

SUB-THEME: FAMILY, GENDER AND HOUSEHOLD

44: GENDER INEQUALITIES AND MDGs

Title: Examining Children Living Conditions By Gender Of Household Head: The Case Of Malawi

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Abstract

Over the last decade, many developing countries especially those in Africa, have witnessed tremendous changes in the structure and composition of households. These changes have been attributed to various social economic and cultural factors operating both within the countries and the world at large. One other significant aspect to these changes has been the shift from predominantly male headed households to female headed households. A number of studies have documented implications of such changes on the living conditions of household, members more especially women and children.

Some studies have further argued and demonstrated how the socio-economic posture of the household head impacts on the living condition of household members more crucially, children. The proposed study attempts to explore children living conditions in view of the changes in household headship by gender, confronting contemporary African countries. It is envisaged that such analysis will provide basis for formulating target specific and impact oriented child development programmes with due consideration placed on the position of household head. Furthermore, this analysis shall provide insight on households that are vulnerable to poverty, hence requiring urgent government attention in efforts to fight poverty and realize sustainable development.

The analysis utilizes data from the Malawi 2004 Demographic. Demographic and social variables such as age, gender and marital status by gender of Household Head will be analyzed. Housing conditions and ownership of durable goods by gender of household head will also be assessed. The analysis shall primarily be descriptive, although logistic regression shall also be utilized to assess children living conditions. Principal Component Analysis will also be used to estimate Household wealth by gender of household head and relate it to children's' living conditions.

Preliminary analysis indicate that living conditions of children in female headed households is worse off than their counter parts in male headed households. This finding has serious policy implications regarding poverty eradication among female headed households, with due attention to

programmes that enhance better livelihood and ensure that intergenerational poverty is addressed.