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Every now and then there are coming different talks about the disease HIV/AIDS disease that is according to different issue people talk about this disease.

I am saying so due to a certain issue I captured recently in one of our neighbouring village called Nyongani indeed it was a talk everyone after people heard of this issue.

On this day I was coming from one of our gardens in Phiri where I was sent by my parents to check if the people who were employed to work in that garden were indeed doing their intended job since there were some rumours that they were not doing their job.

As I was coming from that place I decided to pass through that village called Nyongani only to lengthen my way home. Since it was the month of initiations among young men and women in all villages in the area according to their customs, there were people all over the place and with this I did not wonder but what caught my attention was that apart from the large amount of people in the village as usual there was one house where something different was happening since I could hear drums inside the fence surrounding the house and initiation songs accompanied by the drums with some people outside the house and this made me to wonder since I really knew that initiation on took place away from the houses at a chosen place and this made me to wonder and have a courage to ask what was really happening at the place.

Since I was at the bicycle I stopped at a distance and called one young man whom I used to know him by face only in his almost below twenty five years of age. Without hesitation he indeed came where I stood, I greeted him and told him to take cool since I was only to ask him few questions and he said I was so welcomed.

Without any delay I asked him, what was really happening at the house since it was so unusual? Before he started explaining to me he laughed a little bit while I was still waiting for an answer and thought may be my question was senseless for he started laughing just only when I asked what was happening at the house.

Then he started explaining to me like this; what has happened at that house is a thing which everybody is talking right now in the village since I have never heard about that since my birth (referring to his birth). Here now I was so attentive to hear what had really happened however I knew that it was something not serious but funny according to his facial expression.

Then he continued, in that house there is a couple which got married more than nine years ago and they have children almost five of them. For the whole past nine years they have been living together happily despite the difference in denomination between the wife and the husband since the wife is a Muslim and the husband is a Roman Catholic one and in normal custom most of the Roman Catholic Christians do not go under circumcision either at the hospital or initiation places so was like this man.

Now what made all this to happen which is happening there, this wife of this man fell sick like sexual transmitted related disease of which she did not disclose to anyone in the village but it was known to her and her husband and there was some conflict in the family planning the husband that he was one who has brought the disease in the house that is according to sources.

Without wasting much time blaming each other, the wife decided to go to the hospital to have been checked what was wrong with her and indeed she arrived at the hospital. After being examined, it was discovered that she had a sexual transmitted disease called syphilis in its very early stages and she was recommended for reporting earlier at the hospital for examination. Since the disease she was diagnosed was a sexually transmitted one she was told that she was going to be counseled in all sexual transmitted diseases that is about its dangers and how one can get the disease including HIV/AIDS. She was taken into a counseling room where she got counseled but what caught her soul was the time was counseled about the disease HIV/AIDS.

Since she heard a new thing that she had never heard since she started hearing about the disease HIV/AIDS. While being counseled the counselor mentioned something concerning circumcision in relation with the disease HIV/AIDS. According to the counselor he said the chances of getting HIV/AIDS disease to uncircumcised men is very high unlike to circumcised men which is very low.

At this point in time she was furious again in her soul thinking her uncircumcised husband at home and straight made her mind that once she got home she will force her husband to be circumcised despite his old age which is about over forty. And this stayed in her mind though the counselor was still talking to her. At the end the doctor told her that she should never have sex with her husband until the husband go for the treatment at the very same hospital which happened to be a non-governmental one.

Upon arriving at home the wife called his husband to explain how she have traveled at the hospital and tell him the results. At first it was a family issue that everyone could not know what was happening in the family but later it was known to everyone.

