

**IMPACT OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM) AMONGEST GIRLS OF  
SOUTH POKOT SUB COUNTY IN EDUCATION SECTOR**

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PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF THE  
DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF EDUCATION (ARTS) OF GREYSA UNIVERSITY.**

**DECEMBER 2024**

# DECLARATION

## DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for award of a degree or for any similar purpose in any other institutions

Signature ..... *Patrick* ..... Date *5/12/2024* .....

Kipruto Patrick

EDU-G-4-0116-16

Supervisor: This project has been submitted with my approval as university supervisor

Signature ..... *Mr. Gakwa* ..... Date *5th/12/0.24* .....

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

FGM: Female Genital Mutilation

KRT: Kapsteono Rotwo Tipin

NGO's: Non-Governmental Organizations

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My special thanks also go to my entire family for great support for long absence away from them and for their prayers and financial support that has enabled me to undertake this study.



## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to my parents for their support and professor Reche.

## **DEFINITION OF CENTRAL TERMS**

FGM - Female Genital Mutilation

EDUCATION- The kind of teaching and learning which take place in formal setting such as schools, colleges, universities.

COMMUNITY- a group of people living in the same place

SURGEON- Circumciser, Normally female

ELDERS- Group of individuals who manages the entire FGM cycle

## ABSTRACT

An estimated of two million girls worldwide WERE at risk of experiencing genital mutilation every year of which the majority are girls in 28 African countries. In Kenya the practice is prevalent with 38% of women age 14-49 reporting being circumcised. The aim of this research was to find out the effect of female genital mutilation on the girl child education in the county of west Pokot. In this county, FGM prevalence is as high as 95%. The practice has to let low girls' enrollment in both primary and secondary schools leading to an acute shortage of female professional from the community. It is on this basis that the study ones to find out the effects in relation girl child education. Areas of concern were enrollment, discipline and performance in both internal and external exams. The study was recommending best approaches in the fight against FGM. It investigated whether FGM has a contributed towards the low enrollment for girls in the upper primary and secondary schools respectively and finally there is the effect of FGM on performance in both internal and external examination. In this study the researcher used both qualitative and quantitative methods. For quantitative methods, the researcher used the following tables, charts and bar graphs. In qualitative methods, the researcher used interviews, observation, questionnaires, focus group and discussions. It is envisaged that the results showed the destructive effect of FGM. It led to the creation of awareness in the community leading to sensitization. Anti-FGM campaign was taken a notch higher. Finally discipline in schools was enhanced and performance improved. The country benefited from a lot of female manpower that is otherwise wasted now due to FGM. The other researchers equally shift their attention to focusing on FGM in relation to education. The study concluded that exposure to a dissemination of the information on the social, psychological and the health risk of the practice on girls and women has impacted on the community beliefs and practices about FGM. The study recommends that campaigns against female circumcision should be integrated. in the social and economic development initiatives that particularly focus on women's empowerment.

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

The title of this study is female genital mutilation and its effect on the girl child education in west Pokot County, Kenya. Female genital mutilation refers to the cultural operations that are done from the age of about 14-16 years. It involves the removal in part of the body among the pokot community believed to be a rite of passage from childhood to womanhood.

The aim of this study was to investigate FGM in pokot community and its effect on the education of the girl child. FGM is a widely researched topic but many researchers have never investigated its effect on the education of the girls in the pokot community.

The practice was still going on despite the numerous sensitization efforts by the various NGO's, the government and church leaders. The practice routinely takes place during the august and December holidays.

It is hoped that this study shed light on how this practice interferes with the education of the girl child in terms of enrollment, performance, discipline, and by extension curriculum acquisition. It is further assumed that by shedding some light the study was created the much-needed awareness on the academic negative effect of this age-old tradition. The study will unearth why the practice has continued to thrive with impunity despite the numerous resources directed towards its elimination. By this study, various groups involved in the fight against FGM awoken n to the fact that even education is affected: they were equipped with better approaches of combating the problem with success.

## 1.2 Background of the Study

The practice of FGM has existed in certain regions of the world since times immemorial. According to decreases 2015:5, began in Egypt and it was frequently performed by the ancient cultures of the Phoeicians, Hittites and the ancient Egyptians.

