

With an emaciated body, Ms Jane Nakuti turns slowly in her bed, the grimace betraying the pain she is enduring. As Ms Nakuti squeaks she is careful not to disconnect the sterile bag containing isotonic saline connected to the intravenous delivering blood to her body.

She has been here, in Bududa District Referral Hospital, for the last six months and the ailment has taken a toll on her. The youngster has lost weight and her hitherto light complexion is fading. The only energy left in her is muted responses to questions by medical staff and wishes of quick recovery from her numerous visitors.

With her prominent cheekbones and sunken eyes, Ms Nakuti appears badly undernourished. This is a big contrast to the picture of her taken on the day before she had an abortion.

The nurse in charge, Ms Caroline Achom, and her attendant say before she was brought to hospital, she had been secluded at home barely able to speak. She had developed wounds behind her back and on the buttocks because she has been in bed for long.

"She is suffering from Sepsis Gangrene, pyometia, obstetric fistula, incomplete cervix and incomplete removal of products and could stay in this hospital a bit longer," said Ms Achom.

Ms Nakuti is inconsolable! She speaks of shattered innocence and a blighted future, regretting why she had opted for an abortion when she conceived. "I have seen all of my dreams being destroyed. I have been ostracised by my family. They point at me saying, 'you are a disgrace.' I don't understand what pushed me into an abortion," said Ms Nakuti

Her face changes, she blinks as she narrates the ordeal. She flinches as she tells of the huge amount of blood loss and the pain. Ms Nakuti is not alone, there are many girls who are victims of unsafe abortions in the remote Bududa District, on the slopes of Mountain Elgon.

Ms Nakuti was hardly more than two months in a relationship with her equally juvenile boyfriend when she realised that she was pregnant. "I was only 16 and I wasn't ready to have a baby then. I just had a voice tell me "take a test." When I took the test the results were positive. When I told my boyfriend he told me he was not responsible and asked me to look for the man responsible," she recalls.

"I was in Senior Three then, I could not tell my parents, I thought about committing suicide, then abortion, then chose the latter to abort in order to continue with my studies," said Ms Nakuti as she constantly would be taken up in deep

