

Respondent: ID#2508

Age: 34

Date: 10 July, 1999

Interviewer: Christopher

District: Balaka

During the 2nd visit (this Friday) I visited the respondent together with the village headman who was showing me the way, almost 8km from the road to [village]. The respondent was not there, he was said to have gone to repair his bike at the rear of N primary school. I followed him there but never found him. Then I went back to the village headman's house. Within 20 minutes. He came cycling, saying he had heard from his wife that I wanted to have a chat with him.

I said that I heard he had gone to drink some (local) beer, he said no (the village headman had said if he is missing then he is at the local distillery). I then said that I just wanted to have a chat with him to learn about different customs or traditions in his villages like the dances, and if he could spare some time with me. He said yeah. We were on the *khonde* (veranda) so I said, "Why don't we go under the tree" because I wanted privacy, he agreed. Then I started asking him just to feel free as I was waiting for my friend T, and I told him there are different customs/traditions. In my village, N there are traditions that are followed when a baby is born, and I was just interested to know whether in his area they differ or not. He started by explaining that when a baby is born he knows the men are not supposed to sleep with the wife for 7 months. I asked him why this is so, he said because if the man sleeps with the woman she can become pregnant when the other baby is still young. I asked him what men do during this period, do they manage to control themselves, especially "we young men". He laughed and said that he himself does control himself and he had never slept with another woman since he got married. "I have 3 kids, two died, and I will not have more since I use family planning". I asked him jokingly, "even if you were not married you never had another girlfriend apart from your dear girlfriend then?" He answered that he has had more than one partner when he was young, but ever since he married he never slept with another woman even when his wife had a small kid. I asked him if some of his friends sleep with other women, not only when a baby is small, and I said, "I am not asking you to mention names but do you know some of your friends who do that?" He said there are many who sleep with other women, and he always tells them it's not good. He continued by saying that he himself knows it's not good to sleep with other women, and if a baby is young it's not good since the woman can become pregnant. I asked him if he ever discussed such issues about sleeping with other women with his friends, he said "Ya, I tell them, and I even tell them that they should also use family planning since having many children is not good because feeding and supporting them is not possible if one depends only on farming. "My wife uses pills because I know the goodness of family planning and I don't want to have more". Really? I said and he said ya, she started using pills three years ago. I asked him where he heard about family planning, he said "over the radio, it's every day now, but people don't hear the message". I then asked him in what language the messages on the radio are in, he said Chichewa, I asked him if he ever heard them in Yao and he said no. I asked him whether it was better to have them in Yao or Chichewa, he said "everyone speaks Chichewa so it's good in Chichewa". I then asked him if it's also good to do it in English, he said that's good for those who went to school. I asked him if he himself is comfortable with English jingles, he said no. I then asked "then is it good to do it in English when you don't

understand?” He said no. I then told him I really appreciated his coming to me after I had followed him and not found him, and that I had learnt a lot and that I learned his views on whether family planning messages should be in English and also the traditions that a man should not sleep with a woman when she has just given birth up to seven months later. I said *kuyenda nkuvina*, meaning if you stay in one place you can’t learn more but you have to travel as I had done to this area. He said farewell to me and took his wife (she had not been part of the conversation) and left.

Observation/comment: The respondent seemed to want to please me by telling me positive things. For interest’s sake we need to cross-check the wife’s transcript (because she was interviewed, he said) to see if she said she uses pill and whether the man was lying or the woman is hiding that she’s using the pills. If we discover he lied about the pills, then I would doubt his credibility saying that he never had extra marital affairs.

When the village headman (VH) escorted me to find the respondent we chatted about how big the village is. The VH is a young man of about 25, I was praising him that he is a young VH and in a big village. When we were leaving the respondent’s house after not finding him, we came across a young lady of about 18 carrying pumpkins leaves from the garden. We greeted her and the VH said “hey, cook *nsima*, I have a visitor” (jokingly) and the lady said o.k. She would do that. I saw it as an opportunity to prove about extramarital affairs, and started by asking if she was married. He said she wasn’t, I asked why, is she at school? He said she dropped out. By this time we were walking back toward the VH’s house where [the driver] was with the vehicle. We continued chatting, and I said she’s beautiful, why isn’t she married, does she go out with other men in the village? He said ya, she does, and I asked him why there are few unmarried women the village since we had moved almost across the village and never met many but only that one. He said many are across near the school, and he said, “there, there are many, I tell you”. And I said “and at least you have one, chief?” And he laughed and said “ya ya, it’s like that. I never ____”. I switched to asking him how much 50Kg of maize is here, I could buy it and just put it in the vehicle. We reached his home and the vehicle, and I told [the driver] we should follow the respondent to the school about 1km away, and the VH and I got in, along with 4 young children. Then I said, “Mr. [driver], there are many unmarried ladies the direction we are going, the VH has told me. The driver said, “it is true”, and the VH said that there are many, that he could “arrange for us”. I said, “ah, VH, you want to give us those you already dealt with”, he laughed and said no, he wouldn’t give us those but others, and I asked how many had he dealt with. He said “almost three”. I asked him if he is still with those or the affairs ended, and he said he goes with only one presently, but he has slept with three. I asked him if his wife never heard of this (probing to see if he was doing this when he was married), he said he was already married but his wife was in late pregnancy. We stopped the discussion when we stopped at a small trading center where he asked people if the respondent had reached there to repair his bike.