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Monday (05/02/07)

I think up to now most people do not really understand what the lets chat team actually does when ever they are working in some of the villages here in Balaka or even may be in other districts where lets chat worker like in Mchinji as well as Rumphu.

However what I am to talk here is what I have evidenced here in any district Balaka.

Most people here they take everyone who have once seen working with research team lets chat knows much about medical issues or some other things concerning hospitals matter to some extent I can say yes but to other again I do not think these people are right by thinking in a such way may be just because when the survey is being conducted there are different teams including the nurses may be that is why when the survey come to an end everyone who was in the survey team and was known or recognised by the people around they just take you for a nurse too or someone who can assist them on health matters or advice them what to do or tell them some facts in as far as some health issues are concerned.

I am saying this due to several occasions which I have been meeting in the past including the one which I have just met recently where by people come to me and asking me about things out of survey questionnaire but related to health issue and sometimes even being stopped when I am moving up and down minding my businesses.

This time it was on Monday afternoon, on this afternoon I had plans to go to a certain man who invited me to collect some fresh cassava for the breakfast at home since it was a very sunny Monday afternoon.

I waited for a while before I set for a while before I set or the at least to wait for the sun to go down a little bit.

After the sun had a little bit cool I set off for the journey going to the man in Nephtary village almost one and half kilometres from my home.

Unfortunately I found that the man was temporally away I only found his wife however she confirmed me that I had to wait for he won't take long since he went to the garden only to take some vegetables hence I decide to wait for him.

Just after ten minutes had gone while at the place waiting I saw him coming him vegetable in his hands and a black plastic bag in the other hand.

He walked straight to the place where I was sitting and in respect, I had to stand up for the greeting since the man was double Older my age only that we do chat together regardless of age.

After greetings I did not want to mention what I was there for I knew for sure that he already knew the main reason why I was there despite mere [mere] chatting since I was invited by him specially to collect cassava.

We chatted for almost thirty minutes then I saw it important that I should take a leave at the place since I had to gain a distance of some kind.

Just before I mentioned of my departure I saw him leaving the place and enter the have [house?] leaving me outside the house and I just prayed that he won't take long in the house since my intension was to take a leave.

Contrary to what I was thinking in no time I saw him coming with that black plastic bag I saw with him the time he was coming from the garden but this time seemed to be more full than before and he handed it to me accompanied by the wards saying sorry that you will have a handful just because this morning came some business men from Mwendo to buy in their big sacks.

However I managed to keep some for you in return I just thanked for what he did since though he was saying a handful but it was enough for me to cater for almost three breakfast meals.

So after receiving the cassava I did not take long but to bid farewell with him and he escorted me for about a hundred metres and then he turned back leaving me proceeding with my journey back home.

I walked for about five hundred metres from the place I was at before I approached certain houses into the same village just when I was only five houses to exit the village I heard a call from behind and instantly I stopped to attend the call and I saw a certain young man in his late twenties running towards me and I was some how afraid as to what have done being called in a strange village by a strange man, anyway I took the courage.

In no time he approached me while smiling a thing which gave me a sense that may be it is not something serious. After he greeted me, he passed for almost ten seconds without saying anything and again I was just looking at him since he was the man I have not met with ever since and also him being the one he called me, I had to wait to hear something from him.

However I knew that the man has something to say but he was tongue tied.

Then he got the courage and say would you mind if you can turn back for a while to my house which is over there? Turning back? I asked him back again, then he said yes please if you do not mind I would like you to turn back and please forgive me for the inconvenience.

There is a certain issue which we are failing to negotiate and we want you to help us.

Then came something in my mind which made me to except [accept] the turn and hence I turned back bearing also in mind that I was still having same time for me to walk back home and we were going back to his home myself not knowing what actually I was going there.

After arriving the house I found a mat already spread out and I was pointed to go and sit there and I did not hesitate just soon I sat down, I cast my eyes to a certain woman who to some extent I was familiar with but I could not tell who and where actually I met the woman.

She greeted me and tell me to feel free in happy manner a thing which made me to feel free indeed and knew for sure that it was a peaceful call.

