**ACTIVITY REPORT**

**KEY PERSONS INTERVIEW ON BOTTLENECKS OF THE FGM LAW IN THE GAMBIA**

Organized by Safe Hands for Girls in Partnership with National Youth Council, Young People in The Media, Think Young Women, He for She Campaign Network, The Girl’s Agenda.

 

 

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Safe Hands for Girls (SHFG) is a survivor led women’s rights international organization with offices in U.S and The Gambia that aims to eradicate Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and all other forms of gender based violence through awareness-raising, advocacy, youth empowerment, and community outreach.

One key area that has been our main concentration has been Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Female Genital Mutilation is a practice which has led and continues to result to a numerous number of complications for women as well as a violation of their fundamental human rights.

Gambian statistics have shown that Female Genital Mutilation is still prevalent in The Gambia with religion, culture and tradition being the major reasons behind the practice. Government efforts to bring an end to FGM have been recognized by the recent legislation banning the practice of female circumcision also a National Action Plan on FGM 2013-2017 has been recently adopted which focuses on accelerating the abandonment of FGM.

**BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION**

The law on FGM was passed in 2015, despite the criminalization of this ill-practice, implementation of the law has faced major constraints since the legislation came into effect.

As a result, the National Youth Council tasked Safe Hands for Girls and its partners to conduct series of interviews with key personnel’s in the Gambian Legal system, Government Administration, CSO’s and NGO’s on bottlenecks of the FGM/C law implementation and possible solutions to these bottlenecks.

**OBJECTIVES**

The objective of the key persons interview was to gather opinions from prominent members of the judiciary, Police Unit, Magistrate court, Prosecution unit, Government administration, CSO’s and NGO’s on the bottlenecks of the FGM law and possible solutions that will lead to the effective implementation of the legislation.

**SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

The survey was conducted through a series of interviews, 20 people were selected based on the roles they play in the fight against FGM & how their opinions could prove valuable to the proper implementation of the FGM/C Law. Six questions were drafted and used as questionnaires. The selected individuals & questions are listed below

* Justice Awa Bah
* Magistrate Abeke
* Magistrate Sidi Jobarteh
* Magistrate Omar Cham
* Barrister Lamin Jarjue
* Barrister Maram Sanyang
* Barrister Kimbeng Tah
* Commissioner Ramou Sambou (Child Welfare Unit)
* Police Superintendent Yamundow Jagne (Child & Gender Unit)
* Hon. Fatoumatta Jallow Tambajang (Overseer for Office of the Vice President)
* Binja Jammeh Sidibe (Women’s Bureau)
* Fanta Bai Secka (Department of Social Welfare)
* Njundu Drammeh (Child Protection Alliance)
* Musu Bakoto Sawo (Think Young Women)
* Haddy Dandeh Njie (Female Lawyers Association Gambia)
* Alagie Jarju (National Youth Council)
* Isatou Jeng (The Girls Agenda)
* Fanta Jatta (Action Aid)
* Abdou Jatta (Young People in the Media)
* Maria Saine (Safe Hands for Girls)

The questions were as followed

* Are you aware of the law banning FGM that came into effect in 2015? (What was your reception to it?
* On a hypothetical scale of 0 – 10, how effective do you feel the current law on FGM is in preventing the harmful practice of FGM?
* Based on your assessment scale, do you feel that the law on FGM is adequately being enforced in our society?
* Do you feel that the law on FGM still faces major constrains with regards to its implementation?
* What issues do we need to confront to ensure that the law on FGM is better enforced? (especially to those who still engage in this ill practice)
* How can the issues be effectively tackled (in a timely manner)?

**SURVEY RESULTS**

Results of the completed survey listed below

**Question 1**

Are you aware of the law banning FGM that came into effect in 2015? (What was your reception to it?

**Answers**

* **Justice Awa Bah**

Yes, I am aware of the amendment to the Women’s Act regarding FGM. My reception was normal, I am used to amendments.