After the wife explained that she has been found with sexually transmitted disease, the man did not deny that since he knew how she been moving out in the past but when it comes to issues of being circumcised so that he should reduce the risk of getting HIV/AIDS, according to the counselor, the man could not tolerate this and he did not even understand this since he claimed he has never heard of this ever since and also claimed that according to his denomination he cannot get circumcised only to reduce the risk of getting HIV/AIDS disease a thing which he claimed to have no base to him and insisted that he won't do that. Here now things started not to work with the couple since the wife was insisting that it is better the marriage ends than to be with a husband who is not circumcised since he will give her the HIV/AIDS disease.

Now things in the family reached at the point that the couple could not settle on their own but to be assisted by other people from both sides of the wife and husband and this indeed happened.

However at this point in time was a family issue but some of their neighbours started to be getting some information little by little about what was happening in the family. The people from both the man and woman side set a day on which they agreed to come to the house and try to settle the dispute between the two.

Indeed they came at the house and asked them what is all about in the house so that things should not be fine in the house. The wife to this husband explained everything while both sides were listening attentively and to find the way forward and what caught the hearts of people from both sides was the time when the wife explained that after going to the hospital she was diagnosed with sexually transmitted disease (syphilis) and the good side of the story about this was that she receive treatment to the disease and that by that time she was feeling better.

Then at this time the people who came for advising them started to wonder what the quarrel was all about since the wife was saying she was feeling better not knowing that this was just part of the story.

Then the wife continue explaining to them that while she was being counseled about the sexually transmitted diseases came the time when I was to be counseled about the disease HIV/AIDS being one of sexual transmitted diseases and told that men who are not circumcised have got high chances of getting the disease HIV/AIDS while as those men circumcised has got less chances of getting the disease and as you all know that my husband is a Roman Catholic whom most of the men from this denomination are not circumcised so is my husband and upon arriving here I explained everything to him how I have traveled from the hospital and knowing that he is not circumcised I told him to go for circumcision so that he should reduce his chances of getting the disease HIV/AIDS since he has already started transmitting the disease of this type to me but to my surprise he is refusing to do so and I have told him that if not go for circumcision then it will be better if the marriage ends, there she stopped.

Though the wife explained this to the people they could not even know what the wife was explaining about since all of the people who were there did not know about this that there is a relationship between the chances of getting HIV/AIDS disease with circumcision and nobody had nowhere to start the story since they did not get everything out of the wife's explanation except the first one which she said she was being transmitted with sexual disease by her husband which they all realized that it was guilty but with this of getting HIV/AIDS disease and circumcision nobody could not understand.

However they did not hesitate to ask the wife how circumcision and chances of getting HIV/AIDS disease can be related. But the wife answered that she could not remember the explanation given by the doctor but what she knows is that and she was not going to change her mind of having her husband to be circumcised otherwise there will mark the end of their marriage.

This time all the people from the wife's side and husband side really realize that the wife was serious about the issue though they could not understand what she was trying to mean by that.

Due to this fact they decided to hold the issue for the next day but they agreed to send one representative together with the husband to get the treatment of his disease and the other person to testimony about the issue of circumcision and getting HIV/AIDS from the doctor during the counseling period. Indeed in the next day they set off for the same hospital the wife goes to hear direct from the doctor. At the hospital the husband was given the treatment of sexually transmitted disease (syphilis) and it was now time for counseling without wasting much time they asked the doctor to start counseling them about HIV/AIDS disease with an intention to hear for their own what the wife was saying.

Again the doctor explained to them exactly same things they explained to the wife was not lying about circumcision and the chances of getting the disease HIV/AIDS and they both agreed that the wife was saying the truth.

After arriving home they called each other as they were in previous day so that they should report how they have traveled at the hospital. They explained everything as they were told at the hospital by the doctor that indeed there is a greater chance to uncircumcised person who has got very less chances but still the explanation given by the doctor to them defending this fact was difficult to explain however they just keep the fact that it was true.

Now it was time that they should ask each other if it was proper for elderly person like him to go for circumcision basing only on that fact. But after looking carefully they all agreed that the man should go for circumcision should [even though he was] in his forties and the man himself agreed to do so since it was seen that as

old as he is but [if] he could found with an sexual transmitted diseases ( syphilis) why not H.I.V/AIDS?

