CHARACTERISTICS OF HOUSEHOLDS AND HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

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This chapter describes the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the population in the sampled households. It also examines environmental conditions, such as housing facilities and physical features of dwelling units. This information on the characteristics of the surveyed population is essential for the interpretation of survey findings and can provide an approximate indication of the representativeness of the MDHS survey.

For the 2004 MDHS survey, a household was defined as a person or a group of persons, related or unrelated, who live together in the same dwelling unit, who make common provisions for food and regularly take their food from the same pot or share the same grain store (*nkhokwe*), or who pool their income for the purpose of purchasing food. The Household Questionnaire was used to collect information on all usual residents and visitors who spent the night preceding the survey in the household. This allows the analysis of either de jure (usual residents) or de facto (those who are there at the time of the survey) populations.

One of the background characteristics used throughout this report is the wealth index, which is a proxy of socioeconomic status. The index was developed and tested in a large number of countries in relation to inequities in household income, use of health services, and health outcomes (Rutstein et al., 2000). It is an indicator of the level of wealth that is consistent with expenditure and income measures (Rutstein, 1999). The index was constructed by applying principal components analysis to information on household assets. The asset information was collected in the Household Questionnaire of the 2004 MDHS and covers information on household ownership of a number of consumer items ranging from a paraffin lamp to a bicycle, motorcycle, or car, as well as dwelling characteristics, such as source of drinking water, sanitation facilities, and construction material used for flooring.

Each asset was assigned a weight (factor score) generated through principal components analysis, and the resulting asset scores were standardized in relation to a normal distribution with a mean of zero and standard deviation of one (Gwatkin et al., 2000). Each household was then assigned a score for each asset, and the scores were summed for each household; individuals were ranked according to the total score of the household in which they resided. The sample was then divided into quintiles—five groups with the same number of individuals in each—from one (lowest) to five (highest). A single asset index was developed for the whole sample; separate indices were not prepared for the urban and rural population separately.

2.1 HOUSEHOLD POPULATION BY AGE, SEX, AND RESIDENCE

The distribution of the household population in the 2004 MDHS survey is shown in Table 2.1 by five-year age groups, according to sex and urban-rural residence. The 13,664 households successfully interviewed in the 2004 MDHS were composed of 58,886 persons; 30,163 were women, representing 51 percent of the population, and 28,722 were men, representing 49 percent. The age structure of the population indicates that a larger proportion of the population falls into the younger age groups for each sex in both rural and urban areas as a result of relatively high fertility.

This pattern mirrors that seen in the 1998 Population and Housing Census, and can be seen in Figure 2.1, which shows that the population structure is much wider at the younger ages than at the older ages. There is no evidence of a tapering at the younger ages, which would be expected in a population with declining fertility rates (see Chapter 4). This indicates that Malawi's fertility decline is very recent and is not yet evident in the population structure.

Table 2.1 Household population by age, sex, and residence

Percent distribution of the *de facto* household population by five-year age groups, according to sex and residence, Malawi 2004

Age	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<5	13.9	16.7	15.3	19.0	17.9	18.4	18.1	17.7	17.9
5-9	12.9	13.1	13.0	16.5	15.8	16.1	15.9	15.4	15.6
10-14	13.2	15.2	14.1	14.9	14.8	14.9	14.6	14.9	14.8
15-19	10.5	11.0	10.7	9.7	8.1	8.9	9.8	8.5	9.2
20-24	11.8	14.6	13.1	7.7	9.3	8.5	8.4	10.1	9.2
25-29	13.2	9.3	11.3	6.8	7.1	7.0	7.9	7.5	7.7
30-34	7.3	4.6	6.0	5.4	5.1	5.3	5.7	5.0	5.4
35-39	3.9	4.0	4.0	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.8
40-44	3.8	2.9	3.4	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.2
45-49	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.4
50-54	1.9	2.7	2.3	2.3	3.4	2.9	2.3	3.3	2.8
55-59	2.6	1.5	2.1	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.5
60-64	0.9	0.7	0.8	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.8
65-69	0.6	0.5	0.5	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.4	1.3
70-74	0.7	0.4	0.6	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.1
75-79	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.7	0.6
80 +	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	4,880	4,496	9,376	23,843	25,667	49,510	28,722	30,163	58,886

Figure 2.1 Population Pyramid
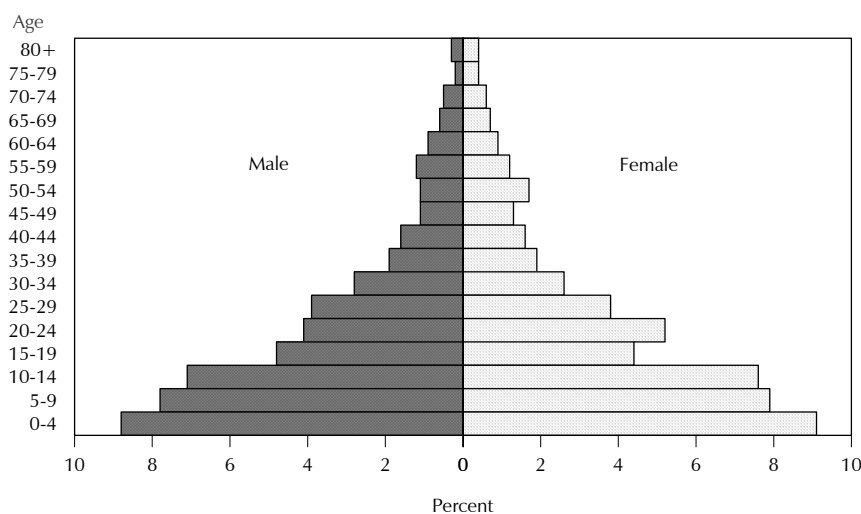
2.2 HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Information about the composition of households by sex of the household head and household size is presented in Table 2.2. The data show that 75 percent of households in Malawi are headed by men. This proportion has not changed since 1992 (75 percent) and 2000 (73 percent). Female-headed households are more common in rural areas (26 percent) than in urban areas (17 percent). The average household size in Malawi remains at 4.4 persons, the same size recorded in 2000. The household size in rural areas is slightly larger than in urban areas (4.4 compared with 4.2 persons, respectively).