* **Magistrate Abeke**

I am very much aware, I even attended meetings, conferences back in 2010 under the auspices of Gamcotrap headed by Barrister Sillah. It was a good law because all the implications of the law were expressed.

* **Magistrate Sidi Jobarteh**

Yes, I think it’s a good move because we’ve been having seminars regarding it. I’m really in support of the Act.

* **Magistrate Omar Cham**

Yes of course I am aware of the FGM law that was passed in 2015, probably been a magistrate applying the law, I am neutral with every law that comes in, our job is to implement the will of the people, the national assembly represents the masses so if a law is passed it’s our job to interpret the law.

* **Barrister Lamin Jarjue**

Yes, I am aware of the law

* **Barrister Maram Sanyang**

I am quite aware of the law given the fact that I am a state council at the Ministry of Justice. It is a good law. It sought to take care of those things that affect women.

* **Barrister Kimbeng Tah**

Yes, I am aware and I actually took part in the drafting of the law and I must say it came at the right time to protect women against the erroneous practice.

* **Commissioner Ramou Sambou (Child Welfare Unit)**

These are things I am fully aware of and I have witnessed some cases and I know it is constitutional because it is based on the law. Even if it does not favor me, I have to accept it because it is a law been passed. – **Inspector Foday Sillah on behalf of Ramou Sambou**

* **Police Superintendent Yamundow Jagne (Child & Gender Unit)**

When I heard about it, I was very happy for such law to be implemented because I am a victim of FGM. Having such a law will protect children.

* **Hon. Fatoumatta Jallow Tambajang (Overseer of Office of the Vice President)**

I am aware because I am a gender activist and my reaction to it is that, it is timely in the sense that many women were anticipating to see it happen. FGM only destroys the fundamental elements of a woman or the girl child.

* **Binja Jammeh Sidibe (Women’s Bureau)**

Yes, I am aware of the law banning FGM, I was very happy after hearing the news on the banning of FGM in 2015. I have been part of those advocating for its ban since 1985, there couldn’t have been better news.

* **Fanta Bai Secka (Department of Social Welfare)**

Yes, I am aware of the law banning FGM and it was a good move. FGM being as it is quite difficult to address is a huge challenge to the life of a young girl.

* **Njundu Drammeh (Child Protection Alliance)**

Yes, I am aware of the law, I was at the National Assembly when it was passed. It was probably one of the best.

* **Musu Bakoto Sawo (Think Young Women)**

I think as someone who has been working in that area for quite a number of years now, it was a very exciting moment for us. I felt like a major achievement had been made, the campaign has been ongoing for over three decades now but there have not been many successes in terms of good political will on the part of the state and the fact that it has been tabled to the National Assembly and then that lead to an enactment, it was a moment quite fulfilling.

* **Haddy Dandeh Njie (Female Lawyers Association Gambia)**

I am aware of the law, it’s good to have a law but the idea should have been to sensitize people first on its harm.

* **Alagie Jarju (National Youth Council)**

Yeah, I was aware of the law banning FGM. When I heard it, I quite much appreciated the fact that finally we have a law banning FGM. One thing I was not quite happy about was the fact it was more of political pronouncement and then later, the legal part came into being. My only concerned was the pattern followed in the legislation.

* **Isatou Jeng (The Girls Agenda)**

Yes, I am aware that there is a law banning FGM in The Gambia. It was one of the most welcoming laws because a law against FGM is something we’ve been yearning for because it was a step to the right direction. I really felt it would reinforce campaign and advocacy against FGM.

* **Fanta Jatta (Action Aid)**

Yes, I am aware. I like it and I think it came at the right time and maybe in fact late.

* **Abdou Jatta (Young People in the Media)**

I am aware of the law regarding the ban of FGM in 2015 which was pronounced by the then president Yahya Jammeh in one of the political rallies in Kanilai.

My reception when I heard about the law; I was really impressed for the simple reason being that over 30 years people have been talking about FGM/C. So, putting a law in place was something that will deter people from such practice. I think it was something that was definitely at the right moment.

