Title: A study of the factors perpetuating infibulation among Somali-Muslims in Mandera District, Kenya

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Abstract: The study is mainly concerned with factors perpetuating infibulation among Somali Muslims of Mandera District, North Eastern Province. The purpose of the study is to identify and discuss socio-cultural factors that perpetuate infibulation among Somali Muslims; investigate the role of Islam in female circumcision among Somali Muslims; assess the effects of infibulation on both the health and education of the Somali girl-child; identify strategies that can be employed to minimize dangers of infibulation among Somali Muslims. The research is significant in bringing a clear picture of what is perpetuating the practice. Is it Somali culture or religious factor? It also to create awareness on how the practice of infibulation can be minimized. The conceptual framework of the study was based on the educational theories of Friere (1973) namely, 'The banking Concept and problem posing concept education' and the Quran and Hadith. The study focused on how these concepts can bring change through consciousness raising education and as well as through learning the correct teaching of Islam on female circumcision. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The target population was all ulamaa, parents, nurses, traditional birth attendants, circumcisers, head teachers, and circumcised teenage girls from Somali community. The Snowball sampling technique was used to select 30 ulamaa, 30 traditional birth attendants, and ten nurses to participate in the study. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select 30 male and 30 female parents. The simple random sampling technique was used to select seven head teachers, and twenty circumcised teenage girls, while the purposive sampling technique was used to select six circumcisers to participate in the study. The research instruments were interviews and written questionnaires. The questionnaires and interviews were administered to Ulamaa, parents, nurses, traditional birth attendants, circumcisers, and head teachers and circumcised teenage girls. The researcher used both primary and secondary sources of data. The data was synthesized and categorized according to themes of the study. Descriptive statistics and tables were used to explain the features of the study. It was found out that those socio-cultural factors like "Hido iyo dhagan" (Somali culture) perpetuated female infibulation. Islam rather may accept only a mild form of circumcision, which is optional. The Somali community was aware of the effects of infibulation on the health and education of their daughters and women but there was resistance to change as it has great value for them. Men are also resistant to change because they cannot marry uninfibulated woman. In view of the danger that result from infibulation, women are most affected and continue to promote the practice. It is recommended by this study that more information is vital to enlighten the Somali community in Mandera District of the dangers associated with female infibulation, in a move towards the policy of 'amelioration'. It is also recommended that the stakeholders like the local men and women, including Imams, educationist to be involved in developing any programme that may bring a positive change. Islamic ulamaa should clear the air on the position of Islam in the rite of female infibulations through preaching the correct teachings.