In Africa, FGM is practiced in several countries such as Tanzania, Uganda, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Nigeria, Guinea, Mauritania to mention a few. It is quite widespread in East, Central and West Africa. Some studies have cited East Africa as being the origin of FGM.

In Kenya, the Pokot community located in the northern part of the country is one of those that practice female genital mutilation. In these communities the cutting is performed on girls on age of 14-17. If a girl is to become pregnant before 14 years of age, she will also be subjected to the cut. According to the community is believed to be an important rite of passage that mark transition from childhood to adulthood. The members of Kapsteono Rotwo Tipin (KRT), a community based organization came up with alternative rite of passage for the girls 2016 as a strategic to end FGM in the region will support for the girl. Generation end FGM grassroots funds, KRT organize two alternative rites of passage ceremonies into sub counties of Pokot counties.

One of the powerful impact of the two ceremonies is that, for the first time, girls understand what FGM entails and the negative effects on their bodies. The ceremonies are also successful in changing the mindset amongst the community. Family members are able to participate during the ceremonies and learn more about the impact of FGM has on girls and women.

Equipping parents with the right information enables them to make the right decision for their children such as choosing the alternative rite of passage over the traditional one. Parents were involve in both ceremonies as they are a key part of the journey towards ending the retrogressive practice, unless they realize the dangers of FGM, many continue doing it in the name of culture. Equipping parents with the rights information enables them to make right decision for the children such as choosing the alternative rite of passage over the traditional one.

The success of the Pokot alternative rite of passage provide us with hope that FGM was replaced in other neighboring counties with the rite of passage that focuses on empowering girls rather than harming them.

In west pokot FGM is carried out by many people. FGM is still dominating in that area so much despite a lot of people like NGO's, church elders educating people about the effects of FGM.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

Despite the ban on FGM by both Kenyan and International statuses, girls of school going age are made to undergo FGM. Most of whom are concerned, intimidated and forced to have it in west pokot. Once FGM has been applied on the girls, quite a number drop out of school either for early marriage or for lack of interest as they wait for a man. Others just succumb to teenage pregnancies, yet others just switch of from schooling.

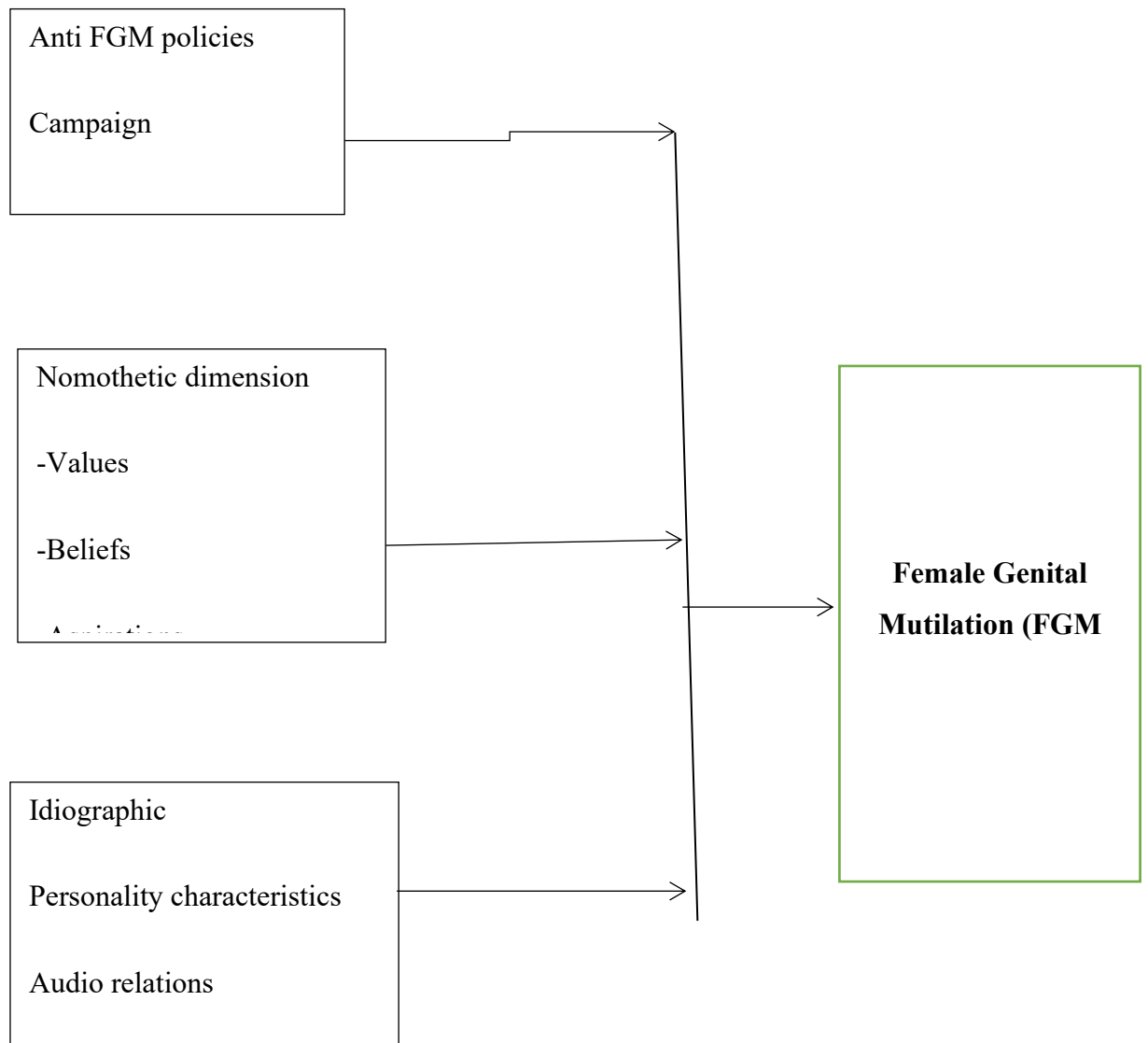
In the west pokot county, enrollment in school for both boys and girls is normally at per class 7-8. At the age of 15 when they undergo FGM, the number of girls drop drastically leaving the boys to command the majority in primary and secondary school enrollment. The scenario continues to colleges and other institutions of higher learning. The problem has manifested itself in the low supply of female professionals from the community.

