Malawi Government

2018 Malawi Population and Housing Census

Characteristics of Older Persons Report

National Statistical Office

July 2020

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FOREWORD



Following the successful implementation of the 2018 Malawi Population and Housing Census (PHC) and subsequent production of both preliminary and main reports, Malawi Government through the National Statistical Office (NSO) has produced 17 thematic reports. The reports have profiled demographic, social and economic sectors of the country. This effort is in line with the United Nations (UN) international standards of releasing main census results, and thematic reports thereafter to present findings across all sectors that were captured during the census. I am contented, therefore, to note that the Malawi Government has fulfilled this requirement by producing thematic reports to inform various government ministries to guide development efforts in the country.

The 17 thematic reports form a primary source of socio-economic and demographic data at various levels and provide the country with important information to foster national development, good governance and decentralization. The results presented in this thematic report will form a solid basis against which the successes and challenges in the implementation of the third Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS III) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be monitored and evaluated. As the government started implementing its MGDS III in 2017, it is imperative to have clear indicators under each sector that shall be meaningfully assessed around 2022, the end of the MGDS III. I am delighted to note that the thematic reports serve that purpose and will help guide our national development plan.

I am fully aware that for the government to produce this high-quality report there was a dedicated team of experts from NSO and other sectors. I would, therefore, like to appreciate the effort of the Commissioner of Statistics, NSO staff and experts from other institutions for producing this report. I would also like to appreciate the support received from development partners and individuals during the whole process of writing the thematic report. Specifically, I wish to thank the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for providing financial support and coordinating all development partners' support. I wish to also thank British Department for International Development (DFID), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Norwegian Government, Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) from the German Government, the Irish Aid from the Irish Government, Iceland Government, the Peoples' Republic of China, the UN Family and the Standard Bank Malawi for providing financial and material resources for the 2018 PHC from which this report is derived. I would also like to thank the US Census Bureau and Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) for providing technical support.

Cliff Chiunda

Secretary to the Treasury

PREFACE



The Malawi Government through the National Statistical Office (NSO) conducted its sixth Population and Housing Census (PHC) in September 2018. The 2018 PHC was the first one to be conducted using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) technology. Data was collected and captured on tablets and transmitted to NSO server electronically via internet. The process proved to be efficient as it reduced time for data processing and cleaning since these processes were mostly done at data capturing stage. The preliminary and main reports were produced in a record time of 3 and 7 months, respectively.

The National Statistical Office has done further analysis of the census data to produce 17 Thematic Reports aimed at enhancing the understanding of the Malawi population. This Thematic Report on Characteristics of Older Persons is one of them, others being: Assessment of Age Sex Data Quality; Spatial Distribution of Population including Urbanization; Fertility and Nuptiality; Mortality; Economic Characteristics of the Population; Migration; Water and Sanitation; Households and Living Conditions; Children and Youth; Gender; Disability; Education; Social Atlas; Population Projections; Implementation and Methodology and the Master Sampling Frame. The Thematic Reports were written by officers from NSO, lecturers from the University of Malawi, subject matter specialists from different Ministries, Civil Society and the UN Family with technical support from US Census Bureau.

I would like to acknowledge the support NSO received from the Government, Development Partners, the Private Sector and individuals for the census including the production of 17 thematic reports. Specifically, I wish to thank UNFPA for providing funding and coordinating support from all Development Partners. I also wish to thank DFID, USAID, the Norwegian Government, GIZ, the Irish Aid, Iceland Government, the Peoples' Republic of China, the UN Family and the Standard Bank Malawi for providing financial resources for the 2018 PHC.

I am heavily indebted to all NSO staff, Census Zone Managers, Census District Supervisors, Control Centre Supervisors, Field Supervisors and Enumerators for their dedication and hard work during the 2018 PHC. Special thanks are extended to US Census Bureau and Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) for the technical assistance they rendered. I would also like to thank community leaders for mobilizing their members to be counted, and members of the general public for their willingness to participate in the 2018 PHC.

Mercy Kanyuka (Mrs.)
Commissioner of Statistics

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2018 Population and Housing Census (PHC) collected information on the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the older persons which include: Population Growth and Distribution, Marital status, Religion and Tribe, Economic status, Employment status, Education status, Disability, National IDs and Household and Housing conditions. The data was analyzed and provides the size, growth and structure of the older population in the country.

According to the results of the 2018 PHC, there were a total of 891,805 persons aged 60 years and over in Malawi representing 5.1% of the total population. The older person's population was higher in rural areas as compared to urban areas. Rural areas had 91.6 percent of the older person's population whereas urban areas had 8.4 percent.

Southern region had the highest population of older persons of 46.3 percent and Northern region had the lowest (13.4 percent). Central region had an older person's population of 40.4 percent. In the districts, the older persons' population proportion was highest in Lilongwe (9.8 percent), followed by Mangochi (6.6 percent), Mzimba (6.2 percent) then Dedza (5.4 percent) and lowest in Likoma (0.6 percent). Among the cities, Blantyre had the highest percentage (29.3 percent) followed by Lilongwe (29.1 percent) then Mzuzu (8.2 percent). Zomba registered the lowest older population (3.8 percent).

The population of older persons in Malawi in 2018 increased by 30.1 percent from 2008. Despite the stagnation in terms of their proportion shares in the total population, in absolute terms, the number of older persons in Malawi is on the increase. It is important to note that the number of older persons in Malawi has almost doubled since 1987, growing from 473,890 to 891,805. As is the case with many other countries in Sub Saharan Africa, Malawi's population of older persons is projected to increase from presently less than one million to more than 2.5 million in 2050.

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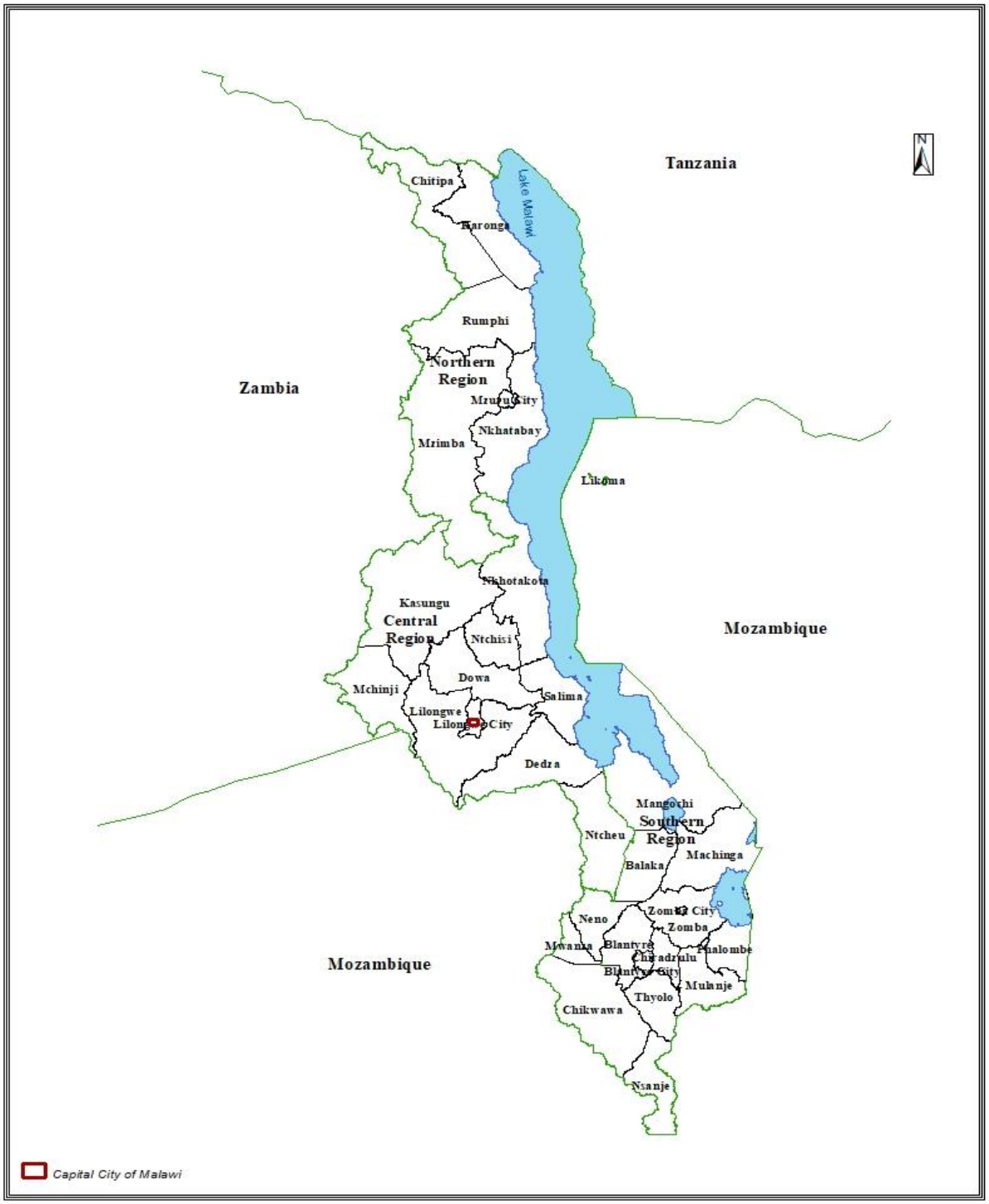
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MAP OF MALAWI



1 SOURCES AND QUALITY OF DATA

1.1 Introduction

For decades, Malawi has and still relies on the Population and Housing Censuses (PHC) as a major source of data for planning, monitoring and evaluation of its national and international development initiatives such as the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III (MGDS III) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The census data also facilitates intra and international comparisons of indicators over time and space. Other sources of vital statistics include; surveys, administrative records and civil registrations.

1.2 Population and Housing Censuses

1.2.1 History of Censuses in Malawi

Malawi has conducted censuses both prior to independence and after attaining independence in 1964. The first census was conducted in 1891 when Malawi was a British Protectorate. This was not a complete census because the population count completely excluded Africans and excluded the whole of the Northern region and a large part of the Central region. The second population census was conducted in 1901. Unlike the first census, the second census attempted to count Africans and other races. However, there is very little information regarding these first two censuses. In 1911 an estimate of the entire population was achieved following the inclusion of the northern Ngoni into the Nyasaland protectorate. Subsequently, other pre-independence censuses followed in 1921, 1926, 1931, and 1945. Censuses conducted between 1921 and 1931 were for people who permanently resided in an area and this was de jure in principle. The 1945 census enumerated those present at home on the night of the census making it a de facto census.

The first census that included extensive training of enumerators and complete demarcation of enumeration areas was carried out in 1966 after independence. Other subsequent censuses which were all de facto followed in 1977, 1987 and 1998. The 2008 and 2018 PHC were both *de jure* and *de facto*. Unlike the previous censuses which used a paper-based questionnaire, 2018 Malawi Population and Housing Census used Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) for collecting data from households. The technology significantly reduced the data capture and analysis period compared to previous censuses.

1.2.2 The 2018 Population and Housing Census

The 2018 Population and Housing Census is the sixth in the post-independence period and is part of the United Nations 2020 World Round of Censuses. The 2018 census enumeration was conducted for three weeks, from 3rd to 23rd September, 2018. Enumerators were deployed to cover the entire country and administered the questionnaire to the household head or any knowledgeable member in regular households. Data was also collected from individuals in institutions and homeless individuals, including street kids.