* **Maria Saine (Safe Hands for Girls)**

Yes, am aware, it was a good step. My first impression was that’s its good but certain provisions need to be reviewed.

**Question 2**

On a hypothetical scale of 0 – 10, how effective do you feel the current law on FGM is in preventing the harmful practice of FGM?

**Answers**

* **Justice Awa Bah**

I haven’t dealt with an FGM case. I don’t know the effect, I cannot tell.

* **Magistrate Abeke**

7/10 with emphasis because even when I watch news or read the papers, the issue is widely spread.

* **Magistrate Sidi Jobarteh**

I see it as a bad law because since it came into effect, I am not aware of any judgement on it. There is no case law on it.

I would rate the scale as 1.

* **Magistrate Omar Cham**

First FGM case came before me, I do not know, I cannot tell how effective.

* **Barrister Lamin Jarjue**

The law is not 100% effective because there are a lot of issues involved and people responsible for enforcing the law come from communities that practice FGM. I am aware of just one case therefore, I rate the effectiveness of the law at 4/10.

* **Barrister Maram Sanyang**

The main purpose in which the law is enacted is to prevent the reoccurrence of the practice.

Scale is about 7-8.

* **Barrister Kimbeng Tah**

5/10

* **Commissioner Ramou Sambou (Child Welfare Unit)**

The hypothetical scale is at 10, because FGM is something very harmful and I see the law to be very effective. **Inspector Saikou Bojang on behalf of Ramou Sambou**

* **Police Superintendent Yamundow Jagne (Child & Gender Unit)**

As at now, I have not seen any preventive measures. Nothing has yet been done.

Scale is 0 because nobody has been convicted yet

* **Hon. Fatoumatta Jallow Tambajang (Overseer for Office of the Vice President)**

In the sense that, not many people are aware of it. Many people are still practicing it because they are not aware of the law, penalties and sanctions. Women need to be given alternative opportunities to build their capacities so that they would no longer use the practice as a source of income.

* **Binja Jammeh Sidibe (Women’s Bureau)**

6/10

* **Fanta Bai Secka (Department of Social Welfare)**

I have an issue with the amendment of the law. If we had a very sensitive Ministry of Justice, we would have gotten a separate bill to be enacted. The amendment is just an amendment to the Women’s Act and does not cover the issue of cross border.

All we need is validation and more on.

* **Njundu Drammeh (Child Protection Alliance)**

Having the law is one thing, implementation is another. I will rate the effectiveness of the law at 4/10.

* **Musu Bakoto Sawo (Think Young Women)**

I think it’s pretty early to be able to determine how effective or the success stories behind the banning of FGM in The Gambia. It will take quite a number of years for people to familiarize themselves because still a lot of people out there don’t know that the law is in place and even law enforcement officials are not familiarized. So, a lot of work needs to be done for the law to take effect. There are cases that have been prosecuted but we still don’t know the outcome, it will take quite a number of years for us to be able to determine how effective the law is.

* **Haddy Dandeh Njie (Female Lawyers Association Gambia)**

0/10

* **Alagie Jarju (National Youth Council)**

It’s a perfect one. We are only having a problem implementing the law at different levels. It’s not 0 but I think it’s just not been implemented so I will go for 1.

* **Isatou Jeng (The Girls Agenda)**

We had some minor challenges as to people saying they were not consulted. The coming into force of the new government has a backlash on the anti-FGM law since they have been silent. People believe the law isn’t effective since we have a new government.

Hypothetical scale is 5.

* **Fanta Jatta (Action Aid)**

Based on the fact that before the law, people were doing it openly but after the law, people practiced it secretly.

It is a good law. Now that we are not in a dictatorship government like the previous government, people feel they are free to practice the culture now and the new government is yet to make its position known.

* **Abdou Jatta (Young People in the Media)**

For me, I don’t think the law is that effective. I’ll rate it at **3** for the sense that right now, a lot of people are not aware of the law or what it entails.

As advocates, we have a lot of work to do to sensitize people about the law.