Table 2.2 Household composition

Percent distribution of households by sex of head of household and by household size, according to residence, Malawi 2004

	Residence		
Characteristic	Urban	Rural	Total
Sex of head of household			
Male	83.5	73.7	75.3
Female	16.5	26.3	24.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of usual members			
0	0.6	0.2	0.3
1	12.0	7.6	8.4
2	13.1	12.3	12.4
3	16.6	17.7	17.5
4	18.2	18.7	18.6
5	13.2	15.1	14.8
6	11.1	11.4	11.4
7	6.5	8.0	7.8
8	4.0	4.3	4.3
9+	4.6	4.7	4.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of households	2,262	11,402	13,664
Mean size	4.2	4.4	4.4

Note: Table is based on de jure members, i.e., usual residents.

2.3 FOSTERHOOD AND ORPHANHOOD

Information on the living arrangements of children under age 18 is presented in Table 2.3. Of the 31,981 children under age 18 recorded in the 2004 MDHS, only 58 percent currently live with both their biological parents; the remainder live with either their mother only (19 percent) or their father only (3 percent), or live with neither of their natural parents (20 percent). The table also provides data on the extent of orphanhood, that is, the proportion of children who have lost one or both parents. Of children under 18 years, 12 percent have lost their father, 6 percent have lost their mother, and 4 percent have lost both of their natural parents. With the rates of adult illness and mortality related to HIV/AIDS rising in Malawi (see Chapter 12), the percentage of households with orphaned and foster children is expected to rise in the near term.

Differentials in fosterhood and orphanhood by background characteristics are not large. As expected, older children are more likely than younger children to be fostered or orphaned. A slightly larger proportion of urban children than rural children have lost one or both parents.

Table 2.3 indicates that children's living arrangements have no consistent pattern by household wealth index quintile. Among the oversampled districts, children in Kasungu are the most likely to live with both their parents (69 percent), while children in Mangochi are the least likely to live with both parents (50 percent).

Table 2.3 Children's living arrangements and orphanhood

Percent distribution of de jure children under age 18 by children's living arrangements and survival status of parents, according to background characteristics, Malawi 2004

| Background characteristic | Living with both parents | Living with mother but not father | | Living with father but not mother | | Not living with either parent | | | | | Total | Number of children |
		Father alive	Father dead	Mother alive	Mother dead	Both alive	Only father alive	Only mother alive	Both dead	Missing information on father/ mother		
Age												
<2	77.3	18.6	2.0	0.1	0.1	1.0	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.5	100.0	4,717
2-4	68.7	15.7	3.5	1.0	0.5	7.7	0.7	0.7	1.0	0.6	100.0	5,947
5-9	56.5	13.1	5.8	2.1	0.7	13.8	2.1	2.6	2.7	0.7	100.0	9,299
10-14	47.5	11.6	8.3	2.4	1.2	14.8	3.1	4.4	6.0	0.8	100.0	8,808
15-17	41.2	9.0	8.6	2.6	1.2	17.2	3.7	5.3	8.8	2.4	100.0	3,211
<15	59.7	14.1	5.5	1.6	0.7	10.7	1.8	2.3	2.9	0.7	100.0	28,770
Sex												
Male	58.3	13.8	5.8	1.9	0.8	10.3	1.9	2.6	3.6	0.9	100.0	15,902
Female	57.4	13.3	5.7	1.5	0.8	12.4	2.1	2.6	3.4	0.7	100.0	16,079
Residence												
Urban	58.8	7.7	5.9	3.6	1.4	10.9	2.2	3.8	4.9	0.8	100.0	4,566
Rural	57.7	14.6	5.8	1.4	0.7	11.4	2.0	2.4	3.3	0.8	100.0	27,416
Region												
Northern	59.1	11.1	5.7	2.3	1.1	11.8	1.5	3.0	3.7	0.6	100.0	4,193
Central	59.4	11.2	5.3	2.2	0.7	12.6	2.2	2.3	3.2	1.0	100.0	13,638
Southern	55.9	16.6	6.3	1.1	0.8	10.0	2.0	2.8	3.8	0.7	100.0	14,150
District												
Blantyre	61.2	10.7	5.1	2.2	1.2	9.0	2.3	2.9	4.8	0.4	100.0	2,188
Kasungu	68.9	6.0	2.4	1.8	0.8	12.3	2.1	2.7	2.7	0.2	100.0	1,488
Machinga	55.5	17.6	5.8	1.3	0.4	11.2	2.4	2.5	2.3	0.9	100.0	1,230
Mangochi	50.2	21.8	5.6	0.8	0.5	14.4	1.8	2.2	2.1	0.6	100.0	1,800
Mzimba	63.1	10.7	4.2	1.7	1.2	13.0	1.4	2.1	2.0	0.6	100.0	2,064
Salima	57.6	12.1	6.0	0.5	0.6	15.1	2.4	2.4	2.9	0.4	100.0	930
Thyolo	52.8	19.9	5.9	0.8	0.8	10.2	2.1	3.2	3.5	0.8	100.0	1,630
Zomba	51.4	17.1	8.4	0.8	1.0	10.9	2.4	3.5	4.4	0.3	100.0	1,566
Lilongwe	56.4	9.5	5.4	3.1	0.9	14.3	2.3	2.7	3.7	1.7	100.0	4,694
Mulanje	51.6	19.0	8.0	0.8	0.9	7.6	3.5	3.9	3.5	1.1	100.0	1,226
Other districts	58.9	13.7	6.1	1.6	0.6	10.2	1.7	2.4	3.8	0.8	100.0	13,164
Wealth quintile												
Lowest	41.5	21.8	9.4	0.5	0.4	15.9	2.7	3.2	4.1	0.6	100.0	6,545
Second	60.4	15.4	5.7	1.1	0.6	9.1	1.7	2.0	2.8	1.1	100.0	6,460
Middle	65.5	11.3	5.4	1.6	0.5	9.0	1.7	1.8	2.7	0.5	100.0	6,491
Fourth	63.2	10.0	4.0	1.8	1.0	11.1	1.7	2.8	3.4	1.0	100.0	6,459
Highest	58.9	8.9	4.4	3.7	1.3	11.6	2.2	3.5	4.6	0.8	100.0	6,026
Total	57.8	13.6	5.8	1.7	0.8	11.4	2.0	2.6	3.5	0.8	100.0	31,981

