

This is a problem Gumuz girl's and women have to face every now and then in the Metekel zone of the Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State.



Wudu

**Case 1:** Wudu is a 14 year old girl who suffered from early marriage and fistula. She was married at the age of 13 and developed fistula at delivery. Her life is spared after seven days of painful labor delivering a dead baby. But unable to control her urine and excreta her husband sent her back to her family. Her husband insisted for a replacement and her younger sister is offered to spare the family from embracement and possible abduction.

A family carries manifold consequences as a result of traditional practices. In Wudu's case she was married at an adolescent age too young to know the responsibilities attached to marriage. Her body was not ready either. And now, her youngest sister and the whole family have to suffer again.



Belaynesh

**Case 2:** Belaynesh suffered from fistula for 4 years. Her age is about 23. She became pregnant 4 times under fistula and aborted 4 times. She wouldn't know what to do and started to alienate herself from social activities staying back at festivities and funerals.

**Case 3:** Yadem is about the same age to Belaynesh. She has been a victim of fistula for 7 years. Similar to Belaynesh, Yadem couldn't hold several pregnancies. Her husband unhappy with the situation brought another wife on top of her. He constructed a separate hut and literally damped her. Unable to help herself and ignorant to find out the cause, she has been suffering for years wondering why this has happened to her.



Yadem

**Case 4:** Gebeyanesh <sup>1</sup> has three children and became fistula on her 4th delivery. She is a traditional health practitioner and works with MLWDO as a community advocate. At meetings and training programs with other community advocates she used to sit at the

back. Her social activity was significantly reduced. To no avail, she tried to treat herself with all possibilities she knows. Too shy, she approached our staff for assistance 10 years after the incident wanting to know if there is a cure anyway.

With the help of MLWDO, 3 of them are at the fistula hospital since October 2, 2006 while Gebeyanesh was treated last year. To add to the pain though, Gebeyanesh is now raped and pregnant about a year after her treatment. Elders have settled the issue traditionally where 7 goats are provided as compensation. More sad story to the nightmare, 6 of the goats paid for arbitration leaving Gebeyanesh with one goat. This is no match at all to the crime. She is denouncing the practice worried about her health and what comes next. She was happy with her life after treated with fistula and no traditional compensation can bring her health back.

<sup>1</sup> Gebeyanesh's photo not attached.

The message is getting across to the community that fistula can be cured after treating some patients and more fistula cases are coming forward. About 20 fistula patients are known to us and for obvious reasons many more will be everywhere in our zone. Fistula operation is free, thanks to Dr. Catherine Hamlin, but we are short handed to transport them back and forth to the fistula hospital. MLWDO now MLWDA is trying hard to alleviate Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs) and a number of outstanding achievements are recorded. But our effort alone is not enough. Early marriage and abduction are illegal acts severely affecting girl's and women's lives. So please help, let every one know and denounce the practice!!! If you can, help us to treat more patients and educate the community to bring about attitudinal changes.

**ይኼ በተደጋጋሚ የሚጋጥም የጉመዝ ሴቶች ትክክለኛ ችግር ነው፡**

ወዱ የ14 ዓመት ወጣት ነች፡፡ በ13 ዓመቷ ተድራ ከ 7 ቀን አስቃቂ ምጥ በኋላ በደረሰባት ፈተና መቶ ልጅ ወልዳ የፊስታላና ያለ ዕድሜ ጋብቻ ሰለባ ሆናለች፡፡ ሕይወቷ ቢተርፍም ሽንትና ሰገራ መቋቋሙ ባለመቻል ባለቤትዋ እንደጥፋተኛ ወደ ቤተሰቦቿ መልሷታል፡፡ ይኸ አልበቃ ብሎ በምትኳ ሴት ስጠኝ በሚለቱ ለቀድሞ ባለቤቷ ታናሽ እህቷ ተሰጥቶታል፡፡

የወዱ ቤተሰብ በጎጂ ባህል ምክንያት ብዙ ስቃይ እየደረሰባቸው ይገኛል፡፡ ትዳር ምን መሆኑ በሚታወቅበትና ሰውነቷ ባልተዘጋጀበት ሁኔታ ወዱ ተጎድታ ስታበቃ ቤተሰቦቿም ዳግም ለጉዳት ተዳርገዋል፡፡

በላይነሽ የምትባል ሌላኛዋ ሴት ደግሞ ዕድሜዋ ወደ 23 ሲሆን ለ4 ዓመታት የፊስታላ በሽተኛ ሆና ቆይታለች፡፡ እንደዚህም ሆና 4 ጊዜ አርግዛ 4 ጊዜ ፅንሱ ተጨግፎባታል፡፡ ምን ማድረግ እንዳለባት ግራ እንደተጋባች ራስዋን እያገለለች በደስታና በሐዘን ሁሉ በርቀት መገኘት ጀመረች፡፡