I am the one I have called you! The woman started everything by saying so and I replied.

“Thank you! And he continued asking me for my identification just for her to make sure that she has called the right person she was interesting to call.

However she knew or recognised me to fully capacity since she mentioned who I am, where I live and even work which I do according to her opinion and I knew for sure that she has recognised me for she said I understand you are “alangizi azaumoyo, <meaning a health worker> and continued saying you work with ‘azungu’ <meaning Americans> in our villages and I saw you again this year but not you are no where to be seen where are you working as of now and when you coming back in our villages since we have got many questions to ask you concerning the disease AIDS and other diseases and when coming back again remembers to bring us those black t-shirt you wore and then she laughed.

To cut the story about I just let her continue saying what she was planning to say.

And then she continued saying without much delay I would like to ask you something concerning issue, which is in controversial between my mothers in-laws and father in-law.

Before she continued, I cut her short since I wanted to know exactly where she saw me and how come that on this day she was found in that village which we do not work in during our survey period?

And in answering she said that she actually came from Chatambalala village one of the villages which is in sample and she there as to husband's home since she has just got married and her husband decided that they should be residing at his home that is why she was found at that place on that particular day.

Then I let her to continue what he was about to say about the controversy between her mother and father in-law and the she continued like this.

These two people got married over twenty years ago and they have got almost five children, three boys and two girls including the one who has just been born recently and my husband being the first born in the family of these two, for the rest of the past years my father in-law has been weaving baskets and sell them in town as his occupation, that is according to sources.

Recently my mother in-law had her last pregnancy according to herself and she was going for antenatal clinic at Machinga District Hospital. However she was not going up with the pregnancy in good health she was casually on and off and then at the hospital decided to take her blood for HIV test a thing which she accepted according to the way she was feeling in her body and again they wanted to protect the unborn baby from getting the disease or the virus if the mother was found HIV positive.

Unfortunately after the test my mother in-law was found HIV positive as of now she is almost nine months since she got diagnosed and her health is still fine since she was told to be going to the hospital every now and then to receive treatment whenever she feels wrong in her body and she follows suit.

Now after she got diagnosed of HIV positive, she was advised to call my father in-law again for the HIV/AIDS test but before my father in-law went there things started going wrong here since my mother in-law was blaming my father in-law that he was the one responsible for the spread of the disease in the house but my father in-law could not admit even my mother in-law could not admit to be responsible for bringing the virus in the house.

It was a terrible thing I tell you! She commented while looking straight at me and definitely I knew that in the end it will be a difficult for me to answer any questions which might come since I could judge from the flow of the story, anyway I let her continue with the story.

Then later my father in-law admitted to go and have his blood tested for the HIV and indeed he went right there at Machinga District Hospital where contrary to what everybody was thinking he came out HIV negative a thing which made

everybody could not believe and thought may be he did not go for HIV test but upon production of the hospital tickets one could hardly believe that he was HIV negative.

However he was told to go there at the hospital for the retest after three months from the day he was tested. But before this three months elapsed, things started not be going well in the family saying how come that the couple and they have been together for years but one is found HIV negative and the other one HIV positive confirmed by the hospital personnel.

And the husband started to blame my mother in-law that she was not behaving each time my father in-law goes to town to sell his chairs and kept on saying that he was leaving my mother in-law since she has got HIV while him does not a thing which is not possible as a couple that means one is unfaithful and this time my mother in-law looks so.

Since she has got the virus but my father in-law does not and as I am talking my father in-law is at his home in Malawa on separation basis saying he want to think twice whether to continue with the marriage or not since his wife who is my mother in-law has surprised him that how come she is HIV positive while he is HIV negative?

So that is why we have called you especially myself since I am the one I know you I want you to give us a clear picture on the issue since you are educated man and we have not gone to school as you have done and moreover being a health personnel as I used to see you working in our villages with “azungu.”

