

**THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN FIGHTING FEMALE CIRCUMCISION  
CASE STUDY THE NEW VISION**

**BY**

**CHEPTAI NAMISI**

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## DECLARATION

I Cheptai Namisi, hereby declare that this is my original work and has not been presented to any institution for any award

Signed.....

Date..... 13/7/2006

This dissertation has been submitted for examination with the approval of my supervisor.

Sign..... 13/7/2006

Supervisor: Miss Sylvia Byamukama

Lecturer Faculty of social sciences and law

Kampala International University

P.O. Box 20000,

Kampala,

Uganda.

## DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my beloved father Mr. Martin Cheptai Namisi and my sweet mother Miss Margret Mutiambu and entire family at large, for the encouragement they have ever given me since I began my studies.

**MAY ALMIGHTY GOD BLESS THEM.**

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I am grateful to God for his provisions, protection and his abundant grace which I believe gave me a break through not only in this study but throughout the course.

**GLORY IS TO HIM FOREVER.**

**DEFINITION OF TERMS.**

- ACFODE - Community for development.
- F.C - Female circumcision
- RH - Reproductive Health.
- UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund.
- SEA - Sabinu Elders Association.
- REACH - Reproductive Education And Community Health.
- FGM - Female Genital Mutilation.
- FPAU - Family Planning Association Of Uganda.
- CEDAW - Convention On the Elimination of all forms of discrimination Against  
Women.
- ICDP - International Conference on Population And development.
- FWCW - Fourth World Conference On Women.
- UN - United Nations.

## PREFACE

This study was carried out to establish the role of the media in fighting female circumcision, with reference to the leading daily- The New Vision.

The research began by reviewing some of the available literature related to the subject on the global, regional and local scene, most of the literature reviewed was from Uganda and it was available in form of papers presented in the workshops, magazines and newspapers.

The methodology used was both qualitative and quantitative; two sets of the structured questionnaires were administered.

The methodology used was aimed at finding out whether the media has helped any role in fighting female circumcision since other organizations have set out to disband this practice.

Personal interviews were held with particular personalities in the media, organization and policy makers to get their views on the subject, in addition the interviews also sought for strategies on how best the media can fight female circumcision.

Focus group discussion were held with some UNFPA members, executive members of REACH and SEA projects UNFPA was chosen as a pressure group struggling to fight female circumcision and especially in the media.

The findings showed that although there has been an increase in the coverage of the anti female circumcision articles the issues were mainly focused on reproductive Health.

(RH)

Finding further revealed that although the New Vision ran stories on Female circumcision, they were only published when there was need. The new vision hardly highlighted the danger of female circumcision.

The majority of respondents recommended that all media personnel be gender sensitized if the media is to play a role in fighting female circumcision. In addition media personals are encouraged to attend workshops on female circumcision eradication so that they can know the facts and urgency of this practice.

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- ii) Questionnaire for Media Personnel
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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 BACK GROUND

Female circumcision (FC) is a traditional practice which dates back to antiquity (ancient time). It involves the removal of parts of the external genital organs. The reasons for its genesis and continuity up to date vary from society to society. Because of its serious effect it is now often referred to as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Female Genital Mutilation has been practiced for along time in many Africa countries including the East African Countries of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda as seen below.

#### FEMALE CIRCUMCISION (FC) PREVALENCE IN AFRICA

| FC PREVALENCE | TYPE OF FC                  | COUNTRIES   |
|---------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 0.49%         | 1,2 & 3                     | Uganda, Tanzania, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Cote D'ivoire, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal  |
| 50-60%        | Mostly 2 but includes 1 & 3 | Kenya, Benin, Chad, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia and Togo                                     |
| 70-98%        | Mostly 3 but includes 2 & 1 | Ethiopia, Eritria, Egypt, Mali, Gambia Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Djibouti, and Burkina Faso |

#### KEY

Type 1: Clitoridectomy.

Type 2: Excision.

Type 3: Infibulations.

In the countries mentioned above, there are pockets of ethnic groups or tribes that practice female circumcision in varying degrees and for various reasons.

In Uganda, female circumcision is practiced by the Sabiny, tribe popularly Sebei of Kapchorwa. The practice is regarded as a sacred ritual sanctioned by the ancestors protected by cultural beliefs and used to initiate girls into adulthood, while conferring cultural identity (Kiirya 1997).

Kapchorwa is a small district in Eastern Uganda bordered by Kenya to its East. Its West and North is bordered by Mbale and Karamoja respectively. It occupies the slopes of Mount Elgon, which forms its Southern border.

However, whatever the degree and reason for circumcision the practice has been associated with a number of health complications and social complications that have drawn global concern. The associated health complications include:-Pain, infections, hemorrhage, injury, lameness, painful intercourse, difficult or desire and satisfaction etc (Met Calf, 1996, Kakuba &Kanesathan, 1995)

According to the chairperson Uganda Human Rights Commission, These concerns call for discouragement, disabling and eliminating of the practice whenever it is done, a number of international and regional organizations have convened directly for actions to eliminate the practice through changing cultural beliefs associated with female circumcision adoption of appropriate polices and legislation improvement of overall social- economic conditions of women.

These Fora and connections include the convention on the rights of the child (1989) The convention on the elimination of all forms Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1979: The international Conference on Women (FWCW) 1995 Beijing. The principle and basis for action of all these fora and conventions is the context of promoting gender,

equity and equality: respect for sexual and reproductive rights and promotion of reproductive health.

In the response to these international commitment to which all three East African countries are signatory, each member country has put in place some interventions to address the practice of female circumcision using different approaches and thus achieving varying degree of success including lessons learned.

