

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION IN INDIA: DIGGING RELIGIOUS ORIGINS OF THE PRACTICE

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Abstract:

This research paper is based on doctrinal study of the issue of female genital mutilation which is a discriminatory and form of gender-based violence inflicted on women and young girls at a very early age. It is practiced in many countries specially in African continent and India is a fresh talk of the town since 2017 after a write petition was filed by Advocate Sunita Tiwari criticising the prevalence of this practice in some concentrated part of India and its states. Although a minority community, but mutilating the body of a female is no less than crime for rituals, traditions or customs which has no identified sources of relevance in the world.

Key words: Female Genital Mutilation, Human Rights, Women, Child, Law

INTRODUCTION

In India, FGM is practiced among the Muslim clan of Dawoodi Bohra community- a sect among the Shia Muslims, which is known as *Khatna* or *Khafz*. The Dawoodi Bohra Community is a Muslim sect from far Middle-East who migrated to India. These Arab community descendants are also known as Atba-e-Malak Badar or Bawahi or Bohara or Bohoro or Daudi, even called as Ismailia Daudi Bohra. They trace their origination to the Fatimi imams from Cairo who remained undocumented, direct descendants of the Prophet Mohammed through Imam Ali bin Abi Talib, son in law of the Prophet, and Fatima, daughter of the Prophet and wife of Imam Ali bin Abi Talib. Thus, deriving their name from Fatima, they first functioned from Medina, migrating over to the Northern African continent and later to Egypt for centuries. In the 10th and 12th century, Fatimi Imams led Dawoodi Bohra's majorly rules in the Islamic world North Africa in the west spreading far east towards Pakistan. They hold a strong duty to protect their community and strengthen religious traditions established by the prophet. Stories of their kingdoms narrate scholars, writers, thinkers, educationists, poets and unrivalled development of philosophy, art and culture. Also, fostered the immense wealth of literature, splendiferous civilisation and pursued the wise way of life.

Before the empire's downturn, the 20th Fatimi Imam, *Al-Amir bi-Ahkam Allah*, directed his deputies to establishes the office of Da'I al-Mutlaq to act as vicegerent of his son. The succession the office of *al-Da'i al-Mutlaq* takes place

through a divine decree, where each Da'i appoints a successor during his lifetime. This chain of succession was interrupted in 200. The 21st Da'i in the line of the imams chose to stand in complete seclusion and since then, the *imamat* runs in line of succession falling from father to son. It is through their faith in this line of succession that the Dawoodi Bohras are also known as Shia Fatimi Ismaili Tayyibi, branch of Islam. The origination of the name 'Dawoodi Bohras', shares an interesting history to it. The right of 27th Dai Syedna Dawood bin Qutub Shah in serious contention with certain Suleman and the dispute was ultimately submitted before the authority of Emperor Akbar. He invited the Syedna Dawood to Kashmir where Emperor Akbar was settled. After making necessary investigations he made the decision and upheld Syedna Dawood to hold the rightful seat of 27th Da'i. This royal decree or Akbar's *farman* still holds a valid precedent still in possession of the present Syedna for continuance of his office of Da'i. Since thereafter, the descendant and followers of Dawood were called as Dawoodi and the term Bohra in being a Gujarati word means 'traders or businessman.' For the followers, Father succeeded by son, the imam, is next to the prophet, who is believed to be inerrant, immaculate, sinless, and sacred with the repository of prophetic knowledge and is also the final interpreter of religion for the Bohra community.

