

Country: India and Pakistan

Population: of the Dawoodi Bohra ethnic group: In India 1,078,000 and in Pakistan 100,000

Estimated prevalence among Bohra women aged 15-49: Unknown

An article by IRIN quotes an individual who believes that at least 50-60 percent of Bohra women undergo circumcision, involving usually a symbolic snipping of the clitoris. "In the past there was more mutilation, and I think 80-90 percent of women suffered it. More awareness has helped reduce the practice".

Type practised:

The most widely practised form is **Type I**, called 'khatna' by the Bohra community. It involves the removal of the clitoris hood or the clitoris, as the clitoris is considered a haraam ki boti, or immoral lump of flesh.

Legal status:

There is no law banning FGC in India or Pakistan.

History of FGC among the Bohra:

The Bohra is a small community based mainly in west India who spread to the Sindh region of Pakistan during independence from British India and from the British rule in 1947. It is believed that they brought FGC culture from Yemen to India centuries ago.

Some girls are often told that a worm is being removed from their stomach and religion is often given as a reason why people practise FGC in India and Pakistan. Bohri priests brought FGC to India and there is a belief that it is an Islamic obligatory practice, despite cutting not being mentioned in the Qu'ran. Non-Bohra women have been known to undertake FGC if they wish to have a Muslim marriage ceremony to their Bohra husband.

Current efforts to abandon FGC:

Tasleem, an FGC activist, has launched a Facebook and Change.org campaign to collect signatures, petitioning the Bohra High Priest His Holiness Dr Syedna Mohammad Burhanuddin to order a ban on this ritual and stop this practice for Bohra women and girls. Tasleem's petition, as of 11 Aug 2014, had received 2836 signatures and has sparked much debate.

Asghar Ali Engineer, a Bohra Muslim and expert on Islamic jurisprudence has also been fighting for reform. He has written over 40 books which propose changes, many about the status of women. He was the founder of a reforming group called the 'Progressive Dawoodi Bohras' who seek reform within the Bohra community. However, he was attacked by Islamic hardliners in a mosque in Egypt and had his house destroyed by opponents. He says that fathers are often unaware of the damage that they are doing by condoning the practice.

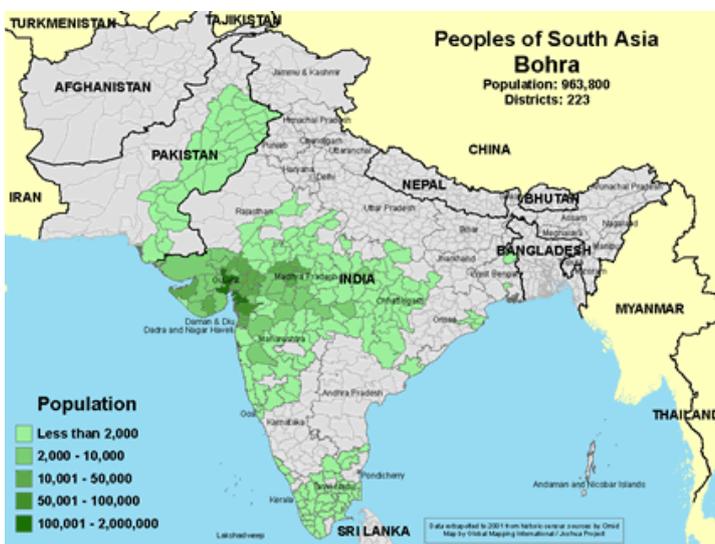
In 2012, a documentary called *A Pinch of Skin* was released that delved into the topic of FGC in India.

Ongoing challenges:

The practice is still very much entrenched in cultural notions of femininity and what it means to be a 'good girl' and marriageable. Most Bohri men know very little or nothing about this practice. In many cases it is only after marriage that men find out. The practice is hidden, hardly ever spoken of and is barely known about. FGC occurs across social and economic lines in the Bohra community.

Additional information:

FGC is performed by mullanis, women who have a semi-religious standing, by dais, midwives or by any woman with some experience. It is done when the girl turns seven and in the summer. At this age the girl is considered nadan (innocent) and nasamaj (not capable of understanding); not capable of understanding what is being done to her, but sufficiently mature to continue the tradition when she has her own daughter.



Major Languages:

Pakistan: Punjabi, Sindhi, and Saraiki
India: Hindi, Bengali, and Telugu

Major religions:

Sub-sect of Shia Islam

Resources:

- http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/country_profiles/default.stm
- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pk.html>
- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/in.html>
- <http://www.dawoodi-bohras.com/>
- http://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/16494/IN
- http://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/16494/PK
- <http://www.irinnews.org/Report/94534/PAKISTAN-Low-awareness-of-hidden-FGM-C-practices>
- <http://orchidproject.org/2011/09/fgc-in-india-and-pakistan/>
- <http://www.indianmuslimobserver.com/2011/11/uproar-over-female-genital-mutilation.html>
- <http://worldmuslimcongress.blogspot.co.uk/2011/11/female-genital-mutilation-among-bohra.html>
- <http://worldmuslimcongress.blogspot.co.uk/2012/04/mutilating-facts-setting-record.html>
- <http://blogs.tribune.com.pk/story/7523/female-genital-mutilation-in-pakistan-and-beyond/>
- <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/Mumbai/Bohra-women-go-online-to-fight-circumcision-trauma/Article1-779782.aspx>
- <http://dawn.com/2012/04/23/female-circumcision-anger-aired-in-india-fm/>
- <http://www.indianmuslimobserver.com/2011/11/uproar-over-female-genital-mutilation.html>
- <http://sheikyermami.com/2012/10/30/australia-fgm-is-good-for-you-its-important-its-part-of-our-culture/>