

# CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS AND WOMEN'S STATUS

# 3

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This chapter provides a demographic and socioeconomic profile of the 2004 Malawi DHS sample of individual female and male respondents. It begins by describing basic background characteristics of men and women, including age at the time of the survey, marital status, educational level, and residential characteristics. It also provides detailed information on education, literacy, and exposure to mass media among men and women, data on employment and work status of women, decisionmaking in the household, and attitudes on women's position in relation to others in the household.

## 3.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Background characteristics of women age 15-49 and men age 15-54 interviewed in the 2004 MDHS survey are presented in Table 3.1. As expected, the percentage of women and men is highest in the younger age groups and the proportion of respondents in each age group declines with age. Sixty-seven percent of women and 63 percent of men are currently married; an additional 4 percent of women and 1 percent of men reported being in an informal marriage or living together. For purposes of the 2004 MDHS survey and in presentation of findings throughout later chapters of this report, informal marriages are grouped together with formalised marriages to form the group "currently married" or "in union." One in three men had never been married, compared with only 17 percent of women, supporting the fact that men get married later in life than women. Women were more likely than men (12 and 2 percent, respectively) to be divorced, separated, or widowed.

As expected, most of the interviewed women and men reside in rural areas (82 percent of women and 80 percent of men). The largest proportion of female and male respondents live in the Southern Region (46 and 45 percent, respectively), while 41 percent of women and 42 percent of men live in the Central Region. Only 13 percent of both women and men live in the Northern Region.

Table 3.1 also shows the distribution of men and women by district, including districts that were oversampled in the survey to allow the presentation of estimates of certain indicators at the district level. Notable are the large differences between the weighted and unweighted numbers of men and women in some districts. The unweighted number represents the number of respondents who were actually interviewed in the 2004 MDHS survey, whereas the weighted number represents that district's proportional representation in the population. For instance, Salima District has only 3 percent of the population of women age 15-49 (as represented by 303 weighted cases), but 703 women were actually interviewed (or 6 percent of the total number of interviewed women).

Table 3.1. Background characteristics of respondents

Percent distribution of women and men by background characteristics, Malawi 2004

Background characteristic	Women			Men		
	Weighted percent	Weighted number	Unweighted number	Weighted percent	Weighted number	Unweighted number
<b>Age</b>						
15-19	20.4	2,392	2,407	19.9	650	650
20-24	24.5	2,870	2,824	18.0	587	583
25-29	18.4	2,157	2,136	19.4	634	617
30-34	12.6	1,478	1,492	14.9	485	474
35-39	9.5	1,117	1,129	9.0	294	287
40-44	8.0	935	940	8.6	282	293
45-49	6.4	749	770	5.6	182	181
50-54	na	0	0	19.9	650	650
<b>Marital status</b>						
Never married	16.8	1,970	1,902	33.2	1,084	1,039
Married	66.8	7,810	7,831	62.9	2,050	2,078
Living together	4.3	503	554	0.9	29	36
Divorced/separated	8.4	979	991	2.5	81	93
Widowed	3.7	437	420	0.5	17	15
<b>Residence</b>						
Urban	17.8	2,076	1,640	20.5	669	507
Rural	82.2	9,621	10,058	79.5	2,593	2,754
<b>Region</b>						
Northern	13.3	1,552	1,597	13.0	423	456
Central	40.5	4,734	4,199	42.0	1,370	1,261
Southern	46.3	5,412	5,902	45.0	1,468	1,544
<b>District</b>						
Blantyre	7.8	914	703	9.7	316	208
Kasungu	4.2	497	897	4.8	156	313
Machinga	3.7	427	772	3.5	114	198
Mangochi	5.1	599	774	4.6	150	190
Mzimba	6.7	778	953	6.5	212	274
Salima	2.6	303	703	2.4	78	182
Thyolo	5.3	618	820	5.2	169	211
Zomba	5.4	637	806	4.9	159	209
Lilongwe	14.6	1,705	710	16.6	542	228
Mulanje	4.4	512	777	3.5	114	178
Other districts	40.2	4,708	3,783	38.3	1,250	1,070
<b>Education</b>						
No education	23.4	2,734	2,823	11.7	383	383
Primary 1-4	25.6	2,998	3,057	24.5	798	830
Primary 5-8	35.5	4,154	4,132	37.4	1,220	1,231
Secondary+	15.5	1,811	1,685	26.3	859	814
<b>Religion</b>						
Catholic	23.1	2,698	2,575	21.2	690	683
Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP)	18.6	2,170	2,065	18.9	616	594
Anglican	2.5	292	252	2.3	76	68
Seventh Day Adventist/Baptist	6.3	731	755	6.5	213	186
Other Christian	36.4	4,257	4,103	36.2	1,179	1,189
Muslim	12.0	1,404	1,816	11.4	372	455
No religion	0.9	100	84	3.0	99	75
Other	0.3	34	35	0.4	13	10
<b>Ethnic group</b>						
Chewa	33.9	3,967	3,665	32.7	1,068	1,006
Tumbuka	9.7	1,136	1,205	9.6	314	331
Lomwe	16.9	1,976	2,211	17.1	559	638
Tonga	2.2	253	255	2.1	68	71
Yao	12.8	1,496	1,819	13.1	426	469
Sena	4.4	512	383	4.6	151	114
Nkonde	1.1	124	98	1.5	49	42
Ngoni	11.7	1,367	1,155	11.9	388	332
Other	7.3	859	897	7.3	238	258
Total	100.0	11,698	11,698	100.0	3,261	3,261

Note: Education categories refer to the highest level of education attended, whether or not that level was completed.

na = Not applicable

Table 3.1 further illustrates the distribution of men and women by religion and ethnic group, showing that most of the interviewed women and men are Catholics (23 percent of women and 21 percent of men). Only 1 percent of women and 3 percent of men report having no religion. The Chewa are the largest ethnic group, making up one-third of male and female respondents; the smallest ethnic group is the Nkonde, making up only 1 percent of women and 2 percent of men.

### 3.2 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Tables 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 show the percent distribution of respondents by the highest level of schooling attended according to their age, place of residence, region, and district. Young women and men are more likely to have attended school than the older generation. The distribution of respondents who have never attended school rises with increasing age. For example, 6 percent of women and 3 percent of men age 15-19 have no formal education, compared with 50 percent of women and 21 percent of men age 45-49. Similarly, 24 percent of women age 20-24 attended secondary school or higher, compared with only 5 percent of women age 45-49. For male respondents, the corresponding proportions for ages 20-24 and 45-49 are 38 percent and 15 percent, respectively.

The 2004 MDHS data indicate that educational opportunities vary among the respondents according to their areas of residence. Urban women and men are more likely to go to school than their rural counterparts. Only 8 percent of urban women and 5 percent of urban men have not attended school, compared with 27 percent and 13 percent in rural areas, respectively. The median number of years of education shows a similar differential, with urban women having a median of 6.9 years of schooling and rural women a median of 3.4 years.

Overall, respondents in the Northern Region are better educated than those in other regions. For example, while 9 percent of women in the Northern Region have no formal education, the proportion in the Central Region is 25 percent and in the Southern Region it is 27 percent. While 22 percent of women in the Northern Region have secondary or higher education, the proportions in the Central Region and Southern Region are 16 percent or lower.

Tables 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 show that wealth status has a positive relationship with a person's education. Women and men in higher wealth quintiles are better educated than those with less education. For example, the median years of schooling for women in the highest quintile is 7.6 years compared with 1.7 years for women in the lowest quintile.

Tables 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 also show the percent distribution of respondents by highest level of schooling and district. Among the oversampled districts, the proportion of women who have no formal education is lowest in Mzimba (8 percent) and highest in Mangochi (44 percent). Secondary education (or higher) is most common for men and women in Blantyre (43 percent and 28 percent, respectively). Mangochi has the lowest education for both women and men.

Table 3.2.1 Educational attainment by background characteristics: women

Percent distribution of women by highest level of schooling attended, and median number of years of schooling, according to background characteristics, Malawi, 2004

Background characteristic	Education				Total	Number of respondents	Median years of schooling
	No education	Primary 1-4	Primary 5-8	Secondary or higher			
<b>Age</b>							
15-19	5.5	24.2	50.0	20.2	100.0	2,392	5.6
20-24	12.7	26.9	36.5	23.9	100.0	2,870	5.2
25-29	24.3	27.0	31.8	16.9	100.0	2,157	3.9
30-34	36.6	26.5	28.3	8.5	100.0	1,478	2.1
35-39	38.3	22.8	32.5	6.4	100.0	1,117	2.2
40-44	39.4	25.8	30.2	4.6	100.0	935	1.7
45-49	50.0	23.6	21.7	4.7	100.0	749	0.0
<b>Residence</b>							
Urban	8.2	14.2	37.2	40.2	100.0	2,076	6.9
Rural	26.6	28.1	35.1	10.1	100.0	9,621	3.4
<b>Region</b>							
Northern	8.7	13.7	55.5	22.1	100.0	1,552	6.3
Central	24.6	27.3	32.3	15.8	100.0	4,734	3.8
Southern	26.5	27.6	32.6	13.3	100.0	5,412	3.5
<b>District</b>							
Blantyre	12.9	20.5	38.3	28.3	100.0	914	6.0
Kasungu	20.3	29.1	36.7	13.9	100.0	497	4.1
Machinga	38.6	26.8	26.2	8.3	100.0	427	2.1
Mangochi	43.6	24.6	23.7	8.0	100.0	599	1.3
Mzimba	8.2	12.5	56.7	22.6	100.0	778	6.4
Salima	34.0	30.3	24.3	11.3	100.0	303	2.4
Thyolo	28.3	32.4	30.0	9.3	100.0	618	2.8
Zomba	15.3	30.0	37.8	17.0	100.0	637	4.4
Lilongwe	21.5	23.1	31.6	23.7	100.0	1,705	4.8
Mulanje	22.2	35.7	31.7	10.4	100.0	512	3.1
Other districts	24.8	26.5	36.7	12.0	100.0	4,708	3.8
<b>Wealth quintile</b>							
Lowest	37.5	33.3	24.9	4.4	100.0	2,037	1.7
Second	33.4	32.4	29.6	4.6	100.0	2,277	2.4
Middle	26.6	30.4	38.0	5.1	100.0	2,383	3.3
Fourth	16.9	24.9	44.5	13.7	100.0	2,361	4.8
Highest	6.7	10.3	38.6	44.4	100.0	2,639	7.6
Total	23.4	25.6	35.5	15.5	100.0	11,698	4.1

Table 3.2.2 Educational attainment by background characteristics: men

Percent distribution of men by highest level of schooling attended, and median number of years of schooling, according to background characteristics, Malawi 2004

