

The Status of the Girl-Child in Soweto, South Africa

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ABSTRACT Several reports and Charters have all emphasized the overwhelming importance of the well-being of every child and their rights to a rewarding life. However, recent decades have brought growing recognition that throughout the world, women's status is lower than men's. More reports have also described the disadvantages or problems that the girl child faces vis-à-vis her brother. This discrimination is further entrenched by the system of institutionalised patriarchy which undermines basic human rights and also engenders a variety of harmful traditional practices. In spite of this observation, none or very few studies have been conducted on the situation of the Girl-Child in South Africa. Even then such studies have only treated the Girl-Child within the larger spectrum of women studies. Against this backdrop, this study was conducted to investigate the special situation of the girl child in Soweto, South Africa. With a sample of six hundred respondents (boys and girls) not beyond age 19, selected through multi-stage sampling procedure, data was collected using the interview method. Findings reveal that contrary to what obtains in many other parts of Africa, the girl-child and the boy-child in Soweto enjoy comparable status, and no significant difference in care and treatment was reported.