The 2018 PHC collected census attributes such as sex, age, place of birth and residence, parental survivorship, education and literacy status, employment status and industry, marital status, children ever born and children surviving, household amenities and assets, housing conditions, business ownership, disability, deaths, emigrants and albinism.

1.2.2 Quality of Census Data

Quality is one of the most important aspects of data as it enhances credibility and increases its potential use. Credible data is vital for effective planning, policy formulation and decision making. A population and housing census is a huge undertaking that requires proper planning and implementation to ensure that the data collected is of high quality and reliable. According to the UN Principles and Recommendations for conducting a Population and Housing Census, a good PHC must have essential features which include: individual enumeration, universality within a defined territory, simultaneity, defined periodicity and small area statistics. NSO made sure that all these attributes of a good PHC are adhered to. These attributes give rise to two distinct properties of a census namely, content and coverage errors. Coverage errors arise from omissions or duplication of the population while content errors are deficiencies in the data arising from incorrect reporting by respondent or incorrect recording and tabulation by the census team. Great effort was taken to get rid of coverage and content errors.

In planning for the 2018 Population and Housing Census, lessons from previous censuses were considered. Efforts were made and strategies were instituted to collect high quality data and reduce errors arising from the use of poor maps, untested methodologies and instruments, inadequate supervision, poor training, inadequate support from general public and inadequacies in data

processing. The National Statistical Office (NSO) took the following steps to ensure quality data was collected:

- Updating the administrative units and demarcating the country into enumeration areas to ensure complete coverage thus avoiding omissions or double counting during the enumeration exercise using Geographic Information System (GIS) and satellite imagery. This was the first time Malawi used satellite maps in the census enumeration.
- Developing census questionnaires through a consultative process with government ministries and departments, the private sector, university and research institutions, supporting partners and the general public.
- Preparing comprehensive supervisors' and enumerators' instruction manuals for guidance during the census training and enumeration.
- Pre-testing the questionnaire to correct any deficiencies.
- Piloting the census as a rehearsal of the main census.
- Providing adequate training for field staff at all levels of operations.
- Intensive supervision at all levels: one Field supervisor to five Enumerators, one Control Centre Supervisor to 8 Field Supervisors, 2 District Supervisors per census district, 12 Census Zone Supervisors and 1 National Supervisor.
- Providing comprehensive census advocacy using all channels such as media (print electronic and social), faith-based organisations, community leaders and face to face publicity.
- Real-time monitoring of census progress using a dashboard, checking and verifying completeness of coverage once the enumeration area was completed.

2 COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE OF OLDER PERSONS POPULATION

2.1 Introduction

The world's population is ageing; virtually every country in the world is experiencing growth in the number and proportion of older persons in their population. Population ageing is occurring because of declining fertility rates, lower infant mortality and increasing survival at older ages. It is poised to become one of the most significant social transformations of the twenty-first century, with implications for nearly all sectors of society, including labour and financial markets. In 1950, there were 205 million older persons in the world. By 2012, the number of older persons had increased to almost 810 million and it is projected to be more than double by 2050, reaching 2 billion. The developing world is experiencing the most rapid increase with Africa's population projected to increase from the current 42 million to 212 million by the year 2050. (UN World Ageing Report, 2017)

Older persons are generally defined according to a range of characteristics including chronological age, change in social role and changes in functional abilities. In high-resourced countries, older age is generally defined in relation to retirement from paid employment and receipt of a pension, at 60 or 65 years (https://www.wcpt.org/node). The United Nations defines an older person as individuals aged 60 years and above. While the definition of an older person may have different meanings in different societies, in Malawi, an older person is an individual aged 60 years and over regardless of his or her status (Malawi National Policy for Older Persons, 2016).

In Malawi, old age is often characterized by extreme poverty, poor housing conditions, loss of dignity, becoming a victim of difficult circumstances including providing care and support to vulnerable and orphaned children among other challenges (National Policy for Older Persons, 2016). At these ages, people become more vulnerable to socio-economic shocks and have limited capacity to sustain their lives. Therefore, information on older population size and composition provides a good basis for designing appropriate programmes for older persons.

In line with the 2018 PHC theme "Be Counted: Leave No-one Behind", data for various age groups including older persons were collected and analyzed. The census data provided an insight into the status and well-being of older persons in Malawi. This report describes the older population of Malawi. It presents an overview of the age and sex structure and geographic distribution of the population 60 years

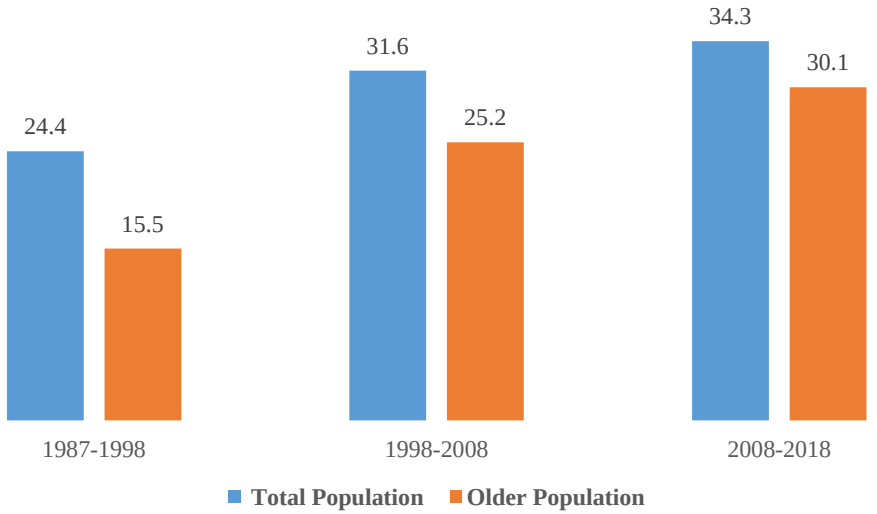
and over. It also provides information on the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of older persons according to sex; residence; religion; tribe; marital status; education status; economic status; disability; National Identity status and household and housing conditions.

2.2 Size and Growth of Older Person Population

Malawi's older population has been on the increase. In 1987, Malawi enumerated a total population of 473,898 older persons representing 6.0 percent of the total population. In 1998 PHC the population of older persons was 547, 542 (5.5 percent), an increase of 15.5 percent from 1987. By 2008, the population of older persons had reached 684,083 representing 5.2 percent of the total population. The number of older persons had increased to 891,805 in 2018, constituting 5.1 percent of the total population. The population of older persons is projected to increase to 2,873,639 by the year 2050, representing 8.5 percent of the total expected population.

From 1987 to 2018, the population 60 years and over has been increasing by an annual average growth rate of 2.0 percent, lower than the growth rate of the general population of 2.5 percent (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Increase of Total Population and Older Persons, Malawi 1987-2018

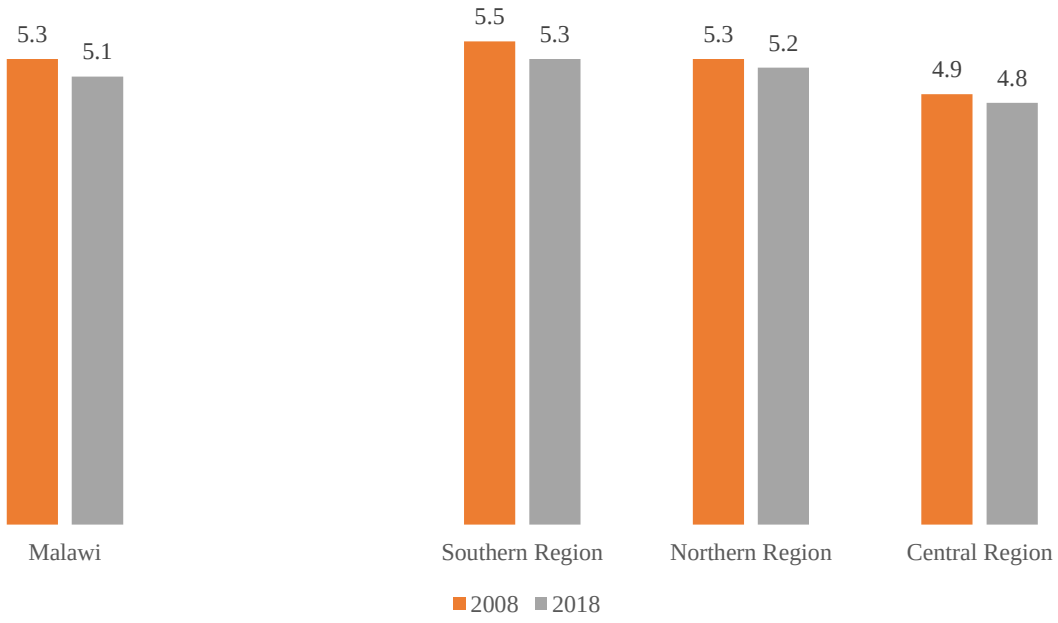


The percentage increase of population 60 years and above is higher than that of the general population

Source: 1987, 1998, 2008 and 2018 Malawi Population and Housing Censuses

Overall, in all the regions, the proportion of the older population had decreased by an average of 0.1 percent. The Central region has the least proportion of older persons in 2008 and 2018 as compared to both Southern and Northern regions (Figure 2.2).

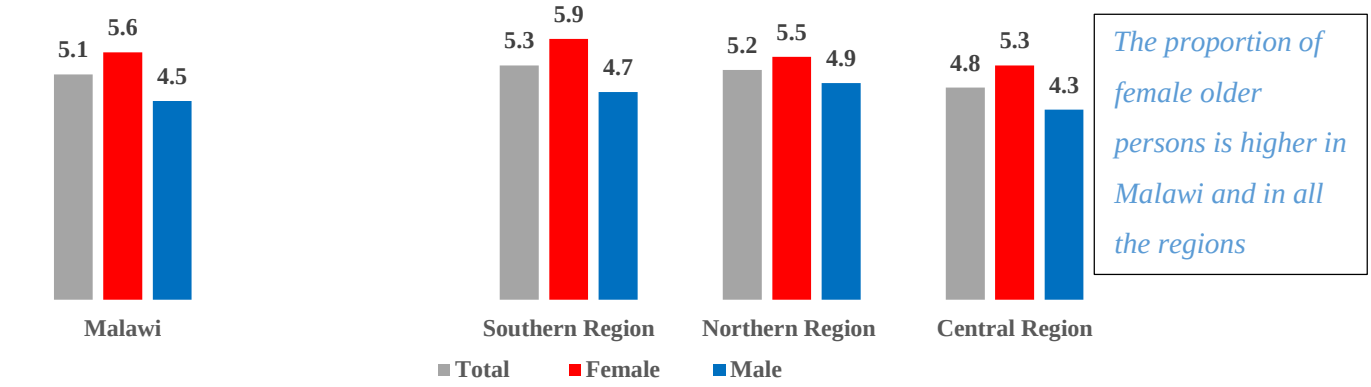
Figure 2.2: Proportion of Older Population Malawi and Regions, Malawi 2008 and 2018



Source: 2008 Malawi Population and Housing Census

The proportion of older females was higher compared to older males in Malawi (5.6 percent against 4.5 percent) and the pattern was similar in all the regions. The male older proportion was highest in the Northern region (4.9 percent) while the female older proportion was higher in the Southern region at 5.9 percent (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3: Proportion of Older Population by Region and Sex, Malawi 2018



Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

2.3 Distribution of older persons

2.3.1 Distribution of Older Persons

According to the 2018 PHC, there were 891,805 persons aged 60 years and over. This means that for every 1,000 Malawian residents there were 51 older persons. This is slightly lower than 53 older persons per 1,000 Malawian residents enumerated in 2008. Disaggregating the older population by sex, 386,033 male older persons were representing 43.3 percent and 505,772 female older persons representing 56.7 percent of the total older population.