Background characteristic	Education				Total	Number of respondents	Median years of schooling
	No education	Primary 1-4	Primary 5-8	Secondary or higher			
<b>Age</b>							
15-19	3.2	28.4	47.6	20.7	100.0	650	5.5
20-24	7.4	22.9	31.3	38.4	100.0	587	6.4
25-29	10.9	22.5	30.9	35.8	100.0	634	6.3
30-34	14.6	22.5	34.1	28.7	100.0	485	5.7
35-39	20.9	21.2	41.0	17.0	100.0	294	5.3
40-44	16.3	25.1	43.4	15.1	100.0	282	5.3
45-49	21.1	23.3	40.7	14.9	100.0	182	4.5
50-54	22.4	35.0	33.0	9.0	100.0	148	3.3
<b>Residence</b>							
Urban	5.2	12.2	31.7	50.9	100.0	669	7.3
Rural	13.4	27.6	38.9	20.0	100.0	2,593	5.1
<b>Region</b>							
Northern	3.1	14.2	53.1	29.6	100.0	423	6.8
Central	13.8	26.4	35.3	24.5	100.0	1,370	5.2
Southern	12.4	25.6	34.8	27.1	100.0	1,468	5.6
<b>District</b>							
Blantyre	5.0	10.0	41.7	43.2	100.0	316	7.3
Kasungu	10.3	21.6	49.7	18.3	100.0	156	5.3
Machinga	18.0	30.0	29.7	22.4	100.0	114	4.2
Mangochi	20.2	31.3	24.7	23.8	100.0	150	3.9
Mzimba	3.0	15.2	51.7	30.1	100.0	212	6.7
Salima	10.2	38.8	33.1	17.9	100.0	78	4.1
Thyolo	12.5	32.8	31.2	23.0	100.0	169	4.6
Zomba	14.2	25.8	33.8	26.2	100.0	159	4.9
Lilongwe	13.1	23.2	31.1	32.5	100.0	542	5.8
Mulanje	7.3	28.0	42.7	22.0	100.0	114	5.6
Other districts	13.0	26.8	38.4	21.8	100.0	1,250	5.2
<b>Wealth quintile</b>							
Lowest	18.6	39.2	32.3	10.0	100.0	412	3.3
Second	16.9	35.6	34.0	13.3	100.0	640	3.8
Middle	16.6	26.1	41.1	16.1	100.0	699	4.8
Fourth	7.7	23.0	48.9	20.4	100.0	709	5.9
Highest	3.5	7.9	29.3	59.3	100.0	802	7.6
Total	11.7	24.5	37.4	26.3	100.0	3,261	5.6

### 3.3 LITERACY

The ability to read and write is an important personal asset enabling women and men to have increased opportunities in life. In the 2004 MDHS survey, persons were defined as literate based on the UNICEF definition: persons who are able to read a complete sentence or part of a sentence. Knowing the distribution of the literate population can help programme planners design effective family planning and health messages. Tables 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 show the level of literacy for women and men by background characteristics. There has been a marked increase in the literacy rate over time, especially for women. While 49 percent of women age 15-49 were literate in 2000, this rate has increased to 62 percent in 2004. For men, the increase is less substantial: 72 percent in 2000 compared with 79 percent in 2004.

Literacy is much higher among younger women than older women. For instance, only 37 percent of women age 45-49 are literate compared with 78 percent of women age 15-19. The level of literacy is higher among men (79 percent) than women (62 percent). Urban respondents have a higher level of literacy than rural respondents (84 percent and 58 percent for women and 92 percent and 76 percent for men). As indicated in the previous section, respondents in the Northern Region have the highest level of education and thus the highest literacy rate. Literacy rates rise with increasing wealth quintile; variations are more pronounced for females than for males.

Table 3.3.1 Literacy: women									
Percent distribution of women by level of schooling attended and by level of literacy, and percent literate, according to background characteristics, Malawi 2004									
Background characteristic	Secondary school or higher	No schooling or primary school				Missing	Total	Number of women	Percent literate <sup>1</sup>
		Can read a whole sentence	Can read part of a sentence	Cannot read at all					
<b>Age</b>									
15-19	20.2	49.4	8.0	21.9	0.4	100.0	2,392	77.6	
20-24	23.9	37.9	9.2	28.8	0.1	100.0	2,870	71.1	
25-29	16.9	36.9	9.2	36.8	0.1	100.0	2,157	63.0	
30-34	8.5	33.5	7.8	50.2	0.0	100.0	1,478	49.8	
35-39	6.4	36.5	8.6	48.5	0.0	100.0	1,117	51.5	
40-44	4.6	34.0	9.8	51.4	0.2	100.0	935	48.4	
45-49	4.7	25.9	6.4	63.0	0.1	100.0	749	36.9	
<b>Residence</b>									
Urban	40.2	33.6	10.2	15.8	0.0	100.0	2,076	84.0	
Rural	10.1	39.3	8.3	42.1	0.2	100.0	9,621	57.7	
<b>Region</b>									
Northern	22.1	45.3	10.8	21.6	0.1	100.0	1,552	78.2	
Central	15.8	36.5	8.5	39.0	0.1	100.0	4,734	60.9	
Southern	13.3	37.8	8.0	40.6	0.2	100.0	5,412	59.1	
<b>Wealth quintile</b>									
Lowest	4.4	32.0	7.4	56.1	0.1	100.0	2,037	43.8	
Second	4.6	34.8	8.8	51.6	0.2	100.0	2,277	48.2	
Middle	5.1	41.9	10.3	42.5	0.1	100.0	2,383	57.4	
Fourth	13.7	45.6	9.5	30.9	0.2	100.0	2,361	68.9	
Highest	44.4	36.3	6.9	12.1	0.2	100.0	2,639	87.6	
Total	15.5	38.3	8.6	37.4	0.2	100.0	11,698	62.4	

<sup>1</sup> Refers to women who attended secondary school or higher and women who can read a whole sentence or part of a sentence.

**Table 3.3.2 Literacy: men**

Percent distribution of men by level of schooling attended and by level of literacy, and percent literate, according to background characteristics, Malawi 2004

Background characteristic	Secondary school or higher	No schooling or primary school				Total	Number of men	Percent literate <sup>1</sup>
		Can read a whole sentence	Can read part of a sentence	Cannot read at all	Missing			
<b>Age</b>								
15-19	20.7	53.0	7.0	18.9	0.3	100.0	650	80.7
20-24	38.4	39.4	5.1	17.1	0.0	100.0	587	82.9
25-29	35.8	39.8	4.2	19.4	0.9	100.0	634	79.8
30-34	28.7	45.1	3.9	22.3	0.0	100.0	485	77.7
35-39	17.0	55.6	4.2	22.6	0.7	100.0	294	76.7
40-44	15.1	59.8	5.9	18.8	0.4	100.0	282	80.8
45-49	14.9	53.4	6.4	25.3	0.0	100.0	182	74.7
50-54	9.0	56.5	4.9	29.7	0.0	100.0	148	70.3
<b>Residence</b>								
Urban	50.9	37.1	4.1	7.3	0.7	100.0	669	92.1
Rural	20.0	50.6	5.5	23.7	0.2	100.0	2,593	76.0
<b>Region</b>								
Northern	29.6	46.0	8.6	15.7	0.0	100.0	423	84.3
Central	24.5	50.3	3.3	21.7	0.3	100.0	1,370	78.1
Southern	27.1	46.0	5.9	20.5	0.5	100.0	1,468	79.1
<b>Wealth quintile</b>								
Lowest	10.0	47.7	7.2	34.9	0.2	100.0	412	64.9
Second	13.3	52.3	4.8	29.4	0.3	100.0	640	70.3
Middle	16.1	50.7	4.9	28.2	0.1	100.0	699	71.7
Fourth	20.4	58.8	7.3	13.0	0.4	100.0	709	86.6
Highest	59.3	32.0	2.8	5.4	0.5	100.0	802	94.1
Total	26.3	47.8	5.2	20.4	0.3	100.0	3,261	79.3

<sup>1</sup> Refers to men who attended secondary school or higher and women who can read a whole sentence or part of a sentence.

### 3.4 ACCESS TO MASS MEDIA

The 2004 MDHS survey collected information on the exposure of respondents to common print and electronic media. Respondents were asked how often they read a newspaper, listen to the radio, or watch television. This information helps family planning and health programme planners reach targeted groups.

More than half of women and men listen to the radio at least once a week; the proportion who read newspapers or watch television is much smaller. Data in Tables 3.4.1 and 3.4.2 show that 67 percent of women and 85 percent of men listen to the radio at least once a week. Only 9 percent of women and 19 percent of men watch television at least once a week. Twenty-six percent of men and 13 percent of women read a newspaper at least once a week. In general, men are more likely than women to be exposed to mass media; while 12 percent of men have access to all three types of media, only 5 percent of women do. Furthermore, 13 percent of men have no access to any type of mass media compared to 31 percent of women.

Urban residents and younger respondents have more access to all three types of media than other respondents. In the Northern Region, where the literacy rate is high, women and men are more likely to read a newspaper weekly than in the Central or Southern regions. Further, exposure to

all three media is highest in the Northern Region (6 percent of women and 14 percent of men) and lowest in the Southern Region (4 percent of women and 11 percent of men).

Table 3.4.1 Exposure to mass media: women						
Percentage of women who usually read a newspaper at least once a week, watch television at least once a week, and listen to the radio at least once a week, by background characteristics, Malawi 2004						
Background characteristic	Reads a newspaper at least once a week	Watches television at least once a week	Listens to the radio at least once a week	All three media	No media	Number of women
<b>Age</b>						
15-19	17.2	11.6	67.0	6.2	29.8	2,392
20-24	15.5	8.3	68.0	5.0	29.0	2,870
25-29	13.0	9.3	68.3	5.5	30.0	2,157
30-34	8.6	6.5	66.3	2.7	32.6	1,478
35-39	9.3	8.6	64.3	3.8	34.7	1,117
40-44	8.6	6.8	64.4	2.9	35.0	935
45-49	7.9	6.8	60.0	3.0	38.3	749
<b>Residence</b>						
Urban	35.5	31.3	79.3	19.7	16.8	2,076
Rural	8.0	3.9	63.7	1.4	34.6	9,621
<b>Region</b>						
Northern	18.9	10.3	66.0	6.1	30.7	1,552
Central	13.3	9.1	66.7	4.9	31.2	4,734
Southern	10.8	7.9	66.4	3.9	31.8	5,412
<b>District</b>						
Blantyre	22.7	19.8	76.0	11.8	21.2	914
Kasungu	11.5	4.9	71.2	1.7	27.3	497
Machinga	7.0	3.8	64.2	0.6	34.4	427
Mangochi	7.7	7.7	61.6	2.0	36.5	599
Mzimba	19.1	11.6	68.1	7.0	29.1	778
Salima	10.3	4.7	63.0	2.3	34.9	303
Thyolo	11.4	5.6	60.0	2.4	38.6	618
Zomba	12.9	10.4	75.9	5.3	21.9	637
Lilongwe	21.8	18.6	66.7	11.3	30.7	1,705
Mulanje	6.7	4.8	60.4	1.4	37.8	512
Other districts	9.1	4.4	65.1	2.2	33.0	4,708
<b>Education</b>						
No education	0.4	2.1	53.5	0.0	46.0	2,734
Primary 1-4	3.6	2.6	61.5	0.1	37.0	2,998
Primary 5-8	13.6	7.4	70.8	2.6	26.6	4,154
Secondary+	45.5	32.0	84.2	23.6	11.3	1,811
<b>Wealth quintile</b>						
Lowest	4.1	1.1	27.4	0.1	70.8	2,037
Second	4.8	1.5	61.9	0.3	36.4	2,277
Middle	5.4	1.3	70.7	0.2	27.8	2,383
Fourth	9.9	3.8	77.7	1.0	19.9	2,361
Highest	36.1	32.1	86.8	19.1	10.3	2,639
Total	12.9	8.7	66.5	4.6	31.4	11,698



**Table 3.4.2 Exposure to mass media: men**

Percentage of men who usually read a newspaper at least once a week, watch television at least once a week, and listen to the radio at least once a week, by background characteristics, Malawi 2004

