

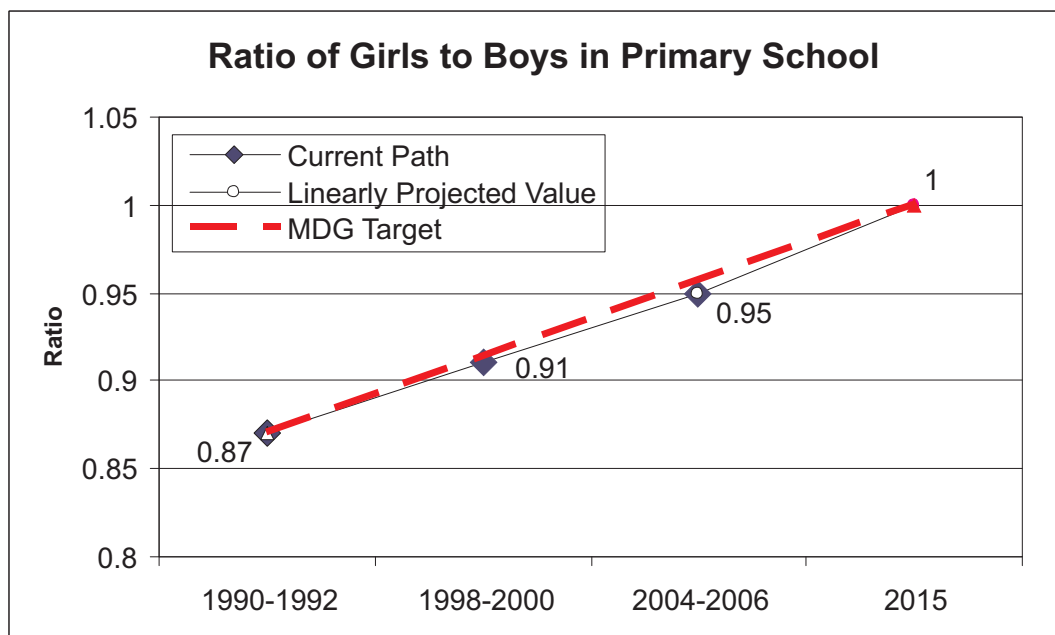
Goal 3. Promote Gender Equality and Empowerment

Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary school and at all levels, preferably by 2005 and at all levels by 2015.

Indicator : Ratio of Girls to Boys in Primary education.

Chart 9: Ratio of Girls and Boys in Primary School



Source: 1992, 2000, 2004 MDHS, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

The ratio of girls to boys in primary school has increased from 0.87 in 1992 to 0.91 in 2000 and further to 0.95 in 2006 as seen in Chart 9 above. The projected figure shows that by 2015 a ratio of 1:1 will be reached thereby meeting the MDG target. This trend therefore shows that gender disparity, in aggregate terms, will have been achieved at primary education level.

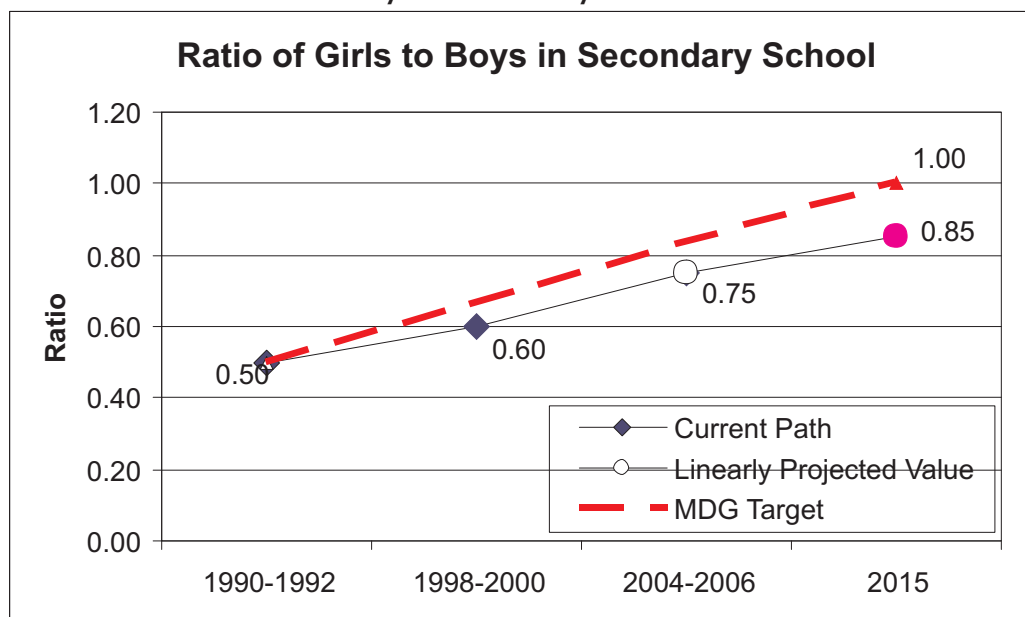
Chart 10 below shows that the ratio of girls to boys in secondary school has moved from 0.50 in 1992 to 0.60 in 2000 and 0.75 in 2006. The projection shows that a ratio of 1 will not be attained by 2015. This implies that the elimination of gender disparities remains a challenge at secondary level, which in turn affects the ratio of girls to boys at tertiary level.