According to the female genital mutilation workshop at Sunset Hotel on March 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> 2000, it was noted that since there is mass population movement and strong relations across the borders and within the region, isolated and successful female circumcision intervention in one country will not be effective. For a long time efforts to address female circumcision is weak in the neighboring countries like Kenya and Tanzania. Circumcision and candidates will continue crossing over borders to get the practice going on wherever the situation warrants. Therefore a likely successful strategy would call for a joint regional initiative to be put in place and a continuous intervention of the media to educate the society on the evils of female circumcision.

The female organization Isis Wicce in their magazine “Proof in print violence against women in the news” argue that News papers are one of the most visible and readily available forms of documentation. They influence our opinions and shape our understanding of the environment in which we live. The magazine says that an average reader presumes that newspapers provide unbiased and gender neutral documentation of events and social problems.

The magazine continues to say that documentation does not exist in a vacuum its socially constructed information that is influenced by those who gather and synthesize it and because most newspapers have historically been staffed and owned by men. They tend to filter information through a male lens as a result, women’s experience of violence have had little influence over the way in which we understand and analyze violence against women was considered part and parcel of the natural order of the world. Because newspapers

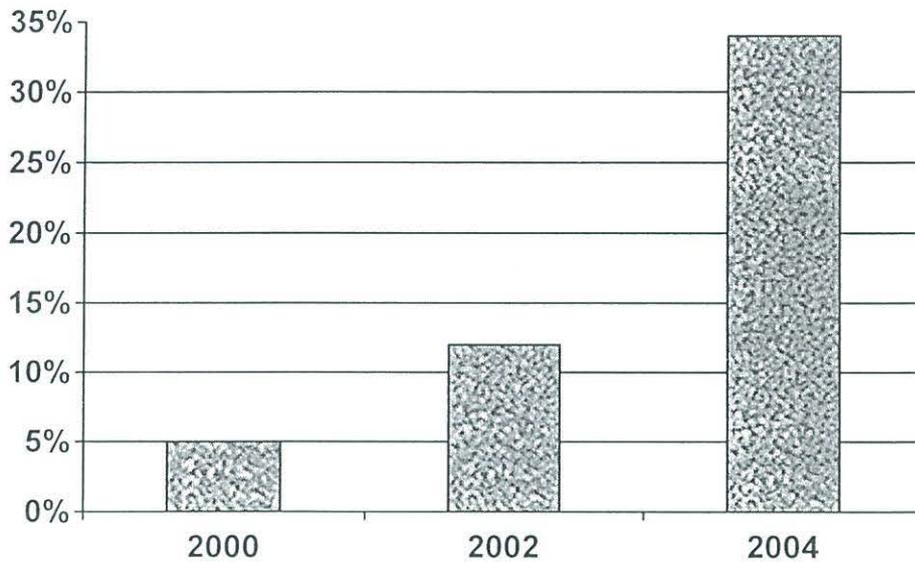
continue to be dominated the sources of violence against women continue to be dominated. The sources of violence against women continue to go largely unaddressed hence looking at “the role of media in fighting female circumcision”

### 1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although there has been a deliberate attempt to encourage the Sabiny community to discard female circumcision. There seems to be persistent opposition to discarding this practice.

The persistent opposition is mainly because of large number of adolescents who braved this practice in 2004 as compared to 2000 and 2002 which in contrast recorded a drop in female circumcision incidence as seen below.

### PERCENTAGE



Where as the drop will partly contribute to a range of community Reproductive health (RH) intervenes such as reproduction Education and community Health, saved religious groups and family planning association of Uganda (FPAU).The reasons that explicate the apparent increase in incidence of female circumcision in 2004 are still un clear. Studies so far done

indicated that the level of knowledge on potential risk of female circumcision were low even among those who braved the practice, in addition, young women, particularly the secondary school going ones in general have positive attitudes towards the practice. Concern is growing over the etiologic (being pale and weak) Reason underlying persistence of female circumcision in the Sabiny Community despite the on going interventions

In light of all these concepts concerning female circumcision what has the media done to reduce this practice? This is the question to be answered in this study.

### **1.3 PURPOSE/AIM**

The purpose of this study was to find out why there is persistent opposition on female circumcision in spite of the efforts made by the media and other institutions to encourage the people to discard the practice.

### **1.4 HYPOTHESIS**

The study was based on the following hypothesis

- a) There is persistent opposition of female circumcision in spite of media campaigns to encourage people to discard the practice.
- b) There is noticeable improvement in coverage of female circumcision since 1998-2004.

### **1.5 JUSTIFICATION**

Female circumcision is one of the practices whose physical and psychological effects are often traumatic and because the irreversible nature of the procedure affect the health and well being particularly the sexual and productive health through the lives of those who undergo the procedures (UNFPA 1997). Apart from dropping out of school early and marrying soon after the circumcision ritual. They are predisposed to a number of health risks ranging from severe bleeding and, HIV infection, pain, hemorrhage, occasional death

lameness painful intercourse, abstracted labour, low sexual desire and stigma.(Met calf 1996,Kakuba and Kanesathasan,1995).

The study was to expose the effects of female circumcision on women/girls in particular and the community as a whole. In addition some women who undergo the practice stand high risks of child birth complications during delivery or delivering dead babies. They develop holes between the vagina and the bladder or rectum which makes conception difficult to the international and local policy makers and implementers in the field of reproductive health.

Based on these health and human right considerations Government and women activists attempted to decampn and ban the practice but their efforts were met with a lot of opposition by the community. Instead more women /girls supported circumcision as a signal to resistance to the outsiders' interference in their culture. This study could was an eye opener to women journalists to play a vital role in female circumcision through continuous media campaigns.