ORIGINS IN INDIA

The establishment of Bohras dates long back to the Fatimi era when the 18th Imam, Al Mustansir Billah send da Da'i named Abd Allah from Yemen to initiate Da'wah¹. On instructions, Abd Allah reached Cambay (now Khambhat, Gujarat) in AD 1067/H 460 and succeeded many in conversions gaining confidence of the mob and the local rulers. Moulai Abdullah was declared the first Wali-UI-hind in India. Thereafter, the office of al-Dai-al-Mutlaq was established post seclusion of al-Tayyeb. Since then, the Indian community pledged their allegiance towards Fatimi Imam and continued the saga of their loyalty towards the Dais in Yemen. The Bohra Community in Gujarat maintained their relations with the Dais in Yemen who guided them in their regular affairs and greeted Bohra delegations from Gujarat. The community grew spreading their dimensions to Patan, Sidhpur and Ahmedabad².

Past few centuries have witnessed with changing location of the Da'i, Bohra headquarters have shifted to India. The centre of the Da'wah (has been primarily in six places Jamnagar, in the Kathiawar region of Gujrat constitutes of five Dais, from 1655/1065 to 1737/1150); Ahmedabad comprises of eight Dais from 1567/974 to 1655/1065, present day Ujjain state of Madhya Pradesh has two Dais from 1737/150 to 1779/1193 in Berhampur one Dai deputed from 1779/1193 to 1785/1200 while Surat at present consists of eight Dais from 1785/1200 to 1933/1351 Mumbai located in Maharashtra is where the present Dai holds the seat.

The community members migration for better livelihood to different places. The first wave migrated to East Africa for trade after severe drought in Kathiawar. Later, on invitation of 43rd Da'i Abdeali Saifuddin, the followers moved to Surat and were provide with food, shelter, clothing and work on a condition that they learn new skills and rewarded them on their departure from Surat. Many groups ventured forth to continue their trade in East Africa. On succession, the 51st Dai revitalised the community by restructuring the organisation on Modern standards. The community headquarter was shifted from Surat to Mumbai and had become a major hub for trade and commerce in India. he encouraged education and learning which motivated the Dawoodi Bohras to settle in different parts of the world developing in their own communities. A tiny ratio of Bohras migrated to Kerala 150 years ago from Gujarat are now

¹ The act of converting people to Islam

² Daftary, F. (1992). The Isma'ilis: Their history and doctrines. Cambridge University Press.

settled in Kerala³. The Dawoodi Bohras are just one sect from the community, there exist Sulemani and Alvi Bohras but the Dawoodi Bohras are in largest number from all the other groups. As their history narrates their versatile expansion across the globe, they remain an extremely close-knit and secretive community and their religious head is known as Da'i or Syedna. Talking about their faith and belief they believe in Monotheism (Tawhid) and follow the tenets of Islam. They recite Shahada⁴ and observe the seven pillars of Ismailism. Which includes Walayah (devotion towards Allah, Muhammad, his descendant and the family)- is central to all the seven pillars of the Bohra faith. The rest of these pillars are Taharah or Tahaarat (purity of thought and blood), Salaat (observing daily routine prayers), Zakaat (offering a portion of earnings for good cause of Allah) Sawm (observing fast in Ramadan), Hajj (a once in a lifetime pilgrimage to Mecca) and Jihad (to live on the path provided by Allah). The Bohras build mosques wherever they live to perform their ritual prayers and *majalis* for religious occasions, for *zikra* of Allah, his prophets, imams and Dai's⁵.

There is a centralized power system and control in the community regarding the practice of Islam among their members as to how they live their lives, their factions of opinions and discontent is often subjected to social boycott and force ostracization of members. It extends to very personal issues like naming the child, education and the job preferences for the members of the community. To all this, the verdict of the Syedna is ultimate and infallible.

Since the community is a blend of African, Egyptian, Pakistani, Indian and Yemeni Cultures their common tongue speaks Lisan al-Sawat, based on Perso-Arabic script, which derives from Arabic, Urdu, Persian, Sanskrit and Gujrat. Lisan-al Dawat which is a blend of Basic Gujrati and Arabic vocabulary is their medium of communication to articulate Islamic values and heritage. As per 2021 data, it is estimated that their population constitutes to be two to five million spread around the world. India accounts for 1,311,000 Dawoodi Bohra's population where a majority of these Dawoodi people reside in Gujrat, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and West Bengal while the rest are spread in Karachi city of Pakistan and other parts of Europe, North America, Africa and Middle-East. They also live in many other parts of the world – Sri Lanka, Singapore, East African countries, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and the United States of America, among others. The real reason for the prevalence and continuance of the practice is due to the Bohra High Priest or *Syedna Muffaddal Saifuddin*⁶, who support and preach the practice to be a part of Islamic religious morality and obligation.