* **Maria Saine (Safe Hands for Girls)**

5/10

**Question 3**

Based on your assessment scale, do you feel that the law on FGM is adequately being enforced in our society?

**Answers**

* **Justice Awa Bah**

I will say the law has been enforced, I am aware of 1 or 2 cases. I am not sure of the outcome.

* **Magistrate Abeke**

It is gradually being enforced because the practice is still on as far as tradition is concerned.

* **Magistrate Sidi Jobarteh**

No

* **Magistrate Omar Cham**

Its deep rooted in our culture

* **Barrister Lamin Jarjue**

The law is not yet fully implemented because members of arms vested with the legal mandate come from communities that practice FGM. Communities do not report cases to authorities because of the religious and cultural belief attached and members of the communities and authorities believe in these beliefs.

* **Barrister Maram Sanyang**

Raising awareness; certain issues are addressed in our societies if only awareness is raised. Awareness is key.

* **Barrister Kimbeng Tah**

It’s not adequately enforced because there are two types of enforcement i.e collaborative enforcement which involves the public’s opinion and views. Also, law enforcement which has to do with enforcing people don’t practice the act at all. I personally believe that collaborative enforcement is lacking.

* **Commissioner Ramou Sambou (Child Welfare Unit)**

It is adequately enforced like all other laws. When the law is contravened, then the police come into action immediately. It has to be reported for the police to take action. We have to talk to the women folk to desist from the practice. **Inspector Abdoulie Bojang on behalf of Ramou Sambou**

**Inspector Ramou Sambou**

The offence has to be identified before action is taken. There is a need for a door to door sensitization. If you talk to women about FGM, they always give a positive response to the practice.

* **Police Superintendent Yamundow Jagne (Child & Gender Unit)**

No, it is not, for the simple reason that the law is in English and 60% of our population are semi-illiterate. The law needs to be translated in the local languages. The programs organized should be able to disseminate information regarding the law.

* **Hon. Fatoumatta Jallow Tambajang (Overseer for Office of the Vice President)**

No, it is not, for the simple reason that the law is in English and 60% of our population are semi-illiterate. The law needs to be translated in the local languages. The programs organized should be able to disseminate information regarding the law.

* **Binja Jammeh Sidibe (Women’s Bureau)**

I will say it is very low and challenging for people to adapt it. Also, many Gambians term the law as the former president’s laws and it no longer bind on them. People should change their attitudes.

* **Fanta Bai Secka (Department of Social Welfare)**

It is not because without a separate law, it can’t be adequately enforced. The law should be there to deter but can’t be used to educate.

* **Njundu Drammeh (Child Protection Alliance)**

No, I don’t think it is. It’s still practiced and not reported. People are still hostile towards the law because they believe it is Jammeh’s law.

* **Musu Bakoto Sawo (Think Young Women)**

There are still ongoing cases and some people are still silent about it. To be able to make such an assessment we need to be able to have a specific data put in place and that hasn’t been provided for so far. We are optimistic about this happening but it may take quite a number of years because the law needs to be backed consistently with advocacy and awareness raising because the law alone is not sufficient.

* **Haddy Dandeh Njie (Female Lawyers Association Gambia)**

No, it is not

* **Alagie Jarju (National Youth Council)**

It is not being enforced at all. It is still happening. Initially, it was a case of people going across the border or at home to do it. Interestingly, since after the new government came in we have seen instances where it has been done openly. To be honest, we know it is happening, the police know it is happening, the legal system knows it is happening but no one is taking the lead to enforce the law.

* **Isatou Jeng (The Girls Agenda)**

It has not been adequately enforced. Those who are supposed to enforce the anti-FGM law are being ignorant about the law. This is because most of them are in support of the practice. CSO’s and NGO’s should educate communities on the harmful effects of FGM.

* **Fanta Jatta (Action Aid)**

No

From the level of the community, people do not report. Our culture and way of living has a lot to do with that.