Background characteristic	Reads a newspaper at least once a week	Watches television at least once a week	Listens to the radio at least once a week	All three media	No media	Number of men
<b>Age</b>						
15-19	26.5	23.8	81.5	11.6	16.2	650
20-24	32.6	23.0	85.4	15.3	12.3	587
25-29	26.0	20.4	88.2	13.5	9.8	634
30-34	28.1	22.4	87.9	14.4	10.0	485
35-39	20.8	12.9	85.7	7.6	13.5	294
40-44	21.5	11.4	83.7	6.9	14.8	282
45-49	21.2	14.1	83.4	9.0	15.3	182
50-54	13.0	3.1	81.0	0.7	18.0	148
<b>Residence</b>						
Urban	51.3	44.5	92.9	35.0	6.0	669
Rural	19.3	12.7	83.1	5.6	14.8	2,593
<b>Region</b>						
Northern	40.0	21.6	82.2	13.9	13.5	423
Central	21.9	19.8	83.4	11.6	14.9	1,370
Southern	25.6	18.0	87.5	11.1	11.1	1,468
<b>District</b>						
Blantyre	36.5	20.8	92.7	16.4	7.3	316
Kasungu	26.3	9.0	75.8	4.3	19.5	156
Machinga	47.9	33.0	92.9	25.9	6.6	114
Mangochi	20.2	16.8	84.8	8.2	13.5	150
Mzimba	53.6	25.3	83.3	18.9	10.4	212
Salima	16.2	6.7	88.3	4.5	11.1	78
Thyolo	20.9	8.4	93.3	6.4	6.3	169
Zomba	18.6	23.2	80.9	10.6	16.4	159
Lilongwe	30.4	34.8	87.0	22.7	12.1	542
Mulanje	28.6	13.4	83.5	6.6	14.1	114
Other districts	17.1	13.7	82.5	6.2	15.5	1,250
<b>Education</b>						
No education	3.6	5.2	77.5	0.0	21.2	383
Primary 1-4	7.2	8.0	78.9	1.7	19.9	798
Primary 5-8	21.5	15.7	84.8	6.6	12.4	1,220
Secondary+	59.5	41.1	94.8	33.4	3.8	859
<b>Wealth quintile</b>						
Lowest	9.9	4.7	57.5	1.8	39.1	412
Second	12.9	5.9	82.5	1.2	15.8	640
Middle	16.0	9.7	86.9	3.3	11.2	699
Fourth	23.2	15.7	90.0	6.0	7.6	709
Highest	55.4	48.8	95.5	37.3	3.8	802
Total	25.9	19.2	85.1	11.7	13.0	3,261

Overall, respondents have greater exposure to radio broadcasts than television or print media. Education and household wealth status are strongly associated with mass media exposure: about 24 percent of women and 33 percent of men with secondary or higher education have access to all three types of media, compared with 7 percent or less for respondents in lower education categories. While 19 percent of women in the highest wealth quintile enjoy all three media, the corresponding proportion for women in the lower quintiles is 1 percent or less.

At the district level, women in Thyolo, Mulanje, and Mangochi are the most likely not to have access to any type of media (37-39 percent), while those living Lilongwe and Blantyre are more likely to have exposure to all three types of media (11-12 percent). For men, the differences across districts are less striking; exposure to all three media ranges from 4 percent in Kasungu to 26 percent in Machinga.

### 3.5 EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Respondents were asked a number of questions to elicit their employment status at the time of the survey and the continuity of their employment in the 12 months prior to the survey. The measurement of women's employment is difficult because some of the activities that women do, especially work on family farms, family businesses, or in the informal sector, are often not perceived by women themselves as employment and hence are not reported as such. To avoid underestimating women's employment, the MDHS survey asked women several questions to ascertain their employment status. First women were asked, "Aside from your own housework, are you currently working?" Women who answered "no" to this question were then asked, "As you know, some women take up jobs for which they are paid in cash or kind. Others sell things, have a small business, or work on the family farm or in the family business. Are you currently doing any of these things or any other work?" Women who answered "no" to this question were asked, "Have you done any work in the last 12 months?" Women are considered currently employed if they answered "yes" to either of the first two questions. Women who answered "yes" to the third question are not currently employed but have worked in the past 12 months. All employed women were asked their occupation; whether they were paid in cash, in kind, or not at all; and for whom they worked.

Table 3.5.1 and Table 3.5.2 show the percent distribution of female respondents and male respondents, respectively, by employment status and continuity of employment, according to background characteristics. Fifty-five percent of women reported being currently employed, 3 percent were employed in the 12 months preceding the survey but not working at the time of the survey, and 42 percent were not employed in the 12 months preceding the survey (Figure 3.1). The corresponding proportions for men are 56, 22, and 23 percent, respectively.

Employment among women and men increases with age. Women who are formerly married are more likely than other women to be employed at the time of the survey. For men, those who are currently married are most likely to be employed. One in three never-married women and men are currently employed.

While rural women are more likely than urban women to be employed, for men the pattern is reversed. Employment among women is highest in Mzimba and Thyolo (79 and 71 percent, respectively), while in Lilongwe the proportion is only 47 percent. For men, employment rates range from 82 percent in Salima to 52 percent in Thyolo.

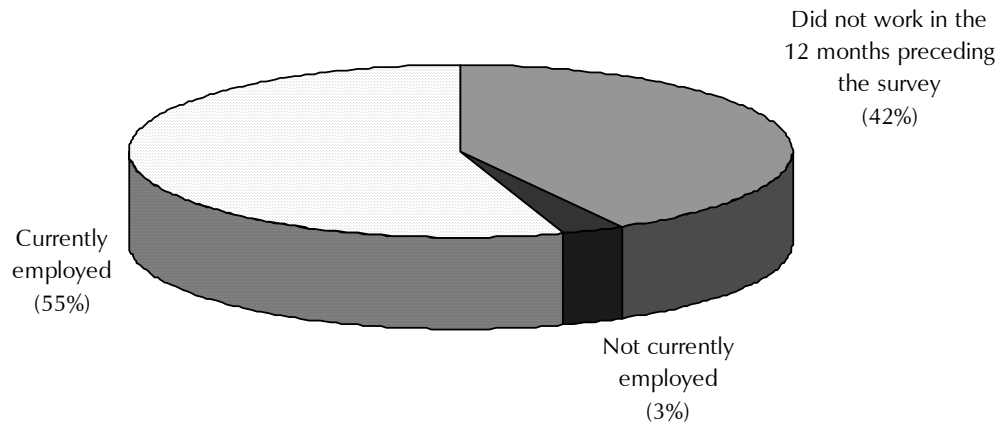
Table 3.5.1 Employment status: women

Percent distribution of women by employment status, according to background characteristics, Malawi, 2004

Background characteristic	Employed in the 12 months preceding the survey		Not employed in the 12 months preceding the survey	Missing/ don't know	Total	Number of women
	Currently employed	Not currently employed				
<b>Age</b>						
15-19	37.1	3.0	59.9	0.0	100.0	2,392
20-24	53.3	3.8	42.9	0.0	100.0	2,870
25-29	57.6	2.9	39.5	0.0	100.0	2,157
30-34	63.6	2.9	33.5	0.0	100.0	1,478
35-39	64.3	2.1	33.6	0.0	100.0	1,117
40-44	67.5	4.2	28.3	0.0	100.0	935
45-49	67.8	2.8	29.3	0.1	100.0	749
<b>Marital status</b>						
Never married	32.5	2.4	65.1	0.0	100.0	1,970
Married or living together	58.4	3.3	38.3	0.0	100.0	8,312
Divorced/separated/widowed	68.0	3.2	28.8	0.0	100.0	1,416
<b>Number of living children</b>						
0	38.9	2.9	58.1	0.0	100.0	2,655
1-2	56.2	3.6	40.2	0.0	100.0	4,092
3-4	60.9	2.7	36.4	0.0	100.0	2,726
5+	65.8	3.1	31.1	0.1	100.0	2,225
<b>Residence</b>						
Urban	44.2	1.9	53.9	0.0	100.0	2,076
Rural	57.6	3.4	39.0	0.0	100.0	9,621
<b>Region</b>						
Northern	62.2	2.3	35.5	0.0	100.0	1,552
Central	48.8	3.5	47.7	0.0	100.0	4,734
Southern	58.8	3.0	38.2	0.0	100.0	5,412
<b>District</b>						
Blantyre	49.3	2.4	48.4	0.0	100.0	914
Kasungu	47.5	8.0	44.4	0.1	100.0	497
Machinga	54.1	3.8	42.1	0.0	100.0	427
Mangochi	55.3	2.4	42.4	0.0	100.0	599
Mzimba	78.7	3.3	18.0	0.0	100.0	778
Salima	52.4	1.8	45.7	0.1	100.0	303
Thyolo	70.5	2.8	26.7	0.0	100.0	618
Zomba	52.5	0.5	46.9	0.1	100.0	637
Lilongwe	46.6	2.3	51.1	0.0	100.0	1,705
Mulanje	62.0	2.5	35.4	0.0	100.0	512
Other districts	54.3	3.7	42.1	0.0	100.0	4,708
<b>Education</b>						
No education	63.1	3.0	33.9	0.0	100.0	2,734
Primary 1-4	58.2	3.7	38.1	0.0	100.0	2,998
Primary 5-8	52.5	3.1	44.4	0.0	100.0	4,154
Secondary+	44.4	2.5	53.1	0.0	100.0	1,811
<b>Wealth quintile</b>						
Lowest	63.9	3.0	33.1	0.0	100.0	2,037
Second	58.3	3.9	37.8	0.0	100.0	2,277
Middle	56.5	3.6	39.9	0.0	100.0	2,383
Fourth	54.6	3.4	41.9	0.0	100.0	2,361
Highest	45.2	2.0	52.8	0.0	100.0	2,639
Total	55.2	3.1	41.6	0.0	100.0	11,698

Background characteristic	Employed in the 12 months preceding the survey		Not employed in the 12 months preceding the survey	Missing/ don't know	Total	Number of men
	Currently employed	Not currently employed				
<b>Age</b>						
15-19	19.6	15.7	64.3	0.5	100.0	650
20-24	52.4	18.5	28.7	0.3	100.0	587
25-29	63.3	28.1	8.6	0.0	100.0	634
30-34	72.4	21.5	6.0	0.0	100.0	485
35-39	71.0	22.6	6.4	0.0	100.0	294
40-44	71.4	22.5	6.1	0.0	100.0	282
45-49	63.3	27.8	8.9	0.0	100.0	182
50-54	69.1	24.1	6.8	0.0	100.0	148
<b>Marital status</b>						
Never married	31.0	15.1	53.5	0.5	100.0	1,084
Married or living together	68.2	25.3	6.5	0.0	100.0	2,079
Divorced/separated/widowed	62.5	19.8	17.7	0.0	100.0	98
<b>Number of living children</b>						
0	34.2	17.7	47.7	0.4	100.0	1,253
1-2	70.8	22.6	6.6	0.0	100.0	794
3-4	68.0	25.4	6.6	0.0	100.0	588
5+	67.8	25.2	7.0	0.0	100.0	625
<b>Residence</b>						
Urban	64.9	7.1	28.0	0.0	100.0	669
Rural	53.2	25.5	21.1	0.2	100.0	2,593
<b>Region</b>						
Northern	55.4	21.1	23.0	0.5	100.0	423
Central	51.6	30.5	17.8	0.1	100.0	1,370
Southern	59.5	13.7	26.7	0.1	100.0	1,468
<b>District</b>						
Blantyre	61.8	11.4	26.7	0.0	100.0	316
Kasungu	53.2	26.5	20.3	0.0	100.0	156
Machinga	53.7	8.7	37.6	0.0	100.0	114
Mangochi	69.6	17.4	13.0	0.0	100.0	150
Mzimba	60.4	16.2	23.4	0.0	100.0	212
Salima	81.7	8.4	9.9	0.0	100.0	78
Thyolo	51.5	26.0	22.5	0.0	100.0	169
Zomba	61.4	17.0	21.6	0.0	100.0	159
Lilongwe	53.8	26.3	20.0	0.0	100.0	542
Mulanje	62.3	13.8	23.9	0.0	100.0	114
Other districts	50.5	26.0	23.1	0.4	100.0	1,250
<b>Education</b>						
No education	62.2	29.5	8.4	0.0	100.0	383
Primary 1-4	60.4	23.1	16.5	0.0	100.0	798
Primary 5-8	53.6	23.1	23.1	0.2	100.0	1,220
Secondary+	51.2	15.2	33.3	0.2	100.0	859
<b>Wealth quintile</b>						
Lowest	52.1	27.7	19.8	0.5	100.0	412
Second	54.7	24.5	20.8	0.0	100.0	640
Middle	51.0	31.1	17.6	0.3	100.0	699
Fourth	59.0	20.0	20.9	0.1	100.0	709
Highest	59.3	9.8	30.9	0.0	100.0	802
Total	55.6	21.7	22.5	0.2	100.0	3,261