2.3.2 Distribution of Older Persons by Region

The percentage distribution of older persons in Malawi was similar to the distribution of the total population. Southern region had the highest percentage of older persons (46.3 percent) followed by the Central region (40.4 percent) then the Northern region (13.4 percent) (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Percentage distribution of older persons by region, Malawi 2018

Place Residence	Total Population	Older Population	Percentage of Older Persons
Malawi	**17,563,749**	**891,805**	
Northern region	2,289,780	119,251	13.4
Central region	7,523,340	359,961	40.4
Southern region	7,750,629	412,593	46.3

Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census 2018

2.3.3 Distribution of Older Persons by Place of Residence

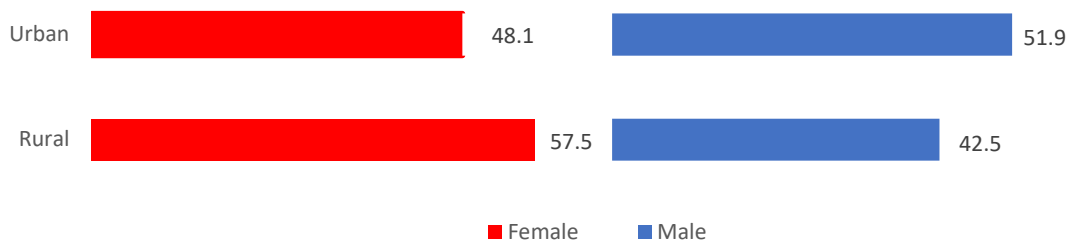
Of the total older population in Malawi, the majority lived in rural areas (91.6 percent) (Table 2.2). Comparing rural and urban, there was a higher percentage of females in rural areas than urban. In the male population, the percentage was higher in urban areas than rural areas

Table 2.2: Percentage distribution of older persons by place of residence, Malawi 2018

Place Residence	Total Population	Older Population	Percentage of Order Persons
Malawi	**17,563,749**	**891,805**	
Urban	2,816,492	75,280	8.4
Rural	14,747,257	816,525	91.6

Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census 2018

Figure 2.4: Percentage distribution of older persons by place of residence and sex, Malawi 2018

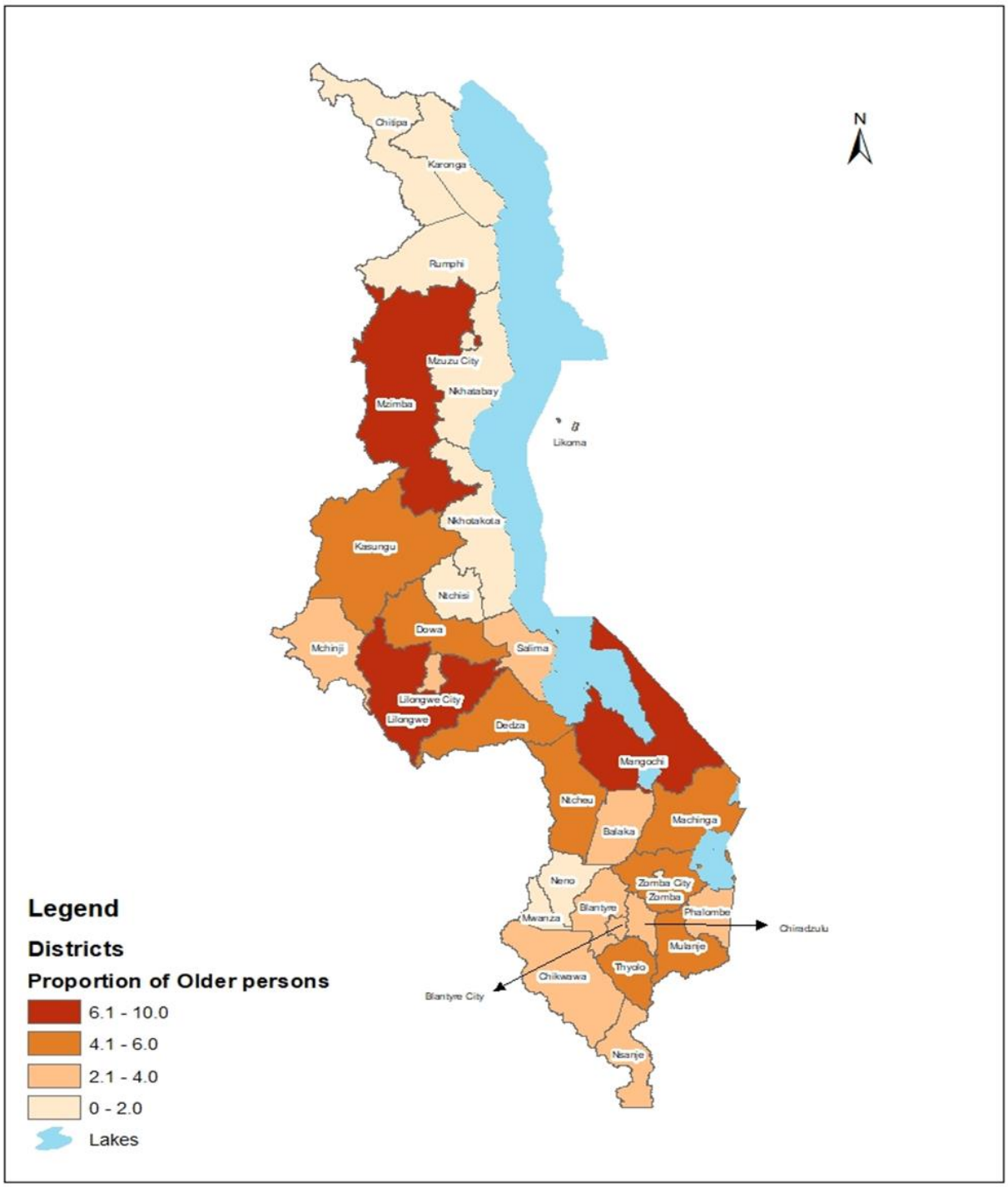


Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

2.3.4 Distribution of Older Persons by Districts

Among districts, the highest percentage of older persons was in Lilongwe district (9.3 percent) followed by Mangochi district (6.5 percent), Lilongwe city (5.6 percent) and Mzimba (5.4 percent) (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5: Percentage Distribution of Older Population



Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

The percentage distribution of older persons at district level within regions varies across the districts. In the Southern region, Mangochi had the highest percentage of older persons (14.3 percent) while Nsanje districts had the lowest (1.4 percent). In the Central region Lilongwe had the highest percentage of older population (24.3 percent), while Ntchisi district had the lowest (4.5 percent). Nearly half (46.0 percent) of the older population in Northern region was in Mzimba district whilst Likoma district had the least percentage of older persons (0.6 percent) (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3: Distribution of Older Persons by Highest and Lowest Populated Districts by Region, Malawi 2018

Region	District with Highest Older Population	Percentage	District with Lowest older Population	Percentage
Southern	Mangochi	14.3	Nsanje	1.4
	Zomba	10.7	Mwanza	1.5
	Thyolo	10.7	Neno	1.7
Central	Lilongwe	24.3	Ntchisi	4.5
	Dedza	13.4	Nkhotakota	4.9
	Dowa	11.5	Salima	6.5
Northern	Mzimba	46.0	Likoma	0.6
	Karonga	14.8	Rumphi	9.7
	Nkhata Bay	13.4		

Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

2.3.5 Top Five Districts with the Highest Proportion of Older Persons

The top five districts with the highest proportions of older persons were observed in Lilongwe (9.8 percent), Mangochi (6.6 percent), Mzimba (6.2 percent), Dedza (5.4 percent) and Zomba (5.0 percent).

Table 2.4: Top Five Districts with the Highest Proportion of Older Persons, Malawi 2018

Districts	Region	Population 60+	Proportion
Lilongwe	Central	87,417	9.8
Mangochi	Southern	58,920	6.6
Mzimba	Northern	54,890	6.2
Dedza	Central	48,247	5.4
Zomba	Southern	44,331	5.0

Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census 2018

2.3.6 Population of Older Persons in Cities and Other Urban Areas

In the cities and other urban areas, Blantyre (29.3 percent) and Lilongwe (29.1 percent) had the most older persons followed by Mzuzu (8.2 percent) and Zomba (3.8 percent). Over 29.7 percent of the Urban population of older persons was distributed in other urban areas in Malawi (Table 2.5).

Table 2.5: Population 60 years and Over in Cities and Other Urban Areas, Malawi 2018

City	Region	Population 60+	Population Proportion 60+
Blantyre	Southern	22,050	29.3
Lilongwe	Central	21,902	29.1
Mzuzu	Northern	6,154	8.2
Zomba	Southern	2,842	3.8
Other Urban Areas		22,332	29.7

Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census 2018

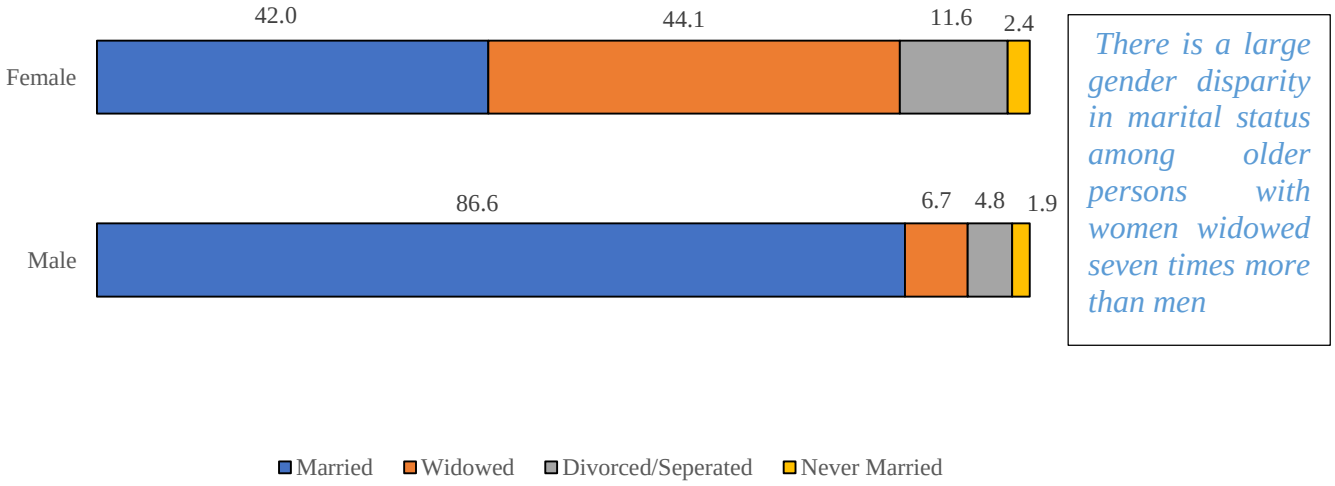
2.4 Social Economic Characteritsics of Older Persons

This section presents the social economic characteristics of older persons. These include; marital status, religion, tribe, disability, national identification status, economic status, education status and household and housing conditions.

