TOWARDS THE CO-EXISTENCE OF FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING AND HUMAN RIGHTS

DURODOLA OLAPEJU IFEOLUWA

Doctoral Student, Department of Jurisprudence, University of Pretoria.
E-mail: ifedurodola@yahoo.com

Abstract - In the article I consider the possibility of finding a middle point between two opposing views; on the one hand the right to engage in a cultural practice of your community and on the other the protection of human rights. The practice of female genital cutting (FGC) as a cultural practice has been a controversial topic because of the various human rights it limits. The campaign to eradicate this cultural practice has been going on for years, but has not been successful in eradicating this practice. This article suggests a different approach in tackling the issue of FGC and its many health concerns and contends that despite the various health risks attached to FGC, it remains a well-respected cultural practice in many African countries. The practice of FGC is sometimes referred to as Female Genital Mutilation. The use of such language does not only disrespect the cultural practice but also led to a strong resistance to anti-FGC campaigns by its adherents. Judging from this, the approach of human rights activists of terming the procedure 'mutilation' has failed in eradicating or curbing the procedure, hence a need for a reformulation of language used in addressing the issue of FGC. This article supports the idea of a cultural transformation which can only be attained through community-based dialogue. A transformed culture will not only lead to the sustenance of a respected cultural practice but also a cultural practice that promotes human rights.