2.4   EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF HOUSEHOLD POPULATION

Education is a key determinant of the lifestyle and status an individual enjoys in a society. It affects many aspects of life, including demographic and health behaviour. Studies have consistently shown that educational attainment has strong effects on reproductive behaviour, contraceptive use, fertility, infant and child mortality, morbidity, and attitudes and awareness related to family health and hygiene. In the 2004 MDHS, information on educational attainment was collected for every member of the household. Tables 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 show the percent distribution of the de facto female and male population age six and over by the highest level of education attained, according to background characteristics.

There is a strong differential in educational attainment between the sexes, especially as age increases. While 30 percent of female household members in Malawi have never been to school, the proportion among males is 20 percent. The proportion of persons with no education is high at the youngest ages, is lowest between the ages of 10 and 24, and then increases with age. For example, the proportion of women who have never attended any formal schooling increases from 14 percent from age 20-24 to 73 percent among those age 65 and over. For men, the corresponding proportion is 8 percent and 44 percent, respectively. Eight percent of women and 15 percent of men have attended some secondary school. The median number of years of schooling is 1.8 years for women and 3.1 years for men. Overall, educational attainment is higher in urban areas than in rural areas. The proportion with no education in urban areas is about one-third that in rural areas.

The proportion of the population age six and over that has attained any education varies across regions and districts. The Northern Region has the highest proportion with some education for both males (90 percent) and females (84 percent). For females, the proportion is lowest in the Southern Region (67 percent); for males, it is lowest in the Central Region (77 percent).

Of the oversampled districts, Blantyre has the highest median years of education at 5.6 years for men, while Mzimba has the highest for women (4.0). The lowest educational attainment for both men and women is observed in Mangochi, where the median years of education is 1.1 years for men and 0 years for women. The situation in Mangochi has remained the same since 2000.

Table 2.4.1 Educational attainment of household population: women

Percent distribution of the de facto female household population age six and over by highest level of education attended, according to background characteristics, Malawi 2004