From the level of law enforcement officers, they are not sure if the government is in support of the law. They need to understand that, if there is a law, even if the president is For or Against it, their mandate is to implement.

* **Abdou Jatta (Young People in the Media)**

I don’t think it is been enforced effectively in the society. In the Gambia, people are still doing the ‘closed door practice’ due to the ***Maslaha syndrome.*** I think that it is something that is definitely affecting us. We have to inform the public and the authorities and also the law should take its due cause on them accordingly.

* **Maria Saine (Safe Hands for Girls)**

No, it is not. There has been a lot of cases, some gone to court but no judgment, no proper enforcement meaning a lot of ground work needs to be done.

**Question 4**

Do you feel that the law on FGM still faces major constrains with regards to its implementation?

**Answers**

* **Justice Awa Bah**

The implementing authority for this law is the office of the VP. I cannot answer.

* **Magistrate Abeke**

Very much but it still needs more emphasis because campaign and sensitization is still on but people should get to the root and in the same dialect. Plant people on the grassroot to educate members of the communities gradually. Encourage adult education institution.

* **Magistrate Sidi Jobarteh**

Yes, I believe that is why it is actually not coming to the courts. This is due to the society’s ‘*Maslaha syndrome*’.

* **Magistrate Omar Cham**

Yes, because the ban on FGM is not as simple as the ban on plastic bags, it is something our forefathers have been doing therefore, it is the sanction behind it that will make people fear. Sensitization needs to be done. Other people have voluntarily left it but we still need to prepare people mentally so they respect the law mentally because 90% of cultures practice it.

* **Barrister Lamin Jarjue**

Yes it does have major constraints.

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* **Barrister Maram Sanyang**

Absolutely, yes

Major constraint is the socio-cultural background.

* **Barrister Kimbeng Tah**

Yes, it does, it’s not comprehensive enough and it was passed in a rough manner hence, there needs to be a wider law on FGM. Before passing a law, talk to people, find out reasons why they’re still doing the practice. Government and its partners should put 100% emphasis on sensitizing the public on the law. People practice FGM because of moral perspective and the government needs to address that.

* **Commissioner Ramou Sambou (Child Welfare Unit)**

**Inspector Ramou Sambou**

To my own opinion, one of the constraints is sensitization programs because some people do not know that it is a crime.

Secondly, workshops and trainings organized do not include the affected people.

Local women are not invited. We have to modernize it as a “Bantaba Kachaa”. The communities need to be sensitized.

A concerned case to take note of is Rape. Presently, I have a case here where in the victim was raped by his own step-father.

* **Police Superintendent Yamundow Jagne (Child & Gender Unit)**

More than the word major, because it is mostly done by heads of families. There is no independency when it comes to FGM. We need the independency to enable us implement the law.

* **Hon. Fatoumatta Jallow Tambajang (Overseer for Office of the Vice President)**

It does because when it was enacted, it was not accompanied by educational programs. These are some of the constraints. The enforcement of the law is not effective because most people do not understand the English Language to enable them understand the law.

Also, the lack of monitoring evaluation. This constraint needs to be addressed so that there is compliance to laws both locally and internationally.

* **Binja Jammeh Sidibe (Women’s Bureau)**

Yes! Especially with regards to the government playing their quota in awareness creation and the level of awareness created on the side of the laws.

* **Fanta Bai Secka (Department of Social Welfare)**

Certainly, because the law is not strong enough to address the bottlenecks.

* **Njundu Drammeh (Child Protection Alliance)**

Yes, it does, it’s still believed in our society that its good and it is happening and not been reported.

* **Musu Bakoto Sawo (Think Young Women)**

It does because if the law enforcement officials, I mean the executive organ of government is responsible for the enforcement of the law and you would see that the police etc are all under the organ but if the police themselves aren’t familiar with the legislation that has been put in place then it becomes a problem for them to enforce it. Another constraint is in relation to the gap that exists i.e the issue of cross boarder cutting, our law doesn’t capture that.

* **Haddy Dandeh Njie (Female Lawyers Association Gambia)**

It does and needs a lot of work.