BOHRAS AND THEIR PRACTICE

The Dawoodi Bohras practice *Khatna*, *Khafd* or *Khafz* which is called a Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) by the critics. The procedure is mostly performed without anaesthesia by a traditional circumciser, generally performed at the age of 7 years. It is the only Muslim sect to practice Female Genital Mutilation branching from the community's original roots in Yemen. Even non-Bohra women seeking to marry in the community must compulsorily perform the ritual and go through the same. Due to lack of data, the extent of practice cannot be articulated. In 1911, a Bombay census connoted the practice of Khatna as clitoridectomy performed by the community. In 1991, a feminist magazine

³ Jairath, V. K. (Ed.). (2013). *Frontiers of embedded Muslim communities in India*. Routledge.

⁴ Islamic holy creed

⁵ Dawoodi Bohra (no date) Wikiwand. Available at: https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Dawoodi_Bohra (Accessed: 27 August 2023).

⁶ 53rd Dai-al Mutalaq or absolute missionary of the Bohra community who has dominion to decide on all spiritual and temporal matters.

Manushi, mentioned about the procedure of FGM in the Bohra community where they remove the clitoral hood or the tip of clitoris. Supporters of the practice emphasise on removal of the clitoral hood only to perform symbolic nicking and it should be referred as “female Circumcision” and not as Female Genital Mutilation.

Under the procedure, the clitoral hood is disconnected from your body, it is being cut through midwives or Mullanis using a knife or cutter. It is believed that the clitoral hood is unwanted part of the body also known as ‘*Haraam ki boti*’ (an immoral lump of flesh) or a ‘*Source of sin*’, that will make them stray and lead to infidelity towards their partner in marriage, and that is why it is important to be cut to stay obedient, loyal, and submissive to their husbands to maintain family honour. The saddest part of this procedure is, it is practice by a woman over a woman and supported, aided, and guided by the women within the community. Many women said it is a custom, it is a religious obligation to follow the practice, some hesitated talking in the open, those who responded supported their mutilation and accepted they do not have a hood, or they do not need any organ or part of body which is likely to cause a sin. To this, many organisations and groups took efforts to launch a community-based awareness programme to eliminate the practice, religious leaders interrupted and stated that the practice was a part of their religion. The practice is very active in the *Bohri Mohalla* of Mumbai.

In 2011 anti-FGM protests featured on all bulletins when a Bohra woman protested the practice through a petition before the then leader Mohammed Burhanuddin of the Bohra clan, those who advocated for the practice opposed the protest emphasising it to be a part of religious procedure and the same should be followed without any remonstrance. The movement gained momentum through an online petition on the social platform by woman who had already undergone FGM and wanted this close-knit practice to end thereby preventing the lives of many young girls from being cut/bruised or deceived in the name of religion⁷. On law point, in 2017, the then Union Minister of Women and Child Development, Maneka Gandhi assured if Bohra community does not give up the practice, then the Centre shall enact a strong law to prohibit the same. It is reported that FGM is a crime under the local laws, but there are no strong provisions to penalise the guilty. After 2017, the news-bulletins have shut down on the news, the political onset shows a different air in favour of the Bohra’s and a larger bench coming to action is a vivid dream. FGM needs a ban, India needs a Constitutional Bench to decide on the pending case. A 2018 study carried out by WeSpeakOut, opposed FGM concluding that FGM affect Bohra girls undergo Type -I FGM which involved removal of clitoral hood or the clitoral glans. A medical examination was performed on 20 Bohra women by a gynaecologist who confirmed they are deprived of both the clitoral hood and the clitoris. The Dawoodi Bohra Women’s Association for Religious Freedom have a pro-FGM opinion against the anti-FGM movement across the world. According to them FGM is a part of their religious belief and culture which needs to be protected and not banned. In 2018, three members of the Bohra community were convicted for performing FGM on two girls, however the same was overruled when the appeal court accepted that the tip of the clitoral hood was not fully mutilated and was still visible, the pro-FGM defence attorney contended that only symbolic wound or “Symbolic Khatna” was performed. To this, the High Court of Australia overturned the judgement and conviction was upheld stating that, “otherwise mutilation”, does not encompass simply cutting or nicking the clitoral hood in the Australian law and is a clear violation of human rights announcing a sentence of 15 months’ imprisonment with a non-parole period of 11 month⁸.