| Background characteristic | Education | | | | | Total | Number | Median number of years |
	No education	Primary 1-4	Primary 5-8	Secondary or higher	Missing			
Age								
6-9	43.8	55.6	0.3	0.0	0.3	100.0	3,872	0.2
10-14	9.3	68.8	20.6	1.1	0.2	100.0	4,492	2.3
15-19	7.1	24.9	48.9	19.1	0.1	100.0	2,570	5.5
20-24	14.0	26.2	36.0	23.6	0.2	100.0	3,036	5.1
25-29	25.2	27.3	31.0	16.4	0.2	100.0	2,247	3.7
30-34	36.4	26.8	27.9	8.9	0.0	100.0	1,516	2.0
35-39	38.6	22.3	32.0	6.9	0.1	100.0	1,122	2.2
40-44	41.0	24.0	30.1	4.7	0.2	100.0	970	1.5
45-49	51.4	22.5	21.5	4.6	0.0	100.0	743	0.0
50-54	49.6	27.7	15.8	5.5	1.4	100.0	998	0.0
55-59	61.7	27.2	7.5	3.0	0.6	100.0	734	0.0
60-64	67.6	25.8	5.5	0.5	0.6	100.0	536	0.0
65+	73.3	23.1	2.9	0.5	0.1	100.0	1,189	0.0
Residence								
Urban	11.8	29.8	31.7	26.7	0.1	100.0	3,651	5.2
Rural	33.4	40.0	21.3	5.0	0.3	100.0	20,388	1.4
Region								
Northern	16.3	34.9	36.5	12.2	0.1	100.0	3,091	3.8
Central	31.4	39.5	20.6	8.2	0.3	100.0	10,086	1.6
Southern	32.8	38.4	21.1	7.4	0.3	100.0	10,862	1.5
District								
Blantyre	19.0	33.6	29.4	17.8	0.2	100.0	1,720	3.7
Kasungu	23.8	44.9	23.8	7.5	0.0	100.0	1,011	1.9
Machinga	42.8	37.1	15.8	3.9	0.3	100.0	892	0.6
Mangochi	49.7	32.3	13.7	4.1	0.3	100.0	1,240	0.0
Mzimba	16.6	33.1	37.6	12.6	0.2	100.0	1,550	4.0
Salima	41.7	38.1	14.7	5.4	0.1	100.0	700	0.8
Thyolo	31.9	42.9	19.9	5.2	0.1	100.0	1,234	1.5
Zomba	22.6	42.6	25.3	9.2	0.2	100.0	1,235	2.3
Lilongwe	27.9	36.9	21.8	13.1	0.3	100.0	3,599	2.2
Mulanje	31.2	42.9	20.7	5.2	0.0	100.0	1,029	1.5
Other districts	31.8	39.4	22.3	6.1	0.3	100.0	9,828	1.6
Wealth quintile								
Lowest	46.3	38.9	12.6	1.9	0.3	100.0	5,220	0.3
Second	38.4	41.1	17.9	2.2	0.3	100.0	4,681	0.9
Middle	31.0	42.1	23.7	2.8	0.4	100.0	4,661	1.5
Fourth	23.7	41.0	27.9	7.3	0.1	100.0	4,719	2.4
Highest	9.7	29.1	33.2	27.8	0.1	100.0	4,758	5.6
Total	30.1	38.4	22.9	8.3	0.2	100.0	24,039	1.8

Table 2.4.2 Educational attainment of household population: men

Percent distribution of the de facto male household population age six and over by highest level of education attended, according to background characteristics, Malawi 2004

Background characteristic	Education					Total	Number	Median number of years
	No education	Primary 1-4	Primary 5-8	Secondary or higher	Missing			
Age								
6-9	47.9	51.3	0.3	0.0	0.5	100.0	3,868	0.1
10-14	10.3	69.2	19.4	1.0	0.1	100.0	4,204	2.2
15-19	6.4	29.3	45.5	18.6	0.1	100.0	2,826	5.2
20-24	7.7	21.1	35.5	35.5	0.2	100.0	2,408	6.8
25-29	11.1	18.8	34.0	35.9	0.2	100.0	2,271	6.8
30-34	16.4	19.0	36.4	28.1	0.1	100.0	1,651	5.8
35-39	18.8	19.8	39.8	21.2	0.4	100.0	1,101	5.8
40-44	15.9	20.6	41.8	21.3	0.3	100.0	939	5.9
45-49	20.4	18.8	41.8	18.6	0.3	100.0	656	5.1
50-54	21.4	25.8	37.0	15.0	0.8	100.0	649	4.4
55-59	26.1	26.4	32.8	12.1	2.5	100.0	712	3.4
60-64	32.9	34.6	25.8	5.6	1.2	100.0	528	1.9
65+	43.7	36.4	15.6	3.0	1.4	100.0	996	0.8
Residence								
Urban	7.8	23.5	30.2	37.9	0.6	100.0	4,100	6.9
Rural	22.9	39.8	26.6	10.4	0.4	100.0	18,719	2.5
Region								
Northern	10.1	33.7	37.2	18.8	0.2	100.0	2,952	4.8
Central	22.7	36.8	25.3	14.6	0.6	100.0	9,758	2.7
Southern	20.6	37.8	26.2	15.1	0.3	100.0	10,109	2.9
District								
Blantyre	11.7	27.9	30.3	30.1	0.0	100.0	1,891	5.6
Kasungu	16.2	39.2	32.6	12.0	0.1	100.0	1,034	3.4
Machinga	28.8	38.9	22.3	9.8	0.2	100.0	808	1.9
Mangochi	36.4	38.0	16.6	8.7	0.3	100.0	1,200	1.1
Mzimba	9.4	34.8	37.2	18.5	0.1	100.0	1,471	4.7
Salima	29.8	40.7	20.9	8.1	0.5	100.0	627	1.7
Thyolo	17.6	44.1	25.9	11.8	0.4	100.0	1,103	2.7
Zomba	15.5	39.5	28.3	16.3	0.4	100.0	1,118	3.3
Lilongwe	20.4	30.2	26.3	22.2	0.9	100.0	3,634	3.8
Mulanje	16.4	44.9	27.2	11.2	0.3	100.0	847	2.7
Other districts	21.7	38.9	27.1	12.0	0.4	100.0	9,088	2.7
Wealth quintile								
Lowest	31.9	43.5	20.0	4.2	0.4	100.0	4,067	1.4
Second	27.9	41.4	24.4	6.0	0.2	100.0	4,484	2.0
Middle	21.5	39.5	30.2	8.3	0.5	100.0	4,497	2.7
Fourth	16.3	36.5	32.5	14.3	0.4	100.0	4,648	3.6
Highest	6.5	25.5	28.1	39.5	0.4	100.0	5,124	7.0
Total	20.2	36.9	27.2	15.3	0.4	100.0	22,819	3.1

Overall, there has been progress in education since 2000, as the proportion of people with no education has decreased, while the proportion with secondary or higher education has increased. In the 2000 MDHS, 6 percent of women and 12 percent of men reported attaining secondary or higher education; these proportions have increased to 8 percent and 15 percent, respectively. The median number of years of schooling for men has increased from 2.7 years in 2000 to 3.1 years in 2004. For women, the median is 1.4 years and 1.8 years, respectively. The improvement is shown by almost all subgroups of the population.