**Figure 3.1 Employment Status of Women Age 15-49**



MDHS 2004

### **3.6 WOMEN'S OCCUPATION**

Table 3.6.1 shows the percent distribution of employed women in the 12 months preceding the survey by occupation, according to background characteristics. Information on a woman's occupation not only allows an evaluation of the woman's source of income but also has implications for her empowerment. It is expected that occupation and earnings are more likely to empower women if they perceive their earnings as important for meeting the needs of their household.

Seven in ten women work in agriculture. Only 3 percent of employed women are in professional, technical, or managerial positions, and 21 percent are employed in sales and services. There are small variations across subgroups of women. However, urban women, women with secondary or higher education, and women living in households in the highest wealth quintile are more likely to hold professional, technical, or managerial jobs.

Table 3.6.2 shows that among employed men, 57 percent work in agriculture, 17 percent in sales and services, and 14 percent work as skilled manual laborers. Men show similar variations across subgroups as women.

Table 3.6.1 Occupation: women

Percent distribution of women employed in the 12 months preceding the survey by occupation, according to background characteristics, Malawi 2004

Background characteristic	Professional/ technical/ managerial	Clerical	Sales and services	Skilled manual	Unskilled manual	Domestic service	Agricul- ture	Total	Number of women
<b>Age</b>									
15-19	0.2	0.1	15.3	1.8	1.1	3.4	77.8	100.0	958
20-24	1.3	1.8	18.5	2.1	1.2	1.4	73.7	100.0	1,638
25-29	4.3	2.0	22.2	2.1	1.4	1.5	66.4	100.0	1,306
30-34	4.2	1.4	22.2	2.1	1.2	1.3	67.6	100.0	982
35-39	4.7	0.7	24.2	2.7	2.4	0.6	64.7	100.0	741
40-44	2.9	0.5	24.7	4.0	1.1	1.4	65.3	100.0	670
45-49	1.7	0.7	17.8	2.4	0.9	1.1	75.4	100.0	529
<b>Marital status</b>									
Never married	3.1	5.3	20.5	3.3	2.2	6.5	59.0	100.0	688
Married or living together	2.5	0.7	18.6	2.3	1.0	0.6	74.3	100.0	5,128
Divorced/separated/widowed	3.7	0.9	29.9	1.9	2.3	3.4	57.9	100.0	1,008
<b>Number of living children</b>									
0	2.3	3.2	18.3	2.5	1.6	4.2	67.7	100.0	1,112
1-2	3.2	1.4	21.1	2.0	1.3	1.2	69.9	100.0	2,446
3-4	3.4	0.4	20.8	2.1	1.0	0.9	71.4	100.0	1,735
5+	1.6	0.4	20.7	3.0	1.5	1.0	71.9	100.0	1,531
<b>Residence</b>									
Urban	8.2	5.7	45.9	4.7	1.9	8.1	25.5	100.0	957
Rural	1.8	0.5	16.3	2.0	1.2	0.5	77.7	100.0	5,867
<b>Region</b>									
Northern	3.5	0.5	28.4	3.1	1.1	1.5	61.9	100.0	1,001
Central	2.5	1.8	19.7	2.7	1.6	1.7	70.0	100.0	2,477
Southern	2.6	1.0	18.7	1.8	1.2	1.5	73.1	100.0	3,346
<b>District</b>									
Blantyre	6.5	4.2	35.0	4.3	1.0	4.1	44.8	100.0	472
Kasungu	2.2	0.8	12.7	2.3	2.9	0.8	78.2	100.0	276
Machinga	3.3	0.0	9.1	1.6	1.5	1.0	83.4	100.0	248
Mangochi	2.0	1.4	18.7	1.0	1.4	1.0	74.6	100.0	345
Mzimba	3.0	0.6	13.7	1.6	1.0	1.9	78.2	100.0	638
Salima	2.9	1.7	17.9	3.4	3.8	0.7	69.6	100.0	164
Thyolo	1.7	0.0	15.6	2.7	1.8	0.8	77.5	100.0	453
Zomba	4.0	0.9	17.7	2.2	0.2	3.2	71.8	100.0	337
Lilongwe	2.1	3.7	22.4	2.9	1.0	4.1	63.5	100.0	834
Mulanje	2.3	0.3	17.0	1.2	1.9	1.7	75.6	100.0	330
Other districts	2.3	0.5	22.7	2.3	1.2	0.5	70.5	100.0	2,727
<b>Education</b>									
No education	0.2	0.0	13.0	2.1	1.4	0.5	82.8	100.0	1,808
Primary 1-4	0.5	0.0	17.3	2.1	1.3	1.3	77.5	100.0	1,855
Primary 5-8	1.1	0.3	25.2	2.2	1.3	2.2	67.6	100.0	2,310
Secondary+	17.4	8.9	30.2	3.6	1.4	2.7	35.7	100.0	849
<b>Wealth quintile</b>									
Lowest	0.6	0.1	11.2	1.8	1.7	0.4	84.2	100.0	1,363
Second	0.4	0.0	15.6	1.6	1.4	0.6	80.5	100.0	1,415
Middle	0.4	0.1	17.3	2.2	1.4	0.3	78.1	100.0	1,432
Fourth	1.6	0.7	22.2	2.1	0.9	0.8	71.8	100.0	1,370
Highest	11.6	5.7	37.9	4.2	1.3	6.3	33.1	100.0	1,244
Total	2.7	1.2	20.5	2.3	1.3	1.6	70.3	100.0	6,824

Note: Total includes 2 women with missing information on occupation.

Table 3.6.2 Occupation: men

Percent distribution of men employed in the 12 months preceding the survey by occupation, according to background characteristics, Malawi 2004

Background characteristic	Professional/ technical/ managerial	Clerical	Sales and services	Skilled manual	Unskilled manual	Domestic service	Agricul- ture	Total	Number of men
<b>Age</b>									
15-19	0.8	0.2	16.8	7.6	7.3	4.7	62.5	100.0	229
20-24	2.8	2.5	13.7	15.3	6.5	4.3	54.8	100.0	416
25-29	6.1	1.2	19.8	13.1	3.3	1.4	55.1	100.0	579
30-34	8.3	1.8	21.4	16.4	2.4	1.1	48.7	100.0	456
35-39	5.2	3.7	16.0	15.3	4.1	2.0	53.8	100.0	275
40-44	5.4	2.0	14.3	12.9	2.1	0.8	62.6	100.0	265
45-49	2.5	1.2	15.5	13.1	3.8	1.2	62.7	100.0	165
50-54	4.0	0.5	4.9	8.3	1.0	0.8	80.6	100.0	138
<b>Marital status</b>									
Never married	4.5	2.7	17.6	10.6	7.3	5.7	51.5	100.0	500
Married or living together	4.9	1.6	16.5	14.2	3.2	1.1	58.5	100.0	1,943
Divorced/separated/widowed	7.9	0.0	15.7	16.7	0.6	2.4	56.7	100.0	81
<b>Number of living children</b>									
0	4.1	2.1	16.8	11.3	6.3	4.1	55.3	100.0	651
1-2	6.6	1.5	18.1	15.0	3.5	2.2	53.1	100.0	742
3-4	5.8	2.0	15.7	15.0	3.0	0.8	57.7	100.0	550
5+	3.0	1.4	15.8	12.8	2.5	0.9	63.6	100.0	581
<b>Residence</b>									
Urban	11.5	5.2	39.7	21.9	4.3	7.1	10.2	100.0	482
Rural	3.4	0.9	11.3	11.6	3.8	0.9	68.2	100.0	2,042
<b>Region</b>									
Northern	5.1	1.4	9.4	11.3	2.8	1.9	68.2	100.0	324
Central	3.9	1.8	14.3	9.1	3.4	1.9	65.7	100.0	1,126
Southern	6.0	1.8	21.5	18.9	4.8	2.3	44.7	100.0	1,074
<b>District</b>									
Blantyre	9.5	2.5	34.1	26.1	4.8	3.6	19.4	100.0	232
Kasungu	3.6	0.0	5.2	5.5	8.6	0.0	77.2	100.0	124
Machinga	6.8	2.0	20.2	14.3	2.2	0.7	53.9	100.0	71
Mangochi	3.2	0.0	17.6	12.5	1.4	0.0	65.3	100.0	131
Mzimba	4.6	1.5	5.9	8.3	2.2	2.0	75.4	100.0	163
Salima	2.6	1.0	18.2	9.2	4.9	1.6	62.6	100.0	71
Thyolo	3.7	2.0	17.8	20.6	12.7	1.0	42.2	100.0	131
Zomba	7.0	1.6	22.2	18.4	1.9	3.2	45.7	100.0	125
Lilongwe	5.3	2.5	22.1	8.7	2.6	4.7	54.1	100.0	434
Mulanje	8.2	2.5	17.3	22.3	5.7	1.9	42.2	100.0	87
Other Districts	3.8	1.7	12.0	12.7	3.2	1.2	65.4	100.0	956
<b>Education</b>									
No education	0.3	0.2	10.5	8.8	4.8	1.7	73.8	100.0	351
Primary 1-4	0.8	0.1	10.6	12.2	4.5	2.6	69.1	100.0	666
Primary 5-8	1.4	1.4	18.2	15.2	3.6	2.1	58.1	100.0	935
Secondary+	18.3	5.1	25.3	15.3	3.2	1.6	31.1	100.0	571
<b>Wealth quintile</b>									
Lowest	1.4	0.7	5.4	8.9	2.2	1.6	79.8	100.0	328
Second	0.8	0.4	6.8	14.0	4.3	0.4	73.3	100.0	507
Middle	1.9	1.0	11.7	11.5	3.9	0.8	69.3	100.0	575
Fourth	3.0	0.9	18.0	14.3	4.1	0.5	59.1	100.0	560
Highest	15.9	5.3	36.5	17.1	4.4	6.8	14.0	100.0	554
Total	4.9	1.7	16.7	13.5	3.9	2.1	57.1	100.0	2,523

### 3.7 TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT

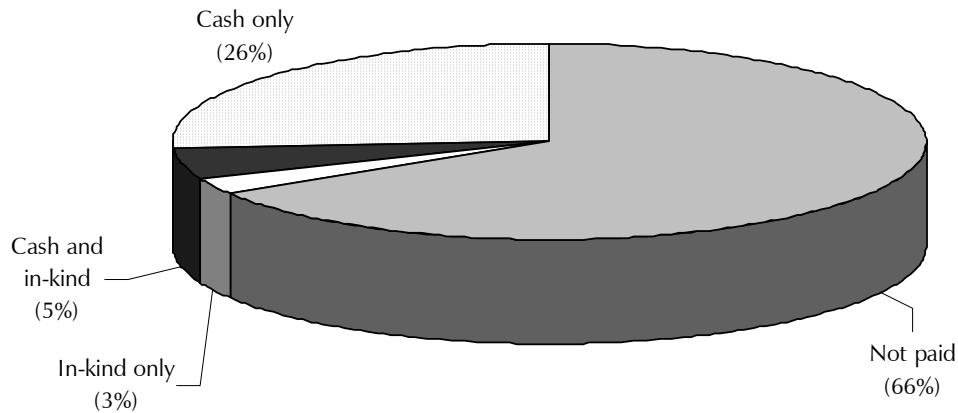
Table 3.7.1 shows the percent distribution of women who have worked at any time during the 12 months preceding the survey by type of employment (agricultural or nonagricultural). All employed women were asked whether they were paid in cash, in kind, or not at all. Two in three women receive no payment for their work (Figure 3.2). Women who work in agricultural jobs are much more likely not to be paid than women who work in nonagricultural jobs (80 percent compared with 32 percent). Ten percent of women engaged in agricultural work were paid in cash only, compared with 63 percent of women in nonagricultural jobs.