2.4.1 Marital status

The population and housing census collected data on marital status for older persons. There was a large gender disparity in marital status among older persons in Malawi with 86.6 percent of older men being married as compared to 42.0 percent of women. With respect to divorce or separation among the older population, 11.6 percent of older women were either divorced or separated as compared to 4.8 percent of older men. Only 2.4 percent and 1.9 percent of older women and men respectively have never been married. Women were seven times more likely to be widowed than men (Figure 2.6).

Figure 2.6: Distribution of Older Population by Marital Status and Sex, Malawi 2018

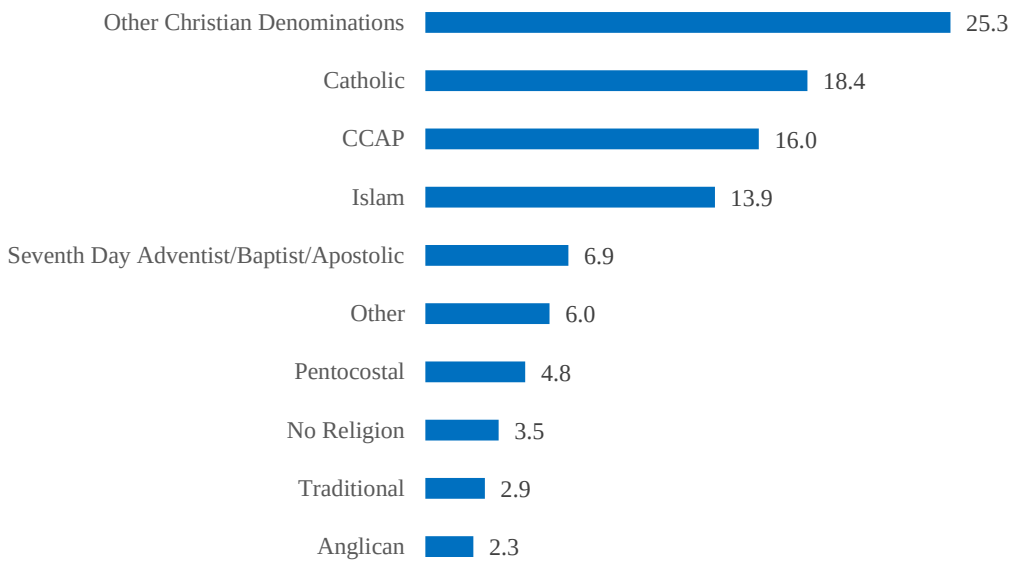


Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

2.4.2 Religion of Older Persons

Amongst older persons, 25.3 percent were members of other Christian Denominations and 3.5 percent had no religion. Overall most older persons practiced Christianity compared to other religions (Figure 2.7)

Figure 2.7: Percentage Distribution of Older Persons by Denomination, Malawi 2018



Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

2.4.3 Tribe of Older Persons

Among major tribes in Malawi there is no marked differences in the proportion of older persons. Nyanja (5.9 percent) had the highest proportion followed by Mang'anja (5.8 percent), Tonga (5.7 percent) and Sukwa (5.7 percent). Lambya, Nkhonde and Chewa had the lowest percentage of older persons of 4.2 percent, 4.7 percent, and 4.8 percent, respectively (Table 2.6).

Table 2.6: Percentage Distribution of Older Persons by Tribe, Malawi 2018

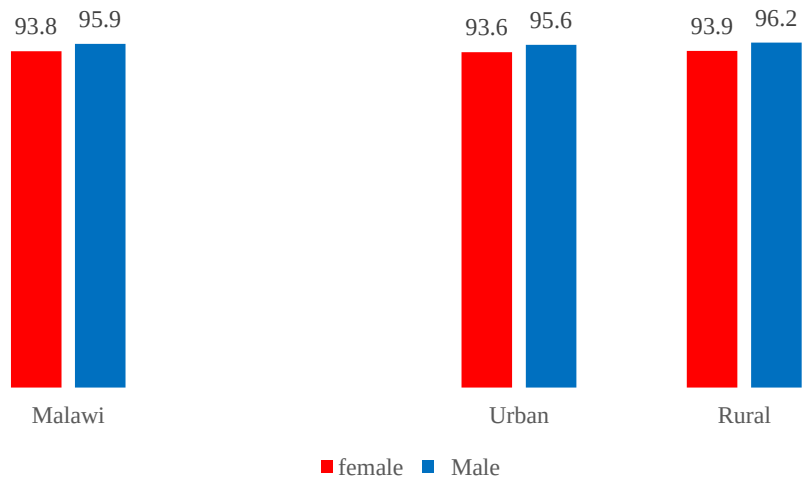
Tribe	Total Population	Older Population	Older Population Percentage
Nyanja	324,981	19,175	5.9
Mang'anja	560,770	32,513	5.8
Tonga	310,788	17,741	5.7
Sukwa	93,909	5,389	5.7
Sena	672,156	36,267	5.4
Yao	2,326,315	122,933	5.3
Tumbuka	1,619,438	85,046	5.3
Lomwe	3,308,627	168,135	5.1
Ngoni	1,825,111	92,710	5.1
Chewa	6,039,176	287,391	4.8
Nkhonde	174,853	8,286	4.7
Lambya	107,304	4,545	4.2
Other	200,321	11,674	5.8

Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

2.4.4 Older Persons' Ownership of National Identification Cards (ID)

The 2018 PHC obtained information of ownership of national identification cards of persons aged 16 years and over. Most older persons had National IDs, with more males (95.9 percent) having the ID than females (93.8 percent). More females (93.9 percent) in the rural areas had National IDs than in the urban areas (93.6 percent). The same pattern was observed in the male elderly population. (Figure 2.8).

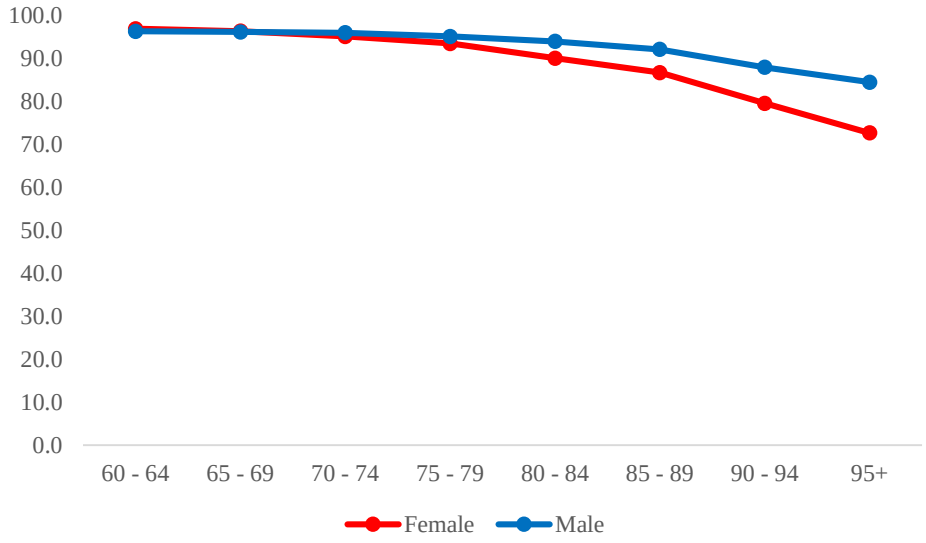
Figure 2.8: Percentage of Older Population with National IDs by Residence, Malawi 2018



Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

Over 90 percent of the population of older persons had National IDs. More females had National IDs than males between the ages of 60 and 69. More older males had National IDs from ages 70 as compared to older females who lag behind after 80 years old **(**Figure 2.9**).**

Figure 2.9: National IDs by sex, Malawi 2018



Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

2.4.5 Educational Characteristics of Older Persons

The 2018 PHC collected data on literacy, school attendance and highest education qualifications for residents aged three years and over. In this section information and analysis is provided for older persons on literacy, school attendance and educational qualifications.

2.4.6 Literacy Rate of Older Persons

According to the 2018 PHC, a person was considered literate if he or she was reported to be able to read and write a simple sentence in any language. The literacy rate of older persons was observed to have improved over the years from 38.0 percent in 2008 to 45.1 percent in 2018 (Figure 2.10).

Figure 2.10: Trends in Older Persons' Literacy Rates, Malawi 2008 and 2018

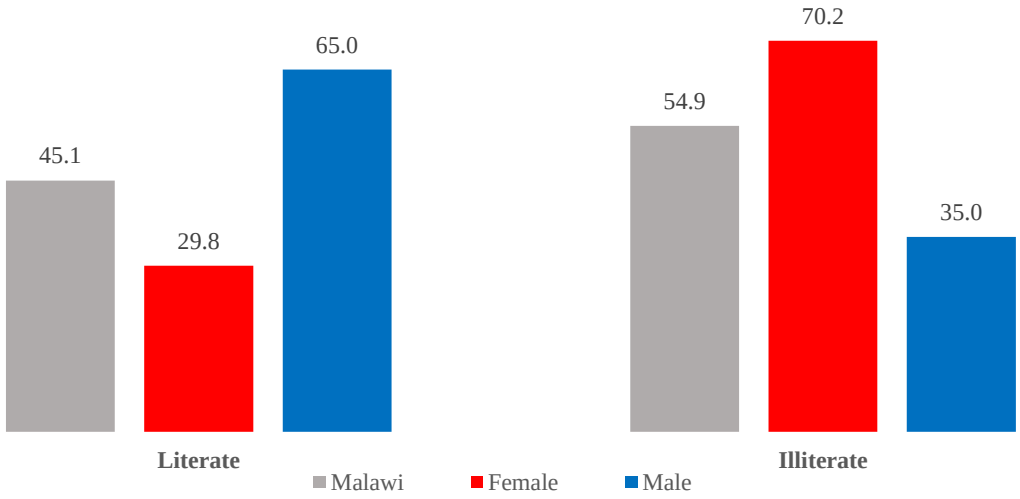


Source: 2008 and 2018 Malawi Population and Housing Census

2.4.7 Population of Older Persons by Sex and Literacy Status

There was a large gender disparity in literacy rates. The 2018 PHC revealed that 54.9 percent of older persons could not read and write. Amongst the female older persons (70.2 percent) were illiterate, whereas, of the male older persons (35 percent) were illiterate. (Figure 2.11).

Figure 2.11: Population of Older Persons by Sex and Literacy Status, Malawi 2018

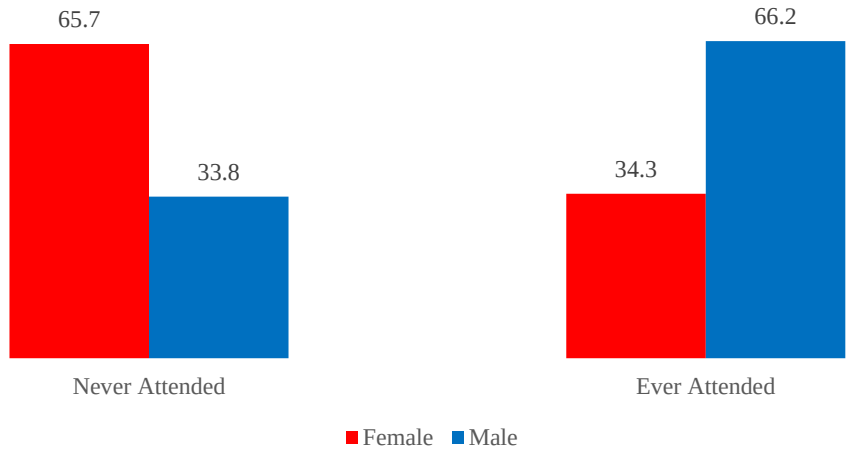


Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

2.4.8 School Attendance for Older Persons

The Population and Housing Census collected data on educational status for residents aged at least 3 years. Among those who had ever attended school in the older population, 66.2 percent were males compared to only 34.3 percent of females. Whereas, for those who had never attended school, older women ranked higher (65.7 percent) as compared to older men (33.8 percent) (Figure 2.12).