2.5 SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The 2004 MDHS collected information that allows the calculation of net attendance ratios (NAR) and gross attendance ratios (GAR). The NAR for primary school is the percentage of the primary-school-age (6-13 years) population that is attending primary school; the NAR for secondary school is the percentage of the secondary-school-age (14-17 years) population that is attending secondary school. By definition, the NAR cannot exceed 100 percent. The GAR for primary school is the total number of primary school students of any age, expressed as the percentage of the official primary-school-age population. The GAR for secondary school is the total number of secondary school students up to an age limit of 24 years, expressed as the percentage of the official secondary-school-age population. If there are significant numbers of overage or underage students at a given level of schooling, the GAR can exceed 100 percent.

Tables 2.5.1 and 2.5.2 present the NARs and GARs by urban-rural residence, region, and wealth index, by sex, for primary school and secondary school. Findings indicate that among children within the official age range for primary school, slightly more girls (84 percent) are attending school than boys (80 percent), which is a slight improvement over the 2000 MDHS findings. The GAR shows, however, that overall, more boys are attending primary school than girls (109 compared with 103). The NAR at primary school is highest for children in the Northern Region (92 percent), followed by the Central and Southern Regions (both at 81 percent). The NAR for primary school is higher in urban areas (89 percent) than in rural areas (81 percent). Both the NAR and the GAR for primary school increase directly with wealth.

Secondary school attendance ratios are much lower and differ substantially by background characteristics. Overall, the net attendance ratio is 11.4, indicating that only 11 percent of secondary-school-age children are attending school at roughly the correct ages. The secondary NAR in urban areas is over four times higher than the NAR in rural areas. The same regional patterns exist for secondary school attendance ratios as for educational attainment: the Northern Region has the highest attendance ratios, with the Central and Southern regions being slightly lower.

The gross attendance ratio of 30 percent for secondary school, though slightly higher than in the 2000 MDHS, indicates that a substantial proportion of secondary-school students are outside the official age range for secondary schooling.

Table 2.5.1 School attendance ratios: primary school

Primary school net attendance ratios (NAR) and gross attendance ratios (GAR) for the de jure household population by level of schooling and sex, according to background characteristics, Malawi 2004

Background characteristic	Net attendance ratio[1]			Gross attendance ratio[2]			Gender Parity Index[3]
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Residence							
Urban	89.0	89.4	89.2	112.7	104.8	108.7	0.93
Rural	78.7	83.0	80.9	108.3	102.4	105.3	0.95
Region							
Northern	91.4	93.0	92.2	129.1	117.2	123.2	0.91
Central	77.6	83.4	80.6	105.1	102.3	103.7	0.97
Southern	79.2	81.7	80.5	106.6	99.0	102.8	0.93
District							
Blantyre	83.7	89.5	86.5	110.7	110.1	110.4	0.99
Kasungu	86.2	88.6	87.5	123.5	107.3	114.9	0.87
Machinga	78.0	79.9	79.0	106.0	94.2	99.9	0.89
Mangochi	66.7	68.7	67.7	84.7	83.0	83.9	0.98
Mzimba	92.4	93.8	93.1	128.7	115.6	122.1	0.90
Salima	77.8	79.6	78.8	100.8	93.5	97.0	0.93
Thyolo	83.9	84.7	84.3	108.6	102.8	105.7	0.95
Zomba	87.8	89.8	88.8	115.3	108.6	111.9	0.94
Lilongwe	79.7	84.0	82.0	103.0	100.1	101.5	0.97
Mulanje	83.5	82.2	82.9	108.8	104.5	106.7	0.96
Other districts	77.8	82.8	80.4	109.9	103.3	106.5	0.94
Wealth quintile							
Lowest	71.8	75.0	73.5	97.1	89.3	93.1	0.92
Second	73.8	79.5	76.6	101.0	97.5	99.3	0.97
Middle	80.9	84.0	82.5	113.0	104.6	108.7	0.93
Fourth	83.1	88.2	85.7	114.6	110.8	112.6	0.97
Highest	92.2	93.8	93.0	120.5	113.2	116.8	0.94
Total	80.1	83.8	82.0	108.9	102.7	105.8	0.94

[1] The NAR for primary school is the percentage of the primary-school-age (6-13 years) population that is attending primary school. By definition the NAR cannot exceed 100 percent.

[2] The GAR for primary school is the total number of primary school students, expressed as a percentage of the official primary-school-age population. If there are significant numbers of overage and underage students at a given level of schooling, the GAR can exceed 100 percent.

[3] The Gender Parity Index for primary school is the ratio of the primary school GAR for females to the GAR for males.