Overall, three in four women who were employed in the 12 months prior to the survey were self-employed. Small differences are found between agriculture and nonagriculture occupations. Two in three women work seasonally. Women in agricultural jobs are more likely to work seasonally (82 percent) than women in nonagricultural jobs (29 percent). Fifteen percent of women who work in agriculture work all year, compared with 53 percent of women in nonagricultural jobs.

Table 3.7.1 Type of employment: women			
Percent distribution of women employed in the 12 months preceding the survey by type of earnings, type of employer, and continuity of employment, according to type of employment (agricultural or nonagricultural), Malawi 2004			
Employment characteristic	Agricultural work	Nonagricultural work	Total
<b>Type of earnings</b>			
Cash only	10.2	62.6	25.7
Cash and in-kind	6.2	3.6	5.4
In-kind only	3.6	1.4	2.9
Not paid	80.0	32.2	65.8
Missing	0.0	0.3	0.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>Type of employer</b>			
Employed by family member	17.5	7.1	14.4
Employed by nonfamily member	3.7	23.5	9.6
Self-employed	78.7	69.2	75.9
Missing	0.1	0.3	0.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>Continuity of employment</b>			
All year	15.2	52.6	26.3
Seasonal	81.9	28.5	66.0
Occasional	2.6	18.8	7.4
Missing	0.4	0.2	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of women	4,800	2,022	6,824
Total includes two women with missing information on type of employment.			



**Figure 3.2 Type of Earnings of Women Age 15-49**



MDHS 2004

Table 3.7.2 shows the percent distribution of men who were employed in the 12 months preceding the survey by occupation and type of earnings. One in three men are not paid for their work and 54 percent receive cash payment only. Men who work in agriculture are less likely to be paid than men who work in nonagricultural jobs. Among those who are paid for their work, the largest proportion are paid in cash (32 percent), while 10 percent are paid in cash and in-kind and 6 percent are paid in in-kind only.

Type of earnings	Agricultural work	Nonagricultural work	Total
Cash only	32.4	82.3	53.8
Cash and in-kind	10.4	3.4	7.4
In-kind only	6.1	1.0	3.9
Not paid	49.8	10.1	32.8
Missing	1.3	3.2	2.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of men	1,441	1,083	2,523

### 3.8 MEASURES OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

In addition to information on women's education, employment status, and control of earnings, the 2004 MDHS also obtained information on other measures of women's status and empowerment. In particular, questions were asked on women's participation in specific household decisions, on their degree of acceptance of wife beating, and on their opinions about when a wife should be able to refuse sex with her husband. These data provide insight into women's control over their lives and their environment and their attitudes toward traditional gender roles, which are

important aspects of women's empowerment relevant for understanding demographic and health behaviours.

These questions are used to define three indicators of women's empowerment: women's participation in decision making, women's degree of acceptance of wife beating, and their degree of acceptance of a wife's right to refuse sex with her husband. The first measure requires little explanation, since the ability to make decisions about one's own life is of obvious importance to practical empowerment. The other two measures derive from the notion that gender equity is essential to empowerment. Responses that indicate a view that the beating of wives by husbands is justified reflect a sanction of women's lower status, both absolutely and relative to men. Although such attitudes do not necessarily signify approval of men beating their wives, they do signify women's acceptance of norms that give men the right to discipline women with force. Similarly, beliefs about whether and when a woman can refuse sex with her husband reflect issues of gender equity regarding sexual rights and bodily integrity. Besides yielding an important measure of empowerment, the information about women's attitudes toward sexual rights will be useful for improving and monitoring reproductive health programmes that depend on women's willingness and ability to control their own sexual lives.

Employed women who earn cash for their work were asked who the main decisionmaker is with regard to the use of their earnings. This information allows the assessment of women's control over their own earnings. In addition, they were asked about the proportion of household expenditures met by their earnings, in order to assess the relative importance of women's earnings. This information not only allows an evaluation of the relative importance of women's earnings in the household economy, but has implications for the empowerment of women. It is expected that employment and earnings are more likely to empower women if women perceive their earnings to be important for meeting the needs of their households.

Table 3.8 shows how respondents' degree of control over the use of their earnings and the extent to which earnings of women meet household expenditures varies by background characteristics. The data show that more than half (52 percent) of women decide for themselves on how their earnings are used, 20 percent make the decisions jointly with someone else, and 27 percent reported that someone else decides for them. Respondents' degree of control over the use of their earnings varies by background characteristics. Older women, more educated women, and women who live in households in the higher wealth quintiles are more likely to have control over their earnings. For example, while 64 percent of women with secondary or higher education decide how their earnings are used, the proportion among women with no education is only 48 percent.

Table 3.8 also shows the proportion of household expenditures that are met by the women's cash earnings. More than half (57 percent) of women reported that their earnings support half or more of their household's expenditures. Twenty percent of women say their earnings support all of their households' expenditures, and 37 percent reported that their earnings support half or more of their households' financial needs. Across subgroups of women, the data show that women who are more likely to meet all of their household's expenditures are those over age 30, those who are widowed, separated, or divorced; rural women; and those who are less educated.

Table 3.8 Decision on use of earnings and contribution of earnings to household expenditures

Percent distribution of women employed in the 12 months preceding the survey receiving cash earnings by person who decides how earnings are to be used and by proportion of household expenditures met by earnings, according to background characteristics, Malawi 2004

Background characteristic	Person who decides how earnings are used					Proportion of household expenditures met by earnings						Number of women
	Self only	Jointly	Someone else only	Missing	Total	Almost none/none	Less than half	Half or more	All	Missing	Total	
<b>Age</b>												
15-19	44.2	13.2	42.6	0.0	100.0	21.3	31.8	33.0	13.9	0.0	100.0	225
20-24	46.0	17.8	35.8	0.4	100.0	12.5	36.6	31.2	19.2	0.5	100.0	467
25-29	52.0	21.4	25.4	1.3	100.0	8.1	33.0	43.6	14.7	0.6	100.0	455
30-34	54.3	22.2	23.6	0.0	100.0	11.6	27.8	31.9	28.3	0.4	100.0	316
35-39	58.5	22.9	18.3	0.2	100.0	5.4	34.2	38.5	21.6	0.2	100.0	273
40-44	56.5	21.6	21.0	0.9	100.0	7.9	32.4	35.3	24.3	0.0	100.0	234
45-49	63.6	19.2	17.3	0.0	100.0	3.7	30.7	44.9	20.6	0.0	100.0	155
<b>Marital status</b>												
Never married	70.0	4.1	25.8	0.0	100.0	19.6	29.6	31.4	19.4	0.0	100.0	250
Married or living together	37.5	27.9	34.1	0.5	100.0	9.0	35.5	39.4	15.7	0.4	100.0	1,468
Divorced/separated/widowed	95.2	0.7	3.4	0.6	100.0	9.3	25.0	29.4	35.9	0.4	100.0	407
<b>Number of living children</b>												
0	55.9	12.3	31.5	0.3	100.0	19.8	34.0	29.0	16.9	0.3	100.0	364
1-2	49.8	21.3	28.0	0.8	100.0	7.7	31.6	40.0	20.2	0.5	100.0	771
3-4	51.4	21.8	26.3	0.5	100.0	9.9	32.9	36.1	20.8	0.4	100.0	531
5+	55.0	21.4	23.6	0.0	100.0	7.7	33.8	37.2	21.3	0.0	100.0	459
<b>Residence</b>												
Urban	67.7	22.4	9.1	0.8	100.0	15.8	32.4	34.1	17.7	0.0	100.0	557
Rural	46.9	19.0	33.7	0.4	100.0	8.3	32.9	37.4	20.9	0.4	100.0	1,568
<b>Region</b>												
Northern	61.2	23.3	14.7	0.8	100.0	7.8	37.2	43.9	10.4	0.8	100.0	385
Central	43.1	13.7	42.9	0.4	100.0	14.9	39.1	31.8	13.8	0.2	100.0	894
Southern	58.2	24.9	16.4	0.5	100.0	6.6	24.1	38.2	30.9	0.2	100.0	847
<b>District</b>												
Blantyre	63.3	27.6	8.1	1.1	100.0	9.8	25.8	38.8	25.7	0.0	100.0	225
Kasungu	38.9	20.7	40.3	0.0	100.0	8.5	38.2	37.3	16.0	0.0	100.0	65
Machinga	(73.5)	(10.9)	(15.7)	(0.0)	100.0	(6.7)	(28.3)	(35.3)	(29.7)	(0.0)	100.0	33
Mangochi	68.4	12.2	19.4	0.0	100.0	3.9	19.7	21.8	54.6	0.0	100.0	65
Mzimba	57.7	21.6	20.7	0.0	100.0	11.4	36.1	42.3	10.2	0.0	100.0	121
Salima	34.2	19.3	46.5	0.0	100.0	15.0	56.0	17.4	11.6	0.0	100.0	63
Thyolo	61.4	25.7	11.2	1.8	100.0	8.8	16.4	35.4	37.6	1.8	100.0	106
Zomba	54.4	29.5	16.1	0.0	100.0	3.9	19.6	41.7	34.8	0.0	100.0	109
Lilongwe	54.6	12.4	32.4	0.6	100.0	21.2	35.0	27.1	16.8	0.0	100.0	341
Mulanje	60.1	19.9	20.0	0.0	100.0	2.3	27.1	43.3	27.3	0.0	100.0	119
Other districts	45.9	19.6	34.0	0.5	100.0	8.5	36.8	39.9	14.2	0.6	100.0	877
<b>Education</b>												
No education	48.2	12.9	38.3	0.6	100.0	9.6	33.3	31.4	24.9	0.9	100.0	411
Primary 1-4	45.8	21.2	33.0	0.0	100.0	11.0	33.3	35.2	20.3	0.2	100.0	487
Primary 5-8	51.8	20.5	27.1	0.5	100.0	11.8	32.6	37.3	18.2	0.1	100.0	755
Secondary+	63.7	23.7	11.8	0.8	100.0	7.8	32.3	41.2	18.5	0.2	100.0	472
<b>Wealth quintile</b>												
Lowest	54.7	13.7	31.4	0.2	100.0	9.2	33.1	30.7	27.0	0.0	100.0	329
Second	45.5	18.2	35.3	1.0	100.0	6.2	37.9	31.4	22.9	1.7	100.0	351
Middle	42.1	18.9	39.1	0.0	100.0	11.4	31.5	36.2	20.9	0.0	100.0	367
Fourth	47.0	22.3	30.2	0.6	100.0	11.0	33.0	41.9	14.0	0.0	100.0	392
Highest	63.3	23.0	13.1	0.6	100.0	11.9	30.6	39.1	18.2	0.2	100.0	686
Total	52.4	19.9	27.2	0.5	100.0	10.3	32.8	36.5	20.0	0.3	100.0	2,125

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on 25-49 unweighted cases.