The study was to provide mass communication department with literature for other students in the department, researchers and academicians wishing to carry out a study on the related subject in the future.

## **1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The study was conducted in Kapchorwa and Kampala Two parishes were selected from Kapchorwa, Kaptum, Mayok and Cheboromu; and a former student of Kaptum. One of the reasons for this choice is that previous studies show that female circumcision is wide spread and still is cherished by the Sabinu throughout Kapchorwa District. Thus the parishes selected was provide a reasonable population from which a draw on sample of circumcised and un circumcised women, girls and other Sabinu Community members will be done.

Kampala was also chosen because it is where the policy makers are located organizations like the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) that are trying to eradicate female circumcision are located in Kampala it also provides the largest Newspaper leadership.

## 1.7 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the current study was:-

- a) Finding out the development in terms of supportive and opposition community views and initiatives regarding the portrayal of female circumcision.
- b) Finding out why the female circumcision is still going on in spite of the on-going female circumcision eradication media campaigns.
- c) Propose media strategies for increasing impact on the on-going campaigns to eradicate female circumcision.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. SOCIETY AND CULTURE

According to Richard Nzita and Mbaga Niwampa in their book “Peoples and cultures in Uganda” The Sebei are very proud of their individuality and customs. One of their unique customs that distinguishes them from the neighbors is female circumcision.

Richard Nzita and Mbaga Niwampa also say while male circumcision was well regarded and carried out after every two years, female circumcision was an annual event requiring not so much organization except the availability of sufficient Wambi(Maize) to make sufficient beer for occasions. This was usually in December but no fixed days were laid down they also said that the girls to be circumcised were usually between the ages of thirteen and sixteen years and they had to be virgins. If a girl became pregnant before circumcision, it was usual to circumcise her immediately after her condition became known without formal ceremonies circumcision was a way of initiation to womanhood and no girl could be allowed to enjoy her full rights including sexual intercourse before she had been circumcised.

According to the book, “Peoples and culture of Uganda.” The beginning of the ceremony was announced by small groups of girls who would start dancing from home to home. They were led by a young woman of between twenty and thirty years who would be chosen on the basis of prestige she had attained when endured circumcision without complaint during her own turn.

The book adds that the initiatees were decently dressed. In the recent past they could wear cotton blouses and skirts held up by crossed straps over their shoulders. Before the actual ceremony. They would sing and dance for almost two days. They could be allowed to drink milk and take short rest if they are particularly distressed.

Richard Nzita and Mbaga Niwampa also say that in the afternoon of the day of the ceremony, their faces were decorated in form of square with water in order to increase their beauty. After sunset a large crowd of people would gather and form a step into the circle around the initiates. Old women would step into the circle to sing songs in praise of the circumcision and urge the girls to endure all pain of circumcision without fear or complaint.

According to Nzita and Mbaga, the initiatees would then join hands in pain and extend to their edges of the circle where they would slightly touch the on lookers with the cow's tail or tree branches to show that they had no fear of anything. The men would be in the neighbourhood, drinking beer; they use long tubes with filters at the bottom. Merry making would go on throughout the night.

## **2.2 THE ACT OF CIRCUMCISION**

According to the book "Peoples and cultures of Uganda" by Richard Nzita and Mbaga Niwampa, Girls were circumcised after dawn. The girls and their female relatives would assemble at the place of operation customarily, no man could attend but only women and girls could. The initiatives were made to lie down with their arms on their heads and their legs spread. They were not supposed to be tied or held during the operation.

Just before circumcision, the intestines of a sheep which had been slaughtered for the occasion were laid on the face of the girls to keep their eyes open during the operation, then the circumciser would perform the act by making three separate incisions into the girl, thereafter the girl was led into a fenced boma across the entrance of which the entrails of the slaughtered sheep were laid on each side of the entrance were placed two spears pointing outwards from the Boma, only leaving sufficient space for one person to enter. The slaughtered sheep and the spears were to scare evil spirits. Legend has it that in olden days these stabs spears were used by parents to spear girls who refused to be circumcised.

Nzita and Mbaga go ahead to say that once the girls were inside the boma, people were allowed to visit them. About an hour after the ceremony, the initiates were led away to

units and put in the care of old women until they would recover in one or two month's time. It was urine that was used for treating the wound. After recovery, the girls regarded as ripe and eligible for marriage and able to enjoy other privileges accorded to women.

### **2.3 CULTURE, SOCIETY AND THE MEDIA**

According to the book "CULTURE, SOCIETY AND MEDIA, cultural dependency and mass media" by J.O BOYD BARRET, it is believed that the media would play an important role in relation to national development, in terms of information dissemination and attitude change which was promoted by some Western Researchers in interesting contrast to an established view that in the already developed world the media performed a mainly reinforcing role with respect to attitude change.

He goes ahead to say that a phenomenon as persuasive and as elusive as that of intercultural media influence should so rarely be seen to contribute at least some positive factors to the process of social change in poor economies.

According to BOYD-BARRET, any general discussion of media impact should include an assessment of the extent to which population is actually exposed to media. The most important factor helping to account for exposure is physical availability of the media. This is still something that cannot be granted in very many of the poor countries. The major obstacles to media development pertain to market conditions, political insecurity, linguistic diversity illiteracy and technology

BOYD- BARRET goes ahead to say that the view that mass media could help to breakdown traditional values has been found unhelpful in a number of ways. The concept of development itself an especially value laden term; The relationship between given social values and a western model of development is peculiarly complex and possibly requires a better understanding of both 'developing' and developed societies than what exists now.

But the simple claim that mass media contributes to national integration and hence development requires considerable modification.