* **Alagie Jarju (National Youth Council)**

Yeah, it faces major constraints with regards to its implementation. For me, we need to continue the part which we sensitize people to enable them understand that the practice is very harmful even religious wise. With this, with or without the law, they will stop. People have their cunning way of diving the law and that is exactly what people are doing now with the FGM law.

* **Isatou Jeng (The Girls Agenda)**

Yes;

Those who are supposed to implement the laws do not understand its content.

The issue of cross-border cutting.

* **Fanta Jatta (Action Aid)**

Yes of course

We have a lot of work to do especially in communities. If the communities do not report, it will be very difficult for the law to be implemented.

* **Abdou Jatta (Young People in the Media)**

Yes, talking from the perspective of an advocate, we are having lot of difficulties in sensitizing people about the law, even though the outside support is there on the Anti-FGM Movement by International Organizations like the The Girl Generation, The Guardian which works with Safe Hands for Girls, UNFPA, UNICEF. But it is still not enough support. Definitely, a lot of work needs to be done to make people know that the law is not a Yahya Jammeh law.

* **Maria Saine (Safe Hands for Girls)**

Yes, especially with the issue of access to justice. People affected don’t have resources therefore, police needs to help people who are at risk of having FGM.

**Question 5**

What issues do we need to confront to ensure that the law on FGM is better enforced? (especially to those who still engage in this ill practice)

**Answers**

* **Justice Awa Bah**

I am not in the position to answer this question.

* **Magistrate Abeke**

Open centers at the grassroot, send in equipped officers, send facilities, establish centers at various point and plant officers as stations to serve as enlightening officers.

Sensitize people because they believe it is cultural. You cannot wipe culture but its gradually fading away therefore, issues should be brought to the lowest level of the society.

* **Magistrate Sidi Jobarteh**

I believe what will make it effective is the issue of sensitization. If possible, house to house sensitization. It has to come from the society itself. More sensitization should actually be done.

* **Magistrate Omar Cham**

Provide incentives like ‘Drop the knife’ by Gamcotrap

* **Barrister Lamin Jarjue**

Sensitization of the general public on the harmful practices because it is medically proven that it has a lot of health implications.

* **Barrister Maram Sanyang**

Education: We need to bring people forward, we need to bring them on board, we need to educate them on the harmful effects of FGM.

Sensitization

Raising awareness

* **Barrister Kimbeng Tah**

Jammeh is gone, the bill is still in place and people need to understand that.

Sensitization, bigger law enforcement committee and the involvement of the Alkalos in the committee.

Government needs to support organizations by providing them with better funding training.

* **Commissioner Ramou Sambou (Child Welfare Unit)**

In the event they are found, they we prosecute them. Break the culture of silence.

* **Police Superintendent Yamundow Jagne (Child & Gender Unit)**

We have to start with the governors, councilors, “yaye kompins” need to take an oath that if such happen in their societies, they will report so the police can intervene.

* **Hon. Fatoumatta Jallow Tambajang (Overseer for Office of the Vice President)**

Translation of the law

Sensitization that they need to comply with the law and serve as watch dogs to those who practice it

Education on the law, I am strongly a believer in educating people on issues affecting their lives.

* **Binja Jammeh Sidibe (Women’s Bureau)**

The involvement of the government in the reannouncement of the ban

* **Fanta Bai Secka (Department of Social Welfare)**

I feel once there is an offence and it is a criminal matter, education should be hand in glove. Fathers are now the ones taking their girl children to FGM as seen in the recent case.

* **Njundu Drammeh (Child Protection Alliance)**

Serious popularization of the law and its effects to members of communities to which it applies.

Build capacities of law enforcement officers

Actuate people to report and assure them that won’t be prosecuted for reporting FGM cases

Protect people who report

Empower young people

* **Musu Bakoto Sawo (Think Young Women)**

Put in place mechanisms that would be responsible for dealing with FGM cases for example, Women’s Bureau should be able to have a committee like a Board of Directors then they would be able to do monitoring.