That means despite his old age but he was going to be circumcised since at all initiation places those young people in their teens and was seen that this man in his forties could not go there and stay with those youngsters hence they decided to talk to the authorities of initiation places in the village if they could come at his home and get incited (circumcised) and indeed giving him some counseling concerning incited person .

They indeed talked them and they will come at the house and get circumcised bearing also his age that he can not stay with the youngsters at the incitation [intiation] places called 'SIMBA'in Chichewa. The day came when they agreed so that the man should be circumcised and they came at his home and get circumcised.

Now asking what is happening there is that the authorities are counseling the man on how an initiated person is supposed to behave and the drums you are listening is that people around should not get what they are talking since it is so confidential. Well! This gave me a lot of question in my heart that is that is really good what is happening there as far as ones rights are concerned? Anyway I just keep it in my heart

However the man explaining to me asked me about the issue that was true that the chances of getting HIV/AIDS to uncircumcised person high than to circumcised person which is low as they are saying. Mmmm! I stayed a while at with out answering him and I said as far as I am concerned this is also my first time to hear such kind of issues may be its up to me to find out if that is being said at the hospital.

I think it is true since they could not tell people any thing which is not verified But still he seemed not sure of the answer I gave him since he stayed quiet after I finished explaining about the question I was asked. Without a delay he continued saying that to my side I can not believe that since circumcision started long time ago and almost every Muslim man is circumcised but still they are catching the disease at the same rate as the other tribes which do not circumcised are catching instead of them circumcised people having low rate anything which making me not to believe that but what I know about HIV/AIDS [to] protect yourself is to use a condom or by abstaining not that!

He concluded! But just to make a correction on how I heard the issue is that circumcision only reduces the chances of getting the HIV/AIDS disease not that one circumcised can not get the disease then he seemed to understand a little since he nodded his head in agreeing to what I was saying but since I had no back up points about this. I thought it was good for me to leave the place and headed back home bearing on mind that it was also the first time [I was] hearing

such kind of diseases

However before I leave the man talked showing that HIV/AIDS facts are confusing them since he said it is [would be] better now [if] organizations or government they stop telling us about HIV/ AIDS issues instead they [should] just leave us with this [leave us alone about circumcision?] and that hence we will not comment on this last statement but only to hide [bid] farewell to him and left the place for home still thinking of what I have heard at that place and to write something on that since people are not knowing about this since it is fact to them and have not yet got true evidence about the matter.[it might be true, a fact, but we have not yet gotten sufficient evidence?]

TUESDAY 29 /08/06

Once one talks or mentions something like the name orphan, definitely one knows that it is a sad thing since being an orphan it is associated with death of a parent and sometimes both parents of that particular orphan due to different reasons either diseases or accident and orphans are supposed to be treated with love and care so that they should not be in a position to remember their late parents in all aspects.

Even the government is taking a leading role of caring orphans along side non-governmental organizations and again well wishers wishing but some of the orphans seems not to understand this and instead of appreciating what all these people, government and even non-governmental are doing they tend to look down all what these people wish to them.

However these are not all orphans but I was shocked hearing a story of a certain orphan which was being raised by a certain man in Vingula Trading Centre. This man happened to be a friend of mine through my brother who was chatting with him before he went out in our neighbouring countries.

On this day I went to Vingula Trading Centre to look for certain pesticides to apply to the vegetables in the garden since it was being spoiled by certain pests. Since it was the market day I had all the hope that I was going to find the pesticides and indeed I got it.

After buying the pesticides it was now time for me to leave for home. As I was passing the Vingula Bus Depot I heard a call but firstly I hesitated in responding since there were a lot of people and I thought may be it is somebody else who is being called. Finally after I was called for the second time by the surname, I knew for sure that I was me and I stopped to see clearly who was calling me.

