

The Consequences of School Violence for Female Learners

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KEYWORDS Female Learners. School Violence. Sexual Abuse. Gender-based Violence

ABSTRACT Globally violence against girls is widespread. Research studies show that girls are particularly vulnerable to both physical and sexual harassment, research further highlights girls' vulnerability to rape by teachers and classmates. This study therefore sought to investigate factors associated with gender-based violence in schools as well the effects on female learners. A qualitative approach was used to explore consequences of school violence for female learners. Semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews were used to collect data from 29 learners, five principals, five school governing body members, five Life Orientation teachers and five non-teaching staff from four schools drawn from four provinces in South Africa, namely Gauteng, Limpopo, North West and Western Cape. Thematic analysis was employed for the purposes of data analysis. The findings of this study reveal that female learners continue to face barriers to their learning as victims of violence perpetrated by male learners and their teachers. Interviewees (learners) saw their schools not as safe places but as primary sites for violence which has a negative impact on their education and their emotional welfare. The study proposes a synergistic approach in the form of collaborative efforts by community, administrators, teachers, parents and learners as a necessary strategy to make our schools safe.