

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR**D Smit*****V du Plessis******SUMMARY**

Education should safely shape the minds and attitudes of young adults and children, especially with the *in loco parentis* principle in mind. Young adults who have experienced sexual harassment in the very environment that should have protected them as learners suffer greatly from social problems and from emotional and academic strain. Victims often become future harassers themselves. Sexual harassment should be eradicated from the education sector *in toto* to ensure a safe learning environment.

High incidences of harassment have been found among college students in America, while a very small percentage of such transgressions have been reported. Similar statistics in South African universities are not available, the problem is therefore managed in a void. The position in schools is more alarming. In South Africa it has been found that 30 per cent of girls are raped at school and that male learners and educators are the main culprits.

Not only is the magnitude of this problem gravely underestimated, but the effect of sexual harassment on learners has also not been managed properly. The authors argue that the focus is on avoiding legal responsibility and accountability, rather than on being proactive. The historic invisibility of sexual harassment in education can be attributed to the wrongful silencing thereof.

KEYWORDS: Sexual harassment; schools; workplace rights; educational rights

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