Law enforcement officials need to be trained because without training they would never understand the context of the law.

Government needs to allocate a budget specifically meant to train law enforcement officials on not issues of FGM but other laws put in place.

* **Haddy Dandeh Njie (Female Lawyers Association Gambia)**

Basically, to sensitize the people and create a mindset on how to end the practice.

* **Alagie Jarju (National Youth Council)**

We need to engage the politicians. There is a perception that the law is gone because the political pronouncement through which the law came in has gone, forgetting that the law was enacted by Parliament which still continues to exist, though with a new team. If politicians presently can take the bull by the horn to and tell Gambians that this law is still here, I am quite certain that the police would be active in implementing the law.

Personally, they are still not sure on the stand of the new government regarding the law. That is why the implementation is still lacking. Government needs to clearly tell Gambians that the practiced is harmful, it’s banned and the police need to enforce the law. The law is here to stay. It is not a Yahya Jammeh law but a Gambian law.

If every young person is convinced that it is harmful, the practice will soon die a natural death.

* **Isatou Jeng (The Girls Agenda)**

The anti-FGM youth organizations in The Gambia are more into campaign than advocacy. We need to call on the Government and stakeholders to make their stand known that the anti-FGM law is here to stay. This is to simultaneously involve the Government because this is an issue that needs to be prioritized.

* **Fanta Jatta (Action Aid)**

We need to tackle it from up and from down.

Everybody has to be outspoken.

Engage the government especially the politicians as it is a development issue with evidence.

Also looking at the loop holes in the law, like practicing FGM outside the boundaries of The Gambia.

Monitoring or examining the young girls to see if they have gone through the practice. They should examine the girl on entry and exit to the country.

Organizations rooted at the community level need to double up on the sensitization of FGM laws and consequences.

We need to have programs that help survivors.

* **Abdou Jatta (Young People in the Media)**

Sensitization is something on going and continuous advocacy regarding the law should be done. As advocates, we should keep sensitizing people and if necessary include it in bill boards. I have seen certain organizations doing this by putting key messages like issues of Gender Based Violence on bill boards. This will definitely help in the process.

* **Maria Saine (Safe Hands for Girls)**

There needs to be an amendment to cover cross boarder issues.

Provision of a Stand-alone Act on FGM

Sensitization and Advocacy both incorporated

**Question 6**

How can the issues be effectively tackled (in a timely manner)?

**Answers**

* **Justice Awa Bah**

I cannot answer, I am not an implementing authority, I only know of cases that comes before me.

* **Magistrate Abeke**

Lack of funds to implement, government, stakeholders and individuals can contribute for an immediate take off. When there is fund, all this can be taken care of.

Those campaigning should intensify and spread all over the world

* **Magistrate Sidi Jobarteh**

With the issue of sensitization, it’s something that has to be done now.

* **Magistrate Omar Cham**

Civic education on a holistic approach. Give incentives, continue initiatives like Drop the knife for a time frame.

* **Barrister Lamin Jarjue**

The public most especially the rural communities need to be involved in the sensitization

* **Barrister Maram Sanyang**

If we involve youth led organizations, bringing on board village heads who the people look up to will involve the people.

Involve the government especially the Ministry of Justice.

We should do more in terms of women empowerment.

* **Barrister Kimbeng Tah**

Come up with stakeholder conferences for the implementation of the ban. This involves stakeholders coming on board, come up with an action plan and key time farme.

* **Commissioner Ramou Sambou (Child Welfare Unit)**

I suggest that we engage more on sensitization and outreach programs and also report any matter to the nearest police station. They should also report on the right time. Due to the culture of silence, most people don’t report because they think if you report, you will become an informant.

* **Police Superintendent Yamundow Jagne (Child & Gender Unit)**

The people who are affected need to expose the issue. I am know the physical, mental consequences and I will not listen to anyone say that it is good. People should be sensitive to make them say they are against the practice.