Table 2.5.2 School attendance ratios: secondary school

Secondary school net attendance ratios (NAR) and gross attendance ratios (GAR) for the de jure household population by sex, according to background characteristics, Malawi 2004

Background characteristic	Net attendance ratio[1]			Gross attendance ratio[2]			Gender Parity Index[3]
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Residence							
Urban	30.3	32.3	31.3	71.9	64.9	68.5	0.90
Rural	6.2	8.7	7.4	25.9	17.0	21.8	0.65
Region							
Northern	10.2	16.2	13.1	39.9	28.8	34.6	0.72
Central	10.1	10.4	10.3	31.3	21.9	26.9	0.70
Southern	10.3	14.0	12.0	33.6	27.4	30.8	0.81
District							
Blantyre	15.0	24.6	19.3	46.2	48.3	47.1	1.05
Kasungu	7.1	16.8	11.4	23.2	29.8	26.1	1.29
Machinga	6.5	11.6	8.7	22.0	17.7	20.1	0.80
Mangochi	10.2	5.2	7.9	26.6	14.4	21.2	0.54
Mzimba	10.8	18.7	14.5	41.3	34.1	38.0	0.82
Salima	2.9	9.9	6.0	18.0	17.6	17.8	0.98
Thyolo	10.8	9.6	10.2	36.4	20.3	28.2	0.56
Zomba	16.1	14.7	15.5	41.8	35.4	38.9	0.85
Lilongwe	18.8	14.8	17.0	44.7	29.5	37.8	0.66
Mulanje	7.5	14.1	11.0	27.2	20.4	23.6	0.75
Other districts	6.6	9.8	8.1	29.0	20.2	24.8	0.69
Wealth quintile							
Lowest	2.6	4.0	3.2	12.4	7.0	10.0	0.57
Second	3.4	3.1	3.3	19.5	7.1	13.7	0.36
Middle	3.5	4.9	4.1	17.9	9.4	14.0	0.53
Fourth	6.8	11.5	9.1	34.6	25.4	30.1	0.74
Highest	30.6	32.9	31.7	74.8	62.7	69.0	0.84
Total	10.2	12.7	11.4	33.5	25.2	29.6	0.75

[1] NAR for secondary school is the percentage of the secondary-school-age (14-17 years) population that is attending secondary school. By definition the NAR cannot exceed 100 percent.
[2] The GAR for secondary school is the total number of secondary school students, expressed as a percentage of the official secondary-school-age population. If there are significant numbers of overage and underage students at a given level of schooling, the GAR can exceed 100 percent.
[3] The Gender Parity Index for secondary school is the ratio of the secondary school GAR for females to the GAR for males.

Repetition and Dropout

By asking about the grade or standard that children were attending during the previous school year, it is possible to calculate dropout rates and repetition rates for primary school. Table 2.6 indicates that repetition rates are high in Standard 1 (45 percent), which may be related to the teachers' decision to ensure a more uniform preparedness before promoting children to Standard 2. Repetition rates decline at higher standards but increase at Standard 8, due to failed attempts at getting into a secondary school. While the repetition rates at Standard 1 are about the same as those in 2000, the rates at Standard 8 have decreased from 39 to 29 percent.

Table 2.6 Grade repetition and dropout rates

Repetition and dropout rates for the de jure household population age 5-24 years by school grade, according to background characteristics, Malawi 2004

Background characteristic	Standard							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
REPETITION RATE								
Sex								
Male	45.3	25.4	29.5	23.3	19.8	11.8	13.3	30.8
Female	44.1	27.7	26.2	20.0	18.9	18.6	14.8	25.2
Residence								
Urban	33.5	23.4	22.7	12.2	19.0	17.0	9.8	13.3
Rural	46.1	27.2	28.7	23.6	19.4	14.4	15.1	34.6
Region								
Northern	30.3	15.3	16.1	13.4	11.5	8.3	10.0	45.7
Central	47.3	28.9	31.3	24.3	19.6	19.3	15.9	29.5
Southern	45.7	27.7	28.3	22.7	22.5	14.5	14.3	20.3
Wealth quintile								
Lowest	46.4	30.1	29.2	24.8	19.0	13.7	20.5	30.9
Second	46.3	25.6	33.4	20.8	24.7	16.4	14.4	31.9
Middle	47.5	26.7	26.4	24.5	18.9	13.0	16.3	48.1
Fourth	44.0	28.5	29.0	24.3	18.0	14.8	9.5	32.5
Highest	37.2	21.9	22.4	15.3	18.5	16.0	13.1	16.5
Total	44.7	26.6	27.8	21.7	19.4	15.0	14.0	28.6
DROPOUT RATE								
Sex								
Male	2.3	1.8	3.4	3.1	4.9	2.9	4.4	10.7
Female	1.9	2.3	2.4	3.5	5.4	4.3	8.6	8.6
Residence								
Urban	2.3	1.8	1.5	0.9	1.8	1.1	2.1	3.8
Rural	2.0	2.1	3.1	3.8	6.1	4.3	7.5	12.2
Region								
Northern	0.3	1.1	1.1	0.9	4.6	1.0	6.4	7.1
Central	1.4	2.0	3.2	3.3	5.9	5.3	8.1	10.9
Southern	3.1	2.4	3.3	4.3	4.6	3.3	4.9	10.2
Wealth quintile								
Lowest	3.5	3.7	5.5	4.2	7.0	7.3	7.9	21.4
Second	2.5	1.8	3.5	5.7	10.2	5.6	15.7	21.5
Middle	2.0	1.8	4.0	4.3	4.9	4.8	5.1	12.8
Fourth	1.4	2.8	1.9	2.2	4.7	2.6	8.4	11.1
Highest	0.3	0.3	0.8	1.3	2.7	1.3	2.1	2.1
Total	2.1	2.1	2.9	3.3	5.1	3.6	6.3	9.9

Note: The repetition rate is the percentage of students in a given grade in the previous school year who are repeating that grade in the current school year. The dropout rate is the percentage of students in a given grade in the previous school year who are not attending school in the current school year.