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Indicator : Ratio of Girls to Boys in Secondary education.

Chart 10: Ratio of Girls to Boys in Secondary School



Source: 1992, 2000, 2004 MDHS, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

The trend above seems to reveal that the education system loses a significant number of girls with progressive levels of education. The reason for this is that many girls dropout out of school or repeat as they progress through the grades in primary education, thereby resulting in low girl intake at secondary level and consequently at higher education level. Therefore, the attainment of gender parity at primary education is in aggregate terms and abstracts disparities between classes in primary education.

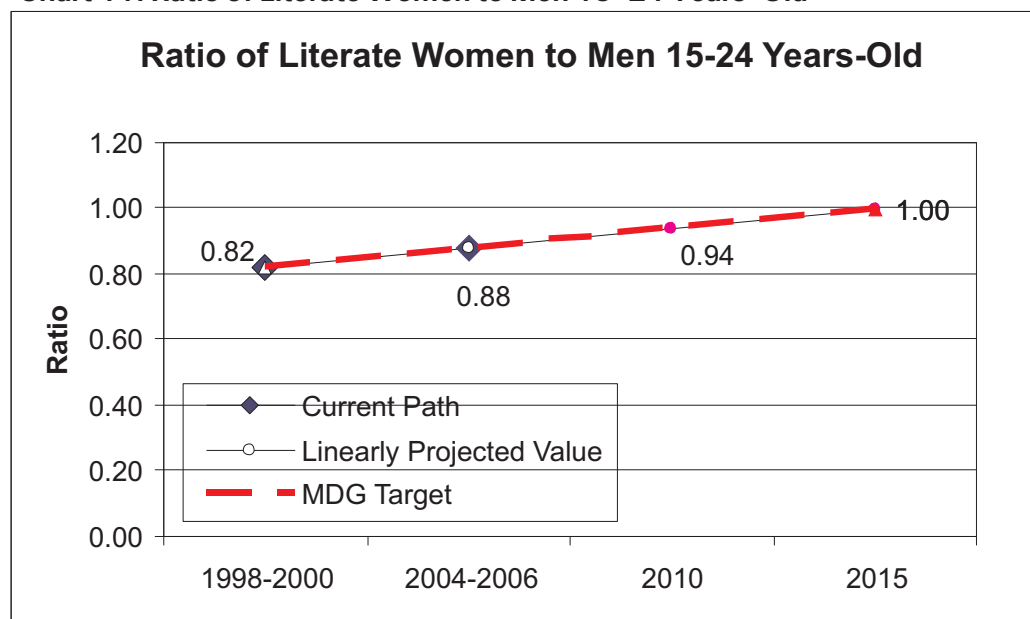
The education sector has for the past years been implementing a number of interventions to address gender disparities at all levels of education some of which include: school feeding programmes, school health and nutrition programmes and direct support to schools. However, the results shown on the figure above seem to suggest that the impact of these interventions on gender disparities are yet to filter through the various levels of education. There is therefore need to put strategies in place that will ensure that the targeted interventions are having impact at all levels of education.



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Indicator: Ratio of Literate Women to Men 15-24 year olds

Chart 11: Ratio of Literate Women to Men 15- 24 Years- Old



Source: 1992, 2000 and 2004 MDHS

Note: The 2004-2006 value is the average of 0.86, 0.91 and 0.88 which are ratios for 2004, 2005 and 2006 respectively.

In order to achieve gender equality, the disparities between girls and boys in all spheres of education need to be eliminated. The ratio of literate females to males 15-24 years-old has increased from 0.82 in 2000 to 0.88 in 2006. Assuming the same rate of improvement continues, the ratio of literate females to males would reach equality in 2015 as shown in Chart 11 above.