In addition, interviewing is not the only solution; we have to reach out to the communities.

“if such happens in my region, the issue will be dealt with in such a way that it will serve as an example for the whole country and will be remembered for the rest of my life”.

* **Hon. Fatoumatta Jallow Tambajang (Overseer for Office of the Vice President)**

The organizations that are involved need to coordinate their efforts effectively. They should maximize the resources to a greater impact.

The communities also need a lot of exposure because they need to see pictures and videos on the practice- seeing is believing.

They should be encouraged to spend on entrepreneurship.

Most of the constraints they have is that they have meager priorities. Studies have shown that where girls are given opportunities, they really prove to be shiny.

* **Binja Jammeh Sidibe (Women’s Bureau)**

Well, it can be done through sensitization and the proper enforcement of the law

* **Fanta Bai Secka (Department of Social Welfare)**

Can be tackled if we all galvanize our efforts in a manner that we can educate everyone. Our approach should be respectful. Encourage the right to passage. The operation is the process.

“Yes to the process of FGM. No to the operation”.

* **Njundu Drammeh (Child Protection Alliance)**

I don’t think there is nothing like timely manner because we are dealing with an entrenched tradition. In other to tackle it the provisions of the law still needs to be communicated. Also, build capacity of law enforcers, establish institutions responsible solely for the protection of survivors.

Finally, make the law extra territorial so as to address the issue of cross boarder cutting by working with neighboring to form a multi- country collaboration.

* **Musu Bakoto Sawo (Think Young Women)**

Mechanism put in place, have some form of a steering committee.

Involving the youth in forming some form of coalition on the level of the state.

Form a committee responsible for travelling far and wide to raise awareness.

* **Haddy Dandeh Njie (Female Lawyers Association Gambia)**

Organizations, NGO’s etc should come together and have one voice on how to sensitize people.

* **Alagie Jarju (National Youth Council)**

Let government come out and make its stand known so that the police can implement the law.

* **Isatou Jeng (The Girls Agenda)**

It has been clear evidence that the law alone cannot make people abandon the practice, so in order to strategize and find a way out; we have to continue educating the communities and engage the religious leaders like the Supreme Islamic Council who need to come out and with a pronouncement that FGM is not a religious obligation. When people are being told that it is optional, and then they will put the issue into consideration.

“We have a lot to do, we still have a long way to go, the future is bright, there is hope that FGM will end but we would not relent, we will continue to involve all actors”.

* **Fanta Jatta (Action Aid)**

It has to take a bit of time because to erase FGM, it has to take young people. If the 30 years ago campaign had involved young people, then FGM would have been erased by now.

On a short-term basis, we can focus on talking to traditional and religious leaders but the focus has to be on young people in order to erase it for generations.

* **Abdou Jatta (Young People in the Media)**

If people are more sensitized, I believe the issues will be tackled and also change the mind set. Certain people might be receptive about this due to their culture. We also need to sensitize the religious leaders, community leaders, women leaders, politicians and even the policy makers because all sectors of the society have a role to play in this.

* **Maria Saine (Safe Hands for Girls)**

Stakeholders need to work together instead of working in isolation. Messages need to be filtered to make sure there is uniformity, instead of one person saying this and another saying something else. Civil society needs government and government needs civil society.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

**Conclusion**

* All Interviewees are aware of the law banning FGM that came into effect in 2015
* Majority believe the law has been ineffective in preventing the practice of FGM
* The law is not adequately enforced in our communities and society
* The law on FGM faces major constrains with regards to its implementation
* Sensitization through civic education can popularize the law resulting to an increase of awareness on the FGM/C Law.
* Alternatives should be provided for circumcisers as some practice for the sole interest of generating income

**Recommendation**

* The law should be translated into local dialects for easier understanding at community level
* Oranizations need to send a uniform message in its efforts to sensitize
* Training Nurses & Ensuring hospitals have FGM/C register and report cases that are brought to their attention
* A reporting mechanism has to be put in place to ensure issues are brought to the attention of the appropriate person.

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