It's true that my father in-law indeed went for HIV test and that he is negative or he is just finding his way out of the family. As the matter of fact I knew that in whatever case I was going to meet a complicated question in the end and indeed it was difficult for me to answer that question instantly since I have never heard such kind of situation whereby in the family a couple husband proved HIV negative and the wife HIV positive. Hence I paused for a while thinking of the way how to answer them regarding also that I was in wrong shoes they put me as a health personnel.

In answering them I just said I was not sure about that but told them that to some point it can happen depending on how immune is in one's body but I did not want to talk more on that since I knew that I did not have any back up to my points and that what I was telling them I was not sure whether it was right or wrong since to the main fact I have never heard of such a situation.

However I promised them I was going to find out and come back to them later after finishing out otherwise what could be all lies but the little answer I gave them that it might happen according to how immune is the one's body they

seemed to have understand what I was trying to mean and again to prevent the broke up of the marriage between her mother and father in-law.

I advised her to go to the hospital where they both went for the advice to have an explanation as to how possible that being couple but they differ in their blood status, one HIV positive and the other one HIV negative rather than just blaming each other.

At that point thought I should not continue there otherwise I might create another controversial issues.

By the way even are seemed to be satisfied with what I explained to her since she stayed quite while nodding her heard in agreeing. But to my surprise her husband who happens to be the son to these controversial couple remained quite through out not even a word to contribute just from the time he called me back.

Anyway I did not know what he was thinking about.

Now it was almost in late hours that I could not stop at any place but to go straight home and I thought it was the right time for me to say bye to them and start heading home.

I stayed for a while and then bid farewell, he thanked me for the time I spent there and I thanked them too for the respect they gave me considering me as a health personal a thing which I was proud of just because of MDCIP yet I was not the one.

As I was going home I kept on recalling on how many people has been treating me in such a way and finally found out that it was more than five people.

I arrived home at about 18 hours and it was time to do my finishing work for the day and then retire for bed.

END

Thursday (08 / 02/07)  
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According to many people view we regard teacher as the second parents to the pupils who they took care of when they left their really parents at home.

But sometimes this turn out to be opposite when some other issues raise concerning a teacher and his/her child if not a pupil. This does not happen in one side where teachers appear but in all places where there is a learning institution

be it at the primary school, secondary schools and even colleges, as long as there are teachers there.

This is so due to a certain issue which I learnt in the past days from a certain woman who said she has been divorced by a certain teacher who have been with for almost six years in marriage just because the teacher has married a certain girl whom he used to teach at a certain primary school within district called Likagwa.

It was on Thursday afternoon when I was completely idle at my home when I heard a call out side the fence of my house. Without any hesitation I came out to see who was calling me at that particular time.

After I came out, I found out that there were three friends of mine by the name of Major, Glyn and Eli, since I just came out with the shirt off due to hotness I turned back upon seeing them to put my shirt on before I greeted them since I knew that there might be somewhere which they wanted to go with me and indeed there was.

In no time I was back to where my friends were and I was told if not asked that if I was willing and having nothing to do, I should escort them at a certain place where the three friends had agreed before getting me.

I tried to ask where actually they were intending to go but they refused to tell me saying I should just following them. Since I knew that they were all my friend I did not regret anything only to join them and left my home going wherever they agreed.

As we were going I wondered where the route which we took was leading to since that route was leading to a place where on that day there was a local brewed beer called 'masese' in vernacular and I knew for sure that the men were going to have a sip there.

Since all of them were drunker and even though myself drinks sometimes but on that particular day I was not in a mood to drink since I had some plans to do before the sun set of the day hence I thought taking beer at that particular time will disturb everything I planned.

However to avoid disappointing them I just decided not to turn back, indeed we arrived at the drinking place were my three friends took me for. We were given a seat and in no times the beer came in a big calabash, we started sipping it little by little while charting different stories and next to me sat a certain woman who seemed to be unfamiliar to me since I almost knew everybody at that compound hence this woman looked very new to me.

I decided to enquire about the woman from the lady who was selling the beer because I knew the lady was supposed to know the new face since she was at her home and to some level the two seemed to be familiar a thing which made me again to think that there might be a certain relationship between the two.