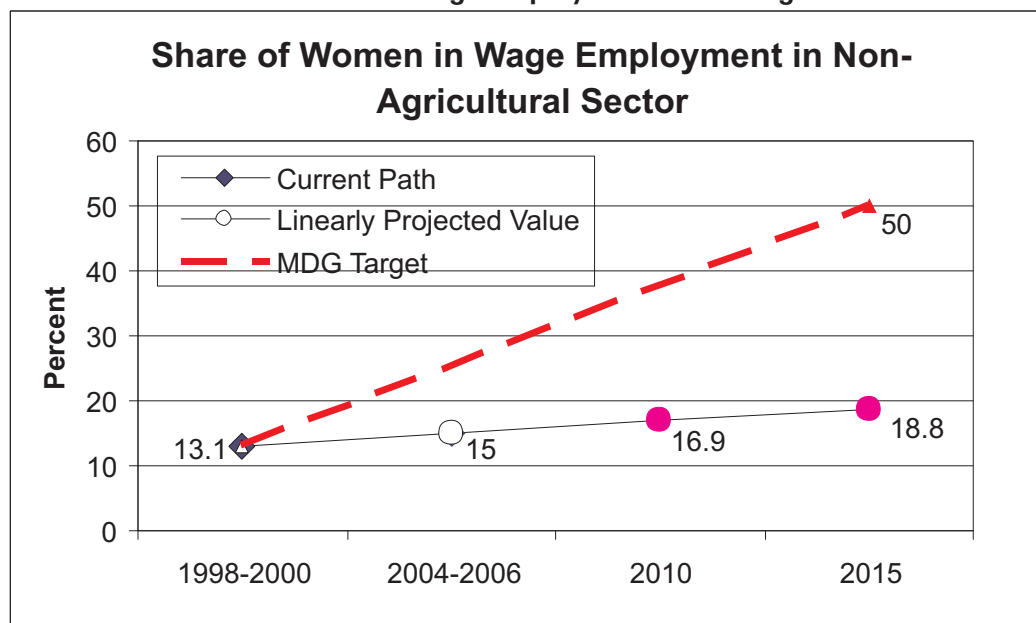
Indicator: Share of Women in Wage Employment in the Non- Agriculture Sector

It has been widely accepted that gender inequality exists in Malawi and that this status quo affects women more than their male counterparts. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy clearly recognizes that poverty, social vulnerability and gender inequality cannot be divorced from each other. Gender inequalities in accessing productive resources, development opportunities and decision making affect economic growth and development. Malawi has a gender development index of 0.374, which is an indication that large disparities between men and women exist. Women who constitute about 51 percent of the population are marginalized in social and economic spheres such that they are unable to effectively contribute to social, economic and political development.

Strongly related to the above scenario is the high illiteracy level among women (56 percent as compared to 28 percent for men). This is initially fuelled by high girl drop out rates from the formal schooling system, a trend that eventually feeds back into the vicious cycle where one will once again expect to have very few women in formal employment.

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Chart 12: Share of Women in Wage Employment in non- Agricultural Sector



Source: 1998 and 2005 IHS

Chart 12 above shows the current status and trends in the share of women in wage employment in the non-agriculture sector as well as projections to the year 2015. Women's share in wage employment in the non-agriculture sector has moved from 13 percent in 2000 to 15 percent in 2006. This trend seems to suggest that there has been very little improvement with respect to the share of women in wage employment in the non- agriculture sector. Hence, Malawi is unlikely to reach a target of having an equal ratio of men and women in wage employment as projections show that women's share in wage employment will be 19 percent by 2015.

Challenges

As noted above, holistic attainment of elimination of gender disparities in the education sector has been slow. Below are some of the challenges faced:

- High dropout rates especially among girls in primary schools due to long distances to schools, especially in rural areas. This poses a security challenge to girls who are prone to sexual abuse among other cases of violence on girls.
- Low capacity in the education sector to implement gender mainstreaming strategies at all levels
- Inadequate policies that are pro active in addressing gender disparities in the education sector (e.g. selection policies) especially at secondary and higher levels of education.
- Poor learning environment which affects girls in primary and secondary schools (e.g. sanitary facilities) especially girls undergoing through adolescence.

Policy Framework and Strategies

In an effort to eliminate gender disparity challenges as noted above, the following strategies have been put in place:

- Establishments of gender focal points at all education levels, including education management.
- Construction of girls boarding facilities in secondary schools so that distance to schools

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for girls is reduced.