The purpose of this study was to investigate why very few girls continue with schooling after FGM so that girl child in this community can have a chance to get education and achieve her dreams.

### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

- i. Reducing pressure on families to continue FGM and integrating community voices into debates on FGM.
- ii. To make contribution to enhance partners and other NGO's knowledge on strategies to promote the abandonment of FGM in West Pokot.
- iii. To empower community members to act as catalyst of behavior change, raising awareness on FGM

## 1.5 Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

In Gelzels and Guba theory on social systems. They observed that behavior is determined by the normative and ideographic discussions. The normative dimension relates to the norms, values, expectations, roles of each person as determined by the social system community. The ideographic diversion is like personally traits of these charged with the responsibility of leading the community.

## **1.6 Objectives of the Study**

- i. To create awareness on the dangers posed by FGM in as for as education is concluded.
- ii. To investigate the extent to which FGM contributes to girl child indiscipline in schools.
- iii. To establish whether FGM affects girl child enrollment in upper primary and secondary schools.
- iv. To ascertain whether FGM contributes to girl child's poor performance in school.
- v. To decrease risks of urinary tract infection

## **1.7 Research Questions**

- i. Is the community aware of the effect of FGM on their children's education?
- ii. Does FGM contribute to indiscipline in our schools?
- iii. How does FGM contribute to the girl child performance in school?
- iv. Does FGM affect the girl child enrollment in school?

## **1.8 Delimitations**

The study was done in west pokot but because of various factors such as poor financial state and time to do the research. The researcher knows that not all the respondents were ready to give the information openly because of the fear of stigma.

## **1.9 Limitations of the Study**

The study was limited to the county of west pokot. The locale is determined by the fact that this is where the practice is quite prevalent. On the same practice is observed such Kisii, Nyamira, Gucha, Kericho, Bomet etc.

The west Pokot County has a porous international burden which is exploited for the frustration of anti-FGM efforts



### **1.10 Assumptions of the Study**

- i. It is assumed that once awareness is created, the prevalence of FGM will reduce.
- ii. It is assumed that reduction in FGM prevalence will lead to improved girl child education.
- iii. It is assumed that the respondents will give true responses on FGM.

### **1.11 Significance**

Most studies done in FGM have focused on health issues especially psychosexual dimension.

