum because there was no follow up on the policy. In addition, there was no material and human resource support. Teachers had no INSERTs which would have provided teachers with new skills, knowledge and a forum to share experiences and even to find encouragement from experts of RE curriculum. Therefore, the research is an eye opener

to the education policy makers to track down the implementation of the RE curriculum policy in order to find out the success and challenges of this RE curriculum policy.

As regards practice, the implication is that many government schools that had chosen multi-faith RE changed and opted for mono-faith RE. The reason was that teachers had challenges in teaching the multi-faith RE. There is need for policy implementers (teachers) to do things according to policy especially on the area of curriculum in order to meet goals of education otherwise they may find themselves working outside goals of education. This calls for a shared vision on the particular curriculum in order to appreciate the need for that particular curriculum.

5.3 Recommendations

The researcher through the findings of the study makes the following recommendations:

- The multi-faith curriculum should be encouraged in Malawi primary schools so that learners acquire diversity of knowledge. As we are living in a pluralist world, learners should be exposed to pluralist religions. Diverse knowledge and pluralist religions would help our learners to fit in the global world. Another justification is that some goals of education will be realised in the teaching of dual mode Curriculum, especially the teaching of multi-faith curriculum.
- Education policy makers need to organise INSERTs for dual mode RE curriculum so that the curriculum should not die a natural death as it has an important part in fulfilling the goals of education in Malawi.

- for smooth implementation of the curriculum and for its sustainability, Education policy makers should support the curriculum by providing material resources as well as human resource, after its formulation.
- The Department of Teacher Education (DTED) and Teacher Training Colleges should include enough content for RE more especially in the areas of ATR and Islam. This will enable pre-service teachers graduate from college with adequate knowledge to handle the dual mode curriculum.
- Government schools should be encouraged to handle multi-faith curriculum so that it should not die from the Malawi primary school curriculum.

5.4 Areas for Further study

Therefore I recommend that the next research be done on:

- How many schools are teaching multi-faith RE and how many are teaching mono-faith RE? This will help to see the number of schools opting for mono-faith RE and those opting for multi-faith RE. This will help curriculum developers to make informed choice whether to continue with dual mode or single mode.
- . An investigation whether to make multi-faith RE to be compulsory in government schools as it is a compulsory to mission schools to teach mono-faith RE. In making multi-faith RE compulsory, it will help the multi-faith RE to survive on the curriculum. By knowing the number of schools taking mono- faith and multi-faith respectively, that will help curriculum developers to have stable number of books to be printed for either multi-faith RE or mono-faith RE. It has been found that many multi-faith RE books were printed and distributed in

schools yet the schools had switched on to mono-faith RE hence a waste of resource.

- A survey on the likings of learners between multi-faith RE and mono-faith RE. This sample was left out in my research but it was found out that the choice of learners themselves had impact on the implementation of dual mode curriculum especially those in an examination class.
- A research on the impact of RE on the lives of learners. That is whether RE is really contributing in meeting the three goals of Education in Malawi curriculum. For example to develop learners morally, spiritually, intellectually and physically.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Introductory letter for data collection

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI



Chancellor College
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND TEACHING STUDIES

To: Whom It May Concern

From: Head of Curriculum and Teaching Studies Department, Chancellor College,
University of Malawi.

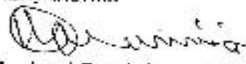
Date: 16th May, 2013

Letter of Introduction for Patricia Khumbanyiwa

This is a letter of introduction for Patricia Khumbanyiwa as our Master of Education student in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching Studies, Faculty of Education, Chancellor College. She is doing research for her thesis as part of the requirements for an award of an M.Ed. She will need assistance to access and collect information for her study. Please assist her accordingly.

For further information, please contact the undersigned.

Many thanks


Macloud Frank Salanjira (PhD)
Head of Curriculum and Teaching Studies Department
Chancellor College
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Tel: 0881030099



Appendix 2: Interview questions for teachers

1. Which curriculum of Religious Education are you following at this school between Bible Knowledge and Religious Education?
2. What procedures did you follow in choosing the curriculum which you are following?
3. Do you know what is in the policy of Religious Education curriculum concerning the implementation of the curriculum?
4. Why have you chosen the curriculum which you are following?
5. Do other stake holders of the school have a say on the Religious Education curriculum?
6. What are the views of the community around this school concerning the curriculum which you are following here?
7. What challenges are you encountering with the type of the curriculum you are implementing ;
 - i From yourselves as Teachers of Religious Education
 - ii From the learners
 - iii From the community around the school.

Appendix 3: Interview questions for parents

1. Which subjects are your wards taking between BK and RE?
2. Were you called by the school to give out your views on whether your wards should be learning BK or RE?
3. Do you know what the policy say concerning the choice of these two subjects, BK and RE?
4. Are you happy with what your ward is learning?
5. Personally which subject would you like your ward to be studying and why?

Appendix 4: Interview questions for head teachers

1. What mode of curriculum is your school following between Bible Knowledge and Religious Education?
2. Do you have any document that is stating how Religious Education should be implemented in the Primary schools?
3. What procedures did your school follow when choosing the type of curriculum you are following?
4. Why did the school decide to follow the curriculum you are using?
5. Did other stake holders of the school say anything concerning your choice of the curriculum
6. What was the reaction of the following concerning the choice of the curriculum?
 - i other teachers in this school
 - ii learners of this school
 - iii community around the school
7. Did you ever encounter challenges because of the choice of the curriculum you are following?