

Country: Senegal

Population: 13 million

Estimated prevalence among women aged 15-49: 28.2%

Data Source	15 – 49 (%)	15 - 19	35 - 39	Urban	Rural	Lowest Region	Highest Region	Nicked, no flesh	Flesh removed	Sewn closed	Tradition ally	Medically performe	National law
DHS 2005	28.2	24.8	30.5	21.7	34.4	1.8	93.8	0.2	82.7	11.9	92.5	0.6	Illegal

PRB 2010

Type practised:

Type II is the most common form of FGC in Senegal. Certain minority groups practice **Type III**. This is most common among Muslim groups in the eastern part of the country.

Legal status:

FGC was made illegal in Senegal in 1999. It is punishable by a sentence of one to five years in prison. However, there have been no successful convictions to date.

History of FGC in Senegal:

In February 1998, former President Diouf called for the eradication of this practice and a national debate on the subject. The Ministry of Women, Children and the Family sponsors public programs, such as an information campaign carried out on the radio, and seminars about the religious and health aspects. Following the accession to power of President Abdoulaye Wade in March 2000, a new study was spearheaded of the practice in Senegal. The goals of the study include developing an integrated governmental approach to the fight against the practice; identifying those scattered groups working against the practice and their methods; tracking and assessing the situation of those women who have publicly abandoned the practice; reviewing the current extent of the practice and assessing the impact of Senegal's 1999 law.

Current efforts to abandon FGC:

The NGO Tostan delivers an education program for women in villages and communities across Senegal. The program has been supported financially by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the government of Senegal. It emphasises participation and empowerment of women; using materials that draw on Senegalese culture and traditions. Instructional materials include games, small group discussions, theatre, songs, dance and story-telling. Modules for learning address such issues as literacy skills, problem solving, women's health and hygiene, management skills, leadership skills, negotiating skills and human rights. They are given in four local languages. This program is currently being replicated in Sudan, Mali and Burkina Faso. Thousands of communities have decided to end the practice of FGC as a result of these educational programmes. From the outset, Tostan did not state whether FGM/FGC was right or wrong. It was the women themselves who, after taking the program, decided that they no longer wanted their daughters to be subjected to this practice. Using the skills learned in the program, they approached their husbands and village leaders to engage the entire community to stop the practice.

Additionally, Senegalese musical artist, Sister Fa, has written popular songs about the practice and publically campaigns to raise awareness around the issue. Other organisations working to bring an end to FGC in Senegal include CAMS (Campaign pour L'abolition des Mutilations Sexuelles) and ENDA-GRAF.

Ongoing challenges:

Representatives of Tostan, which follows a basic education and empowerment approach, have suggested that the outlawing FGC has made their work that more difficult since it increased defensiveness among the populations practicing it. The press has also suggested that the passage of the law has driven the practice underground.

Additional information:

Along ethnic lines, FGC is most common among Soninke (78%) and Pular (62%) and lowest for women from the Wolof and Serer groups (2%). Religion also affects prevalence rates: 29% of Muslim women have been circumcised compared to 11% of Christian women and 16% of animist women or women belonging to other unspecified religious groups.

Ethnic groups:

Wolof 43.3%
Pular 23.8%
Serer 14.7%
Jola 3.7
Mandinka 3%
Soninke 1.1%
European and Lebanese 1%
Other 9.4%

Languages:

French (official)
Wolof
Pulaar
Diola
Mandinka

Major religions:

Islam 94%
Christianity 5% (mostly Roman Catholic)
Indigenous beliefs 1%

Resources:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/country_profiles/default.stm
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>
http://www.childinfo.org/files/Senegal_FGC_profile_English.pdf
<http://2001-2009.state.gov/g/wi/rls/rep/crfgm/10107.htm>