Even when the mass media have been nationalised there remains an important conflict by Katz and Wedell (1978) between the exploitation of mass media in order to bring changes in attitude that would hasten the process of modernisation. BOYD says the importance of the mass media in relation to national unity is evident at each of these stages of political integration in development process: The stages of political integration in the early phase of independence, the onset of modernisation and the reaction against it.

## **2.4 REPRODUCTIVE EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY HEALTH (REACH)**

### **PROJECT.**

According to research made by Chekwero Jackson, this project works with the community to innovate alternatives to the practice sanctioning change or legitimise discarding the practice while maintaining cultural values and social mobilisation by key change agents reaching out to and convincing community members to accept change.

The project has also been conducting annual cultural day to promote good culture practices and advocate for cultural alternatives that enhance the positive values of the Sabin society without necessarily undergoing female circumcision. The cultural day is held once every year in the month of December. It brings together stakeholders and community members to deliberate about their harmful aspects of the Practice.

Beside presenting concrete biological social and psychological information related to the practice, community members are also encouraged to discard the practice and replace it with harmless rituals.

## **2.5 FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION OF UGANDA (FPAU)**

Chekweko Jackson also said that FPAU Integrated Community Health Project was inaugurated in 1997 in Kapchorwa District. Being a fairly new project few community

members know about it owing to the fact that it has been also able to implement a few activities related to reproductive health. FPAU has been able to train some nurses and peer educators to assist in the provision of information and counselling associated with Family Planning and Female Circumcision, provide antenatal services, participate in immunisation campaigns and sensitize community members through Seminars, film shows and a puppet drama. These activities have largely focused on issues related to Reproductive Health particularly on the linkage between Family Planning and Female Circumcision (Chekweko 1994).

## **2.6 SABINY ELDERS ASSOCIATION.(SEA)**

In his research, Chekweko also said that SEA has been working hand in hand with Reproductive Education and Community Health in the campaigns against female circumcision .It has trained members of the executive at the district level and sensitized its members at grass root level with some logistical support from reproductive Education and Community Health and Development Network of Indigenous Association (DENIVA)

The Association has recognised that the clans have beliefs and taboos that actually facilitate female circumcision. In order to eradicate the myths and misconceptions, SEA plans to bring together clan heads and work with them to sensitize clan members about the need for changes of certain cultural norms that are oppressive to women/ girls in the family and community.

## **2.7. RELIGIOUS GROUPS**

Spiritual activities and active participation of saved religious groups such as Pentecostal and body of Christ churches in the campaigns against female circumcision began 30 years ago in Kapchorwa district. Presently each of these churches has at least 50 churches through the district and 2-4 churches per parish with each having an adult congregation ranging between 50-100. In addition, whereas there are Protestants, religious denomination in Kapchorwa District, they have not been very active in the campaign to eradicate female circumcision as compared to the Pentecostal and body of Christ churches.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

This Section presents the methods' that was used in the study highlights the scope of the study, sample selection methods of data collection and analysis.

### 3.1 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

To analyse the role of the media in fighting female circumcision in Uganda. Specific groups and individuals in society will be targeted .These include editors. These were interviewed to find out how they cover cultural practices, what types of cultural practices are of interest to them and the criteria they use for selecting such processes.

The study also was focus on journalists in other media organisations to get their views about the role of the media in fighting female circumcision ,Radio and television broadcast both government owned and private stations are part of the population.

The United Population Fund (UNFPA), Reproductive Education and Community Health (REACH) and other women activists were approached to get their views and comments regarding the coverage of female circumcision in the media.

The women groups were requested to state their contribution made in ensuring role of the media in fighting female circumcision. They also suggested how best media can be used to fight female circumcision. The population was also to include Sabinu elder's directors, and heads of organizations that help to fight female circumcision.

### **3.2 SAMPLING PROCEDURE.**

A purposive random sampling was applied in identifying respondents for the study. For this at least two editors and their reporters from The New Vision besides other reporters from other news papers.

Included in this sample was the Sabin elders, heads and directors of the United Nations Population Fund and community Health and Family Planning Association Uganda. Emphasis was placed on organization and individuals that help fight female circumcision, policy makers and outstanding individuals in society like Miss Jane Kuka and Mr. Dr Steven Chebrot who have contributed in fighting female circumcision.

### **3.3 DATA COLLECTION**

Data in this study was be collected by using both quantitative and qualitative methods in these Quantitative method , two sets of structured questions will be administered ; a set for leaders , heads and directors of organizations that can help fight of female circumcision and one for the media personnel. Qualitative face-to-face interviews with individuals and focus group discussions was being held.

A documented Information form previous researcher on female circumcision by organization like UNFPA, REACH, and FPAU was used.

### **3.4 CONTENT ANALYSIS**

News Papers was gathered of the years 1998-2004 and the content on female circumcision was analyzed on the basis of coverage/space allocated to article on female circumcision and themes covered.

### **3.5 LIMITATIONS**

The study was not a simple one as the re is financial constraints that may delay the work, also the problem to be faced during interviews for example interviewees may give a date which may make the study period predictable.

There maybe poor response from reporters as a good number of them may fail to return the questionnaires. This caused a delay in compiling the findings and more questionnaires were to be distributed to other reporters to get tangible results.

The language barrier I had to hire a translator, which is costly and time consuming .This Problem of language barrier has also limited the readership of The New Vision in Kapchorwa.

The research project was expensive in terms of product distribution and collection of questionnaires ringing various individuals fix appointments for interviews, transport cost to and from various places. Stationary, typing .This means that one is supposed to work hard to secure the funds to meet the above costs.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS.

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter highlights the results of the study from the structured questionnaires, the focus group discussion and interviews with individuals. Results from the questionnaires were given in tabulation form while in the other method used, the result were in narrative form.

