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To use or not to use toilet tissue?

As a nation, we have toilet issues. There are many people out there who have no toilet etiquette and suffice to say, many of them are not the down trodden who live in villages or slums as you might think, but the educated, well-heeled.

Patrick M is a tight who some years ago, threw a simple barbecue at his crib in Munyonyo. The numbers on the guest list were pretty conservative – 15 of us, all educated, good family backgrounds, well-travelled and with more than above par manners.

Having 'above par manners' is something that didn't go down well with Patrick M when he came back from the washroom. He berated us because somebody had peed on the toilet floor. "Who does that?" he bemoaned. "Look at all of you. One of you peed on my floor and I'm not amused!"

It so wasn't me because I had yet to go to the toilet but when I did, rather than incur his wrath if I didn't get my pee aim right, I took myself out into his garden, found some shrubbery and started doing my thing. Half way through my pee, I heard a grunt in the dark followed by – "ani afuka wano?" To my horror, it was our host Patrick M.

Getting back, over the past eight weeks, there have been stories in the papers that make for 'disturbing reading'. One read: "Toilet Paper

Unhygienic, Say Doctors.' The next read: 'CAO Tasks LC Leaders On Toilet Policy'. Next: 'Residents Shun Latrines' and the last: 'The National Household Survey Indicates 83% of Ugandans Defecate In The Bushes and Karamoja Sub-Region Leads In This Vice.'

Hmm, let's take it toilet-by-toilet don't you think?

Toilet Paper Unhygienic, Say Doctors

The story reads: "Using dry toilet paper for anal cleaning leaves faeces behind, which exposes one to urinary tract infections (UTIs)."

The discovery comes after a new revelation by American doctors that dry toilet paper, "...moves faeces, but it doesn't remove it", which makes women develop UTIs as the bacteria moves to the urethra. "If they're using dry paper, they aren't washing all of themselves. It's just unclean," one of the doctors said.

Dr Ekwaro Obuku, of Uganda Medical Doctors Association, chipped in:

"Toilet paper removes the faeces while the water cleans everything thoroughly. However, in our setting where most people don't wash their hands after visiting the toilet, the most important thing is to encourage them to do so."

Residents Shun Pit Latrines

In Orom, which I am told is a sub-county in Kitgum district, their issue with toilets has nothing to do with whether to use toilet paper or not. Rather, they just don't see the need to go and poop in a toilet or pit latrine. Many of them, especially the elderly, think "it's unbecoming to waste time constructing a house for human waste yet defecating in the open seems to be easier." Eh!?

CAO Tasks Local Council Leaders on Toilet Policy in the region

Meanwhile, Bushenyi have formed a united ground with their brothers and sisters in Orom, a stance that has so irked Bushenyi CAO, Elias Byamungu. You see, people from Bushenyi don't have toilets, are seemingly too lazy to dig pit latrines and are not in the least bothered about pooping in the open.

'National Household Survey - 83% of Ugandans Defecate In The Bush and Karamoja Sub-Region Leads In This Vice.

Meanwhile in Karimojong, they finally have something to shout about! Of the 83% of people in Uganda who don't have toilets, the Karamajong top the list. Is that something they should be proud of?

Conclusion

I know of somebody who always has a mobile toilet following him wherever he goes. If only we could be like him, Uganda might just be a cleaner place to live in?

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