

Respondent: ID#8018

Age: Born in 1968

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1999

Interviewer: Davie Chitenje

District: Balaka

This respondent is a sugar-cane seller and he also makes mats using reeds. At that time I found him along the road selling his sugarcane with his friends, and he also had his child nearby. I told him that I have come to chat with him on how his business was going on so as not to sensitize him. His friends who were nearby shouted “[name]” (MBC reporter), letting him know to be aware of my questions.

When we started chatting on how his business going on, a woman carrying sugarcane from the same *dimba* (marsh area along the river banks) that he buys from passed by and we exchanged greetings. After the woman had passed I asked him who she was, he told me she is just one of the women that he does business with. Then I asked very keenly “brother, I know that *dimbas* are always bushy, do you go with these women together up to those *dimbas*?” He said “Oh yes, why not”. Before I went on I switched to another issue by asking him if the child was his, he replied that it was the only child he has. Then I asked him to tell me what happens when a child is born, do the couple sleep together or not? He started by laughing, “You know what, brother, we are told by the elders that you shouldn’t sleep with your wife until five or six months pass”. Then I asked if he was told the same himself. He answered, “Oh yes”. I continued by asking if he managed without sleeping with another woman after his child was born, he said, “Yes, I did”. I then asked him how he managed to go with those women to the busy *dimba* while he has stayed for six months without sleeping with a woman. He laughed and paused, then continued, “Brother, I was threatened by my elders that if I sleep with another woman I was exposing my child to danger. Since the child gets sick now and again, so this child being the first born, I am afraid”. I then continued, “Are you sure, brother, that you did not do with anyone? Because you know you’re in your 30s and this time sexual desires are always strong, just like what I experience myself. It’s very difficult to manage that”, just to make him feel free. He then finally answered, “Aah, I myself, I don’t”. So I did not want to continue, I just bid him goodbye. But had it been that those friends did not sensitize him at first, I am sure he could have been free.