This study opens a new front whereby FGM is investigated in relation to education.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Internationally, quite a few studies have been undertaken in relation to FGM. The studies have focused on the effect of FGM on the psychosexual and the reproductive health a woman and by extension the girl child. So far, none of the studies have linked FGM to the academic well-being of the victims. This is an area which has not attracted the attention it deserves from researchers.

In Kenya, the above trend has been replicated. All studies have tried focus on the health dimension of FGM. According to Oloo, Wanjiru and Newell Jones, (2015:5): the approaches used with varying degree of success, to encourage communities to abandon. FGM include: health risks/harmful practice approaches, educating and providing alternative sources of income to the circumcises; alternative rites of passage, addressing FGM through religion; legal and human rights; and the promotion of girl's education and empowerment programs. The study failed, once again to relate FGM to the performance of the girl child in school.

- i. Cheserem (2010:4) describe the scenario of FGM as pathetic seeing someone writhing in pain just because of tradition. Serem like many others did not relate her study to education.
- ii. Karhu (2010:8) observes that the little information available can be obtained easily via the internet and books for those who can read. The little information however does not highlight FGM in relation to education of the girl child.

This is the gap which this study is going to fill. It was lead to the realization that the effect of FGM is not confined to health, psychosexual and human rights violation. It is not just an issue of pain but a much deeper effect on the education of the girl child.

### **2.2 Effect of FGM on School Enrollment**

The number of girls enrolled in upper primary is low as compared to lower primary. It was assumed rightly that the drop is contributed by FGM. Many of them opt for early marriages since they now consider themselves women.

## **2.3 Discipline**

At the level of discipline, they become in disciplined. They cannot now be disciplined by any female teacher who has not undergone FGM. To them such a person is regarded as a child. During those days when corporal punishment was quite prevalent, the circumcised girls would not let any female teacher punish them. Socially they equaled themselves to the female teachers, yet discipline is one single main contribution towards success in education. It is on the basis that this study will connect. FGM to poor girl child performance in education.

## **2.4 FGM and Truancy**

Absenteeism become common, lateness for classes is set to increase with FGM prevalence All these are the perspectives that lacked in the previous studies, creating a gap which this was hopefully fill.

## **2.5 Summary of Identified Gaps in the Review Literature**

The study concluded that exposure to a dissemination of the information on the social psychological and the health risk of the practice on girls and women has impacted on the community beliefs and practices about FGM. The study recommends that campaigns against female circumcisions should be integrated. In the social and economic development initiative that particularly focus on women empowerment.

## **2.6 Theoretical Framework(s)**

### **Feminist Theory**

Feminist theories are varied and diverse. All analyze women's experiences of gender subordination, the roots of women oppression, how gender inequality is perpetuated, and offer differing remedies of gender inequality.

Liberal feminism argues women unequal access of legal, social, political and economic institution causes women's oppression.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This study will be carried using several instruments. It uses both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative methods such as observation, interview, questionnaire, key person information's, focus group all used to assess the effect of the practice on discipline. By this instrument, the researcher will interview parents directly especially those whose daughter have undergone/not undergone FGM. It is envisaged that the opinion of leaders such as principals of secondary schools, Head teachers, Education Officials, Community leaders, Church leaders- all will be interviewed.

### **3.2 Research Design**

This study employed descriptive research design because it allows the researchers to have clear research that addresses the problem statement and to allow others to comprehend it. Therefore, the study majored on the impact of FGM amongst girls in South Pokot Sub-county.

#### **3.2.1 Research Variables**

Independent variables: FGM or female circumcision

Dependent variable: education of the girl child- discipline, enrollment and performance.

#### **3.2.2 Research Locale**

Research was conducted in West Pokot County. This is because FGM prevalence is high in that region. There is normally poor performance of girls compared to boys and the dropout rate is high. The final reason is that early marriages are quite frequent.

### **3.3 Target Population**

The study was in secondary schools that are either girls or mixed, this is about 70 schools each with a population of about 250 girls – enrollment for girls is low.

The study will further target 150 parents, 15 elders and 7 circumcisers, 25 community leaders and 40 teachers. This is a total of 1200 respondents.

### 3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

A sample is a sub-category of the target population that the researcher intends to study with the aim of generalizing study results to target population (Fischer, 2017).

