**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 3417**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 11/09/2015**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 37/2015**

**3417. Prof C T Msimang (IFP) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

(1) Whether she has found that teacher training programmes equip them with the capacity to deal with cases of (a) gender-based violence and (b) rape in schools;

(2) whether her department has any plans in place to employ social workers in schools to deal with the learners who are the victims of gender-based violence and rape; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;

(3) what other mechanisms does her department have in place in order to inform learners and teachers about steps to take in instances where rape or sexual assault by a fellow learner or learners takes place? NW4078E

**Response**

1. **Whether teachers have the capacity to deal with cases of (a) gender-based violence and (b) rape in schools;**

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has several programmes that coalesce to provide a comprehensive response to gender-based violence. These programmes have been institutionalised in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) in the Life Orientation Curriculum across all grades and bands. The Department uses a human rights-based approach to address gender-based violence. Following are some of the programmes that the Department is undertaking in its response in dealing with gender based violence:

**The Bill of Responsibilities (BOR): “Building a culture of humanity and accountability in schools”**

This programme, which is captured as Rights and Responsibilities in the Life Orientation Curriculum, includes gender rights. The programme is supported by a Bill of Responsibilities that is premised on the Bill of Rights that each right comes with corresponding responsibilities. The programme is further supported by a teacher training manual that provides the content and activities for teachers to teach about rights and responsibilities. The programme has been supported by other Departments and many of our partners, including Faith-Based Organisations. Thus far all provinces have received training in the Bill of Responsibility.

**Training of Master Trainers on Gender-Based Violence**

During 2014/15, the Department undertook a national training programme targeting master trainers. The purpose of this training was to enable them to identify and respond to Violence against Women (VAW) and Violence against Children (VAC), including Gender-Based Violence (GBV), using the revised training manual called Opening Our Eyes. About 400 master trainers were reached. The training touched on the following topics:

• Gender-based violence: an introduction;

• Dealing with hate crimes at schools;

• Responding to situations of sexual abuse;

• Recognising harassment and taking action;

• Gender and HIV – the link;

• Educators as facilitators of healing;

• A school policy on GBV; and

• A whole school approach on GBV.

**Challenging Homophobic Bullying in Schools**

The Challenging Homophobic Bullying in Schools guide explains what homophobic bullying is and what teachers, parents and learners can do to make schools safer for all learners. It provides clear and simple steps that teachers and learners can take in challenging homophobic bullying in schools. Distribution of the manual has been done to all provinces, with the purpose to further deliver to schools.

The Department has completed training provincial master trainers on the roll out of the National School Safety Framework. The master trainers will cascade the training to schools.

1. **Whether her department has any plans in place to employ social workers in schools to deal with the learners who are the victims of gender-based violence and rape; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;**

Currently a limited number of social workers and psychologists have been employed by some Provincial Education Departments at district level. The Department of Basic Education is in the process of developing integrated norms for funding, staffing and infrastructure for inclusive education, including psycho-social support. These norms are aimed at ensuring an equitable distribution of these scarce resources in each district to serve the needs of learners with specialised needs in ordinary, full-service and special schools. It is recommended that support services be based at district level. These services will include support to victims and survivors of violence, including gender-based violence, in schools. The Department plans to complete the norms by March 2016 for incremental implementation up to 2019.

**(3)** **What other mechanisms does her department have in place in order to inform learners and teachers about steps to take in instances where rape or sexual assault by a fellow learner or learners takes place?**

**Speak Out Against Abuse**

The Department has developed an advocacy programme for learners that inform them of their rights and the course of action if they are sexually harassed or raped. The advocacy programme is supported by a comprehensive and learner friendly handbook entitled *“Speak Out” Youth report sexual abuse*-A handbook for learners, on how to prevent sexual abuse in public schools. The advocacy programme utilises school dialogues and role-playing to address gender-based violence in schools.

Prevent Violence in Schools Training focuses on enabling and supporting learners to take action to prevent violence in their own schools. About five hundred (500) master trainers have been trained across all provinces and they will, in turn, train learners. The following were the topics covered during training:

• Introduction to prevent violence in schools;

• Understanding violence;

• Gender Based Violence;

• Analysing violence;

• Reporting violence;

• My school, my reality; and

• Taking action.