

Unmet need for family planning aggravates poverty

By Agnes Kyotalengerire

With her 10-month-old baby clinging to her breast, Jackie Nyiramanjambere picks pieces of cotton wool off her skirt as she answers questions about her life. When she fails to remember her date of birth, she reaches for her national identity card and displays it.

The 42-year-old, a resident of Gase village in Mbuqa parish, Nyakinama sub-county, Bufumbira county in Kisoro district, says the baby she is breastfeeding is her tenth. Nyiramanjambere later discloses that she had the baby against her wish.

She explains that after delivering her eighth child, she decided to start using contraceptives to prevent any other pregnancies because she did not want to have any more children. She chose an injectable contraceptive method referred to as Depo Provera. With this method, a woman is given an injection that protects her for three months.

However, two months after getting the injectable contraceptive, Nyiramanjambere started

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experiencing irregular bleeding. She decided not to go back for another injection.

"I then conceived my ninth baby and five years later, I gave birth to this baby I am breastfeeding," she narrates.

Nyiramanjambere who earns a living from tilling other residents' gardens, says she does not want to have any more children because it is costly to take care of them.

"My husband sells plastic sandals in Kisoro town and is struggling to take care of the family's basic needs. I have to supplement his

income by buying food using the little money (about sh5,000), I earn whenever I till gardens," she explains, adding that, sometimes, they go without meals.

Although the children attend schools under the Universal Primary Education programme, where they do not have to pay tuition fees, they need scholastic materials, which the parents have to provide. However, Nyiramanjambere says they usually fail to meet their end of the bargain and sometimes, the children stay out of school.

With all the financial strain, the couple is suffering, and Nyiramanjambere says she has made up her mind not to have any more children and wants to use contraceptives; preferably a permanent method.

"My worry is how to get a type of contraceptive that will not make me bleed again or make me lose weight as my friends have always told me," she adds.



Nyiramanjambere

Access to family planning key to empowerment, development