

# DILEMMA OF PREGNANT GIRLS AT UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY



Dilemma is situation in which a difficult choice has to be made between two or more alternatives, especially ones that are equally undesirable. a girl leaves home for university but somehow she is excited with her boyfriend and gets pregnant, but the institution is against pregnancy out of wedlock. On realization by the boyfriend about the pregnancy, and state of shock, he drastically decided to put an end to the relationship, on the other hand, the family was also against the pregnancy and very bitter on her to the extent of chasing her away from home. This left her confused, traumatized and scared and what was more devastating was to be discontinued from campus due to the strict policy against pregnancy.

Helpless as she was, very many things ran through her nerves on how she had disappointed her parents and how she was going to raise a baby single handedly without facilitation from the person responsible of the pregnancy. These are the three words Gladys Nakyeyune uses to describe how she felt on the nights of September 20-2010. It was the day that Nakyeyune found out that she was expecting for the first time. This was after she had gone with her boyfriend and one thing led to another. They had one to many bottles of liquor and she ended up in the mans bed. They had unprotected sex because the were very excited at that time, At that time, the now 25 year old

mother of a one year baby says that it was the wrong time to have a baby because she had just been admitted at Uganda Christian university where there is a policy that penalizes girls who get pregnant out of Wedlock.



I remember crying endlessly because I did not know whom I could turn to for help since every one seemed to be against me. The only person whom she gave her entire heart when he blinded with his love that was filled a lot of joy that they slept together enjoying many bottles of liquor was no more but rather regrets as why she gave in to the man who actually does not love her but rather wanted to use her to quench his thirsty which he successfully achieved usually in such complicated situations, the first question that crosses the minds of many girls is whether to terminate the pregnancy or basically this because most of them conceive without being prepared, others conceive out of rape, from the people that they did not love and others might be the circumstances of the surrounding environment for example school. Just like Gladys Nakyeyune opted to terminate because she was still studying from the university where they couldn't allow her to continue with her studies however it was just a mere thought that could not come to pass. What saved the situation was that a nurse she had visited to assist her abort, discouraged her from doing it, Looking straight in her eyes and asked her why she was going to kill the innocent child because every person is entitled to the right of life. **Article 22 [1]** of constitution of the republic of Uganda states that No person shall derive off life intentionally except in execution of a sentence passed in a fair trail by court of competent jurisdiction in

respect of a criminal offense under the laws of Uganda and the conviction and sentence have been confirmed by the highest appellate court. **Article 22 [2]** of the constitution of republic of Uganda further states that No person has right to terminate the life of unborn child except as may be authorized by the law. **Section 141 of the penal code of Uganda chap 120** provides that any person who, with intent to procure the miscarriage of a woman whether she is or is not with a child unlawfully administers to her or causes her to take any poison or noxious things, or uses any kind, or uses any other means, commits a felony and is liable for imprisonment for 14years. **section 212 of the penal code of Uganda chapter 120** provides that any person who, when a woman is about to be delivered of a child prevents the child from being born a live by any act or omission by such a nature that if a child had been born a live and had then died he or she would be deemed to have been killed the child commits a felony and liable for life imprisonment. she also told her that there were slim chances of her survival in the process because of over bleeding. Much as she would survive, she would end up eventually becoming infertile, after that, Nakyeyune finally made the decision of keeping the baby. This marked the beginning of her life's mystery at a Christian founded university that prohibits pregnancy out of wed lock.



I did my best to hide the two months pregnancy 'because i did not want any university administrator to find out. I was scared to death that if anyone of them found out, i would be discontinued from the university. she confesses. she continued studying. But she wore very baggy

clothes much as it felt awkward. Her friends got unusual concerned about her dress code but she brushed them away saying, she had a chronic illness that permitted her to wear fitting dresses. she did this until she was due. she missed classes for few weeks claiming that she was unwell in reality, she had gone away to deliver. just a few weeks after having a baby. she went back to campus and resumed her studies. Nakyeyune happens to be among some few girls at the university in recent years that have been fortunate to continue and finish their studies despite the university code of conduct regulation on marriage and pregnancy that is mentioned on the page 11 of the institutions conduct handbook. It is stated that "Pregnancy out of the wedlock is an offence, whether committed by a female student, or a male student who impregnates her". While the minister of education and sports Janet Museveni has, on several occasions, reiterated the stand that the girls who gets pregnant while at school should not be expelled, whether it happens at primary, secondary or university level. it that pregnancy out of the wedlock is an offense. Many institutions still maintain that these girls are bad apple to keep in school but only right candidates for marriage. They usually have a famous quotation "you can not seerve two masters" meaning you can't be a student at the same time a married couple "