Table 3.9 shows working women's control over their own earnings within marital and non-marital contexts, and how it varies by the extent to which their earnings help to meet household expenditures. Overall, 38 percent of married women have complete control over their earnings, 27 percent share control with their husband or partner, and for 34 percent of married women, their husband/partner controls their earnings. Many married women do not have control over their cash income even if their earnings do not contribute to the household expenditures. For example, husbands decide how their wives' earnings are used for 43 percent of women whose income does not substantially contribute to household expenditures. Women who are divorced, separated, widowed, or never married are more likely to have control over their earnings than married women (86 percent compared with 38 percent).

Table 3.9 Women's control over earnings

Percent distribution of women who received cash earnings for work in the past 12 months by person who decides how earnings are used and current marital status, according to the proportion of household expenditures met by earnings, Malawi 2004

Contribution to household expenditures	Currently married or living together							Not married <sup>1</sup>						
	Self only	Jointly with husband	Jointly with someone else	Husband only	Someone else only	Missing	Total	Number of women	Self only	Jointly with someone else	Someone else only	Missing	Total	Number of women
Almost none/none	40.8	10.9	3.9	42.9	1.5	0.0	100.0	132	84.6	1.8	13.6	0.0	100.0	87
Less than half	40.2	22.7	1.1	34.8	0.4	0.9	100.0	521	82.3	2.9	14.7	0.0	100.0	176
Half or more	34.5	32.9	0.4	31.9	0.3	0.0	100.0	578	83.6	2.7	13.7	0.0	100.0	198
All	37.7	31.6	0.5	30.0	0.0	0.3	100.0	231	92.0	0.6	7.1	0.3	100.0	195
Total	37.5	27.0	1.0	33.5	0.6	0.5	100.0	1,468	85.6	2.0	12.0	0.4	100.0	657

Note: Total includes women with missing information on contribution to household expenditures.

<sup>1</sup>Never married, divorced, separated or widowed women

The ability of women to take decisions that affect the circumstances of their own lives is an essential aspect of empowerment. In order to assess women's decisionmaking autonomy, information was collected on women's participation in five different types of decisions: on the respondent's own health care, on making large household purchases, on making household purchases for daily needs, on visits to family friends or relatives, and on what food should be cooked each day. Table 3.10 shows the percent distribution of women according to who in the household usually has the final say on each of these decisions. The data show that for 65 percent or more of married women, their husbands make decisions for their wives' health care, and large and daily household purchases. Decisions to visit family or relatives are more likely to be made together with their husbands (41 percent). The only one of these decisions that a majority of married women make on their own is the type of food to cook daily.

The pattern is different for nonmarried women. Nonmarried women are more likely than married women to make four of the five decisions by themselves. However, for about half of women all five of these decisions are made by someone other than the woman herself: someone else decides on visiting family and relatives for 47 percent of nonmarried women and on large household purchases for 56 percent of nonmarried women.

Table 3.10 Women's participation in decisionmaking

Percent distribution of women by person who has the final say in making specific decisions and current marital status, according to type of decision, Malawi 2004

Decision	Currently married or living together						Total	Number of women	Not married <sup>1</sup>				Total	Number of women
	Self only	Jointly with husband	Jointly with someone else	Husband only	Some-one else only	Decision not made/not applicable			Self only	Jointly with someone else	Some-one else only	Decision not made/not applicable		
Own health care	17.8	9.9	0.1	70.4	1.5	0.3	100.0	8,312	40.7	3.0	51.9	4.4	100.0	3,385
Large household purchases	6.4	11.5	0.1	80.3	1.2	0.5	100.0	8,312	34.2	3.4	55.7	6.7	100.0	3,385
Daily household purchases	18.8	13.8	0.1	65.4	1.5	0.2	100.0	8,312	35.4	3.8	54.8	5.9	100.0	3,385
Visits to family or relatives	18.8	41.3	0.2	38.4	1.1	0.2	100.0	8,312	40.9	6.8	46.5	5.7	100.0	3,385
What food to cook each day	64.3	9.5	0.4	24.2	1.3	0.1	100.0	8,312	38.6	5.9	49.5	5.9	100.0	3,385

<sup>1</sup>Never married, divorced, separated or widowed women

Table 3.11.1 shows the percentage of women who report that they alone or jointly have the final say in specific household decisions, according to background characteristics. Divorced, separated, or widowed women are far more likely than married or never-married women to have the final say in all the specified decisions. Degree of independence in making household decisions increases with age and number of children. Urban women, women who earn cash, and the least educated women are more likely to have a final say in all given decisions. Regardless of background characteristic, ever-married women and those over age 20 have the final say on what food to cook every day.

Table 3.11.2 shows similar data from a man's perspective. Contrary to the women's report, the majority of men say that in a couple, a wife has an equal or greater say in making decisions on visiting family or friends, control over the money she earns, and how many children she wants to have and when she wants to have them (73 percent, 69 percent, and 64 percent, respectively). Men are less likely to agree on a wife's role in making decisions on large household purchases and small daily purchases (44 percent and 53 percent, respectively). Twenty-seven percent of men say that a wife has an equal or greater say in all five decisions listed. There are no significant differences by the man's age, except that men age 15-19 are less likely than older men to agree that a wife has an equal or greater share in making specific decisions. Rural men are much less likely than urban men to agree to the five decisions (23 percent compared with 44 percent). Men in the Northern Region are less likely than men in other regions to agree to the specific decisions (21 percent compared with 27-28 percent). Education and wealth index have a positive relationship with the likelihood that men agree to the role of women in making specific decisions. Better educated men and men in higher wealth quintile are more likely than other men to say that a wife has an equal or greater say in all five decisions. Across oversampled districts, men in Blantyre and Machinga are most likely to say that a wife has an equal or greater say in making specific decisions. On the other hand, men in Salima are the least likely to agree to these decisions.

Table 3.11.1 Women's participation in decisionmaking by background characteristics: women

Percentage of women who say that they alone or jointly have the final say in specific decisions, by background characteristics, Malawi 2004

Background characteristic	Alone or jointly have final say in:							Number of women
	Own health care	Making large purchases	Making daily purchases	Visits to family or relatives	What food to cook each day	All specified decisions	None of the specified decisions	
<b>Age</b>								
15-19	17.8	8.7	13.1	30.3	31.2	6.3	56.4	2,392
20-24	28.2	18.0	30.5	55.5	65.7	13.3	23.6	2,870
25-29	33.8	25.0	39.0	62.2	74.2	19.9	17.9	2,157
30-34	38.5	30.6	43.7	68.1	78.0	24.7	13.6	1,478
35-39	42.4	34.8	44.8	65.3	78.4	27.9	13.6	1,117
40-44	43.4	35.5	49.4	70.9	83.6	28.9	10.8	935
45-49	50.0	43.9	54.7	76.1	85.0	37.8	10.5	749
<b>Marital status</b>								
Never married	17.1	9.3	10.2	20.6	16.3	7.9	71.3	1,970
Married or living together	27.8	18.0	32.8	60.3	74.3	12.1	16.7	8,312
Divorced/separated/widowed	80.6	76.9	79.5	85.6	83.8	73.2	10.7	1,416
<b>Number of living children</b>								
0	19.7	10.9	15.6	30.7	31.3	8.4	56.5	2,655
1-2	33.4	24.8	36.6	61.6	71.8	19.6	18.4	4,092
3-4	37.0	28.9	42.0	65.3	78.0	22.9	14.6	2,726
5+	40.1	30.4	44.5	67.9	80.4	24.6	13.3	2,225
<b>Residence</b>								
Urban	34.1	28.2	42.9	53.2	61.2	23.6	31.1	2,076
Rural	32.0	22.7	32.8	57.4	66.6	17.7	23.9	9,621
<b>Region</b>								
Northern	37.1	25.6	36.6	53.0	70.9	16.2	22.2	1,552
Central	29.3	21.1	32.3	53.4	65.2	16.9	26.5	4,734
Southern	33.7	25.3	36.1	60.5	64.6	21.1	24.8	5,412
<b>District</b>								
Blantyre	44.3	37.5	48.3	59.7	69.5	31.6	24.9	914
Kasungu	19.3	12.4	20.1	36.9	69.9	8.0	24.7	497
Machinga	27.8	22.5	35.5	57.5	69.7	19.0	26.0	427
Mangochi	26.7	22.8	31.7	43.6	50.9	17.8	39.4	599
Mzimba	41.5	23.6	35.7	57.9	77.7	15.0	15.4	778
Salima	27.8	19.2	31.6	53.4	63.1	15.3	29.8	303
Thyolo	30.3	22.5	33.2	78.8	74.2	19.0	14.1	618
Zomba	26.7	20.6	30.6	57.0	61.7	17.6	27.2	637
Lilongwe	30.7	23.4	36.5	52.8	61.3	19.6	29.4	1,705
Mulanje	29.9	24.5	33.8	61.2	61.4	21.6	29.2	512
Other districts	33.3	23.2	34.0	57.7	65.6	17.9	23.9	4,708
<b>Education</b>								
No education	36.3	27.9	38.3	63.2	71.8	22.5	18.7	2,734
Primary 1-4	30.3	21.3	32.0	57.8	68.1	17.7	22.8	2,998
Primary 5-8	31.3	21.7	34.3	54.8	64.4	16.6	26.5	4,154
Secondary+	32.3	25.5	34.2	49.2	55.1	19.8	35.8	1,811
<b>Employment</b>								
Not employed	25.0	17.2	27.7	46.2	56.3	13.4	35.2	5,235
Employed for cash	44.6	39.6	53.1	68.4	77.7	31.8	15.6	2,033
Employed not for cash	35.5	23.8	34.2	63.6	71.2	19.0	17.7	4,417
<b>Wealth quintile</b>								
Lowest	42.0	33.5	42.7	63.4	71.4	28.6	19.8	2,037
Second	30.4	20.9	30.4	58.5	67.2	17.0	23.0	2,277
Middle	28.8	19.8	30.4	54.7	65.4	15.0	24.9	2,383
Fourth	28.5	19.5	31.3	56.4	65.4	13.9	25.0	2,361
Highest	33.4	25.6	38.9	51.9	60.5	20.5	31.6	2,639
Total	32.4	23.6	34.6	56.7	65.7	18.8	25.2	11,698

Note: Total includes 13 women with missing information on employment status

Table 3.11.2 Men's attitudes towards women's control of decisionmaking by background characteristics

Percentage of men who say that in a couple the wife should have an equal or greater say than the husband in specific decisions, by background characteristics, Malawi 2004

