14 April 2016

To,

His Holiness Syedna Taher Fakhruddin,

Re: Eliminating Khatna for girls from the Bohra community.

We have been subject to and/or have had loved ones subjected to khatna at the fragile age of 7. The physical and psychological effects of this are still with us. We have experienced severe pain and excessive bleeding and in some cases, shock, difficulty in passing urine, infections, and injury to nearby genital tissue due to the procedure done on us.

The pain inflicted by female circumcision/khatna did not stop with the initial procedure, but continued throughout our life. Because as children, the shock and trauma of being subject to mutilation of an extremely sensitive genital part, without being told, the subsequent pain and shame associated with it, combined with secrecy has left indelible scars on our psyche. We have all experienced various long-term effects - physical, sexual and psychological.

For most us talking about this itself has been a huge step as we have never disclosed to any of our near and dear ones the aftermath of this procedure and the effects it has had on us throughout our lives. Today some of us have taken courage to address you and appeal to you to eliminate and eradicate this practice in the Bohra community. We request you to take cognizance of our voices and pay heed to traumatic experiences. We want you to specially consider the harmful effects it has on the girl child and the severe abuse of child rights which takes place because of this procedure being perpetrated on young innocent girls aged 6-7.

India, where the largest numbers of Bohras reside, is a part of the United Nations which categorically and clearly denounces FGM. India is also a signatory to the CEDAW and CRC and hence we need a clear directive in India and the world as well.

In many other countries like the USA, UK, Australia, France etc there are clear anti FGM laws.

Given that the Bohra community is spread across the whole world, one clear directive from your Holiness denouncing the practice of khatna as harmful to the girl child will go a long way in giving a healthy and progressive message for the community and its members.

Salaam,
Respectfully yours,

Signed,
Masooma Ranalvi (India), Zehra Patwa (USA)
Convenors: Speak Out On FGM

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