As we were still sipping I called the woman who was selling beer and of course she came without any delay and sat down where I was and then I asked her about the new face of a woman which she was at the place not for any bad reason behind but just for the sake of knowing her.

The woman indeed agreed that I was not wrong, she was a new face at that place and that she has just come in a week time from Mangochi where she was married but to her own reasons she has decided to come back from the marriage and stay with us here. With that statement, I knew that there might be a certain issue very crucial which was made the woman to come back from marriage willingly and again basing on her own decisions.

Then the woman was called by certain group of young men to sell them the beer however I requested her to back again when she is done with the men. I had my sip while waiting for the woman to come back and in no time the woman arrived and sat at the same place.

Then I asked the woman if there was any relationship with the woman since they looked alike? Indeed the woman told me that there was a strong relationship and that she was her younger sister and she stopped there.

However my intention was to find out that what really made the woman to decide quaffing the marriage on her own and decided to stay home but I was not dear to where to start the issue since I was tongue tied but still I took the courage and ask the woman the main reason which has made her to quit the and this was a different case with this woman whereby she decided on her own to leave the marriage.

Before she started answering me the woman laughed a little bit while facing down and I knew that she will explain it to me.

Then she started telling me the whole issue that this younger sister of her got married to a certain primary school teacher almost two years ago and they were staying in Mangochi where the husband was working and up to now the husband is still there.

Then what has made this sister of mine to come back was that, this teacher fell in love with his own pupil out the knowledge of my sister.

And they were in love for almost a year without my sister knowing anything until when this lave [?] pupil who was in love with the husband to my sister wrote her

final examination at the primary school level called primary school leaving certificate.

After this pupil wrote her examination, she left the school going home to wait for the results to come out. Everything was indeed for the teacher since the pupil left the school without this sister of mine knowing that her husband was going out with his pupil, however there is a saying which goes, there is no any secret under the sun, the time this pupil was going home after the examination, she was already impregnated by the teacher but she could not notice or realise that she was in that condition.

While at home after some months the pupil started to wonder how her body was performing but she could not tell anybody. She tried to resist but things could not work for her and even some of her physical features started to change which made her parents and relatives to wonder what it was going to her and being elderly people they really knew that something was wrong their child and they decided to take her at a confidential place to ask her what was going on with her.

At first the girl was trying to deny that she was okey and fine but later she revealed that she had missed her two menstruation a thing which made her to wonder.

Defiantly her parents and relatives, knew for sure that the girl was pregnant and it was now time to ask her who was responsible for the pregnant a thing which was very sad to everyone in regarding to her age and also bearing in mind that she has just written her primary school leaving certificate examination at the age of fifteen and found having pregnant! Very sad.

Upon enquiring who was responsible for her pregnant it was to disbelief of everybody to her from child that her teacher at primary school where she was is the one responsible for the pregnant since ever since she has never been in love with anybody else except the teacher.

Indeed everybody was shocked to hear that and asking her why doing such kind of a thing with her teacher? The girl revealed that the teacher promised me that he will be providing to her exercise books, pens and that during the examinations the girl will be favoured and as a result she will be taking good positions in class a thing which made the girl to be convinced and excepted [accepted] the teacher to be her lover in sex issues.

Everybody was very sorry indeed, now what was next is to find a second step to take in as far as pregnant issues are concerned hence they decided to make a follow up by going to the school where the girl was learning and found out about the teacher responsible for the pregnant.

They all agreed and after two days they set off to the school together with the girl.

After arriving at the school they asked for the head teacher and they were directed at the head teacher's office where they found him. They were greeted and asked why they were there for since even the head teacher wondered that the pupil who was at the school and she has written her examination very nicely without any problem she is coming with parents and relatives.

Without any hesitation the relatives told the head teacher that they were there to find a certain teacher whom he is responsible for the pregnant of their daughter.

Then the head teacher was shocked hearing such kind of a news, thinking that the girl was at the school just very recently and now these people are saying that she was pregnant by one of the teachers at the school?

Indeed things were not good since the head teacher knew that if it was true that one of the teachers at school was responsible for the pregnant of the child at the same school, it might lead to losing of the job of the teacher.