Background characteristic	Wife should have an equal or greater say in:						Number of men
	Making large purchases	Making daily purchases	Visits to family or relatives	Control over money she earns	How many children to have and when	All of the specified decisions	
<b>Age</b>							
15-19	35.7	46.9	71.7	66.6	58.4	19.5	650
20-24	41.0	51.6	70.9	66.5	63.6	25.1	587
25-29	49.2	55.2	76.1	71.0	69.4	32.6	634
30-34	47.8	57.1	75.4	71.9	68.2	29.3	485
35-39	49.7	56.5	72.6	66.1	61.2	27.8	294
40-44	45.6	53.3	74.3	68.4	61.9	27.6	282
45-49	43.3	51.9	70.1	73.6	64.9	27.7	182
50-54	45.6	52.9	65.2	60.6	54.0	27.7	148
<b>Marital status</b>							
Never married	41.2	52.6	74.9	69.5	63.4	25.3	1,084
Married or living together	45.7	52.9	71.8	67.7	64.2	27.6	2,079
Divorced/separated/widowed	40.0	55.0	74.4	72.0	54.9	26.5	98
<b>Number of living children</b>							
0	40.7	51.7	73.3	69.0	63.4	24.5	1,253
1-2	46.1	53.0	72.6	68.6	65.6	28.7	794
3-4	48.8	53.9	75.1	70.3	64.4	30.1	588
5+	43.9	54.1	70.3	65.3	60.7	25.8	625
<b>Residence</b>							
Urban	55.0	68.5	83.8	79.8	79.1	43.6	669
Rural	41.3	48.8	70.1	65.5	59.6	22.5	2,593
<b>Region</b>							
Northern	35.2	74.8	58.3	70.9	52.0	21.2	423
Central	45.0	45.4	71.2	64.3	62.0	26.8	1,370
Southern	45.8	53.5	78.6	71.6	68.6	28.4	1,468
<b>Education</b>							
No education	36.4	40.3	66.8	58.5	55.3	20.0	383
Primary 1-4	26.8	40.1	62.0	56.3	50.0	13.6	798
Primary 5-8	41.7	53.5	71.4	67.2	60.7	23.6	1,220
Secondary+	66.9	69.3	87.8	86.0	84.3	46.6	859
<b>Wealth quintile</b>							
Lowest	30.3	41.4	61.3	60.3	51.8	15.4	412
Second	35.5	39.9	68.7	59.0	57.3	15.6	640
Middle	41.4	48.9	66.6	65.4	58.2	21.0	699
Fourth	46.3	56.7	75.4	71.3	65.6	29.5	709
Highest	58.3	69.0	85.4	80.3	77.9	44.2	802
<b>District</b>							
Blantyre	64.9	68.0	89.3	85.3	82.3	47.0	316
Kasungu	29.5	40.7	48.0	51.0	43.1	12.6	156
Machinga	56.4	70.7	74.2	70.6	73.7	48.2	114
Mangochi	30.3	43.4	68.1	59.1	51.6	18.9	150
Mzimba	30.2	71.0	55.8	69.8	51.2	17.1	212
Salima	28.4	28.0	64.7	52.9	47.4	7.7	78
Thyolo	43.3	46.0	70.9	59.1	58.5	21.2	169
Zomba	32.1	46.6	67.2	53.4	50.3	21.4	159
Lilongwe	50.5	53.5	71.0	66.3	66.5	37.3	542
Mulanje	51.2	40.2	79.4	68.3	67.4	28.1	114
Other districts	42.7	51.1	76.9	72.2	65.9	22.0	1,250
Total	44.1	52.8	72.9	68.5	63.6	26.8	3,261

To assess women's degree of acceptance of wife beating, the 2004 MDHS survey asked women, "Sometimes a husband is annoyed or angered by things which his wife does. In your opinion, is a husband justified in hitting or beating his wife in the following situations?" The five situations presented to women for their opinion are: if she burns the food, if she argues with him, if she goes out without telling him, if she neglects the children, and if she refuses to have sex with him.

The first five columns in Table 3.12.1 show how acceptance of wife beating varies for each reason. The last column gives the percentages of women who feel that wife beating is justified for at least one of the given reasons. A woman who believes that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife for any reason at all may believe herself to be of low status, both absolutely and relative to men. Such a perception could act as a barrier to accessing health care for her and her children, could affect her attitude toward contraceptive use, and could impact her general well being.

Twenty-eight percent of women agree with at least one of the selected reasons for wife beating. Neglecting the children was the reason for which women were most likely to find wife beating justified (17 percent). Differentials across respondents' background characteristics are small, although younger women, married women, rural women, and women with less than secondary education are more likely to accept justifications for wife beating. Women in the Northern Region are much more likely than women in other regions to agree with at least one reason for wife beating (45 percent compared to 32 percent or less).

Table 3.12.2 shows men's perception on justifications for wife beating. Interestingly, men are less likely than women to justify wife beating for any reason (16 percent compared to 28 percent). In general, younger men, never-married men, men with no living children, men in the Northern or Central Regions, and men in the lower wealth quintiles are more likely than other men to agree to wife beating for any reason.

The extent of control women have over when and with whom they have sex has important implications for demographic and health outcomes. To measure women's agreement with the idea that a woman has the right to refuse to have sex with her husband, the 2004 MDHS asked respondents whether a wife is justified in refusing to have sex with her husband under four circumstances: she is tired or not in the mood, she has recently given birth, she knows her husband has had sex with other women, and she knows her husband has a sexually transmitted disease. These four circumstances for which women's opinions are sought have been chosen because they are effective in combining issues of women's rights and consequences for women's health.

Table 3.13.1 shows the percentage of women who say that women are justified in refusing to have sex with their husband for specific reasons, by background characteristics. The table also shows how this indicator of women's empowerment varies with the other two indicators, namely with women's participation in decisionmaking and women's attitudes toward wife beating. It is worth noting that, unlike the previous indicator of empowerment, this indicator is positively related to empowerment: the more reasons women agree with, the higher is their empowerment in terms of a belief in women's sexual rights.



Table 3.12.1 Women's attitude towards wife beating

Percentage of women who agree that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife for specific reasons, by background characteristics, Malawi 2004

Background characteristic	Husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife if she:					Agrees with at least one specified reason	Number of women
	Burns the food	Argues with him	Goes out without telling him	Neglects the children	Refuses to have sex with him		
<b>Age</b>							
15-19	14.2	14.8	15.9	20.9	13.5	31.8	2,392
20-24	12.0	12.8	13.9	18.4	14.4	29.8	2,870
25-29	10.8	10.9	14.9	16.7	14.2	27.6	2,157
30-34	9.1	10.5	11.6	14.7	12.4	24.4	1,478
35-39	10.6	9.7	12.1	14.1	13.1	25.8	1,117
40-44	9.5	10.5	13.5	15.5	14.2	27.4	935
45-49	9.7	8.1	12.4	13.7	12.5	24.7	749
<b>Marital status</b>							
Never married	11.1	11.5	13.0	17.5	10.8	26.9	1,970
Married or living together	11.7	12.3	14.6	17.6	14.8	29.2	8,312
Divorced/separated/widowed	10.1	9.1	11.0	14.1	11.1	24.5	1,416
<b>Number of living children</b>							
0	12.5	13.0	14.4	18.5	12.9	29.7	2,655
1-2	11.7	12.3	13.9	17.5	14.2	28.8	4,092
3-4	10.8	11.0	13.4	16.5	13.7	27.6	2,726
5+	10.1	10.5	13.9	15.7	13.5	26.3	2,225
<b>Residence</b>							
Urban	6.3	7.1	10.1	10.5	8.6	18.1	2,076
Rural	12.5	12.8	14.7	18.6	14.7	30.4	9,621
<b>Region</b>							
Northern	17.7	17.6	24.5	28.2	22.6	45.1	1,552
Central	13.7	14.6	15.3	20.2	17.5	31.8	4,734
Southern	7.5	7.6	9.6	11.4	7.7	20.2	5,412
<b>District</b>							
Blantyre	4.0	3.9	4.8	6.2	4.0	10.1	914
Kasungu	24.9	25.8	32.6	38.2	27.5	50.4	497
Machinga	5.6	3.1	3.1	4.9	4.6	12.5	427
Mangochi	9.1	12.1	12.4	15.9	11.7	28.0	599
Mzimba	20.2	21.0	28.4	29.5	23.2	47.4	778
Salima	10.0	8.9	8.8	12.3	26.7	35.8	303
Thyolo	11.4	9.5	11.9	14.8	8.7	24.2	618
Zomba	6.7	8.4	8.7	9.6	7.0	18.5	637
Lilongwe	10.8	11.6	11.3	13.9	13.6	20.5	1,705
Mulanje	7.4	7.5	9.3	10.1	9.6	19.9	512
Other districts	12.1	12.6	15.2	19.9	14.7	32.8	4,708
<b>Education</b>							
No education	11.8	11.4	13.4	16.3	15.1	28.3	2,734
Primary 1-4	13.7	12.8	13.9	17.2	15.0	30.2	2,998
Primary 5-8	11.6	12.5	15.8	19.0	14.3	30.2	4,154
Secondary+	6.5	9.2	10.2	14.1	7.8	20.3	1,811
<b>Employment</b>							
Not employed	10.6	10.8	12.5	16.3	13.6	26.5	5,235
Employed for cash	10.1	12.1	15.6	17.3	13.8	29.7	2,033
Employed not for cash	12.9	12.9	14.8	18.2	13.7	29.7	4,417
<b>Number of decisions in which woman has final say<sup>1</sup></b>							
0	12.5	12.7	14.6	17.9	12.9	27.7	2,945
1-2	12.1	13.4	15.7	19.2	15.1	31.1	4,501
3-4	10.9	10.9	13.1	16.9	14.4	29.9	2,057
5	9.0	8.2	9.9	12.2	11.0	21.6	2,195
<b>Wealth quintile</b>							
Lowest	13.2	12.8	14.4	17.7	14.7	30.0	2,037
Second	12.5	12.8	14.8	18.2	16.6	31.9	2,277
Middle	13.0	14.3	14.6	20.3	15.8	32.0	2,383
Fourth	11.6	12.2	15.5	18.9	14.3	30.0	2,361
Highest	7.3	7.6	10.7	11.6	7.8	18.8	2,639
Total	11.4	11.8	13.9	17.2	13.7	28.2	11,698

Note: Total includes 13 women with missing information on employment.