Figure 2.12: Older Population Education Status by Sex, Malawi 2018

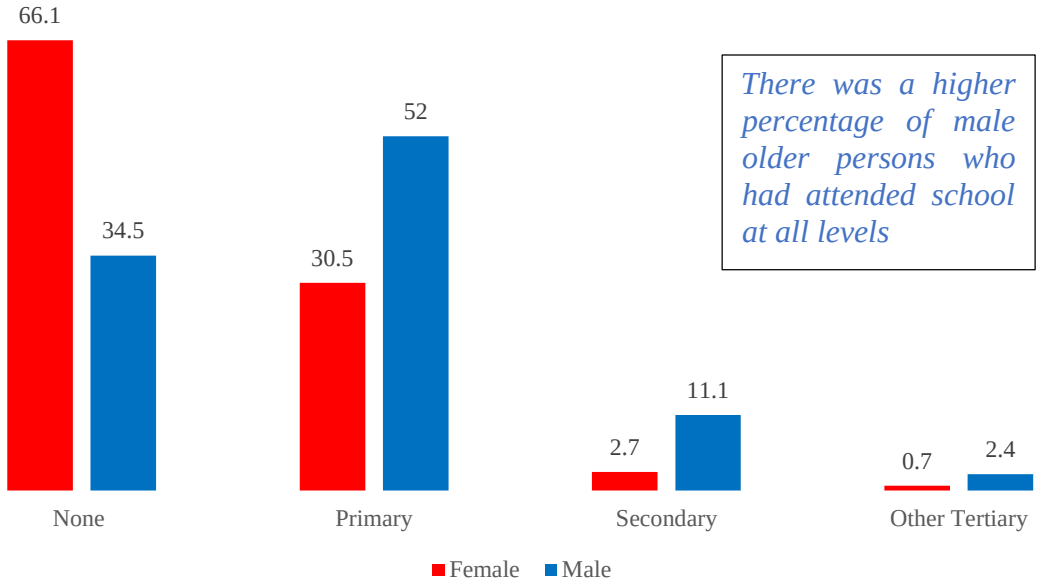


Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

2.4.9 Older Persons Highest Educational Level

Older persons had lower levels of education. Disaggregated by sex, there was a higher proportion of male older persons who had attended school at various levels. About 11 percent of males and 2.7 percent of females had attended secondary school. About 2 percent of older men and less than 1 percent (0.7 percent) of females had attended other tertiary level of education (Figure 2.13).

Figure 2.13: Older Persons Highest Educational Level by Sex, Malawi 2018

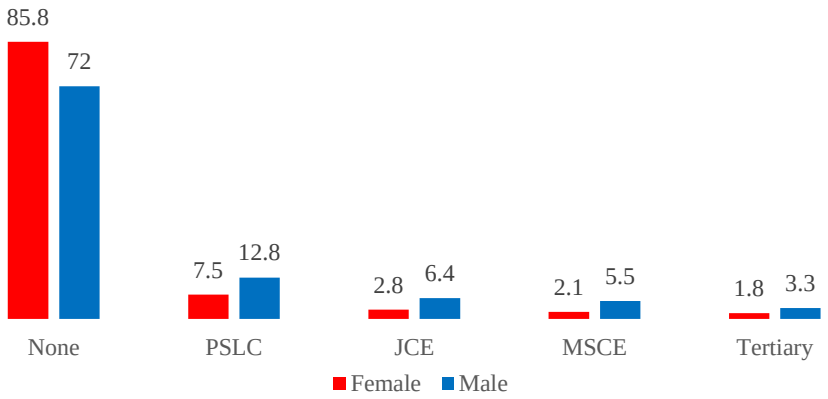


Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

2.4.10 Older Persons Education Qualifications

Notable differences were observed between older men and women in their educational qualifications. Amongst female older persons 85.8 percent had no education qualification against 72.0 percent of male older persons. Overall there was a higher percentage of male older persons with all education qualifications (Figure 2.14).

Figure 2.14: Older Persons' Highest Education Qualification by sex, Malawi 2018

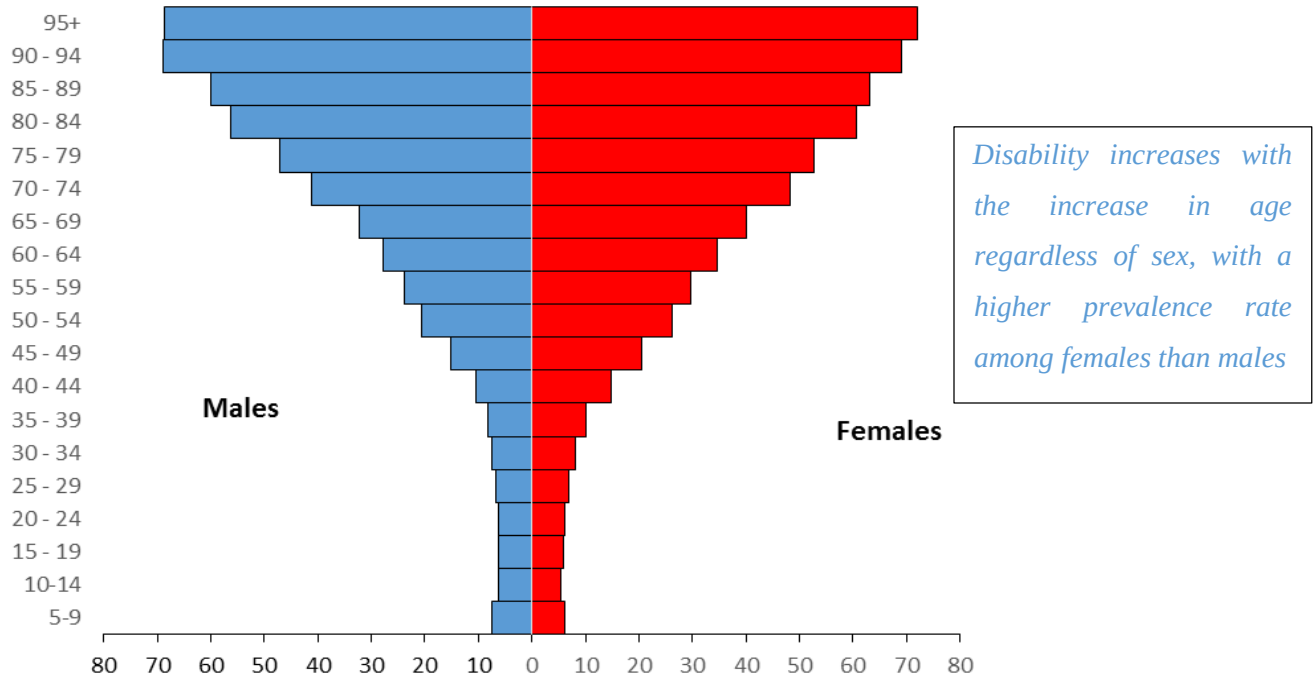


Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

2.4.11 Prevalence of Disability in Older Persons

The disability prevalence rate for Malawi is increasing with a corresponding increase in age especially more prevalent from 40 years and above. As such, people in Malawi are more likely to acquire a disability with ageing as opposed to the period they are children or youth (Figure 2.15).

Figure 2.15: Percentage Distribution on Disability Prevalence by Age and Sex, Malawi 2018



Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

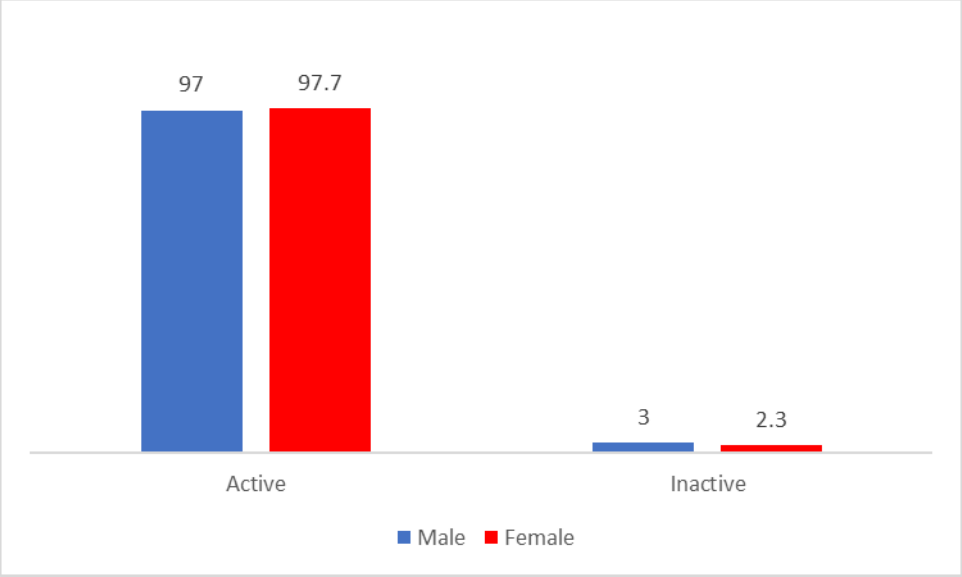
2.4.12 Economic Characteristics of Older Persons

The 2018 PHC collected information on economic characteristics of older persons. Economic Characteristics of older persons were classified as economically active or inactive. The census included information on people who were currently employed or have ever been employed, status in occupation and reasons for not working. The population was divided into economically active (both employed and unemployed) and economically inactive people.

2.4.13 Economically Active Older Persons

Economically active persons are defined as all people who were either employed or unemployed but available for work. According to the 2018 PHC, 97.7 percent of older women were economically active compared to 97.0 percent of older men (Figure 2.16).

Figure 2.16: Economically Active Older Population, Malawi 2018

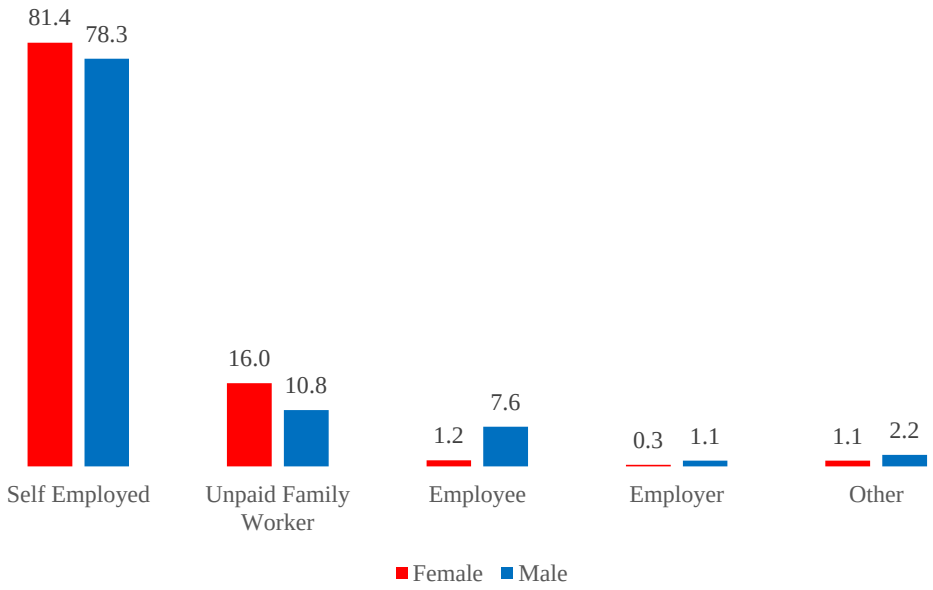


Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

2.4.14 Employment Status of Older Persons

The employment status was analyzed for all older persons who were categorized as economically active. While almost equal number of older males and females were self-employed and employers, the percentage of older females (16 percent) who did unpaid family work was substantially higher than for older males (10.8 percent). Whereas, a higher percentage of older males were employees (7.6 percent) as compared to 1.2 percent of older females (Figure 2.17).

