

**THE IMPLICATIONS OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION ON THE
GIRL CHILD EDUCATION**

**(CASE OF PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS AT CHEPSIGOT
LOCATION, ELGEYO MARAKWET COUNTY, KENYA)**

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ABSTRACT

The practice of female genital mutilation/circumcision is dated back to ancient times. Despite massive awareness about the harmful effects of female circumcision on women's and girls' reproductive health, education and human rights violation, and the law prohibiting the practice being in place, to date girls still undergo female circumcision within many communities in Kenya. It is a common assumption among Kenyans that one of the causes of low enrolment, poor retention and completion rates among girls in primary schools of Elgeyo Marakwet County is FGM. This study sought to establish the implications of female genital mutilation on the girl child education in Chepsigot location, Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. The study was guided by liberal feminism theory and Systems Theory. This study adapted the use of a descriptive research design, where the researcher conducted a field survey. The study took place at the public primary schools within Chepsigot Location, Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. The target population for this study consisted of all the head teachers and class teachers of the selected public primary schools in Chepsigot Location. Purposive sampling was used to select 115 respondents. SPSS (version 20) was used to analyze the study's data. Basic descriptive statistics were done. The data was then analyzed through percentages, frequencies, mean and standard deviation and the findings were presented in tables, graphs and narratives for easy comparisons and understanding to the readers.

The study revealed that outdated cultural beliefs, low level of sensitization among community members, fear of social exclusion from the local community and uncouth common belief linked to material wealth like circumcised girls fetch more dowry than uncircumcised girls is a factor contributing to FGM persistence. FGM initiation ritual in Elgeyo Marakwet continues over the period of months which negatively affects girls' school attendance. The government efforts in providing communities with expertise needed to bring about change on ending FGM has increased morale and academic performance of girls in Chepsigot Location. The study concludes that outdated cultural beliefs, low level of sensitization among community members, fear of social exclusion from the local community and uncouth common belief linked to material wealth like circumcised girls fetch more dowry than uncircumcised girls is a factor contributing to FGM persistence. FGM practice has negative and harmful effects on girls' health and consequently child's education. Administrative interventions to assist the girl child after undergoing FGM to advance enhanced academic performance of girls in Chepsigot Location. The study recommends that social institutions advocating for the welfare of the girl child in the society need to partner with county and national government in view of sensitizing local communities on dangers associated with FGM as well as the necessity of educating girls. More efforts should be stepped up towards sensitizing local communities on importance of abandoning outdated cultural activities like FGM as they were found to have a negative influence on academic performance of girls. There is need to recognize local leaders and volunteers mobilizing the local community to abandon the FGM exercise. The government needs to fully implement laws and policies that aim at reducing FGM exercise as this was found to have a positive influence on academic performance of girls.