Finally I saw the man and I went straight to him and everybody was happy to see each other since it took a long time without seeing each other. We greeted each

other and since it was like a visitor at the area, he asked me what I was there for? And I answered that I was there to buy some pesticides to apply in vegetable garden and told him that I was on my way back home the time he was calling me.

Fine, in proceeding I asked him where he was going since he was on the bus depot and he started telling me the story. As you know that nowadays orphans are everywhere more especially due to the disease HIV/AIDS and for the same fact I had my cousin who passed more than five years ago and this sister of mine left two children both girls the elder one was almost fourteen years the time my cousin passed away and the younger was only nine years of age and since nobody was not in a position to adopt them due to lack of resources in their family hence I decided to take the other younger girl of nine years to my home to live with her as my child.

Indeed everything was quite fine and I realized her nicely in everything we talk of spiritual and social even people were not differentiating with my children since whatever my children were eating she was eating the same and even wearing the same things as to what my children were wearing, they all lived happily as children of one family. I registered all the children of mine including her at one school though all my children were in upper classes than her since she was in standard four while my children were in standard seven and form one respectively.

I raised all of them up to the time when she reached standard eight she sat for the primary school leaving certificate examinations at Masanjala primary school of which she did better and got selected to Vingula Community Day secondary school.

I was very happy hearing that she had been selected to go to secondary school since I knew that her future will start there and that if she did better she will also help other people in future as I was doing with her. Indeed I did everything so that she report at school in good time. I bought her everything necessary requirement for a secondary school student and off she went to find accommodation close to the school since she said that she will not be able to operate from home. I agreed with her and offered her money for accommodation and food and she reported at school only this year in January.

She started well in everything, performance in class as well as behaviour this according to the reports I was receiving from her friends. This was evidenced after her first term examination results since a class of forty pupils she managed to be number twenty and I congratulated her and encouraged her to work hard knowing by myself that if she works hard she will not suffer the hardships of being an orphan in the future since she will be relying on her own in everything and if not others relying on her on. This I thought it was indeed a blessing for her.

The time to go for second term came and I provided everything to her to start up again her school life. She went back to school. However little by little I started hearing some reports of what she was doing at school like going out with men while only in form one and second term for that matter, I could not believe that with ears and I decided to call her back home to ask her about the rumours I was hearing.

She came home and I asked her about the rumours I was hearing that she has started going out with men and abandoning classes yet I provided her with everything needed in her life, talk of money and clothes so why doing such a nasty thing.

However she refused all what I asked her that I was hearing from her schoolmate and promised me that she cannot do such kind of a thing and promised me never to her such stories that she is the one doing and continued saying by herself that I provide her with everything so why doing things. Not knowing that she was fooling me if not herself in as far as the consequences are now.

Despite the warning and advices I gave her, I kept on still hearing of nasty things which she was doing there but according the statement she talked to me I was thinking that people are just expecting her behaviour since I knew being an orphan she cannot do such a foolish thing and also bearing in mind that she is being raised by a certain person not her parents hence she cannot do foolish things yet I was just fooling myself.

Just weeks ago came a message that school fees is needed at school and without delay I sent her two thousand kwacha to pay for her school fees. A week later she was found that she was not reporting for classes and this was evidenced by her teacher whom I met one day and I wrote her a warning letter about what she is doing of absconding classes had their reasons behind.

Three days later it was known that she was pregnant by a married man within the trading center and at this she knew herself that things are now bad for her and she decided to ran away before the news reached me and I don't know where she has taken the transport money since the time I was getting the news yesterday she was already out to her home in Zomba, T/A Masesa fearing me and since I am the one I took her there I am also following her so that I should give report to her relatives that she has ran away without my knowledge and also that she is pregnant and I am so furious about this thing since I have just lost my resources raising her with a mind of caring for an orphan so that I should pave way of her future but now everything in ruin. Hence now I am going to Zomba to report that thing.