Sampling entails selecting number of individuals from the target group population (Gall and Brag, 2010). The study will adopt simple random sampling to determine the sample size

Target Population	Sample Size
1000 Students	500 Students
40 Teachers (Heads and principals)	12 Teachers (Heads and Principals)
150 Parents	15 Parents
15 Elders	4 Elders
10 Community leaders	5 Community Leaders
45 Circumcised	18 ircumcised

*Table 1: Sampling and Sample Size*

### 3.5 Research Instrument

The research will utilize both questionnaires, interviews to collect data. Questionnaires will be administered to students, teachers and principals of the sampled schools. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) a questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of series of questions and other prompts for gathering information from respondents. It allows the research to generate data specific to their own research and offers insight that would otherwise be unavailable. A questionnaire enables researcher reach a large number of respondents in short time. Both structured and open- ended questions will be used to obtain information from teacher principals and students.

### **3.6 Data Collection Instruments**

For qualitative data, the researcher was detailed description. On the other hand, for quantitative data, the researcher will be using graphs, bar graphs, tables, percentage, ratios and histograms.

### **3.7 Validity and Reliability of The Research Instruments**

This section will present the validity of the research instruments reliability and creditability of the data.

#### **3.7.1 Validity of Measurements**

Validity is the degree to which results collected from the analysis collected from the analysis of a given data really represent the phenomena under study (Dlodlo and Dhruv, 2013). In this study to determine the validity of the questionnaire and interview guides the researcher will develop tools with content-related details to measure the degree to which the instrument measures what it's supposed to measure out.

#### **3.7.2 Reliability of Measurements.**

Reliability is defined as to level to which an inquiry test, observation of a measurement process is able to give similar outcomes repeatedly. An instrument is said to be reliable when it can measure a variable accurately and by the ability to give similar results over and over again. Reliability is the consistence and dependability of data gathered through repeated application of scientific instruments of data collection, procedure under similar conditions.

### **3.8 Ethical Consideration**

According to Resnick (2011), ethics refers to norms for conduct that distinguish between accepted and unaccepted behavior. The reason for conducting the study will also be disclosed to the respondents and will advocate for free and voluntary participation and all information obtained will be confidential and for academic purpose. The participants will answer the questionnaire willingly.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

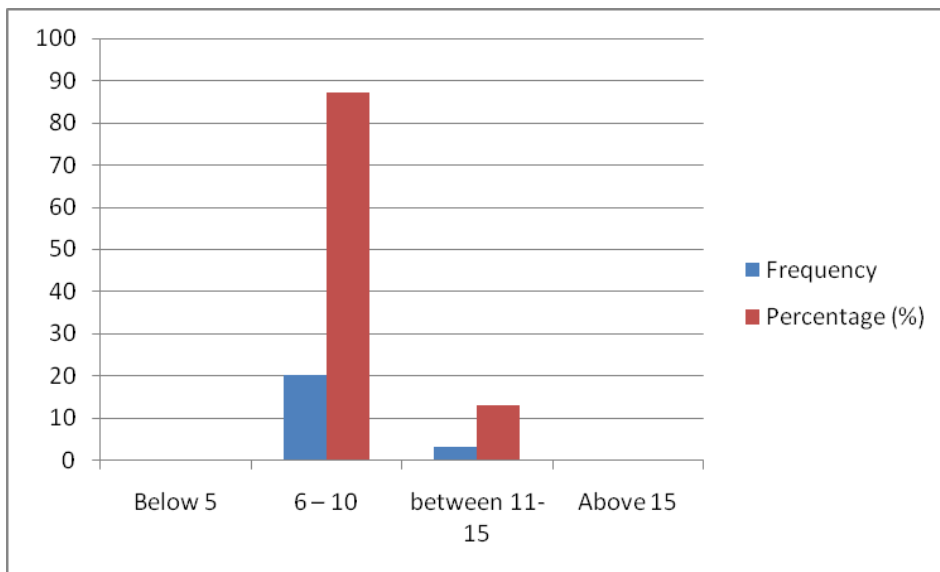
### 4.1 Introduction

This study sought impact of female genital mutilation (FGM) amongst girls of south pokot subcounty education sector. The impact was assessed in terms of school attendance, academic performance, type of indiscipline, and transition rates to the next level of classes.