As of 2023, Islamic factions are distributed even on the prevalence and continuance of the practice as of today on young girls and women and requires change or elimination in the practice due to fatal consequences. The Bohra group

⁷ AFP, “Female circumcision anger aired in India”, DAWN (2012)

⁸ R v A2; R v KM; R v Vaziri (No. 2) (2015) NSWSC 1221

itself has a divided opinion on the practice between the conservatives and the progressive Bohras. The conservatives however refuse to speak on the issue due to factional differences raised after resentment over the anointed succession of the new spiritual leader or Syedna leader Muffadal Saifuddin after succeeding Mohammad Burhanuddin before the Bombay High Court by Khuzaima Qutubuddin, now represented by Takher Fakhruddin, as his Successor. Qutubuddin in his suit contended that his brother Burhanuddin the 52nd Dai had appointed him as the successor or second in command as the 'mazoon', on December 10, 1965 and privately anointed him as the next successor or Syedna leader to the Bohra clan claiming that Muffadal Saifuddin, his nephew should be restrained from discharging his duties as Syedna leader for the Bohras however, the Da'ai-e-Mutlaq or the Syedna or spiritual leader of the Bohras can be any deserve member from the community and need not be from the Syedna's family itself but the later has been followed more often. The division of opinion roll around the mandate over FGM for girls between six to seven years of old submitted by the conservationist Saiffi Bohras while the Qutbi Bohras with their base in thane share a much reasonable and progressive view. The victims and the outcasted support Syedna Fakhruddin because he allowed the women of the community: her share of freedom of thought and expression, freedom to have work preference and to opt out of cutting voluntarily. Syedna Taher Fakhruddin had declared that young girls cannot be coerced to go through the knife against their will for the purpose of FGM. In response to this support, several Dawoodi women showed resentment by forming an organisation called Sahiyo (which means a female friend in Gujarati) with a petition before the supreme court to outlaw the practice of FGM in India, like Australia and US⁹.

RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE

There are numerous social, traditional, religious and cultural aspects for the practice of FGM to continue in different parts of the world or in India. A variety of social and cultural reasons have been reported: to maintain female hygiene, cultural duties and obligations, maintain familial integrity and protection of girls by controlling their virginity, preventing immorality, securing future marriage prospects for girls, greater pleasure for men and fertility enhancement. It is an essential ritual signifying the germination of womanhood for a girl and entering her puberty years. It is seen as an essential part of their religious beliefs for keeping the cultural ideas and rhythm of femineity and modesty in woman intact. FGM is said to reduce a woman's urge for pleasure or it helps her resist the thirst for 'Illicit' sexual intercourse. However, these reasons lack any evidence. But the family pressure to conform with the traditional practice is the main provocation factor where women even if they want to depart from the societal norm, they shun themselves due to condemnation, harassment and ostracization or excommunication of families.