#### 4.2. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH DISTRICT LEADERS IN KAPCHORWA.

This was held at different places of work. The group comprised of five members holding different posts in the district. The purpose of the group discussion was to get views from different leaders regarding the role of the media in fighting female circumcision.

During the discussion, members noted that the media in fighting female circumcision has been effective to the sabiny elites

“The target groups who are mostly illiterate tend to miss out information brought Forward in the media especially print media and also the ordinary people who Are the majority are neglected”

A respondent noted that a big role in fighting female circumcision is attributed to education and religion. The argument is that the media has failed to bring out the information in an advisory and educational manner.

“ The article in the media tend to demoralize the people for example when it was Quoted that female circumcision leads to barrenness which is not true.”

A member noted that the culture of reading newspapers lacked among the Sabiny community.

“ If a paper was introduced in Kuku sabiny like the Etop of Teso, people in Kapchorwa could pick the interest to read because it is in their local language. The

greatest number of the sabiny community are illiterate and so do not see any reason of buying or reading newspapers.”

Commenting on the role of the media in fighting female circumcision, a respondent said that there are a few occasions she read the new vision, and never came across stories on female circumcision.

“Women are reported as baby thieves, battered wives, step mothers burning step Children and yet there are important issues to be attended to like female Circumcision.”

A respondent decried the failure of new vision to highlight the issue on reproductive health. She said there so many things that affect the reproductive organs but none of them is mentioned in the papers.

“Reproductive health problem like health complications and social implications Which are caused by female circumcision have not been highlighted in the news Paper”

A respondent suggested that all districts should have papers in their local languages so that the people are sensitized on every crucial issue like female circumcision.

#### **4.3 THE SABINY ELDERS ASSOCIATION (SEA) FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION.**

The group comprised of four people of different posts in the organization. The discussion was supposed to get the views of different people concerning the role of the media in fighting female circumcision.

During the discussion the SEA chairman was imposed with the members of women who were no longer interested in female circumcision.

“The number of women who undergo circumcision has reduced as compared to The previous years and this is because of education and efforts made by religious Leaders.”

The chairman of SEA also commended the effort made by the media (The New Vision) is fighting female circumcision.

“It is through articles in the media that we have organizations like UNFPA

Coming from up smaller organizations like REACH and SEA to fight female Circumcision. ”

But the chairman also showed a great need of communication officers who will be responsible for publishing articles concerning female circumcision.

A respondent complained that there are many cultural activities, which affect the development of this nation and need to be addressed. But the media (The New vision) neglects this need and concentrates on non-issues.

“News papers spent a lot of time talking about women dressing and fashion which are non developmental there is need to focus on. Circumcision so that they can discard this practice since People spend a whole year participating in it, and developmental things like Agriculture.”

One of the respondents pointed a finger on women journalists saying that they are the ones to advocate for such articles in the media.

“Some of the women do not care about the health complications women undergo Due to female circumcision. Women journalists are the ones Who would highlight the plight of women.”

Another respondent noted that although women groups carry out activities that are related to health complications, hardly are they reported about in the media.

“Women have come up in groups to enlighten society on health complications Experienced by the women in the society but the media does not recognize some of these activities that are meant to improve the health of women in the society.”

One of the members was of the view that there are a few women in The New Vision holding top positions for example the editors most of them female journalists occupy low positions where decisions are taken in most cases they are just reporters and so affecting the reporting of the health complications in women.

“If there were women in decision making positions they would be the ones to give a push to issues regarding female circumcision in The New Vision.”

A respondent blamed the media for failure to highlight the International women’s Day like other days for example International Labor day and Independence Day.

“The New Vision should carry out special supplements on women’s day as they do on other important days. This would be the best opportunity to feature the health complications and social complications that women undergo.”

**They made the following recommendations.**

The female circumcision sensitization seminars and workshops be conducted for all journalists in the media so that they can report on issues concerning health complication and social implications.

That women NGOs should form a strong task Force to fight female circumcision through the media, through lobbying and advocacy and reacting to the poor coverage of female circumcision in The New Vision.

That more women should be trained in journalism so that they can get decision making positions in The New Vision hence enabling them to highlight the dangers of practicing female circumcision.

**4.4 FOCUS ON GROUP DISCUSSION WITH UNITED NATIONS POPULATION (UNFPA)**

Reproductive education and community health (REACH) project work hand in hand in the fight for female circumcision. The purpose of this discussion is to get the views of these projects from the media in fighting female circumcision.

According to UNFPA the press was not allowed at the initial stage of the project for fear of mis - representing information or even exposing it to premature criticism. So there was need for the project to initiate a cultural sensitive intervention in the media.

A respondent said that The New Vision is biased in its coverage of cultural activities. The newspaper mostly focuses on activities in the central region.

“There is a bias in favor of the central region we need to see more from the other Parts of the country.”

A member also said that whenever workshops are organized, journalists do not attend and so information that is published ends up being distorted since it is not a professional reporter who writes the story, facts are neglected. She recommended journalists to attend such work shops where crucial issues on reproductive health are discussed.

#### 4.5 INTERVIEW WITH THE NEW VISION.

This interview was questionnaire form and they were answered by different people in The New Vision Head office. The purpose of the interview was to get, different views from the journalists regarding the role of the media in fighting female circumcision.

In the response got, members noted that The New Vision has many more things to write about besides cultural activities like female circumcision.

“You can not have cultural activities all the time but we write about them when Need arise, besides we have many more things to write about.”

According to the people interviewed, most of them were impressed with the coverage of female circumcision by The New Vision as seen in the table below.