Still the head teacher was wondering that how could this happen since all the teachers at this school were all married. It was unbelievable incident.

Now, it was the turn of the girl to explain to the people there the name of the teacher responsible for the pregnant and indeed the heartache and indeed the head teacher left the girl to explain.

Without any shy the girl revealed that her class teacher Mr. M'chadza was responsible for the pregnant and she continued that she was being convinced since the teacher said he will be providing exercise books pens and that she will be favoured during the examinations a thing which the teacher was indeed doing.

It was unbelievable thing by everyone who was hearing from the girl explaining.

Without much time, the head teacher sent a message to the teacher Mr. M'chadza to come to his office immediately without knowing what he was called for, Mr. M'chadza left everything he was doing and went straight to the head teacher's office.

Upon arrival, Mr. M'chadza was shocked to see the people in the office and among them a girl whom she was in love with. He really knew that things were bad for him after assessing the environment and sweat appeared on his whole face.

He was welcomed and have a seat, upon seating the head teacher asked him if he realises the people in the office, he answered can only recognise this girl only pointing to his pupil.

Then the head teacher told him that the people there were after him and they were the parents and relatives of the girl.

He continued saying that the girl is pregnant and she is mentioning you to be responsible for it now can you tell us your views on the matter?

The head teacher asked the teacher. There then the teacher was tongue tied and had nothing to say, a thing which made everybody in there to believe that the girl was saying the truth.

After some time the teacher decided to answer back by trying to deny that he was not the one responsible for it but he did not go far with his denial before the girl gave all the evidence how their love was going and the teacher had nothing to say only to look down in shy.

Then the parents chipped and told teacher that what they want is only him to take the girl for his wife other wise they were taking the issue to higher levels meaning high offices of ministry of education to be assisted with the matter.

Knowing the consequences which might be there if the denies to the girl for a wife that he might loose his job, the teacher asked the relatives to the girl to give him a grace period of two days so that he might think of it and that he will be back to them.

Later some discussions the teacher was allowed to think in the two days time and then he should report back. In so doing the teacher wanted to take the issue to his wife which he really knew to be a touch task to talk to his wife about the issue but in order to secure his job he was forced to, and what he wanted to tell his wife was that he was intending to marry another record wife in a polygamy manner a thing which he knew that it won't work in as far as wife was concerned.

Two days elapsed before the teacher reported the matter to his wife since he could not find a starting point until four days passed and the people at the girls home started to wonder if justice was going to take its charges with the teacher hence they decided to go back to the school in a fifth day together with the girl.

After arriving at the school the head teacher has nothing to do with the people only to point or direct the people to the teachers house Mr. M'chadza.

Without any delay the people with the girl went straight to the teacher's house finding him with his wife behind the house on the shade. Upon seeing the people coming the teacher felt like running away but he could not do so since the people

and the girl were already at the door, but he knew that this fate was around the corner.

As the people were approaching his wife started to wonder what the people were after at her house and she was afraid too. This time the people did not come with respect since they thought they want to be fooled by the teacher since the teacher did not report back to them in two days as agreed until when they decided to follow the teacher on their own.

And this day their aim was just to leave the girl to the teacher for his wife without any discussions and indeed this happened. Upon arriving at the teacher's house the people told the teacher without even having a seat that they have come to leave the girl to him and nothing else.

Now the wife to the teacher could not understand anything and thought may be the girl was taken there to be helping her doing household chores not knowing that she has been impregnated by the husband and that the people has come to leave her as her husband's wife.

Then the sister of mine decided to enquire from her husband if the issue was true that he has impregnated the girl and that the girl was to be left for his wife. In answering the teacher told my sister that she should not worry anything since things had already happened and that if he deny to take the girl, he might lose the job a thing which he saw to be very bad.

But to accept [accept] it to secure job and that you will be leaving [living] together in the house being you the first wife and the girl the second wife.

However this could not sound anything in my sister's head and thought may be she was dreaming.