ያድም ደግሞ ከበላይነሽ ጋር በተመሳሳይ የዕድሜ ደረጃ ወስጥ የምትገኝ ስትሆን በፊስታላ በሽታ ለ7 ዓመታት ስትሰቃይ ቆይታለች፡፡ ፅንሱም ለመገዝ ሞክራ አልቻለችም፡፡ ከጥቅም ወጪ በመሆኗ ባለቤቷም ሌላ ሚስት አምቶ አሏት ሌላ ጎጆ ወስጥ ለ5 ዓመታት ለብቻዋ አስቀምጧታል፡፡ በሽታዋን ለመቆም በራሷ ማድረግ ያለባትና እንዴት እንደመጣበት ማወቅ ተስኗት ለዓመታት ስትሰቃይ ኖረች፡፡

ሌላኛዋ ሴት ደግሞ ገበያነሽ ትባላለች፡፡ የሦስት ልጆች እናት ስትሆን በአራተኛው ወለድ በፊስታላ የተጠቃች ሴት ነች፡፡ ገበያነሽ የባህል ሐኪም የድርጅታችን የሕብረተሰብ ወኪል ነች፡፡ ስብሰባና ስልጠና

ለሕብረተሰብ ወኪሎች በሚከተሉት ጊዜ ከኋላ መቀመጥ ታዘወትር ነበር፡፡ የማህበራዊ ግንኙነቷም በእጅጉ ቀንሶ ነበር፡፡

ከበሽታዋ የሚላግል ዘዴ ይኖር እንደሆነ ፍለጋ በፊስታላ ከተያዘች ከ10 ዓመታት በኋላ ሃፍረት በተቀላቀለበት ሁኔታ የድርጅታችንን ሰራተኛ ቀርባ አነጋገረች፡፡

በምዝገባ ሉካ የሴቶች የልማት ድርጅት አመክኝነት 3ቱ ሴቶች ከመከከረም 22/99 ጀምሮ በህክምና ላይ ሲገኙ ገበያነሽ ግን ከአንድ ዓመት በፊት አከባቢ ታክማ ድና ወደ መንደሯ ተመልሳለች፡፡ ሆኖም ስቃይዋ በዚህ አላበቃም፡፡ ገበያነሽ ተደፍራ አርግዛለች፡፡ በሽማግልና ጉዳይዋ ታይቶ 7 ፍየል በካሳ እንዲከፈል ተወስኗል፡፡ በጣም አሳዛኝ ደግሞ 6ቱ ፍየሎች ለሽማግሌ ታርደው ለገበያነሽ የተረፉት አንድ ፍየል ብቻ ነው፡፡ የገጠማችን ድርጊት በሚወገዝ ላይ ስትሆን ድና በደስታ እየኖረች የነበረችን ሴት የትኛውም ዓይነት ባህላዊ ካሳ ጠፍዋን ለመልስና ወደፊትም ሊገጥማት ከማቻለው አደጋ ሊያድናት አይችልም፡፡

ደኅው በተመሳሳት ሴቶች አመክኝነት ፊስታላ በሕክምና እንደሚገኝ ወደ ሕብረተሰቡ መልዕክቱ በሚደረሱ ታምሞች በብዛት ወደኛ በመቅረብ ላይ ናቸው፡፡ እስከአሁን ወደ 20 የሚሆኑ በድርጅታችን ይታወቃሉ፡፡ ሆኖም ብዙ ታምሞች በዘናችን ወስጥ እንደሚኖሩ ይታመናል፡፡ ምሳሌና ይግባት ለዶር ካተሪን ሀምሊን የፊስታላ ሕክምና ነፃ ነው፤ ሆኖም አምቶ መመለሱ ወጪ የሚከፍል በመሆኑ በአቅም ማስ ምክንያት በአሁኑ ጊዜ በድርጅታችን ለመርዳት አልቻልንም፡፡ ድርጅታችን ጎጂ ባህሎችን በማስወገድ ረገድ ዓበይት ወጠቶችን ቢያስመዝግብም በኛ ጥረት ብቻ ለመፍታት ያዳግታል፡፡ ያለ ዕድሜ ጋብቻና ጠላፋ የልጃገረዶችንና የሴቶችን ህይወት በማጠላለሽ ጉዳት በማድረስ ላይ ያሉ ህገወጥ ድርጊቶች ናቸው፡፡ ስለዚህ እባካቸው እርዳን፤ ሁሉም እንዲያወቀወና እንዲያወግዝው እናድርግ!!! ከተቻላቸው ተጨማሪ ሴቶችን ለማከምና ህብረተሰቡን በማስተማር የአመለካከት ለውጥ ማምጣት እንድንችል እርዳን፡፡

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