**TABLE III THE COVERAGE OF FEMALE CIRCUMCISION BY THE NEW VISION:**

| RATING    | NUMBER | %     |
|-----------|--------|-------|
| Excellent | 8      | 33.3% |
| Good      | 10     | 41.7% |
| Fair      | 4      | 16.7% |
| Poor      | 2      | 8.2%  |
| Total     | 24     | 100%  |

Out of the 24 respondents in The New Vision, 8 journalists were satisfied with coverage of female circumcision (33.3%), 10 respondents said the coverage is good (41.7%), 4 respondents looked at the coverage as being fair (16.7%), while 2 respondents said the coverage is still poor (8.2%)

In analyzing the rate of coverage of female circumcision, it can be said that most of the people in the New Vision are impressed with the coverage of female circumcision. This could be as a result of the New Vision having a government inclination, which gives a lot of coverage to government activities.

Data from The New Vision showed that the articles on female circumcision were only published when there was need to highlight the people and when they are news worthy.

Female circumcision in The New Vision is mostly covered in the theme “community knowledge, attitude and the practices related to female circumcision, Genital cutting in Kapchorwa District” The problem with this theme is that they do not give the danger of practicing female circumcision. The community should be educated about the complications and social implications of female circumcision.

**TABLE IV : TYPES OF CULTURAL ACTIVITIES COVERED BY THE NEW VISION**

| TYPE           | NO | %     |
|----------------|----|-------|
| Circumcision   | 4  | 28.6% |
| Cattle keeping | 6  | 42.8% |
| Death rituals  | 2  | 14.3% |
| Child naming   | 2  | 14.3% |
| Total          | 12 | 100%  |

The above table indicates that more time and space is given to cattle keeping (42.8%) followed by circumcision (male and female) (28.6%), Death rituals and child naming are given the same time and space of coverage (14.3%)

This could be attributed to the seasonal nature of female circumcision after every other year. Health complications and social implications could be highlighted even in the years when social implications could be highlighted even in the years when social implications there is no circumcision so that people can adjust with the practice since they can not discard the practice so easily.

**TABLE V: AGE BRACKETS FOR JOURNALISTS IN NEW VISION.**

| AGE GROUP | NO | %     |
|-----------|----|-------|
| 20- 25    | 14 | 58.1% |
| 25-35     | 6  | 24.9% |
| 35-45     | 4  | 17.0% |
| 45-55     | —  | —     |
| 55        | —  | —     |
| Total     | 24 | 100%  |

The above table indicates that the majority of journalists in the new vision are young between age of 20 – 25 years making up a percentage of (58%) very few of them fall between the age of 25 and 30 years (24.9%) what is surprising among journalists who participated in this study only four were between the age of 35 and 45 years none of them was above 45 years.

This could be attributed to the new trend in profession of journalism. The degree in mass communication was introduced in 1988. Since then young students from “A” level have joined the course in reasonable numbers, meaning that they qualify as journalists at early age (at about 23 years) Therefore, they join the media houses in the youth stage, since university graduates are now preferred whenever there are job opportunities. The presence of youths in The New Vision definitely affect the way female circumcision is reported. The youth stage is normally characterized by making discoveries and it is the prime age for making fun.

Perhaps this is the reason for sensational articles that are about several issues for instance female circumcision and such other areas that need highlighting female circumcision are neglected.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The findings confirmed that The New Vision is a leading daily in terms of readership and circulation and it covers issues on female circumcision. The study showed that although The New Vision covers cultural activities. Most of it was allocated to cattle keeping and female circumcision was not given much attention as needed

It was also established that although The New Vision covers the issues of female circumcision, most of it is on the theme “Community Knowledge Attitude and Practices related to female Genital Cutting in the Kapchorwa” The health implications and the social implications of the practice were not highlighted.

On the other hand, however a good number of respondents held the view that the paper published some articles about female circumcisions and its dangers. The New Vision was commended for the educative articles pertaining reproductive health.

The study indicated that although organizations projects in Uganda have made outstanding contribution in fighting female circumcision, hardly are their efforts features in the media. But even when coverage is given the articles are not educative and persuading, instead they tend to demoralize the community, it was established that the target groups who are mostly circumcised and un circumcised are rural women and girls who are already aware of the health complications of female circumcision

The low number of female number of females journalist in decision making positions, coupled with various obstacles like heavy work load play a major role in the way female circumcision is covered, women issues are not given priority since the women who would try to push such issues were very few and still in low positions where decisions are not made

Many respondents hold the view that the major reason for the raw deal that female circumcision receives in the media is due to profit motive of the papers. They do this by coming up with headlines or pictures that can attract the attention of the people, hence health complications and social implications caused by female circumcision are not considered news worthy, at times.

A point that emerged strongly from the study was lack of gender sensitivity among the journalists. This meant that they lacked gender awareness and this greatly affected the way female circumcision is covered.

On the other hand, the study showed that the sabiny women girls themselves are to blame for their persistence in the practice. It was revealed that the sabiny women/girls felt that it is through the practice of circumcision that one is considered a woman that is why many still brave the practice.

Another revelation in the study was to do with the age of most journalists in the media. The study showed that most of them are below the age of 25 years. This implies that they are not mature enough and this affects them in the news gathering, selection and reporting such that they tend to concentrate on issues that are funny and sensational.

UNFPA was commended for the efforts it has shown in fighting female circumcision. The research showed that UNFPA target policy makers to respond to the issues that appear in the media concerning health complications and social implications caused by female circumcision.

The research also revealed that the project intended to improve the health of women / girls in the sabiny society hence highlighting the dangers of practicing female circumcision.