In return she answered to her husband that if such would be the case then she was lady [ready] to pack up and go home together with her single baby to give chance to your child to be your wife but I can not stay in one house while the girl as my co-wife as young as she is.

Not at all however the teacher tried to cool down my younger sister to stay, but my younger sister could not take that, instead she packed her belongings and then set off to her home leaving her husband together with his girl behind as a family, as of now two weeks has ended while here.

So that is all about the story of my younger sister for her to be found here.

To me seemed a controversial issue and difficult to comment but I just felt the women had strong decision to manage leaving her husband because of his

doings marrying his own class pupil and be saying to her original wife that he wants her to his second wife!

Too bad indeed and I wish these thing could not have been happenings. I thanked the woman for her time which she wasted explaining the story to me and I told her now to get free and carry on selling beer to the customers.

And again the money which the friends of mine had seemed to come to and since nobody was calling for the drink and I asked them if we could take a leave? Indeed we left the place going to our different homes hoping to meet the other day if had allows.

THE END

Friday (15/02/07)

Most people nowadays seem to know what it means when we talk or mention of family planning since a lot of people can be seen spacing their children, but to some other people this word family planning seem to be a new thing to them and even not know what it means looking to the way they behave I am saying this due to a certain incident which I came across just very recently whereby I was so chocked that how come a person or a couple can be doing such kind of things and be suffering the consequences yet there is what it called family planning whereby they can choose one method and be using depending on their wish.

On this day I went to a certain man in Nowazumale village who used to mend peoples shoes when they are in bad condition in short I can just say a cobra [cobbler].

I left my pair of shoes to this man in the previous two days hence I decided to make a follow up to find out whether he has finished mending my shoes or not and that if I found them mended I should take it home.

Unfortunately I found the shoes not yet finished and he told me that I should not go back but to wait for the pair of shoes which was about to be finished hence I sat down and wait.

While I was there waiting, came a certain old woman at least in her seventies. She arrived there and she was greeted by the man being the owner of the place. After she was greeted. She started explaining why she was there for she came to tell the man that a child who was suffering has passed away and burial was supposed to take place in the following day since it was already late in the day around fifteen hours time.

However I knew that the communication between the two has taken place since the way the woman reported the issues it showed that even the man knows about the issue and also about the child who was suffering and he just answered okey fine I will be there at the funeral house in no time.

Then the woman departed. After the departure of the woman I decided to ask the man what the child was suffering which has led to his death?

And the man told me that it was a deliberate move since the mother of the child does not want to follow family planning methods and continued saying that this was her second time to loose the child in such a way in consecutive times.

Firstly this woman had a child and she raised her up to about a year and then she convinced again to bore her second child, now things started to worsen from this second born child of her since the time when the second born child was on six months she found out that she was pregnant again for the third born child a thing which was very bad for the second born baby and indeed it was the fate of the second born child since she had to stop him from breast feed at the age of six months a thing which really happened.

After some three months after the second born baby had stopped breast feed, he started showing signs of malnutrition which indicated that he was lacking something in his body layer as the time went by the child started swelling the stomach and the legs with pale hair.

She was advised to take the child to the hospital. But the mother could not do so, claiming that the child was bewitched by ill hearted people and instead she was busy going to different places looking for traditional medicine but to no avail until the child passed away at the age of nine months.

After the death of the child the woman was advised by people that she should be using family planning methods, since people know that the death of her child has come due to the fact that the woman stopped breast feeding the child earlier before its time just because she was found pregnant faster than necessary.

The woman only agreed to do so but in real sense, she did not she gave birth to the third child after the death of her second child.

She raised its third child up to about eight months old, then she found that she was pregnant again for the fourth child. Therefore people knew that she did not follow the advises to be using family planning methods likewise she also stopped breast feeding the third born baby who was only eight months old.

At first it showed that it won't affect the stopped breast feed baby since he looked health at first time but things started to change again for the baby and started showing the signs which the second baby was showing before he died.

Still instead of going to the hospital, for treatment, she was busy looking for traditional medicine believing that people has bewitched the baby until his death and he is to be buried in the next day.

That is very sorry indeed.

THE END