

### **Moral beliefs (*Umuchinzi*)**

We should take note that many of the Lambya tradition customs concerning moral beliefs and the time of youth have been severely influenced by western ways of life which have been introduced to Chitipa through various developments like technology. However, these customs have not died completely, and in some parts of Chitipa they are still observed. Customs connected with growing up of girls in Chitipa is still been practiced, though in many villages where the data was collected the custom died sometime back due to the influence of western culture, which is considered as a great loss. In some villages amongst the Lambyas the customs still exist. Girls who have reached adolescent stage go through advices from elder woman which includes aunts (*nasenje/nge*) of the girls on how they can handle their adolescences. This practice is different from many ethnic groups who practice jando, nsondolo, and ndagala.

### **Transition (*Ugeza umwali/Usungu*)**

In Lambya traditional village all girls underwent a mark of transition between childhood and adulthood. The transition is known as *ugeza umwali or usungu*. The primary principal purpose is instruction or counseling for girls. *Usungu* begins with attainment of puberty, that is, it begins when a girl experiences first menses. In Ulambya, on attaining puberty, the girl usually informs an aunt or grandmother about her new experience. The girl is then taken for confinement for the entire period of her menses (usually a week). Elderly women, especially aunts counsel the girl in many matters including how she should take care of herself every time she menstruates, for example, she is advised not to put salt into food (*imbeya/iweya*); to regularly wash herself and her underclothes, and on the proper way of sitting in the presence of other people. The girl is counseled on good manners especially when interacting with adults. She is expected to show respect for elders. She is told to avoid sexual relationships with men and boys before marriage or risk pregnancy out of wedlock. She is also told to stop playing with girls that have not yet attained puberty to show that she is now grown up and must therefore begin behaving like an adult by associating with fellow grownups. These practices as of now are no longer common in many villages where this study covered, as the people do not consider this important to their culture and privacy life.

In addition, the initiates are taught how to carry out household chores such as cooking, washing, gardening, maize pounding, fetching firewood, smearing and smoothing the floor of a house. They are also taught about etiquette and good behavior towards their husbands once they are married, and to dress respectfully by wearing clothing that covers their bodies, particularly from the knees up. These are typical information of advises that are found in typical Lambya families and villages amongst the Lambya's of Chitipa district.

### **General Lambya beliefs**

- ~ It was indicated in Chitipa that a Lambya man who commits adultery while his wife is expectant, is expected not to use hands but feet when adding firewood to a fire to avoid causing birth complications for his wife.
- ~ In Chitipa among the Lambya, when a chief dies, elders bury him at night. He is buried in a sitting position. A white chicken or sheep is buried with him previously they were buried with live person. Ordinary people are not told about the death till the next day. People dance *sendemule* (a royal dance) and mourning for the chief by the general populace takes place then.
- ~ Amongst the Lambya of Chitipa bereaved women wear their ordinary clothes with *inkhusi or inkwamba* (a piece of cloth) and *ichitambala* (woman's headgear). Women friends bring in the *inkwamba*. The bereaved wife can get as many as over 20 *inkwamba* from friends. These pieces of cloth are a form of debt because the woman is expected to buy similar pieces for her friends when they find themselves in the same situation. She wears the *inkhusi or inkwamba* and *inkhiya* for about a month.
- ~ In Chitipa, since being a chief was a big responsibility and people intending to harm the chief are many, many chiefs-to be run away from the responsibility. The royal guards and his *ndunas* persuaded the heir apparent to accept their nomination for the chieftaincy. The chief to be was beaten up together with his wife. If he ran away, he was followed and pestered until he accepted the position. Interviewees indicated that it was fun to beat him up because the opportunity to rough up a chief would never present itself again since after installation, the people were at his mercy. *Chisekeresko* (a celebration that includes dancing, beer drinking and eating) took place at the installation of the new chief.