## **5.2. CONCLUSION FROM THE STUDY**

It is evident from the study that health complications and social implications caused by female circumcision are still given little courage in spite of the efforts made by some organizations, projects to encourage the people to discard practice. The Uganda government has not come up with a policy of persuading the sabiny community to discard this practice.

There is therefore an urgent need for gender awareness among the media personnel. Gender awareness should be given attention for three reasons one is on the human rights ground, the necessity for this need is embedded in various international declarations and inventions such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1940), the UNESCO CONVENTION Against discrimination in education (1962) and the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (1981) of which Uganda is a signatory. The issues here are that women are human beings with their own rights and should have equal rights with men in all aspects. Issues concerning health complication caused by female circumcision should be highlighted

The second reason is that unless women are given attention, female circumcision will be on an increase. If gender is not addressed in the media, issues concerning women's productive health caused by female circumcision will not be highlighted.

Thirdly unless gender is addressed, women's contribution in fighting female circumcision remain "invisible" and the practice will receive persistent opposition. The media for instance could play a major role in highlighting the contribution women make in fighting female circumcision

## **5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY.**

Considering the rate of low coverage of female circumcision in The New Vision, it was recommended that women activists should form a task force to help fight female circumcision through the media and it this will require networking on the side of the women's groups.

UNFPA working in conjunction with other projects should lobby government to enact anti female circumcision laws; this could possibly reduce the rate of female circumcision

Women working in the media should mobilize resources and establish media houses purely owned by women. This will enable them to participate in decision making and hence give the priority to women issues like health complications and social implications caused by female circumcision

Female circumcision sensitization workshops be conducted for all journalists so that they can report issues concerning health complications caused by female circumcision.

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**KAMPALA  
INTERNATIONAL  
UNIVERSITY**

Ggaba Road, Kansanga \* PO BOX 20000 Kampala, Uganda  
Tel: +256 (0) 41 - 266 813 \* Fax: +256 (0) 41 - 501 974  
E-mail: admin@kiu.ac.ug \* Website: http://www.kiu.ac.ug

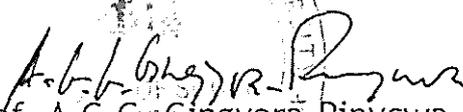
*Faculty of Social Sciences and Law*

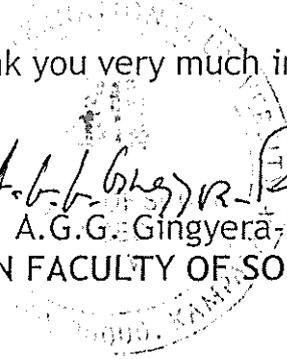
To:..... THE EDITOR  
.....THE NEW VISION  
.....NEWS PAPER  
.....

This is to introduce to you Mr. /Miss. CHEPTAI NAMISI  
.....  
who is a bona fide student of Kampala International University,  
He/She is working on a research project, which is a partial  
requirement for the award of a degree.

I hereby kindly request you in the name of the University to accord  
him/her all the necessary assistance required for this work.

Thank you very much in advance.

  
Prof. A.G.G. Gingyera-Pinyawa  
DEAN FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND LAW



## QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Sir or Madam:

You're kindly requested to fill the questions below to help Mr. Cheptai Namisi who is doing research project on "THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN FIGHTING FEMALE CIRCUMCISION " CASE STUDY OF THE NEW VISION to complete his bachelors degree of mass communication as a final requirement to the completion of his course at Kampala International University. The information or finding of this research will be treated confidently and are restricted for academic purposes only. Thanks for your co-operation in advance. Below are the questions.

### A. PERSONAL INFORMATION:

1. Name of the Respondent .....

2. Occupation.....

3. Profession.....

4. Sex (Please tick)

a) Male

b) Female

5. Age Group in years

15-25

25-35

35-45

45-55

55 and above

6. Marital Status (Please tick)

a)Married

d) Divorced

b)Un married

e) Widow

c) Widower

f) Others (please specify) .....

7. Religious Affiliation (Please tick)

- a) Catholic
- b) Protestant
- c) Muslim
- d) Born again
- e) Non believer
- f) others Please specify.....

8. Level of Education

- a) Primary
- b) Secondary (O- Level)
- c) Secondary (A- Level)
- d) Tertiary
- e) None

**(B) ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION**

9. Name of Organisation/ Department/ Institution .....

10. Physical Location and Postal Address.....

11 When was it established? .....

12. What were its Objectives? .....

13. Do you deal with Cultural activities (Please tick)

- Yes
- No

14.If your answer is yes , please indicate which issue you deal with

.....  
.....

15. Briefly explain what you exactly do with regards to cultural activities?.....

.....

**(C) NEWS PAPER COVERAGE**

16. Do you read News Papers? (Please tick)

- Yes
- No

17 Give reasons for your answer in 16

.....  
.....

18. Which News Paper in Uganda Do you Read? Please Tick

- a) The New Vision
- b) The Monitor
- c) The East African
- d) Bukedde
- e) Others please specify

.....  
 .....

19. Which Newspaper(s) do you read most

.....  
 .....

20. Give reasons for your answer above? .....

.....  
 .....

21 How Often do you read news papers ( please tick from the table below)

| Newspaper Name   | Daily | Weekly | Once a week | Once a month |
|------------------|-------|--------|-------------|--------------|
| The New Vision   |       |        |             |              |
| The Monitor      |       |        |             |              |
| The East African |       |        |             |              |
| Bukedde          |       |        |             |              |
| Others(Name)     |       |        |             |              |

22. What topic do you read? (Please tick in the boxes provided and rank the topic 1-9 starting with the one you read most.