### 4.2 Demographic Data

Data was analyzed using frequencies, bar graphs, percentages and tables. T-test was used to ascertain the level of significance of the impact of FGM on education of the education sector as shown in figure 1 below:

#### 4.2.1 Age



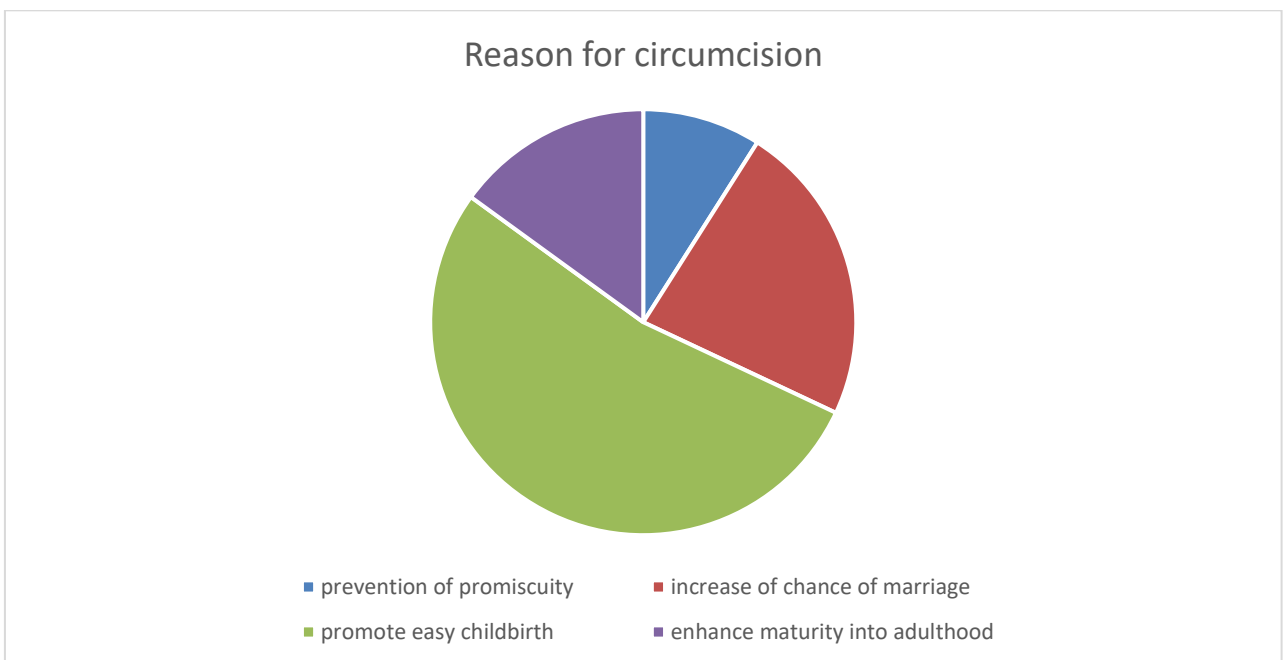
*Figure 2: Frequency and Age of Circumcision*

The graph depicts that a large proportion of the girls undergo the rite between six and ten years. This is a tender age where they have begun their schooling. At this age they do not understand FGM and why they have to go through it. The pain experienced during the exercise affects them physically such that they are not able to attend school for at least 20 days during the healing process. The girls are also affected psychologically in the long run.

As a result, their education was affected, and they were not performed like their counterparts who do not undergo the rite.

#### 4.2.2 Common reasons for circumcising girls in west pokot community

- prevention of promiscuity
- increase of chance of marriage
- promote easy childbirth
- enhance maturity into adulthood



