

Gangsterism as a Cause of Violence in South African Schools: The Case of Six Provinces

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ABSTRACT This paper reports on a study that was conducted in six provinces of South Africa namely Gauteng, North West, Limpopo, Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga. The aims of the study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of school stakeholders of school violence and the nature of violence that takes place in South African schools. This was a qualitative study that used interviews and documents. A questionnaire was also employed for generalisation. The scourge of violence in South African schools is a cause for concern; daily reports appear in the written and electronic media about high levels of violence, physical and sexual abuse and gang related activities in our schools. The findings suggest that Gangsterism is of serious concern in South African schools and is one of the external factors that exacerbate violence in schools. This is true in all provinces studied and particularly in the Western Cape and Limpopo. The study recommends that there is need to support current efforts aimed at increasing basic levels of good management, school effectiveness and teacher professionalism in South African schools. A well-ordered school is also a less violent school. Schools that experience problems of violence need an active safety and security committee that monitors violence; recommends violence prevention measures; and oversees its implementation.