

Infibulation

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By- Isha Malhotra (Maharaja Agrasen College, Du) Infibulation is the ritual removal of the external female genitalia and the suturing of the vulva. It is a practice found mainly in northeastern Africa. The cruel practice of female genital cutting or female genital mutilation is not just happening in Africa but also in tribal societies. Young girls aged six and seven are regularly being cut in India as well. Mumbai abounds with untrained midwives who continue to scar young girls from the Bohra community. For long, it remained a well-kept secret, a taboo and a subject never allowed to be discussed. But, now some women also victims of Bohra tradition have chooses to speak out. They were lured by their mothers as well as grandmother's to be betrayed. Women shrieked in pain but no one noticed this ever before. Most common unwanted reason behind this malpractice is stating the skin as 'unwanted' and a source of pleasure that women were not allowed to have, simply have no basis on scientific justification. It is often considered a rite of passage into womanhood, without which the woman is not considered marriage material.

The culprits of this practice can be seen as the group or community who support patriarchy, who thinks that a woman's sexuality needs to be curbed and in order to demand fidelity or marriage as an institution to holdup, the woman has to be cut. So, that can't lose her virginity before her marriage and the right on her virginity is completely upon her husband. In fact, this painful process is a practice done on women by other women. Most of the victims blame their mothers but at the same time their mothers were even the victims of this mindless tradition.

The first part of the painful, molesting and inhuman practice involves three types. Type one is where clitoris is removed or cut to half, the second type is to remove the inner lips which is known as labia minora and type three involves removal of big lips and the edges are stucked together leaving a tiny opening for the passage of menstrual flow as well as urine. There is another type which is known as unclassified, it includes pricking of the area, introduction of corrosive material, tattoo and cutting into the floor of the vagina. The immediate effect of it is excessive bleeding, urinary tract infection, vaginal infection and this can prevent women from getting pregnant because it leads to infertility. It can also lead to HIV due to the use of same blade, scissors and knife. Women who are the victims of this mal tradition also faces severe pain issues during sex as well as their period. In worst cases even the child dies because of the unbearable pain of the female infibulation.

FGM can kill. We need to change attitude, spread awareness and FGM should be ended now! According to the WHO, FGM is any partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or any other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Across the world, 8000 women and girls are at risk of mutilation every single day. In England and Wales, an estimated 66,000 women are living with the consequences of

FGM and more than 20,000 girls are at risk every year. Female Genital Mutilation is often confused with circumcision, but to make that comparison would be a mistake. For one, the cutting is far more extensive than in circumcision, and a blunt instrument is often utilized in the process.

It is carried out on young girls between infancy and age 15, and occasionally on adult women. 27% of women age 15-49 have been cut and around 82% of Nigerian women undergo it before age 5. It is the third highest no. of women and girls who have undergone it worldwide, after Egypt and Ethiopia. Around 19.9 million women in Nigeria have undergone it. Not only this but around 32% of urban women have undergone it whereas, the 19% of rural women have undergone it. Natives sole purpose was to prevent sexuality as well as reproduction. May women suffered from depression as well as anxiety due to this. It not only ruined their physical body but also their emotional state and health.

This practice does not have any religious backing but few represent it as the religious belief. Sheikh Mohammed Dersa, the president of the Afar Region Islamic Supreme Council, started to combat FGM/C 25 years ago. He believes that FGM/C is a harmful practice that risks the life of young girls and has no basis in Islamic law but rather is Pharaonic. Lack of awareness as well as capturing one's ability to draw a line between right and wrong result in such situation. Many are asked to remain silent but it should be considered as a constant dialogue with community members and spread message of no tolerance as well as no silence. With constant dialogue, healthcare as well as psychological support should be provided to these women.

It can, therefore, be asserted that increasing the accessibility of education is key to fighting FGM and eliminating the practice from the culture. The battle against FGM is daunting but not impossible; through the help of education and domestic and international involvement, the practice of FGM may be reduced or even stricken out entirely.

Traditional as well as community leaders from all spheres should come forward to take step in revolution. Indeed, many understood that the practice which they thought was a positive for the protection of girl's sexuality is actually harmful. Many communities have totally declined and abandoned this malpractice. International Development secretary Justine Greening said: "It's fantastic to see so many people coming together to show their support for girls. There are too many girls around the world who are being denied the freedom to control their bodies and their futures. The Girl Summit is helping to drive momentum towards this unique opportunity that we have to end harmful practices such as FGM and child marriage within a generation." It is however a remarkable achievement of implementing no more torture on girls and women. The resolution and resolute of the problem is still under progress.



Navigated to Infibulation