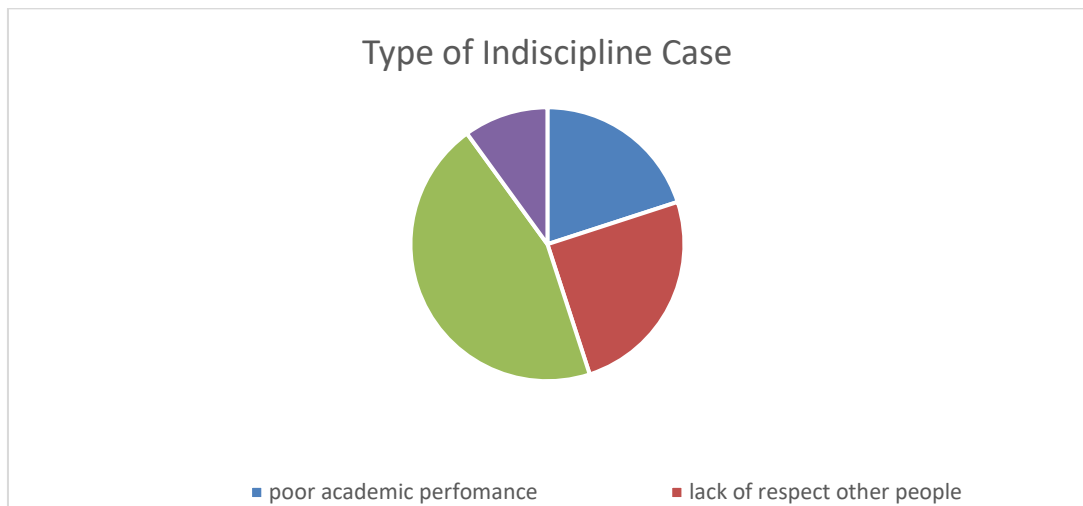
**Figure 3: Common reasons for circumcision**



As indicated in the graph above, girls are circumcised for various reasons. The most dominant reason for circumcision among the girls is to prevent immorality at a rate of 65%. This is followed by a sign of maturity into adulthood (5%), to gain respect among girls (2%) and for identity with the community.

#### 4.2.3 Types of Indiscipline Cases after FGM

- Poor academic performance.
- Lack of respect for teachers.
- Repetition of classes and school dropout.
- Fighting other girls.



**Figure 4: Indiscipline cases after FGM**

The figure shows that after FGM girls undergo behavioral changes some of which are undesirable. Lack of respect for teachers also takes a proportion of 26%, lateness (22%) and use of vulgar language at a rate of 17%. Such behaviors results in distractions such that the girls cannot fully focus on their studies. Also lack of respect for their teachers implies that they were not very keen in class when they are being taught by the same teachers. The overall effect was poor performance in class.

#### 4.2.4 Showing T- test for the Individual Factors

Average number of days attended in a term before and after the FGM

Factors	T – test
Number of days attended	31
Academic performance	3.17
Transition rates	1.0

**Table 2: T-test for Individual Factors**

The T-value is significant where the test statistic is greater than 2.58 at 95% significant level. The significant coefficients imply that the FGM affects the education. A coefficient of less than 2.58 indicates that FGM has no impact on the education with respect to the predictor variable. From the table 1 above only two predictor variables that is number of days attended and academic performance have a t- value of more than 2.58. This implies that FGM affects the number of days attended by the girls and also their academic performance. These factors have an overall impact on the education level of the affected girls.

The transition rates are not affected as the t- value is less than 2.58. This shows that FGM does not affect the transition rates significantly.

The study therefore advocates that FGM has an impact on the level of education. According to the t- test, this is supported by 67% of the predictor variables. The transition rates could be affected by other factors besides FGM as there is no significant relationship.

The level of indiscipline cases after FGM, the age of circumcision and the reasons for undertaking FGM do not support the education for girl child. It is therefore evident that FGM impacts negatively on the education of the girl child.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This section of the study ties up the observations made in the field study with the objectives set at the beginning of the study. The chapter further touches on summary, the implication of the study findings, conclusion, recommendations and further research.

### **5.2 Summary of the Findings**

The objective of this study was to create awareness on the dangers posed by FGM in as for as education is concluded. According to the t- test this is supported by 67% of the predictor variables.

### **5.3 Implications of the Findings**

It was observed that a large proportion of the girls undergo the rite between six and ten years. This is a tender age where they have begun their schooling. The pain experienced during the exercise affects them physically such that they are not able to attend school for at least 20 days during the healing process. The girls are also affected psychologically in the long run. As a result, their education is affected and do not perform like their counterparts who do not undergo the rite.

Girls are circumcised to prevent immorality as a sign of maturity into adulthood, to gain respect among girls and for identity with the community. The reasons raised were nonacademic. The exercise therefore does not consider its effects on education of the girls.