Figure 2.17: Proportion of Older Population Employment Status by Sex, Malawi 2018

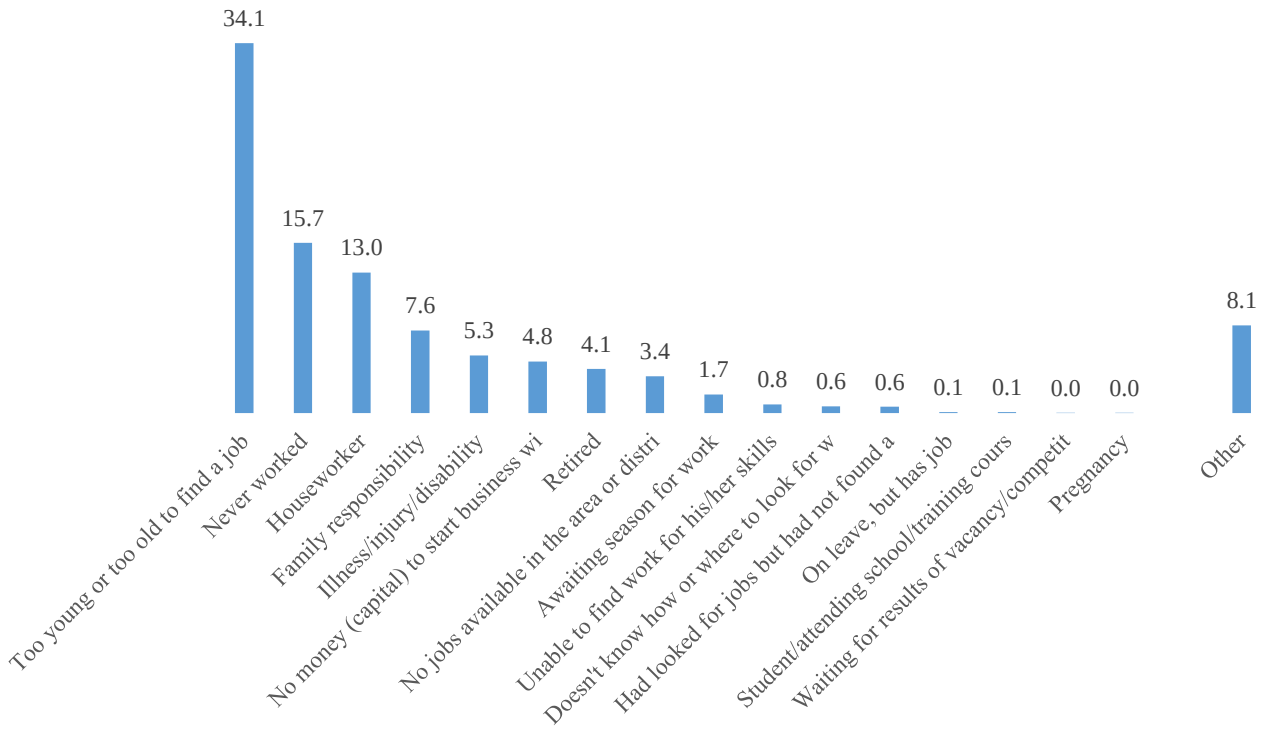


Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

2.4.15 Economically Inactive Older persons

There are some reasons for older person's not working. Of the reasons for not working, 34.1 percent reported to have been too old to work, 15.7 percent of older persons indicated that they had never worked, 13.0 percent were house workers, 5.3 percent reported to have had an illness, injury or disability, 4.1 percent were retired and 0.1 percent were students (Figure 2.18).

Figure 2.18: Proportion of Older Population by Reasons for Not Working, Malawi 2018



Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

2.4.16 Older persons Dependency Ratio

Dependency ratio technically refers to the ratio of children age 0 to 14 and older persons aged 65 years and over to the population aged 15 to 64 years. In this report the focus is on older persons and the working definition of older persons dependency ratio is a measure of the number of dependents aged 65 years and over to the total population aged 15 to 64 years.

Analysis of the 2018 PHC data showed that at national level the dependency ratio for the population 65 years and over was (7.1 percent) and this this implied that, for every 100 working population, there were 10 older people aged 65 years and over. For the population aged 65 and over, the dependency ratio was 7 implying that for 100 working people there were 7 older persons. The age dependency ratio for older persons was highest in Southern region with 10 older persons per 100 working people. Northern Region

had 10 older persons depending on 100 working people. In the cities, Mzuzu and Blantyre had the highest dependency ratio of about 5 older persons for 100 working people.

2.4.17 Age Dependency Ratio by Region

Southern region had the highest age dependency ratio (7.8 percent), followed by Northern region (7.0 percent) whereas, Central region had the lowest dependency ratio (6.6 percent) (Table 2.7).

Table 2.7: Age Dependency Ratio, Malawi 2018

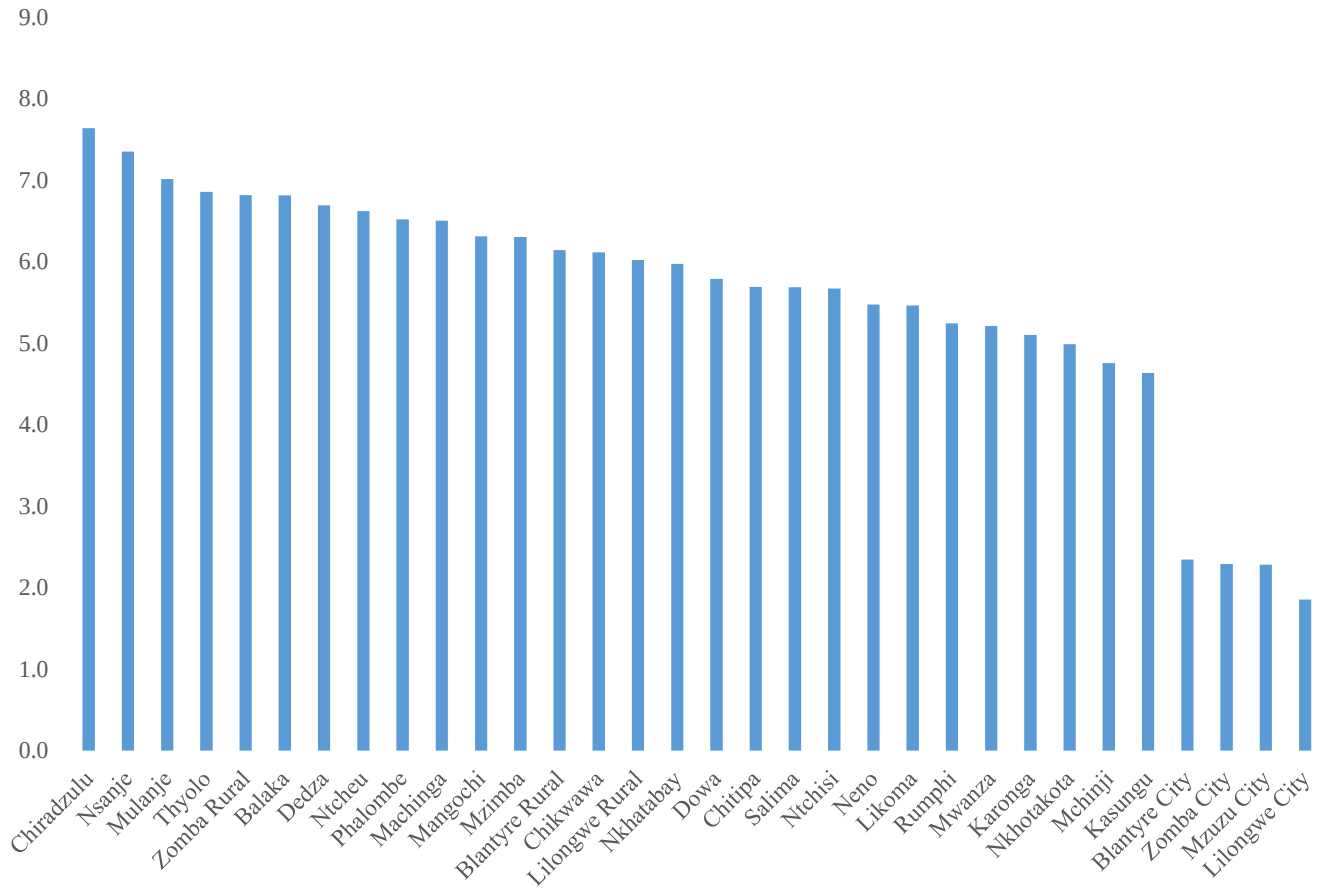
	65+ Years
Malawi	**7.1**
Northern region	7.0
Central region	6.6
Southern region	7.8
Mzuzu city	2.8
Lilongwe city	2.2
Blantyre city	1.3
Zomba city	2.8

Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

2.4.18 Age Dependency Ratio by Districts

In Malawi, Chiradzulu district has the highest age dependency ratio. The next five districts with higher age dependency ratios are also in Southern region, namely: Nsanje, Mulanje, Thyolo, Zomba Rural and Balaka. Lilongwe City has the lowest age dependency ratio followed by Mzuzu City, Zomba City and Blantyre City (Figure 2.19).

Figure 2.19: Older persons Age Dependency Ratio by District, Malawi 2018



Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

2.5 Household and Housing Conditions for Older Persons

The population and housing census collected housing and household characteristics. These included among others; age of household head, type of household, source of household livelihood, ownership of assets and type of dwelling structure including access to internet.