In 2016, Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin described circumcision as an act of "religious purity". In Islam, according to Da'im al-Islam also, the jurisprudential significance is attached to its hygiene or *Tahaarat* which is not just physical but "spiritual" and "religious." In 2017, from the community point it was said the that practice enhances facial radiance on woman and sexual pleasure for the husband. After much protest against khatna, many women have defended the ritual stating that it holds the key to sexual stimulation and beneficial for us both medically and physically. Most of them support the genital hygiene reason for the prevalence of khatna in the community. Ghadi ally mentioned the main reason behind khatna are religious obligations, traditional practices and to curb the girl's sexuality at a very young age¹⁰. This becomes the main reason to disregard to what several Bohras refer to as "*haraam ni boti*" or sinful lump of flesh. A recent study conducted by Sahiyo on 385 Bohra women concluded the same fact where majority of respondents

⁹ Mishra, S. G. (2023, June 11). Bohras: A community divided. National Herald.

<https://www.nationalheraldindia.com/culture/bohras-a-community-divided>

¹⁰ Ghadi ally R. (1992). All for "Izzat". Newsletter (Women's Global Network on Reproductive Rights), (38), 7–8.

claimed to practice khatna as a part of their tradition and to moderately control their sexual desire, a very few mentioned hygiene or medical reasons for the same. Clearly, the purpose behind Khatna was to control a girl's sexual urges to prevent premarital or extramarital sexual relations or affairs beside her husband¹¹.

According to Islamic Texts, hadiths particularly the Shafi, Hanbali and Hanafi Schools of Islam mention Female Circumcision as either permissible, honourable or a recommended practice (*sunnah*) however, many Islamic scholars have questioned the authenticity of these Hadiths. But even if they are taken into consideration, the central point of the arguments stays the same without denial that female circumcision was a pre-existing practice in several parts of Arabia during the reign of Prophet Muhammad. It was not a newly introduced religious ritual in Islam and every follower was familiar with the same.

According to Ibn-al-Qayyim, *Khitan, Khatna or Khafd or khafz* the noun describes the action of the circumciser. It is also used to describe the site of circumcision as given under the Hadith. As already discussed above with reference to Islamic text in male circumcision, here also, "When two circumcised parts meets, ghusl becomes obligatory." In females the word used is *Khafad* and the one who remains uncircumcised is called as *aghlaq or aqlaq*¹².

The ruling on circumcision in Islam has been interpreted by different Islamic scholars. As per Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymin, circumcision is obligatory in case of men and *sunnah* in case of women. There is a difference, in case of men, it serves the conditional for the purpose of prayer for it requires a Namazi to be filled with purity (taharah), because if the urine remains in the foreskins, while urinations the same might get collected in the foreskin which can cause infection and burning and every time for urination, some drops of urine remains as a residue, thereby making the Namazi impure causing *najasah*. In case of females, the purpose is to reduce desire. This is just in order to seek perfection and does not amount to removing something harmful from their body¹³. In the view of Imam Ahmad, Ibn Qudamah mentioned in al-Mughni (1/115) that it is obligatory for men and it is dutiful for women, but not obligatory in nature. Ibn al-Sabbagh has narrated in al-Shamil that for woman, a portion of skin which looks like comb of a rooster at the vaginal head is cut, between two labia and the base of skin should be left like a date pit. According to Al-Juwayni in lines with Hadith suggests that too much of the skin should not be removed in case of women. There must be something left out and extreme cutting should be avoided.

The reason why circumcision of women is practiced in Islam is to regulate their urge or desire or moderate their growing sexual urges. Regarding whether women should be circumcised, Shaykh al-Silam has emphasized on circumcision saying, "it is a must for women to cut the piece of skin which looks like a rooster's comb. It makes her face look brighter and pleases the husband while having sexual intercourse. Where purpose of circumcision for men is to stay clean and pure, for women the purpose is to regulate their growing desire, if left uncircumcised here desires will grow strong and can prove to be fatal for marriage. Hence, being called son of an uncircumcised woman is taken as an insult because an uncircumcised woman has stronger desires and urge. It is believed that immoral actions are very common among women of such frames belonging to Tatars and Franks, which cannot be found among the Muslim women. However, circumcision should not be too severe as it weakens the desire and the husband remains unpleased if the clitoris is extremely cut. The purpose shall only be achieved when it is cut in moderation¹⁴." According to Ibn

¹¹Goswami, P. (Director). (2012). *A pinch of Skin* [Film]. Nid Fvc Student Films.