- a) Culture
- b) Politics
- c) Business
- d) Sports
- e) Gender Issues
- f) Health
- g) Cartoons

h) Puzzles

i) Others Specify

.....2

3 Give reasons for your answer

.....  
.....

**D. PORTRAYAL OF CULTURE IN NEWS PAPERS:**

24 In your view which of the following News papers covers Cultural activities/

a) The New vision

c) The East Africa

b) The Monitor

d) Bukedde

e) Others

Specify.....

.....

25. How do you rate the coverage of cultural activities in News Papers ? ( insert the correct number in the boxes for example if Bukedde is excellent in covering cultural activities insert 1 in the box against Bukedde)

a) The New Vision                      1 Excellent

b) The Monitor                            2 Very good

c) The East Africa                      3 Good

d) Bukedde                                4 Fair

e) others                                    5 Poor

26 Give reasons for your answer in 25

.....  
.....

27 . Are you satisfied with the way Cultural activities are covered in the News Papers?

Yes

No

28. a) If your answer in No why?

.....  
.....  
.....

b) If your answer is yes, Give reasons to support it?

.....  
.....  
.....

**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH.**

**STRUCTURED QUESTIONS FOR MEDIA PERSONNEL**

(All information will be treated with utmost Confidentiality)

**PERSONAL INFORMATION:**

(Please write in the space or tick in the appropriate box.)

1. a) Name ..... (optional)

- b) Sex            15- 25  
                      25-35  
                      35-45  
                      45-55  
                      55 & above

c) Marital Status:

- Married
- Unmarried
- Divorced
- Separated
- Widow
- Widower

d) Religious Affiliation

Catholic

Protestant

Born Again

SDA

Any other Please specify

.....  
.....

e) Level of Education

Primary

Secondary(O- Level)

Secondary (A- Level)

Tertiary

Others please specify

.....  
.....

f)Profession

.....  
.....

g) Occupation .....

h) Position held in an organization.....

i) For how long have you held the positioning (h).....

j) What is the nature of your work?

.....  
.....

NEWS COVERAGE OF CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

a) Does your News paper cover cultural activities?

Yes

No

b) If your answer in (a) is no give reasons for it

.....  
.....

c) If yes what type of cultural activities do you cover?

Circumcision (male and female)

Cattle Keeping

Farming

Death rituals

Child naming

Any other Please (specify).....

d) What is the nature of your coverage in (c)

e) How often does your news paper cover such issues?

Daily

Bi weekly

Once a Week

Once a month

Others (Please Specify)

f) What Criteria do you use for selecting the issues to cover?.....

.....  
.....

g) On which page does your paper carry stories to cultural activities .....

h) Give reasons for your answer in (g)

.....  
.....  
.....

i)How do you rate the coverage of cultural activities on your paper?

Excellent

Good

Fair

Poor

Any other please specify

j) Are you satisfied with the coverage of cultural activities?

.....  
.....

k)

i) If your answer in (j) is yes please give an explanation for it

.....  
.....  
.....

ii) If your answer in (j) is no suggest ways of how best you would like cultural activities to be covered.

.....  
.....  
.....

## APPENDIX (i)

Financial plan (Budget)

| ACTIVITY                             | COST  |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| Designing study & stationery         | 20    |
| Field familiarization                | 15    |
| Presenting cost                      | 20    |
| Field allowances for data collection | 30    |
| Printing and Binding expenses        | 20    |
| Miscellaneous                        | 30    |
| Total                                | \$115 |

## Appendix (ii)

| Time Schedule                       | Period            | Output                          |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| Proposal writing                    | Jan – Feb 2006    | Proposal submitted for approval |
| Field familiarization               | March 2006        | Initial information collected   |
| Developing Research Instrumentation | March –April 2006 | Research instrument developed   |
| Data Collection                     | April 2006        | Data collection                 |
| Data analysis                       | April 2006        | Data analyzed                   |
| Preparation of the report           | May-June          | Ready dissertation              |
| Submission of report                | July 2006         | Submitted Dissertation          |

10 COMMENTARY

29/10

SUNDAY VISION

Editorial Tel: 235209/230312

Fax: 235843, Kampala

e-mail: vision @imul.com

[Sunday@newvision.co.ug](mailto:Sunday@newvision.co.ug)

Marketing/advertising

Tel: 344191, 257494, 257659

Fax: 344193

OPINION

FEMALE CIRCUMCISION EVIL

KACHORWA district council must be commended for passing a resolution which outlaws Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in their district. Since Kapchorwa is the only district in this country where the macabre culture is practiced, we can safely say that FGM will soon be stamped out of Uganda. Which is good news for the women of Kapchorwa, who for generations have had to suffer pain and humiliation in the name of culture.

FGM involves amputation of substantial sections of the female anatomy. As a result of this often fatal surgery, women no longer enjoy sex union and suffer serious medical risks, especially during childbirth. The need to outlaw the practice therefore cannot be overemphasised.

However a council resolution alone is not enough to protect Sabinu women folk from the FGM surgeon's knife. Other measures must be put in place to ensure that the practice does not continue behind closed doors, leading to more health complications.

The councillors in Kapchorwa must invest time and resources in educating their people about the evil practice, and why it must be stopped.

Efforts must also be made to spread the campaign against FGM across the borders to Kenya, where the culture is still going strong.

The regional task force that was formed recently to eradicate FGM in the East African region must be strengthened, to ensure that the people in support of

---

the culture have nowhere to hide. It is quite useless to outlaw FGM in Uganda without a corresponding measure by our Kenyan and Tanzanian neighbours. But the strongest weapon against FGM is education of the would be victims.

An educated mind is more analytical, and is less likely to hang onto such outmoded customs. To win the war against FGM, the battle field must be set in our schools under UPE.

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