PARENTS' INFLUENCE ON DAUGHTERS' ASPIRATIONS IN NGUMO ESTATE, NAIROBI

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ABSTRACT

The study examined how children, boys and girls are brought up in urban households and how this is likely to influence girls' aspirations in future. The basic assumption was that good or bad performance of women in their adult roles can be related to the ways in which they were brought up as children. If girls are brought up differently from boys and are disadvantaged early in life, because of differential socialization that favours boys, they will grow into disadvantaged adult women.

Data from the study were collected through the administration of a questionnaire in a survey research and focus group discussions to and with the parents and children. The focus was on the division of labour in the households, educational opportunities that are given to daughters and sons, as well as parents' aspirations for their children and children's own aspirations for their future lives. Views on property ownership in marriage and inheritance of property by children were also examined. These data were analysed by quantitative and qualitative methods through the use of percentages, frequency tables, description and explanation.

According to the findings, attitudes on the division of labour seem to be changing, although in reality, women and girls are still doing more work in the households than men and boys. The study also found out that girls and boys are accorded equal opportunities in education and property inheritance by their parents.

The study concluded that, amidst the vast and various changes that are taking place, methods of socialising children are also changing. Parents involved in this study value their daughters and sons equally. It was observed that these new attitudes by parents give daughters the confidence required to face future challenges on an equal footing with
boys. The study recommends that, more studies on this area are needed. These should be carried out in different communities and different social classes, so as to establish the trend of changes more clearly. It also recommends that, gender changes need to be approached more calmly by gender activists than has been the case, taking into consideration that a whole generation cannot be changed overnight. Their activities should reflect a deeper and clear understanding of the situation.