Mmm! I was so shocked hearing such things somebody being an orphan adopted by somebody end up in such situation leaving school in form one due to pregnant



while having the resources by the guardian in order to take out her orphanage too bad.

However I did not comment anything on this issue since I saw the issue being so personal to him and also observing the way the man was deeply concerned according to his appearance instead I just wished him a nice journey all the way to Zomba but finally I only wished to know the age of which that orphan has dropped school? And he told me very concern that she was only fifteen years and her name is Fowler Everson. Very sorry indeed. I bid farewell and wished her a nice journey as I said and off I go home thinking in mind that if all orphans were of this habit then people would have no interest of assisting them. The End.

FRIDAY 01 /09/ 2006

Sometimes an issue of witchcraft seems to be very controversial sometimes people would not agree that witchcraft is being practiced by people on this land but sometimes people could tell that apart from the God's will that the person has to die when his/her time comes, something also might take place in terms of witchcraft is difficult to identify even in postmortem then people just keep it in doubt if the person has died of witchcraft or it is a natural death. Anyway only God knows. I am saying this due to a certain death which took place at a certain village called Inusa in Sub T/A Bwanali area.

On this day I was coming from a certain village Majanya where there was a celebration of somebody's birthday and they prepared some food and drinks for the invited people. After the celebration and when everything was over concerning the celebration I decided to go back home since I was alone I left the place in good time so that I should have enough time of walking back home.

While I was now in our village territory, I passed a certain borehole and there were about seven women. Firstly I had no any attention to what they were talking since I thought talking when they are at the borehole is the women's habit but now I wondered the environment and each and every woman who was there stood still with her both hands crossed at chest and I now knew that there might be something so unique there which they are talking and as I was drawing very close to where the women were I only heard one statement that, "everybody cannot believe such kind of death" there then concluded that something serious was being talked there. However I could not stop there to find out what it was all about since there were only women and moreover being at the borehole hence I had no option but to proceed at the place with an aim to find out the issue I heard from the women talking from anybody else I met ahead of me.

Just when I walked almost hundred metres from the borehole two men again standing just at the side of the road fortunate enough I was familiar to these men and found them talking the same issue again and I was so proud that I have found these men talking the issue these men were of the same village which was

heard that the funeral was, the other man was sick by the name was Marko. I approached them and they knew for sure that I was stopping at the place. I greeted them and they greeted me too. Then despite that I found them talking the issue I wanted. I asked them that I have just heard about the sudden death do you know anything about this.

Definitely we know the story, one of them answered. Then he started explaining. This man was a business man, he used to purchase fresh fish and sell them in town especially Blantyre. And just previous day this businessman went to purchase fresh fish in Mangochi so that today he should be leaving for Blantyre to sell his fish and since he came back home in the evening waiting for the night to leave early in the morning for Blantyre.

Upon arrival home in the evening previous day he was welcomed by his wife and he was given some water to bath as by custom that when the husband was away at work when he is back he has to be given some water to bath.

After bathing he did not leave the house but stayed there resting since he was tired waiting for dinner. During dinner time he had it together with his wife and before he went to bed he reminded her wife that she should wake him up very early if he fails on his own so that he should catch the earliest transport going to Blantyre and the wife agreed that she will do, that is according to the wife's statement. They all went to bed and since the wife is having a newly born baby they slept separately.

They slept all the night long together with the wife shall keeping in mind that she should wake her husband very early for the journey to Blantyre. Just around at about four am this morning the wife remembered the promise and she left her the place to wake him up for the journey.

He shook her husband but the husband could not respond and thought may be he is deadly asleep. He continued shaking him but no response despite that long time shaking, then she was shocked she decided to put the light in the room so that she took off his beddings just as soon as she lit the lamp she went straight to the husband's place and took off his beddings and try to make shake him again she discovered that the body of her husband was completely cold showing that not even blood was moving in his body then she decided to observe his face.