The second panel of Table 2.6 shows the expected pattern of increasing dropout rates with increasing years in school. Only 2 percent of children drop out of school after attending Standard 1 compared with a dropout rate of 10 percent at Standard 8. It is notable that the dropout rate and the repetition rate at Standard 8 is higher for boys than for girls.

Rural children are more likely than urban children to drop out at all grades except Standard 1. Children in the Northern Region are less likely to stop their education than children in the Central or Southern Regions (7 percent compared with 10-11 percent at Standard 8).

2.6   CHILD LABOUR

The 2004 MDHS survey collected information on the work activities of children age 5-14 in the week prior to the survey. Working children have less opportunity to attend school and are more susceptible than adults to unfair working environments, including low or no pay, poor working conditions, and physical abuse. Despite policies and laws designed to curtail exploitative child labour, the practice continues in many settings. The 2004 MDHS asked a series of questions about whether children age 5-14 were doing any kind of work for pay, whether children regularly did unpaid family work on the farm or in a family business, and whether and to what extent (number of hours) children helped with household chores.

Table 2.7 shows that overall, 37 percent of children age 5-14 are currently engaged in some type of work. Eight percent of children age 5-14 are doing work for nonrelatives, about half of these without pay. Seven in ten children did daily household chores during the past week, most of them working for less than four hours per day. One in three children are engaged in family business or working on the family farm.

Older children are much more likely to be working than younger children. Although girls are more likely to be involved in longer hours of domestic work per day than boys, there is little difference in the overall proportions of girls and boys who work (35 and 39 percent, respectively). Urban children (17 percent) are much less likely to be working than rural children (40 percent).

Children in the Northern Region are more likely than those in the Central Region and Southern Region to be working without pay for nonrelatives (5 percent compared with 3 percent and 2 percent, respectively). Children in the Northern Region are less likely to be employed on the family farm or in the family business than children in the Southern and Central regions (29 percent compared with 33 percent and 34 percent, respectively). While 41 percent of children in the lowest quintile work, the corresponding proportion among children in the highest quintile is only 22 percent. Among the oversampled districts, almost half of children age 5-14 in Kasungu are working, compared to 30 percent in Blantyre.

Table 2.7 Child labour

Percentage of children age 5-14 years who are currently working, by type of employment and selected background characteristics, Malawi 2004

Background characteristic	Work for nonrelatives		Currently doing work on family farm or family business	Domestic work for:		Currently working[1]	Number of children
	Paid	Unpaid		Less than 4 hours per day	4 hours or more per day		
Age							
5-9	2.0	2.3	16.1	56.3	0.8	19.3	9,202
10-14	8.0	3.7	50.5	80.0	3.8	55.9	8,696
Sex							
Male	5.4	2.3	35.4	62.0	1.6	39.0	8,762
Female	4.5	3.6	30.3	73.4	2.9	35.2	9,137
Residence							
Urban	1.7	1.6	13.7	71.0	1.9	17.0	2,543
Rural	5.5	3.2	36.0	67.3	2.3	40.4	15,356
Region							
Northern	3.9	5.4	29.4	74.9	3.3	35.2	2,333
Central	4.7	3.0	33.7	65.9	2.2	37.8	7,711
Southern	5.5	2.3	32.9	67.6	2.1	36.9	7,855
District							
Blantyre	2.8	3.6	24.4	65.3	2.7	30.4	1,250
Kasungu	6.1	4.0	45.3	68.4	2.5	49.1	807
Machinga	8.4	3.5	38.9	65.1	2.8	43.1	673
Mangochi	6.4	1.5	29.9	58.1	2.2	33.9	1,014
Mzimba	4.6	6.7	39.2	73.7	3.6	44.5	1,146
Salima	5.3	2.7	33.2	68.1	1.9	36.8	541
Thyolo	6.3	3.1	33.2	70.0	2.1	37.7	917
Zomba	5.9	0.9	41.8	76.7	3.4	44.8	849
Lilongwe	2.9	1.8	30.3	65.8	2.4	33.3	2,710
Mulanje	5.9	2.3	30.6	69.2	0.9	34.3	689
Other districts	5.0	3.1	31.7	68.2	1.9	36.3	7,302
Wealth quintile							
Lowest	7.1	3.0	36.4	65.0	2.0	40.5	3,780
Second	5.8	3.1	38.8	67.6	2.2	43.0	3,544
Middle	5.5	3.3	39.1	67.4	2.2	43.6	3,464
Fourth	4.2	3.2	31.6	67.7	3.0	36.3	3,661
Highest	1.9	2.2	17.7	71.8	2.0	21.5	3,451
Total	4.9	3.0	32.8	67.8	2.3	37.1	17,899

[1]Working means doing paid or unpaid work or working on a family farm or for a family business.

2.7   HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

2004 MDHS respondents were asked about their housing environment, including access to electricity, source of drinking water, time to water source, type of toilet facilities, house construction materials, and possession of various durable goods. This information is summarised in Table 2.8. Seven percent of households in Malawi have electricity. Electricity is much more common in urban areas (30 percent) than in rural areas (2 percent).