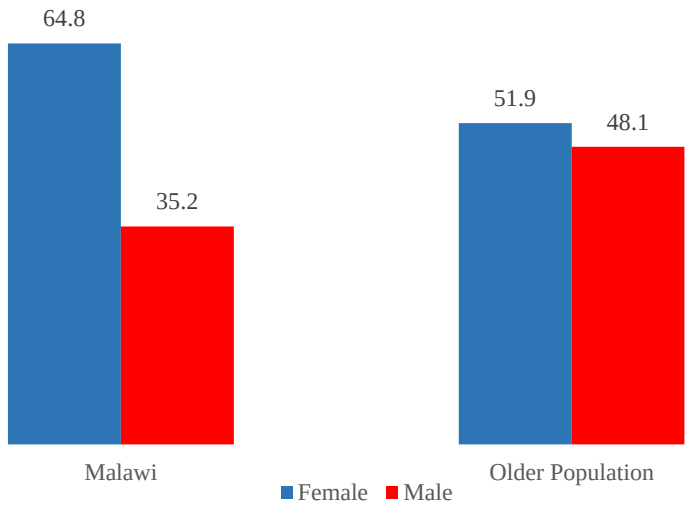
Definitions

a. Mean household size is calculated as the ratio of the total population enumerated in households to the number of such households enumerated in an area.
b. A permanent structure is made of durable roofing materials such as iron sheets and strong walling materials such as burned bricks.
c. A semi-permanent structure lacks one of the materials of the permanent structure such as having a roof made of iron sheets with the wall made up of unburned bricks.
d. A traditional structure lacks both materials of the permanent structure. For example, a grass thatched house having its walls made of unburned bricks is regarded as a traditional structure.
e. Household tenure in a census refers to the status of the arrangements under which a household occupies all or part of a dwelling unit (United Nations, 2008). The unit of enumeration is a household occupying a housing unit. It refers to the ownership or rental status of the household with respect to the dwelling in which the household members live.
f. Durability of a dwelling unit in Malawi is determined by the type of construction material used for the walls and the roofs. For example, a dwelling unit is considered more durable if its walls are constructed with burnt bricks and the roof is made up of iron sheets. On the other hand, a dwelling unit is not durable if its walls are constructed by mud and the roof is grass thatched. A dwelling unit with grass thatched roof and its walls made up of burnt bricks is moderately durable.

2.5.1 Household Headship for Older Persons

The census data indicated that 619,889 older persons were household heads, representing 69.5 percent of the total older person's population in Malawi. At national level older persons constituted 15.6 percent of household heads. In the general population, there were more male headed households (64.8 percent) than male headed ones (35.2 percent). This picture was similar in the older population although the gap between males and females) was very small (3.8 percent compared to the difference of 29.6 percent in the general population (Figure 2.20). Overall, the proportion of older women who were heads of households was higher than that of women in the general population.

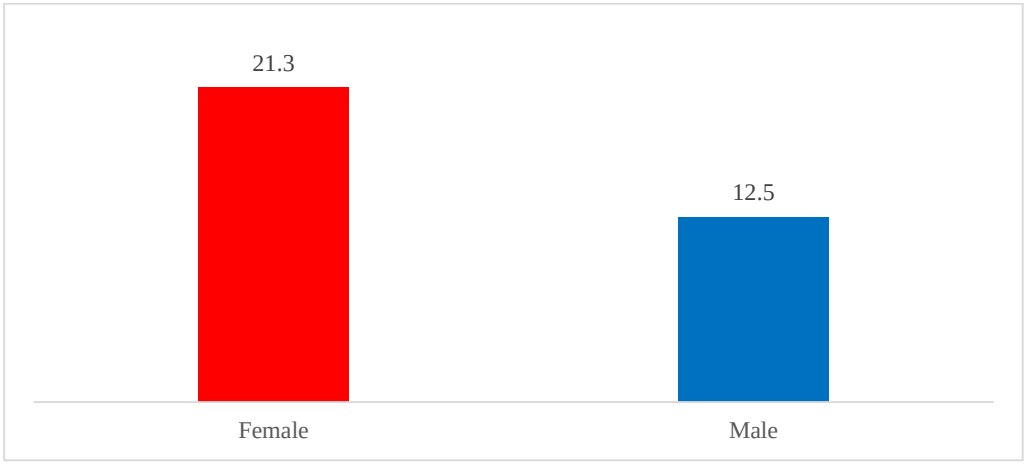
Figure 2.20: Comparison of Household Heads by Sex, Malawi and Older Population, Malawi 2018



Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

Of all female headed households in Malawi 21.3 percent are headed by elderly people. This is higher than the share of elderly male headed households (12.5 percent) of the total male headed households (Figure 2.21).

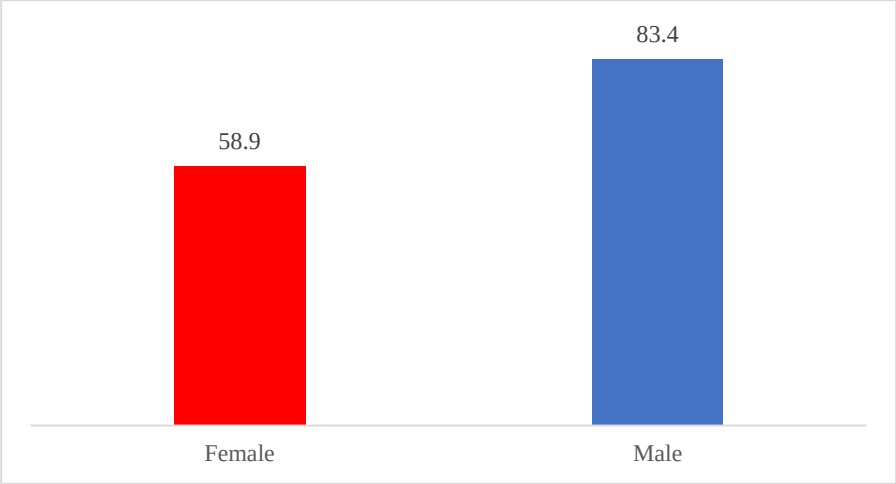
Figure 2.21: Share of Elderly Headed Households by Sex, Malawi 2018



Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

Amongst all female elderly persons (58.9 percent) are households heads, while amongst male elderly persons, (83.4 percent) are household heads (Figure 2.22).

Figure 2.22: Comparison of Elderly Household Heads by Sex, Malawi 2018

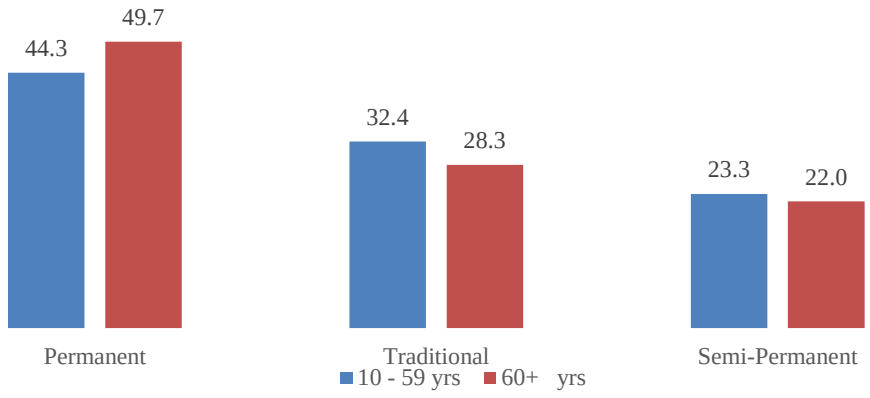


Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

2.5.2 Dwelling units Characteristics of Older Persons

Amongst the older persons household heads 49.7 percent had permanent dwellings, while the household heads 59 years and below, registered the highest on the traditional and semi-permanent structure (32.4 percent) and (23.3 percent) respectively (Figure 2.23).

Figure 2.23: Comparison of Household Heads' Type of Dwelling by Age, Malawi 2018



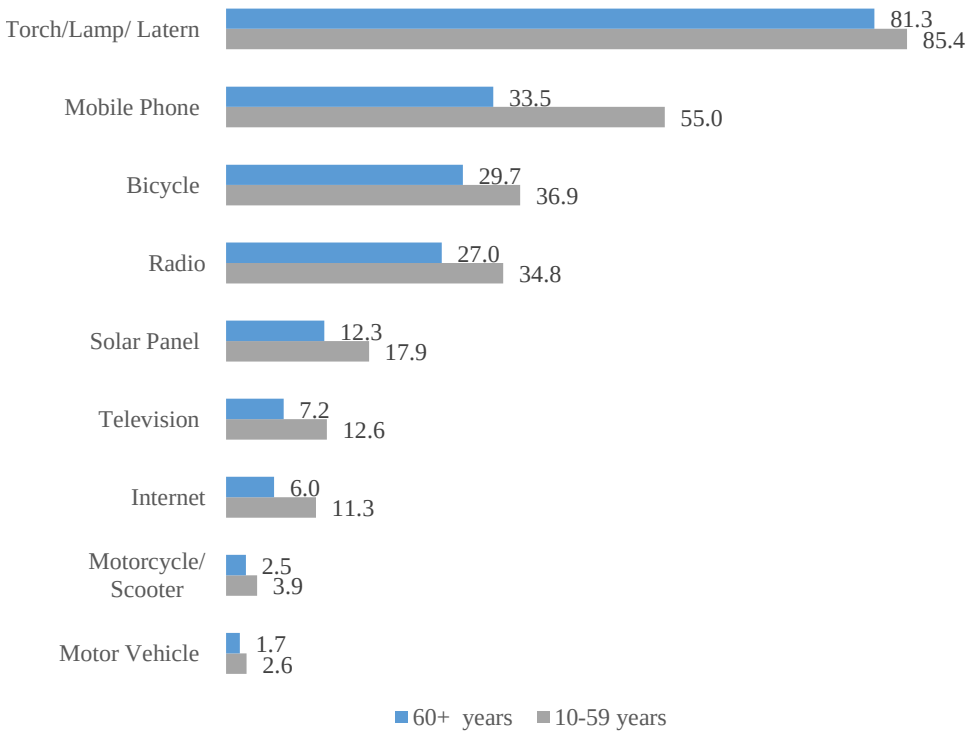
Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

2.5.3 Ownership of Assets by Older Persons Headed Household

For this report, analysis of the ownership of assets by older persons headed households focused on assets that were deemed to have a bearing on the welfare of older persons. Mobile phone, Radio, Television, Bicycle, Motorcycle/Scooter, Solar panel, Torch/Lamp/Lantern, Motor vehicle and access to the internet were considered as having a substantial influence on the household level of access to information, goods and services.

Overall Households headed by older persons owned fewer assets than households headed by persons less than 60 years. The highest gap in ownership of these assets is observed in mobile phones and bicycles. The most common assets owned by older population households were Torch/Lamp/Lantern, Mobile phone, Bicycle and Radio. There was a similar pattern in the ownership of these assets by households headed by persons aged 10 years to 59 years. There was also a notable difference in the proportion of household heads aged 60 years and over and those aged 10-59 in terms of access to the internet (6.0 percent and 11.3 percent, respectively) (Figure 2.24).