Oh! She was nearly to faint with shock and fear seeing that the tongue of her husband was out with a lot of foul down it and eyes wide open, she shouted while rushing out calling for the people to see what has happened to her husband, in no time people were already at the house and some already in the house to see what has happened.

Unfortunately it was discovered that the husband was dead and there was a deep cry from the wife. More people still coming to the house. However though

he was discovered dead they decided to take the body to the hospital so that they should find out what has killed him since in previous day he was perfectly right and okay.

In no time they found a lift to the hospital where it was indeed verified that he was dead but they could not find out what has killed him and advised to go back home and do the burial ceremony.

Indeed anybody could not believe that and everybody at the funeral was crying as though not knowing the deceased person but only hearing how the death has come and indeed everybody could not believe that and what it was in the mouth of everybody was that he has been bewitched but nobody could verify it but only believing that normal death never comes in such way and everybody believed that people can practice witchcraft and that a person can be bewitched.

The burial day came and according to the way this man died I decided to go and attend the burial ceremony though it was at a bit distance. Just arriving at the place one could tell that it was a sudden death since there was a loud cry from young, middle aged and old persons, even those who only came to attend the ceremony could cry and there were a lot of people who came to verify that the person they were chatting with in the previous day had indeed passed away without even a small illness or complaining of anything in his body, it was indeed so sad to everyone.

After the burial ceremony I came back home with full sorrow indeed due to such sudden death and some how made me to think too tat people may practice witchcraft.

THURSDAY 07/09/06

On this day I had nothing serious to do at home since I had been working since morning and I was so tired that after lunch I had small rest and then I went for a shower soon after the shower I left home for a mere walk which I took the direction of the chief's court yard.

As I was approaching the courtyard I saw that there were people sitting there and for sure I knew that there might be something there in form of a case and I decided not to proceed the place but to stop and have a sit for myself.

After sitting down I discovered that all the people were waiting for the chief and his councilors to start the case, which was scheduled for that day. And while we were waiting for the chief and his counselors to come I went and at next to a certain man with an intention to ask him about what the case of that was all about.

Fortunately enough the one I was asking was related to one of the people who were involved in the case that afternoon and that happened to the man. Then he told me that the case was about the couple.

This couple in the past days made a decision to take part in loan scheme so that they should take a loan and start a certain business to keep them going. They all agreed but the wife was the one who was illegible [eligible] to take the loan, she processed everything and got the loan of five thousand kwacha.

Then indeed started the business of a hawker. For the part time they were living happily in their family up to the time they decided to take the loan. However though the woman was the one who took the loan but the business was being ran by the husband and indeed things were progressing for them that now and then they were putting new goods in the hawker.

After seeing that money now was not a problem especially to the man who was running the hawker, the husband decided to propose an extra marital partner to go out with whenever he was going to buy goods for the hawker in town. And this indeed happened out of knowledge of his wife.

But the real wife was wondering the behaviour of his husband and started tracing him, long at last the wife was told that his husband is going out with a certain woman of whom he is spoiling the money to and the wife traced the whole story which she discovered it was true.

However the wife asked the husband if it was true that he was going out with another woman, the husband did not deny he answered yes, I want now to be a polygamy since I am now finding enough money.

Then the woman said, if you want to marry the other wife so that you have two of them no problems but forget about myself and all the goods which is in the hawker, I am taking since I am the one I got the loan find another goods for yourself to feed those two women you want to marry and the woman indeed left for her home with all the goods which was in the hawker to her home.

Now here the husband is pleading to the woman so that they should unite the wife is rejecting so here we want to hear how the issue will be to his or her side and to see who was wrong and we are only waiting for the chief. I waited a little bit the chief and his councilors were nowhere to be seen and I just left the place hoping to hear from other people the results of the case. Too bad indeed.

THE END.