¹² Tuhfat al-Mawlud, 1/152.

¹³ Al-Sharh al-Mumti', 1/133-134.

¹⁴ Majmoo' al-Fataawa, 21/114

Quadamah, "Circumcision is performed in Islam paying money in lieu of the cut either to traditional circumcisers or to medical practitioners. According to Shariat law it is permissible like all other permissible actions¹⁵."

About medical benefits of circumcision for girls or women, circumcision is a religious practice for both males and females in Islam. Where for males the ritual stays obligatory, as symbol of Islam on the other side for females circumcision is not obligatory but mustahabb¹⁶.

Reports based on *sunnah* indicate that circumcision has been prescribed in Islam. In Madina there lived a woman who was guided by Prophet to circumcised women but not to go to the extreme extent of cutting, circumcision must be performed where it is good for women and liked by the husband. Hence, due to religious acclamations it is said that female circumcision has been prescribed for a purpose, there is a strong wisdom behind it and it downpour lot of benefits to the female health.

Certain health benefits mentioned by Dr. Haamid al-Ghawaabi supporting female circumcision emphasise the necessity of the practice. Implying that secretions made by labia minora amalgamate if the women stay uncircumcised and turn feculent developing into an unpleasant odour causing infections in vaginal or urethral area. The cut is reported to reduces sexual sensitivity of the clitoris rose which increased to 3 centimetres in size during sexual arousal, which according to scholars, annoys the husband. Another plus point of circumcision is to prevent stimulation of clitoris, spasms of clitoris which is also a kind of inflammation and reduce excessive sexual desire. One issue of contention against female circumcision is that it causes frigidity to this Dr. al-Ghawaabi discredits their claim. According to Ghawaabi, there are many factors behind frigidity, there is no sound statistical evidence to support the claim in comparison of circumcised women with uncircumcised one. Except in cases of pharaonic circumcision or Sudanese circumcision where clitoral hood is completely excised which does lead to frigidity but the kind of circumcision prophet Muhammad has supported it does not destroy nor excise the female genitalia. This statement alone suffices since medicinal growth was minimal at that time and very little knowledge was available about female genital organ-clitoris and its surrounding nerves.

Arguments in support of FGM are backed by view from a female gynaecologist Sitt al-Banaat Khaalid, who stated that for Muslims female circumcision is obedience to Islam ¹⁷which signifies to act in accordance with the principals of fitrah and strictly following sunnah which encourages circumcision. A Muslim follower is well versed with the dimensions of Islam and with faith in Allah everything that has been said is for good of mankind in all aspect which includes health as well. If there are benefits which are not apparent now, they will be discovered in the future. Like male circumcision when it was found to be useful for genital hygiene, it became a common medical procedure with widespread acceptance across the nations despite strong opposition from some groups. Similarly, female circumcision takes away excessive secretion through the libido of the women, prevent unpleasant odours resulting from foul secretion beneath the prepuce and reduces urinary infections and protects the reproductive system from other infections.

¹⁵ Al-Mughni, 5/314

¹⁶ Mustahabb refers to something that is enjoined in Islam but is not absolutely binding, such as Duha prayer

¹⁷ Not able to find source

Therefore, according to various translations put by different Arabic and Islamic scholars' same message has been interpreted in either different or contradictory ways. What come classify as circumcision to increase "radiance" or "loveliness" of a woman's beauty and face, the reference is about her sexual satisfaction post coital relation. In context to sexual chastity, another scholar interprets it as something chaster or better for woman to keep her sacred and pure. Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Malik consider circumcision to be recommended but not obligatory¹⁸.

