

**CHALLENGES FACED BY PRIMARY SCHOOL HEADTEACHERS
IN FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION PRONE ZONES:
A SURVEY OF CHEPARERIA DIVISION IN WEST POKOT
COUNTY**

BY

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ABSTRACT

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) also known as female genital cutting is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or any other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. FGM related factors have been found to offer major challenges to headteachers in primary schools. The purpose of the study was to establish the challenges faced by primary school head teachers in female genital mutilation prone zones. This was necessitated by the fact that there have been witnessed high rates of school-dropouts, early marriages, low school enrolment and improper hygiene factors that are FGM related and which consequently cause major challenges to head teachers.. The study therefore aimed to identify the effect of school drop-out challenge faced by primary school headteachers; analyze the effect of hygiene factor challenge faced by primary school headteachers; locate the effect of early marriages challenge faced by primary school headteachers; and establish the effect of low enrolment challenge faced by primary school headteachers in female genital mutilation prone zones within Chepareria Division. It employed descriptive survey research design and targeted 40 head teachers and 1000 parents and the sub-chief of Chepareria Division and its zonal education officer. Simple random sampling was used to select 12 head teachers and 300 parents while purposive sampling technique was used to select sub-chief and zonal education officer. Questionnaires and interview schedules were the data collection instruments. To establish reliability of research instruments, the Cronbach's coefficient alpha model was used with its figure standing at 0.712 while to establish Validity of the instruments, two experts on the topic from Methodist University examined the content of the instruments. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented in tables, charts and graphs. The results show: that school drop-out, hygiene factors, early marriages and low pupil enrolment that were FGM related posed a major challenge for head teachers. The study therefore recommends that: Head teachers should initiate programs aimed at promoting primary school education even for girls who have encountered FGM to then curb school dropout cases. The head teachers in conjunction with the police should in no uncertain terms ensure that girls, even for girls who have encountered FGM, are put back in school as the law demands. Head teachers with the help of the government should invest in school sanatoriums that will effectively deal with hygiene factors suffered by girls who have undergone FGM. This will enable them remain in school even in the face of FGM. They should initiate public private partnerships in involving NGO's in creating awareness on the ills of FGM which lead to school dropouts, early marriages, hygiene factors and low enrolment and motivating parents and girls to remain in school. Further, the government through the Ministry of Education should initiate and review policies to help effectively curb FGM related school-dropouts and other attendant ills. The head teachers should be trained in effective strategic management to ensure that the measures put to offset retention challenges in FGM prone zones bear fruit. The study will benefit the community with findings to help curb the FGM menace.