- Construction of new primary schools in rural areas to reduce school distance.
- Rehabilitation of primary and secondary schools to improve on learning environment (including water and sanitary facilities)
- Expansion of girls boarding facilities in teacher training institutions so that numbers of female teachers is increased specifically targeted for rural area deployment. These teachers apart from teaching are also expected to role model for girl pupils and students.
- Revision of the re-admission policy in 2006, which makes it friendly for students who withdraw on pregnancy grounds.
- Introduction of equitable selection policy at secondary schools (i.e. girls' alike boys' share 50% of student places) and handicapped entry requirements for girls in higher education institutions.

Indicator: Proportion of Seats Held by Women in National Parliaments

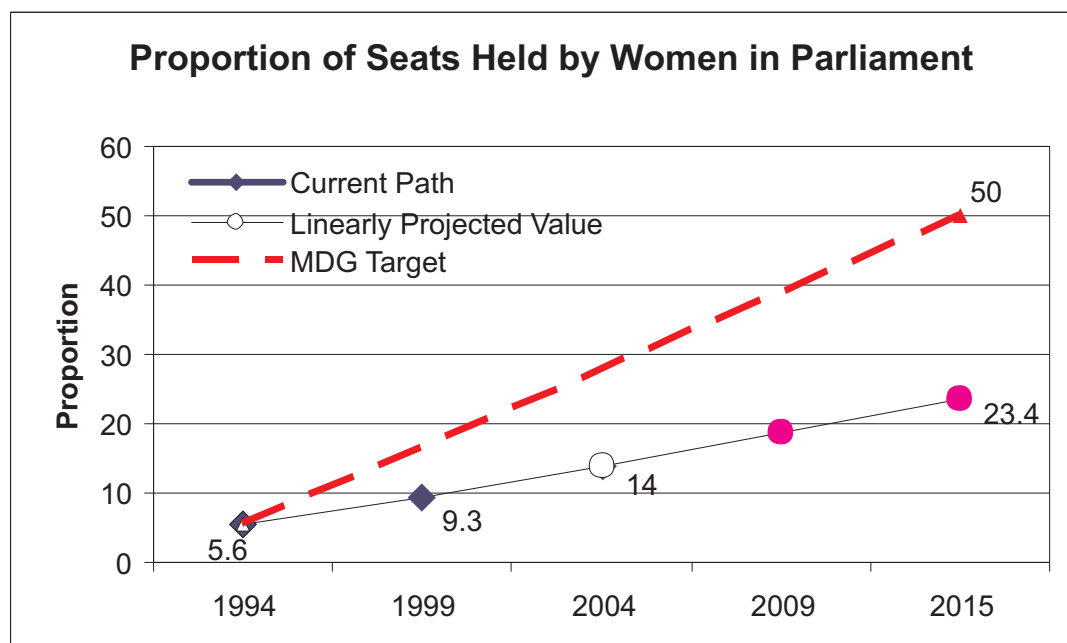
The proportion of seats held by women in national parliament has improved significantly over time. During the 1999 presidential and parliamentary elections, out of 193 elected members of parliament, only 18 members of parliament were women, representing 9 percent. In the 2004 presidential and parliamentary elections, there were 193 elected members of parliament and only 27 of them were women. This represents an increase of about 50 percent. In absolute terms, the total number of women in relation to men is still regarded low as the women have only about 14 percent (2004) of the seats, far below 50 percent that may be indicative of equal representation



Women Parliamentarian Caucus

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Chart 13: Proportion of Seats Held by Women in Parliament



Source: Malawi Electoral Commission (2006)

Chart 13 shows that the proportion of seats held by women in Parliament has increased from 5.6 percent in 1994 to 14 percent in 2004. The results show that there has been a substantial increase in the number of women in the national assembly. However, this proportion remains far below the Southern African Development Community (SADC) target of 30 percent share of women in parliament by 2005. There are many challenges that can be attributed the slow pace in achieving fair representation of women in parliament. Lack of adequate constitutional provisions for effective implementation of affirmative action in relation to women is one of such challenges. In addition, socio stereotypes in our society such as the line of thinking that men should always be Leaders and women should follow contribute to low number of women elected into parliament.

Malawi Government will address these challenges by:

- Taking affirmative action to increase women in decision making positions in the public and private sectors.
- Strengthening the institutional capacity for effective co-ordination of gender policy implementation.
- Breaking the cultural/traditional factors which create and perpetuate gender inequalities.
- Promoting gender equality through advocacy.