With a case such as Nakyeyunes where a girl gets pregnant and is able to continue with her studies without being penalized, one wonders if the marriage and pregnancy rule jotted in the university's code of conduct handbook still applies. In addition Uganda Christian university states that there may be reluctance in the enforcement of the policy on the challenge that there is no specified punishment under the code of conduct. the punishment is usually determined by the university disciplinary committee. In such a case, it is not easy for the committee to give penalties that are harsh. In the upholding the university policy in such matters and being lenient to the rest of the community, I am very optimistic

that very soon, the university will have policy that harmonizes the two. On how the university is currently helping such students, university offers counseling and guidance to the affected students. if the university becomes rigid, i would turn out dangerous as some girls would opt for atrocious act like abortion so as to continue with their studies. It is unfortunate that some get pregnant unconsciously may be through rape and ignorance, others engage in unprotected sexual intercourse because they are in a sexually active stage. In such a case, it is not easy for the committee to give penalties that are harsh. In the upholding the university policy in such matters and being lenient to the rest of the community, I am very optimistic that very soon, the university will have policy that harmonizes the two. On how the university is currently helping such students, university offers counseling and guidance to the affected students. if the university becomes rigid, i would turn out dangerous as some girls would opt for atrocious act like abortion so as to continue with their studies. It is unfortunate that some get pregnant unconsciously may be through rape and ignorance, others engage in unprotected sexual intercourse because of they are sexually active stage. In such a case, it is not easy for the committee to give penalties that are some harsh. On how the university is currently helping such students, university offers counseling and guidance to the affected students. In the upholding the university policy in such matters and being lenient to the rest of the community, I am very optimistic that very soon, the university will have policy that harmonizes the two. if the university becomes rigid, i would turn out dangerous as some girls would opt for atrocious act like abortion so as to continue with their studies. It is unfortunate that some get pregnant unconsciously may be through rape and ignorance, others engage in unprotected sexual intercourse because of they are sexually active stage. In the upholding the university policy in such matters and being lenient to the rest of the community, I am very optimistic that very soon, the university will have

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Due to the strict policy at the university, counselor reveals

that indeed there are some of such girls who fear to go for counseling because of the rule. and therefore they are often stigmatized and psychologically tortured because of the policy, he encourages them to seek counseling because it empowers them to cope and handle the situation. as some of the girls make the decision of keeping the pregnancy even amidst the policy, others have gone ahead to take the atrocious shortcut of visiting some of the clinics outside the university to ask medical personnel to assist in terminating the pregnancy. One of the nurses who preferred anonymity and operates from bugujju, the parish in Mukono district has on different occasions girls to her asking for help to abort but because abortion is illegal, she sends them away in fear to risk the closure of her clinic. The medical practitioner recalls a time when one of the girls who was about three months pregnant tried to bribe her with a huge sum of money. She was a first year student in the university who willing to pay shs500,000 for kilning the innocent life but she refused to perform that act, the student went ahead and asked for misoprostol tablets which induce either labor or an abortion. Still she refused to give them to her because professionally, they are not allowed to administer them directly to individual unless they have been prescribed and it is also a criminal offense under section 143 of the penal code 120 which provides that any person who unlawfully supplies to or procures for any person knowing that it is intended to be unlawfully used to procure the miscarriage of the woman, whether she is or is not with the child commits a felony and is liable for imprisonment for three years. As regards three girls go for abortion semester. this implies that other clinics around the university received more girls seeking abortion services. UCU is not only the university that has a strict morally oriented policy against unmarried girls who get pregnant. other like Islamic university in Uganda [IUIU] prescribe that, in the line with the teaching of the Koran, a girl who gets pregnant out of wedlock commits a sin and must be excluded, in this case, the student is expelled. However, this seems to be in

contrast to the women's rights to education, privacy and reproductive health, as enshrined in the 1995 Uganda constitution.

Article 12 [2] of the international covenant on Economic, social and cultural right outlines the steps that should be taken by the stated parties for the realization of the rights to health. these include the reduction of the stillbirth rate and infant morality and in the effect improvement of the material health. in order to prevent discrimination against women on grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States parties are obliged to take appropriate measures to prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of the maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status. The convention further obligation with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of the a network of child care facilitates and provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them. Uganda is party to this international human rights instrument, while the constitution of Uganda guarantees the right to religion or culture of ones choice, it explicitly prohibits any culture or practice that discriminates against women, the argument that a student contracts to follow these school rules to the dot, saying these are standard contracts, in which the student does not have a genuine say. besides, one cannot contract outside of the law. the law prohibits such unfair exclusion from accessing education.



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