Table 2.8 Household characteristics

Percent distribution of households by household characteristics, according to residence, Malawi 2004

Household characteristic	Residence		Total
	Urban	Rural	
Electricity			
Yes	30.2	2.2	6.9
No	69.6	97.6	93.0
Missing	0.2	0.1	0.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Source of drinking water			
Piped into dwelling	14.1	0.6	2.9
Piped into yard/plot	15.1	1.0	3.4
Public tap	45.2	7.4	13.7
Open well in yard/plot	1.9	2.5	2.4
Open public well	5.4	26.1	22.6
Protected well in yard/plot	2.0	5.5	4.9
Protected public well	14.7	43.4	38.6
Spring	0.1	3.2	2.6
River, stream	1.3	9.4	8.0
Pond, lake	0.0	0.5	0.4
Dam	0.0	0.3	0.2
Tanker truck	0.0	0.1	0.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Time to water source			
Percentage <15 minutes	67.4	36.7	41.8
Median time to source	4.9	19.4	19.0
Sanitation facility			
Flush toilet	16.2	0.8	3.4
Traditional pit toilet	76.1	80.0	79.4
VIP latrine	2.3	0.9	1.1
No facility/bush, field	5.2	18.2	16.1
Missing	0.2	0.0	0.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Flooring material			
Earth, sand	35.5	87.1	78.5
Dung	0.6	0.7	0.7
Cement	62.3	12.0	20.3
Carpet	0.9	0.1	0.2
Missing	0.2	0.0	0.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Cooking fuel			
Electricity	10.6	0.3	2.0
Kerosene	0.2	0.0	0.1
Charcoal	41.4	2.0	8.5
Firewood, straw	47.1	97.5	89.2
Dung	0.0	0.1	0.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of households	2,262	11,402	13,664

A household's source of drinking water is important because potentially fatal diseases including typhoid, cholera, and dysentery are prevalent in unprotected sources. Piped water, water drawn from protected wells, and deep boreholes are expected to be relatively free of these diseases. Unprotected wells and surface water (rivers, streams, ponds, and lakes), are more likely to carry disease-causing agents. Table 2.8 shows that overall, 64 percent of Malawian households have access to clean water, 20 percent from piped water and 44 percent from protected wells.

As expected, a far greater proportion of urban households have access to piped water than rural households (74 compared to 9 percent). In urban areas, 67 percent of the households have access to water within 15 minutes, compared with 37 percent of rural households.

Modern sanitation facilities are not yet available to large proportions of Malawian households. The use of traditional pit latrines is still common in both urban and rural areas, accounting for 79 percent of all households. Overall, 16 percent of the households in Malawi have no toilet facilities. This problem is more common in rural areas, where 18 percent of the households have no toilet facilities, compared with 5 percent of households in urban areas.

The type of material used for flooring is an indicator of the economic standing of the household as well as an indicator of potential exposure to disease-causing agents. Overall, 79 percent of all households in Malawi live in residences with floors made of earth, sand, or dung, while 21 percent live in houses with finished floors like those made of cement or wooden panels. Earth flooring is almost universal in rural areas (87 percent). The type of cooking fuel used by a household reflects both economic status as well as exposure to varying types of pollutants. Most households (89 percent) use firewood or straw. Charcoal is also a popular fuel in urban areas. Eleven percent of urban households use electricity as their cooking fuel, whereas almost no rural residents do.

Respondents were also asked about their household's ownership of particular durable goods. In addition to providing an indicator of economic status, ownership of these goods provides measures of other aspects of life. Ownership of a radio or television is a measure of access to mass media; ownership of a refrigerator indicates a capacity for more hygienic food storage; and ownership of a bicycle, motorcycle, or car reflects means of transport, which can be important for seeking emergency medical care or taking advantage of employment opportunities. Ownership of a telephone opens up communication with other users. Information on ownership of these items is presented in Table 2.9.

Four in ten households own a paraffin lamp. This item is slightly more common in urban households than in rural households. Nationally, 62 percent of households own a radio and only 5 percent of households own a television. Five percent of households in Malawi own a cell phone, and only 2 percent have a landline telephone.

More than one in five households own a bed with a mattress (21 percent) or table and chairs (29 percent), while ownership of a sofa set (11 percent) or a refrigerator (3 percent) is uncommon. Bicycles are the most common type of vehicle owned by households; 40 percent of households have a bicycle. Ownership of motorised transport is rare: only 2 percent of households have cars, and fewer households (1 percent) have motorcycles. As expected, urban households are more likely than rural households to own each of the items listed, with the exception of the bicycle. Overall, one in four rural households own none of the listed items, while the same is true for only one in ten urban households.

Table 2.9 Household durable goods

Percentage of households possessing various durable consumer goods, by residence, Malawi 2004

Durable consumer goods	Residence		Total
	Urban	Rural	
Household goods			
Paraffin lamp	47.1	36.5	38.2
Radio	79.2	58.5	61.9
Television	21.1	2.2	5.3
Cell phone	20.8	1.5	4.7
Landline telephone	8.3	0.5	1.8
Bed with mattress	54.5	14.7	21.3
Sofa set	35.5	5.7	10.6
Table and chairs	53.8	24.5	29.3
Refrigerator	14.7	0.7	3.0
Means of transport			
Bicycle	30.9	41.8	40.0
Motorcycle	1.9	0.8	1.0
Car/truck	8.1	0.8	2.0
None of the above	9.6	25.1	22.5
Number of households	2,262	11,402	13,664