Muslims agree to the point that old Islamic Arabic is difficult to interpret and often leads to ambiguity or multiple connotations. But because of this ambiguity many generations of Bohra women have undergone practicing the ritual of Khatna with the sole purpose of controlling a woman's sexual desire. And on the same pretext other Bohras contend to claim on the same line that Khatna is done to increase sexual pleasure. This argument was recently made by an ardent Khatna supporter and Islamic Sunni Scholar Asiff Hussein. He commented in response to Speakout on FGM laying prominence on the connection between "increasing pleasure and "to keep a woman chaste." He was quoted saying

"This [removal of the clitoral hood] necessarily leads to a satisfactory sex life among women, thus ensuring their chastity. The classical jurists were not such parochial men after all. They deduced from this one statement of the prophet what it really meant."

In other words, Khatna or circumcision was precisely a practice motivated to ensure sexual satisfaction of woman in marriage so that she does not stray out of the matrimonial bond. But despite the above statement health consequences and obstetric outcomes of circumcision fail to establish female ensured sexual satisfaction. However, several interpretations of prophet's words do sound believable on one point that the practice is a taboo to control sexual desires of women to the core. It seems like the coital control of the very actual of sensuousness in a sexual intercourse is being calculatively controlled by a husband, which is a serious deprivation of Article 21, where woman holds a total liberty to one's sexual desires and sensuality as well, but the statements above suggest that the germination of a total experience of marital bond even during the penile function and penetration into a women's vagina is being controlled. Controlling a woman in whatsoever manner is inappropriate and at least this form of control on her freedom of senses of sexual satisfaction is unholy and inhumane.

It is well recognized that local community and religious leaders have pivotal roles and opportunities to either influence change and to help change attitudes and understanding or, conversely, to contribute to and support continuation of the practice of FGM/C¹⁹. The rationale and religious significance put forward by various scholars fail to justify the requirement for cutting a female genital however minor the procedure might seem to be. FGM has been declared as a human rights violation of both girls and women. Expressive international instruments suggest guidelines and the need to end FGM as one of the Sustainable development goals 2030. Like her male counterpart, a female also shares the same human sense however there are physical differences that are God created. Overarching patriarchal ideas have no relevance in society today. Any alterations with a female's genital in order to control or try or enhance her future sexual life is next to sin. Young girls as young as seven-year-old has no clue about sex or the functions of various

¹⁸ Alahmad, G., & Dekkers, W. (2012). Bodily integrity and male circumcision: an islamic perspective. The Journal of IMA, 44(1), 44-1-7903. <https://doi.org/10.5915/44-1-7903>

¹⁹ Mohamud, A. A., & McAntony, A. (2006). Female genital mutilation: cutting in Somalia (No. 36033, pp. 1-135). The World Bank.

genital organs of her body that shall one day be discovered by herself, honestly, time should be given to these innocent girls and their puberties to remain untouched, uncut and naturally discovered and be born as woman.

The clitoris serves a high engineering purpose in a female body by protecting it from overstimulation, injury abrasions and it naturally retrocede during sexual stimulation and arousal to allow further exposure of the clitoris. What is necessary here to understand is that it does not require any cut for exposition. Female genitals have natural functions to perform and any alterations or modifications will not enhance anything but destroy their sense of compassionate and healthy natural life. Blindly following khatna is same as the concept of “western” clitoral unhooding. Clitoral unhooding is performed on consenting minor females. It is done only when sexually active women have issues with too much prepuce tissue during orgasms on sexual arousal. Also, saying that *tahaarat* is the main reason behind khatna lacks a strong argument as personal and physical hygiene can be maintained preferably by vaginal liquid wash or soaps or water and the right order to achieve spiritual or religious purity does not go through one’s genitals but through the strength, wisdom, deeds and thoughts of a person while performing *namaaz* or prayers.