<sup>1</sup> Either by herself or jointly with others

Table 3.12.2 Men's attitude towards wife beating

Percentage of men who agree that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife for specific reasons, by background characteristics, Malawi 2004

Background characteristic	Husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife if she:					Agrees with at least one specified reason	Number of men
	Burns the food	Argues with him	Goes out without telling him	Neglects the children	Refuses to have sex with him		
<b>Age</b>							
15-19	7.8	14.2	10.6	14.2	11.0	27.9	650
20-24	5.4	11.5	11.6	12.5	9.1	21.9	587
25-29	3.9	5.2	5.3	7.1	4.0	12.0	634
30-34	3.0	4.9	4.5	6.0	6.6	13.1	485
35-39	1.8	3.7	4.8	5.0	4.7	9.5	294
40-44	1.4	2.0	2.5	2.9	2.0	6.5	282
45-49	1.5	4.9	2.5	2.3	2.2	5.4	182
50-54	2.4	4.5	4.4	5.9	6.4	12.9	148
<b>Marital status</b>							
Never married	7.1	11.9	9.8	12.9	10.2	23.8	1,084
Married or living together	2.7	5.3	5.4	6.2	4.5	12.1	2,079
Divorced/separated/widowed	5.3	8.3	6.4	6.1	10.6	15.1	98
<b>Number of living children</b>							
0	6.6	11.8	9.7	12.7	9.9	22.9	1,253
1-2	3.2	5.3	6.6	5.8	4.5	13.3	794
3-4	2.5	5.1	4.9	6.2	4.8	11.7	588
5+	2.2	4.4	3.6	5.3	4.3	10.0	625
<b>Residence</b>							
Urban	4.6	5.5	5.7	5.8	6.5	14.1	669
Rural	4.1	8.1	7.2	9.1	6.6	16.6	2,593
<b>Region</b>							
Northern	6.5	10.9	10.4	14.2	11.7	22.7	423
Central	6.0	10.3	8.7	10.8	8.8	21.1	1,370
Southern	1.9	4.1	4.2	4.5	3.1	9.5	1,468
<b>District</b>							
Blantyre	2.1	3.1	2.8	3.0	3.9	6.8	316
Kasungu	6.2	12.5	8.1	12.5	8.3	22.5	156
Machinga	1.5	4.6	3.5	1.4	0.7	6.5	114
Mangochi	2.8	5.0	4.0	5.6	3.6	10.0	150
Mzimba	6.7	12.0	7.8	12.9	10.2	21.2	212
Salima	5.8	9.2	8.6	7.5	12.0	17.5	78
Thyolo	3.5	4.7	2.4	6.3	2.0	11.5	169
Zomba	1.6	6.6	5.1	6.3	5.6	13.7	159
Lilongwe	6.0	7.2	8.2	8.5	9.3	19.0	542
Mulanje	2.4	8.6	9.5	10.4	5.3	16.6	114
Other districts	4.2	8.5	8.3	9.9	6.7	17.9	1,250
<b>Education</b>							
No education	3.1	5.7	3.8	4.8	5.6	12.2	383
Primary 1-4	5.3	9.6	7.4	10.6	9.7	20.3	798
Primary 5-8	5.0	9.6	8.5	9.9	7.0	18.0	1,220
Secondary+	2.5	3.8	5.5	6.0	3.6	11.3	859
<b>Number of decisions in which a woman should have final say<sup>1</sup></b>							
0	(0.0)	(3.0)	(5.1)	(5.9)	(7.8)	(12.9)	35
1-2	5.4	9.1	9.1	9.4	7.8	19.2	911
3-4	3.8	7.1	6.1	8.1	6.1	14.9	2,316
<b>Wealth quintile</b>							
Lowest	7.0	11.5	7.7	11.0	9.8	19.0	412
Second	4.9	9.1	7.5	11.0	6.8	17.7	640
Middle	3.9	8.0	7.7	8.9	7.2	16.4	699
Fourth	3.4	6.5	5.2	7.1	4.8	15.0	709
Highest	3.2	5.0	6.9	5.9	5.8	14.0	802
Total	4.2	7.6	6.9	8.4	6.6	16.1	3,261

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on 25-49 cases.

<sup>1</sup> Either by herself or jointly with others

Fifty-two percent of women agree that a woman is justified in refusing sex for all selected reasons and only 13 percent say that a woman is not justified in refusing sex for any of the selected reasons. In general, women are most likely to justify refusing sex if a woman recently gave birth (80 percent), perhaps because it is a cultural taboo in Malawi to have sex right after birth. Hence this finding may not be a sign of empowerment as much as adherence to an important traditional belief. The next most accepted reasons for refusing sex are the knowledge that the husband has a sexually transmitted disease (74 percent), and if the husband has sex with other women (71 percent). Women are the least likely to agree with refusing sex because the woman is tired or not in the mood (64 percent).

There is little variation in this index by background characteristics. The percentage of women who say that a woman is justified in refusing sex for all the specified reasons increases with the woman's education and independence in decisionmaking. Women in the Southern Region are more likely than women in other regions to agree with all of the reasons for refusing sex (59 percent compared with 51 percent in the Northern Region and 45 percent in the Central Region).

Table 3.13.2 looks at the same issue from the men's perspective. Men are more likely than women to think that wives are justified in refusing sex with their husbands for each of the specified reasons. While 74 percent of women say that a wife is justified to refuse sex with her husband if the husband has a sexually transmitted disease, the corresponding proportion for men is 81 percent. Men are least likely to justify a wife refusing sex because she is tired or not in the mood (67 percent), but they are still slightly more likely to find this reason justifiable than women (64 percent).

As in the case of women, there are small variations in this index by background characteristics. The differentials among men are similar to those of women. For example, men in the Southern Region are also more likely than men in other regions to agree with all of the reasons for refusing sex (60 percent compared with 51 percent in the Central Region and 42 percent in the Northern Region).

Table 3.13.1 Women's attitude towards refusing sex with husband

Percentage of women who believe that a wife is justified in refusing to have sex with her husband for specific reasons, by background characteristics, Malawi 2004

Background characteristic	Wife is justified in refusing sex with husband if she:				Percentage who agree with all of the specified reasons	Percentage who agree with none of the specified reasons	Number of women
	Knows husband has a sexually transmitted disease	Knows husband has had sex with other women	Has recently given birth	Is tired or not in the mood			
<b>Age</b>							
15-19	66.0	65.6	69.1	57.7	47.1	22.1	2,392
20-24	74.2	72.8	81.8	67.2	53.4	10.7	2,870
25-29	76.6	72.7	83.4	65.6	53.5	9.5	2,157
30-34	77.3	73.2	83.6	65.7	53.0	9.5	1,478
35-39	76.7	71.2	83.6	68.6	55.4	10.5	1,117
40-44	75.8	72.0	83.7	65.6	54.0	10.0	935
45-49	76.3	72.8	80.5	61.2	51.9	12.1	749
<b>Marital status</b>							
Never married	65.9	65.2	65.8	56.7	47.9	24.5	1,970
Married or living together	75.3	72.2	83.0	65.9	53.0	10.3	8,312
Divorced/separated/widowed	76.5	72.9	82.1	66.0	53.8	10.2	1,416
<b>Number of living children</b>							
0	67.9	67.0	70.0	58.3	48.2	20.9	2,655
1-2	75.6	72.7	82.9	66.6	53.4	10.0	4,092
3-4	75.7	71.7	82.1	65.8	53.4	10.9	2,726
5+	75.3	72.4	84.0	65.9	53.5	10.0	2,225
<b>Residence</b>							
Urban	79.8	76.5	83.8	69.7	61.2	11.1	2,076
Rural	72.6	70.0	79.1	63.3	50.3	13.0	9,621
<b>Region</b>							
Northern	80.1	71.0	85.3	65.3	51.1	6.7	1,552
Central	68.1	67.0	75.0	55.8	44.6	17.4	4,734
Southern	77.1	74.8	82.8	71.7	59.3	10.3	5,412
<b>Education</b>							
No education	69.5	65.9	78.1	61.5	46.7	13.6	2,734
Primary 1-4	71.0	69.5	78.5	62.5	49.6	14.8	2,998
Primary 5-8	75.5	72.7	80.8	65.2	53.7	11.8	4,154
Secondary or higher	81.4	78.3	83.3	70.0	61.5	9.8	1,811
<b>Employment</b>							
Not employed	70.7	69.1	76.7	61.6	50.2	16.1	5,235
Employed for cash	78.4	74.8	84.9	67.4	55.6	9.0	2,033
Employed not for cash	75.5	71.8	81.6	66.2	53.0	10.3	4,417
<b>Number of decisions in which woman has final say<sup>1</sup></b>							
0	67.8	65.4	71.4	60.3	48.4	19.7	2,945
1-2	74.1	73.0	81.4	66.0	52.8	11.2	4,501
3-4	77.8	73.3	85.0	64.5	51.8	8.2	2,057
5	77.6	73.0	83.7	66.5	56.5	10.5	2,195
<b>Number of reasons wife beating is justified</b>							
0	73.5	71.3	78.8	65.4	55.3	14.9	8,395
1-2	76.0	68.7	81.6	59.3	42.2	7.3	1,975
3-4	71.6	73.2	83.6	65.5	45.1	6.5	898
5	75.8	74.7	86.6	66.6	53.6	7.2	430
<b>Wealth quintile</b>							
Lowest	70.0	67.4	77.5	61.8	48.7	14.6	2,037
Second	71.3	69.5	79.2	63.6	50.0	13.5	2,277
Middle	71.9	68.4	78.4	62.4	48.9	13.1	2,383
Fourth	74.9	71.9	81.1	63.5	51.0	11.7	2,361
Highest	79.9	77.2	82.9	69.6	61.1	11.0	2,639
Total	73.9	71.1	80.0	64.4	52.2	12.7	11,698

Note: Total includes 13 women with missing information on employment.

<sup>1</sup> Either by herself or jointly with others

Table 3.13.2 Men's attitude towards a woman refusing sex with husband

Percentage of men who believe that a wife is justified in refusing to have sex with her husband for specific reasons, by background characteristics, Malawi 2004

Background characteristic	Wife is justified in refusing sex with husband if she:				Percentage who agree with all of the specified reasons	Percentage who agree with none of the specified reasons	Number of men
	Knows husband has a sexually transmitted disease	Knows husband has had sex with other women	Has recently given birth	Is tired or not in the mood			
<b>Age</b>							
15-19	75.1	66.3	80.8	58.7	46.8	11.3	650
20-24	80.6	74.1	87.3	65.4	52.8	5.1	587
25-29	82.8	75.0	91.3	71.1	58.1	4.9	634
30-34	81.5	73.2	89.9	70.1	55.5	6.9	485
35-39	87.0	79.3	98.3	70.8	59.2	1.3	294
40-44	84.0	76.6	95.2	69.1	55.8	2.1	282
45-49	87.3	77.8	94.1	64.5	54.3	2.2	182
50-54	80.2	72.4	89.1	62.0	49.3	6.9	148
<b>Marital status</b>							
Never married	76.7	69.3	82.7	61.7	50.9	9.8	1,084
Married or living together	83.6	75.8	92.6	69.4	55.9	3.9	2,079
Divorced/separated/widowed	83.8	68.3	92.2	56.0	42.2	3.8	98
<b>Residence</b>							
Urban	84.5	78.5	87.5	69.5	62.7	7.9	669
Rural	80.5	72.1	89.8	65.7	51.5	5.4	2,593
<b>Region</b>							
Northern	77.0	71.0	87.9	52.2	42.3	7.3	423
Central	80.1	72.1	87.9	62.3	50.9	6.5	1,370
Southern	83.7	75.3	91.0	74.5	59.8	4.9	1,468
<b>Education</b>							
No education	79.7	70.1	91.3	63.0	47.9	5.2	383
Primary 1-4	76.9	67.8	85.0	61.6	46.8	8.6	798
Primary 5-8	81.2	73.3	90.1	63.9	52.1	4.9	1,220
Secondary or higher	86.2	80.3	91.3	76.2	65.4	5.1	859
<b>Wealth quintile</b>							
Lowest	80.4	69.7	88.6	57.7	45.4	6.7	412
Second	80.8	74.6	91.5	68.0	52.4	4.2	640
Middle	80.5	71.0	89.8	64.1	49.9	4.4	699
Fourth	81.0	72.0	88.0	66.7	54.2	7.2	709
Highest	83.1	77.7	88.7	71.6	62.3	7.0	802
Total	81.3	73.4	89.3	66.5	53.8	5.9	3,261