FEBRUARY 27, 1997

Getting ready and tying the marriage knot

One of the institutions which is

seriously affected by Aids is marriage. With increasing rates of

premarital sex, the question has

been raised as to whether or not

marrying couples should be advised to undergo HIV testing.

The answer to this question depends very much on the back

grounds, habits and beliefs of the

Marrying couples.

For example, in the case of couples who know one another thoroughly, including their respective family upbringing and the values

and ethics they hold about sexuality, testing is not necessary, unless

the marrying couple wish to do it voluntarily on their own.

However, in view of the traditional belief in Africa that a man  
should have children before he dies, there is a growing tendency for young men to marry when they discover that they are infected.

They do this without telling their

wives and sooner or later they are

leave behind infected wives and

babies. In such cases, testing is

necessary.

If one of them is found to be infected it means they cannot get

married or, if they do, they cannot have children because they will have to use condoms effectively every time.

Our aids against Aids are in the

knowledge that the marrying couple have of another’s values and

habits.

The institution of marriage has

been weakened further by the

growing pattern of searching and

finding sexual pleasure outside it.

Because of this, marriage has

ironically become one of the ways

of spreading Aids into the general

population.

Our aids against Aids are in intensifying the education of young

persons on the purpose and nature

of marriage .

There have been cases where a

young woman has been tricked by

a young man into having sex on

the false promise of marriage.

When that happens it is vital for

the girl to lest the seriousness of

the man by insisting on following

the essential arrangements for

marriage. This will help to sort out

those men who are serious about

marriage and those who are not.

Our aids against Aids is in en-

swing that our youth take marriage seriously.

In today’s economy there is a

growing tendency to commercialise the requirements. There is no standard price for animals meant

for dowry. There is also a tendency for many girls’ parents to try

and settle their own financial

problems by asking for amounts

of money which leave the marry-

¡ng couple stressed and strained.

In view of the increasingly un-

affordable costs being imposed in

marriage preparation by the girls’

parents, it appears necessary for communities to make an effort to

standardise these requirements.

Our aid against Aids are in

making marriage between young

persons affordable and in

strengthening marriage and developing mutually supportive social

kinships by reducing tension and strain.

Our aids against Aids are in ensuring that the basic steps for marriage are known and facilitated in order to have orderly and strong marriage bonds.

•An Aids Education

Programme

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