The study, therefore, concludes that Girls undergo behavioral changes after FGM, some of which are undesirable. They engage in supremacy fights with other girls especially those who have not undergone the ritual. They also lack respect for their teachers, such behaviors results in distractions such that the girls cannot fully focus on their studies. Also lack of respect for their teachers implies that they will not be very keen in class when they are being taught by the same teachers. The overall effect will be poor performance in class. According

to the t -test this is supported by 67% of the predictor variables. The transition rates could be affected by other factors besides FGM as there is no significant relationship.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

In conclusion FGM has a negative impact on the education of girls. Since most the girls after FGM get married. As a result FGM should be completely banned by the government so that our both gender focuses more in education. With support from pokot community the women should fine a new approach to initiation into womanhood that includes song, education, celebration, and a week of seclusion. During a week of seclusion, girls in the alternative program are educated on a wide range of subjects, including personal hygiene, relationships, dating, courtship, and marriage. The program also covers topics such as peer pressure, male and female reproductive anatomy, menstruation, conception, prevention of pregnancy, the consequences of teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases including; HIV and AIDS, and ways to prevent exposure.

Girls are put in a class of their own, secluded and thoroughly educated on matters relating to adulthood and maturity. When they are ready, the girls graduate and are considered adults. This points to the fact that the problem can be tackled if society is thoroughly educated and sensitized on the subject. Once the society understands and accepts the problem and the benefits of available alternatives, no one will have to go through circumcision or Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

The Inter-African Committee has urged all African countries to develop initiation without

## **5.5 Recommendations**

The government should offer massive penalties to the parents who force their children to undergo FGM and also law enforcement agencies should ensure all the culprits are arrested .Also alternatively Rite of Passage should be emphasized and advocated for by all stakeholders of education. Centers like the ones run by World Vision in West Pokot and other areas in Kenya should be supported so as provide shelter for girls who have run away from home because of FGM. Structural adjustments should be undertaken on the integration

program so that the outcomes are satisfactory (Antia & Stinson 1999). For example, replacement of the regular classroom teachers who show negative attitude towards inclusion should be done.

## **5.6 Further Research**

The study has discovered that FGM has negative effect to the women. Such effect depends on several factors such as the type performed, the expertise of the practitioners, the hygiene condition under which it is performed, the amount resistance and the general health condition of the women undergoing procedure.

In further complication which results after FGM practices include complication during childbirth, anemia, the cysts and abscesses, damage to the urethra resulting in urination problem. However, there are other areas that need further research since this study did not exhaust them.

The first area to be researched in future includes that of comparison of academic performance of girls. The study, therefore, concludes that who have gone through FGM and that of those who have not.

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## APENDICES

### Appendix I: QUESTIONNAIRES

Introduction letter

Dear respondent, my name is Kipruto Patrick a student of Greta University pursuing Bachelor of Education Arts. To complete my course, am supposed to conduct research on impact of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) amongst girls of south Pokot sub county. Kindly allow me to introduce you to this study and assisting in responding to the questions posed by the study.

Kindly tick appropriately within the boxes provided by only ticking one option among various options given

Are you a residence of South Pokot county?

Yes  No

Are you aware of FGM?

Yes  No

Community participation

The following numbers in the table provided signals that:

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Neutral 4. Strongly disagree 5. Disagree

Kindly tick among one number given based on the statements provided

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
I have ever participated in community ceremonies					

I participate in public meeting to give my views about FGM					
We are involved in discussing community affairs					



## **Appendix II: Questionnaire For Head Teachers And Teachers**

### **Teachers' Questionnaire about the Impact of FGM on Education of girls**

#### **In west pokot community.**

Please tick or write the answer. Everything written is treated as confidential.

#### 1. Age:

- i) 18 – 20 years old
- ii) 20 – 30 years old
- iii) 30 – 40 years old
- iv) Above 40 years old

#### 2. Gender:

- i) Female
- ii) Male

#### 3. At what age are girls in west pokot community circumcised?

- i) Below 5 years old
- ii) 6 - 10 years old
- iii) 11 – 15 years old
- iv) 16 – 20 years
- v) Above 20 years old

#### 4. Choose the most common reason for circumcising girls in

Pokot community.

- i) Respect among the peers
- ii) Maturity into adulthood
- iii) Identity with the community

- iv) To prevent immorality
- v) Any other (Specify) .....

5. How is the transition of girl students with hearing impairment to the next level of classes after FGM? (Kindly provide relevant statistical records)

.....

.....

6. What is the most common type of incidence among girl students after FGM in your school?

- i) Absenteeism
- ii) Lack of respect
- iii) Poor academic performance
- iv) Repetition of classes
- v) Dropping out of School