Figure 2.24: Household Head Ownership of Assets by age 60 and over and 10-59 years, Malawi

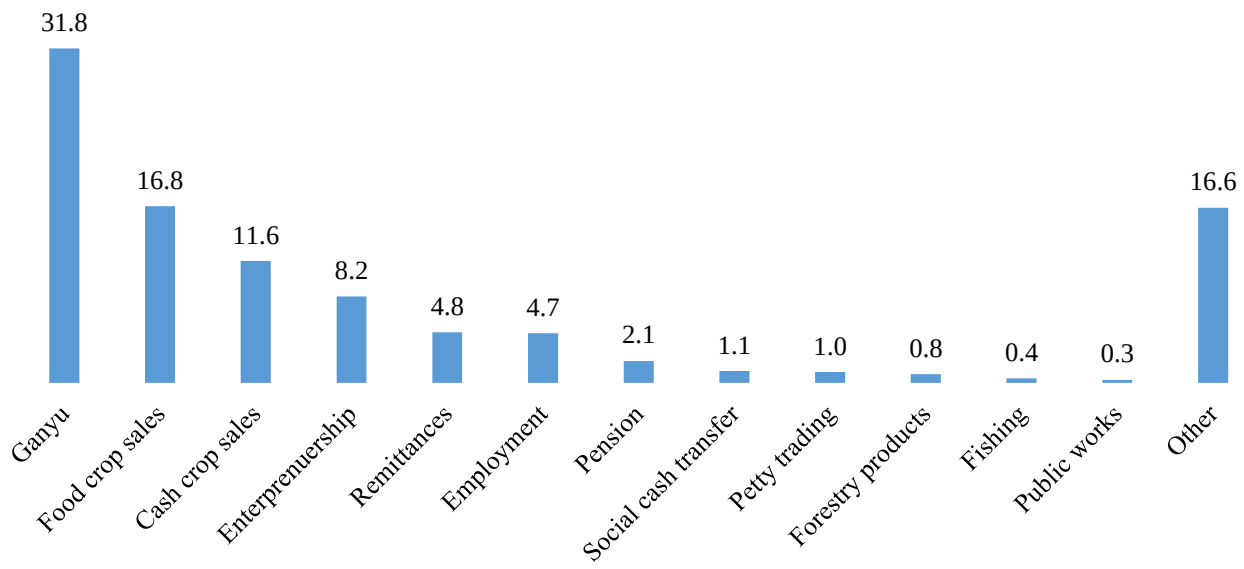


Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

2.5.4 Household Sources of Livelihood of Older Persons

The top five sources of livelihood among households headed by older persons were Ganyu (31.8 percent), food crop sales (16.8 percent), other sources (16.6 percent), cash crop sales (11.6 percent) and entrepreneurship (8.2 percent). Social Protection initiatives such as pension, public works and social cash transfer were the least sources of livelihood among older person's households. Only 2.1 percent of older persons headed households had pension as their source of livelihood and 1.1 percent had social cash transfer while 0.3 percent of the households had public works as their means of livelihood (Figure 2.25).

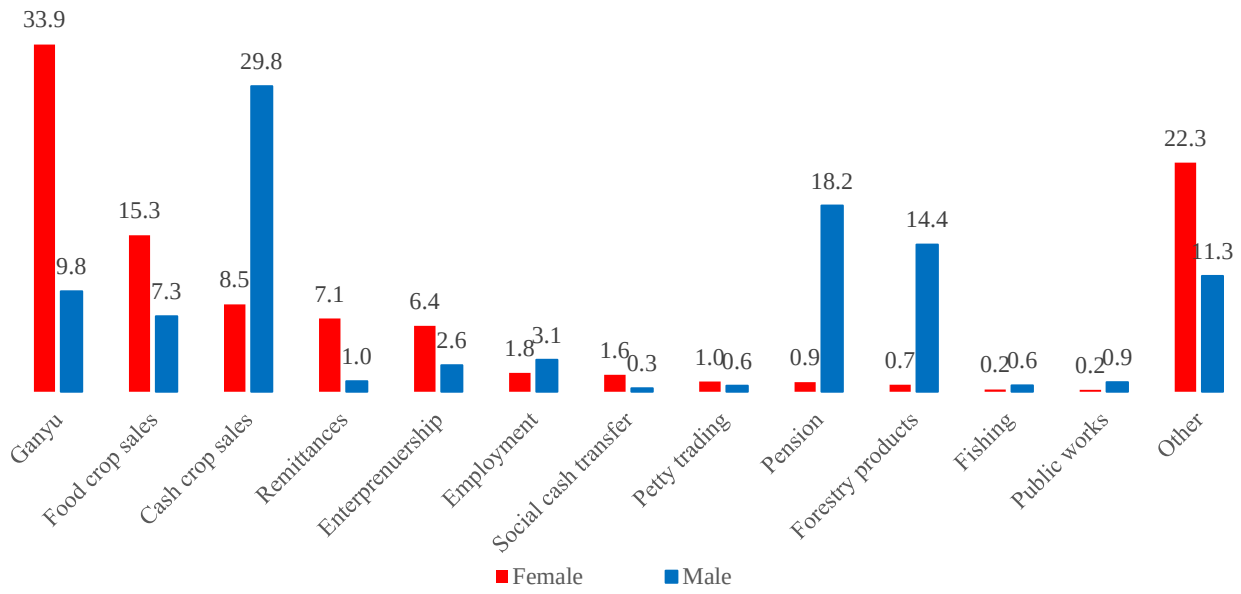
Figure 2.25: Proportion of Older Persons' Headed Households by Livelihood Sources, Malawi 2018



Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

Female headed households ranked high on Ganyu (33.9 percent), Food crop sales (15.3 percent) and Remittances (7.1 percent) as their sources of livelihood compared to male headed households. Whereas, the male headed households dominated on Cash crop sales (29.8 percent), pension (18.2 percent), forestry products (14.4 percent) and employment (3.1 percent) (Figure 2.26).

Figure 2.26: Proportion of Older Persons' Headed Households by Livelihood Sources and Sex, Malawi 2018



Source: Malawi Population and Housing Census, 2018

3 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The objective of this report was to compile and analyze the 2018 PHC data on older persons in order to be able to more accurately monitor the changing situation of older persons over time and provide policy makers with a comprehensive picture of the situation of older persons as they implement initiatives aimed at achieving the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III and Sustainable Development Goals targets.

The 2018 PHC indicates that the population of persons aged 60 years and over in Malawi is on the increase in absolute numbers even though their proportion in the total population has remained steady low, at about 5% over the years. This confirms the conception that population ageing is gradually evolving in Malawi as is the case in many parts of the world. The growing number of older persons in the population generally has profound social and economic implications which require robust policy interventions. Given the situation of older persons as highlighted by the 2018 PHC, the Government of Malawi needs to incorporate and mainstream population ageing issues into the development process and earmark resources.

The findings of this report underscores the disadvantaged status of older persons in Malawi. It has highlighted the gender disparity existing between older men and women in all social and economic aspects with older women being more disadvantaged than men. Older women for instance, are seven times more likely to be widowed than men and illiteracy levels are high among older women as compared to men. It has also been noted that as women grow older they are more likely to be heads of households. The disability prevalence rate is also higher among older women as compared to older men.

The report findings therefore call for improvements in the understanding of the gender dimensions of the lives of older persons, since social, economic, health and cultural factors affect older women and men in different ways. Government should develop gender-inclusive policies and programmes that should address the intersecting inequalities, including those associated with older age. Gender policy makers and advocacy groups need to adopt a life-course approach to address the intersecting inequalities that affect women and men of different social identities over their lifetime and in old age.

In pursuit of decent living, the report has shown that majority of older persons remain economically active (80.9 percent). A large proportion of older persons is self-employed with majority of women doing unpaid family work. Engagement in income generating and livelihood enhancing activities by older persons could be viewed as failure by existing social protection programmes to reach out to majority of older persons to address their poverty. In addition, high older economic dependency ratio indicates the greater burden that employed population and the overall economy faces to support and provide for the welfare of older persons. Whilst it is pleasing to note that Malawi has a number of social protection programmes targeting poor and vulnerable households, development of specific programmes that exclusively target older persons remains an option that needs to be considered.

As Government strives to uplift the livelihoods of older persons, it is important to strengthen family support systems for the elderly which are disintegrating and getting eroded. Further to this, development of policies and programmes for older persons should acknowledge the fact that older persons needs vary according to sex, age cohort, locality and socio-economic background with females being more disadvantaged and vulnerable than their male counterparts.

Government and stakeholders need to begin to view older persons as a population group of interest and embark on development of short, medium and long term plans and strategies to meet the challenges of population ageing including investing more resources in social policies and health care of older persons, paying special attention to economic and social security of older persons. Structurally, government should strengthen national capacity to respond to the implications of ageing and the needs of older persons.

Further research and surveys need to be undertaken to enrich the findings of the PHC data on ageing to support the formulation of appropriate policies and programmes in Malawi.

The Population and Housing Census data provides vital information that supports the formulation of evidence based inclusive social development policies and programmes. In order to achieve inclusive social development where older persons are recognized and included, accurate and reliable data on ageing population must systematically be analyzed to ensure that older persons have equal access to social services. In other words, older persons' data can be used in monitoring the situation of older persons in Malawi by providing a benchmark on the socioeconomic characteristics of the senior citizens.

4 ANNEX

Annex 4.1: Population of older persons by place of residence, region and districts, Malawi 2018

Place of Residence	Total population	Proportion of Total Population (%)	Older Population	Proportion of older persons (%)
Total	**17,563,749**	**100**	**891,805**	**5.1**
Urban	2,816,492	16.0	75,280	8.4
Rural	14,747,257	84.0	816,525	91.6
Northern Region	**2,289,780**	**13.0**	**119,251**	**13.4**
Chitipa	234,927	1.3	12,218	10.2
Karonga	365,028	2.1	17,653	14.8
Nkhata Bay	284,681	1.6	16,035	13.4
Rumphi	229,161	1.3	11,533	9.7
Mzimba	940,184	5.4	54,890	46.0
Likoma	14,527	0.1	768	0.6
Mzuzu City	221,272	1.3	6,154	5.2
Central Region	**7,523,340**	**42.8**	**359,961**	**40.4**
Kasungu	842,953	4.8	37,668	10.5
Nkhotakota	393,077	2.2	17,750	4.9
Ntchisi	317,069	1.8	16,146	4.5
Dowa	772,569	4.4	41,509	11.5
Salima	478,346	2.7	23,266	6.5
Lilongwe	1,637,583	9.3	87,417	24.3
Mchinji	602,305	3.4	26,965	7.5
Dedza	830,512	4.7	48,247	13.4
Ntcheu	659,608	3.8	39,091	10.9
Lilongwe City	989,318	5.6	21,902	6.1
Southern Region	**7,750,629**	**44.1**	**412,593**	**46.3**
Mangochi	1,148,611	6.5	58,920	14.3
Machinga	735,438	4.2	38,477	9.3
Zomba	746,724	4.3	44,331	10.7
Chiradzulu	356,875	2.0	24,321	5.9
Blantyre	451,220	2.6	25,474	6.2
Mwanza	130,949	0.7	6,129	1.5
Thyolo	721,456	4.1	44,144	10.7
Mulanje	684,107	3.9	42,051	10.2
Phalombe	429,450	2.4	23,494	5.7
Chikwawa	564,684	3.2	29,699	7.2
Nsanje	299,168	1.7	18,191	4.4
Balaka	438,379	2.5	25,635	6.2
Neno	138,291	0.8	6,834	1.7
Zomba City	105,013	0.6	2,843	0.7
Blantyre City	800,264	4.6	22,050	5.3

Annex 4.2: Age group of older persons and their livelihood sources, Malawi 2018

Household Age	number of Households Head	Livelihood sources												
		Enterpreneurship	Employment	Ganyu	Petty trading	Remittances	Pension	Public works	Fishing	Food crop sales	Cash crop sales	Social cash transfer	Forestry products	Other
60 - 69	330,168	31,954	21,080	113,762	3,578	10,324	7,298	970	1,645	55,970	40,903	2,325	2,694	37,665
70 - 79	192,676	13,646	6,418	59,052	1,864	10,610	4,032	501	708	33,464	22,122	2,541	1,562	36,156
80 - 89	80,104	4,386	1,418	20,323	670	6,763	1,274	162	224	12,393	7,450	1,585	602	22,854
90 +	16,936	739	192	3,678	142	1,905	207	29	28	2,093	1,127	414	142	6,240

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