

FGM REFERENCING: AN IMPEDIMENT TO LITERACY IN GIRLS AND WOMEN AMONG THE SAMBURU

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ABSTRACT

The current study examines and analyzes the referencing discourse of Traditional Female Initiation (TFI), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) among the Samburu of Samburu County in Kenya. The fact that a lot of campaigns have been done, but the practice which is wrapped in a special kind of discourse still goes on, motivates the current study. Traditional Female Initiation (TFI) is not only an issue in Kenya but also in East African countries neighbouring Kenya, other parts of Africa, Asia, Middle East, Europe, and North America. Among the Samburu this practice is entrenched in subtle discourse that is deeply rooted in the Samburu culture. This study is based on two objectives. First to identify the linguistic references used to portray women and girls among the Samburu. Secondly, to find out identity and power the references give to women and girls. The research is based on two research questions. Firstly, are there linguistic references among the Samburu used to refer to women and girls? Do these references give women identity and power? The study adopts the Critical Discourse Analysis theory (CDA) propagated by Fairclough, (1995, 2000) and Van Leeuwen (1995, 2001). The branch of CDA used is Discourse Historical Approach as propagated by Wodak (2001) and KhosraviNik (2010). The views of the Feminist theory as propagated by Cameron (1990) are also used, especially the principles of gender and power. Data will be collected in Samburu County, Suguta Mar Mar location. The target population will consist of the Samburu native speakers attending the ceremony; the sample will be collected using purposive sampling of the speakers and singers at the ceremony. Four subjects coded A-D will be sampled and interviewed. The sample will consist of two male and two female between the age of 35 and 65 years. The data will be collected by in-depth interview recording, and note taking. The subjects will be requested to participate willingly and no subject will be forced or coaxed to take part in the research. The data collected will be later transcribed, translated and analyzed qualitatively using the CDA theory and Feminist theory. The findings of this study are expected to be of benefit to policy makers interested in girl child education