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Exploring Gender Dynamics in Sexuality Education in Uganda’s Secondary Schools

Thesis Presented for the Degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in the African Gender Institute Faculty of Humanities UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

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Declaration

I Florence Kyoheirwe Muhanguzi declare that the work that gave rise to this thesis, is my own original work except where references have been cited and has neither been submitted nor is being submitted concurrently in any university or institution of higher learning for any degree.

Name: Florence Kyoheirwe Muhanguzi
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Dedication

Dedicated to my husband Dr. Hosea Muhanguzi and my sons Don, David and Derrick for their encouragement and patience.
Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to all who supported me during the course of my studies, and encouraged me to undertake this course. I am highly indebted to Associate Professor Joy Kwasiga who has been my mentor since graduate training, for her interest in my studies and consistent encouragement. Associate Professor Grace Bantebya Kyomuhendo and Dr. Edith Okiria provided insightful guidance during the initial stages of developing my research proposal. Professor Marjorie McIntosch from the University of Wisconsin, USA offered invaluable comments and advice during the time of developing the research proposal and writing the thesis.

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# Table of Contents

DECLARATION ...................................................................................................... II
DEDICATION ....................................................................................................... III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .................................................................................... IV
LIST OF TABLES ................................................................................................ VIII
LIST OF FIGURES ............................................................................................. IX
ABSTRACT .......................................................................................................... X

## CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY ........................................... 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................................................. 1
1.2 GENDER EQUITY AND EQUALITY ISSUES IN SUB SAHARAN AFRICA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM ....2
  1.2.1 Access, persistence and performance in school .......................................................... 3
  1.2.2 Factors causing the gender disparities in SSA education .............................................. 5
  1.2.3 Government policy initiatives addressing gender disparities in education .............. 8
1.3 THE STATUS OF GENDER AND EDUCATION IN UGANDA ......................................................... 11
  1.3.1 Gender and education policy framework in Uganda .................................................. 13
1.4 SUMMARY ................................................................................................................................. 17

## CHAPTER TWO: GENDER, SEXUALITY AND EDUCATION: LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL REFLECTIONS .......................................................... 19

2.1 INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................................................. 19
2.2 GENDER AND SEXUALITY ................................................................................................................ 19
  2.2.1 Gendering sexualities ....................................................................................................... 28
  2.2.2 Gender, sexuality and schooling .................................................................................... 32
  2.2.3 The school as a gendered institution .............................................................................. 39
2.3 GENDER AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION ..................................................................................... 41
  2.3.1 Family and community involvement in formal sexuality education .......................... 42
  2.3.2 Gender and sexuality education in schools ................................................................. 44
  2.3.3 Students' response to sexuality education lessons ....................................................... 56
2.4 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ................................................................................................. 57
2.5 SUMMARY ...................................................................................................................................... 58

## CHAPTER THREE: CONTEXTUALISING THE RESEARCH AGENDA ......................................... 60

3.1 INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................................................. 60
3.2 UGANDA: THE NATIONAL CONTEXT ............................................................................................. 60
  3.2.1 The historical and current political setting ................................................................. 60
  3.2.2 Uganda's socio-economic background ....................................................................... 61
  3.2.3 The socio-demographic profile of Uganda ................................................................. 62
  3.2.4 Uganda's social cultural setting ...................................................................................... 64
3.3 UGANDA'S POLITICAL ENGAGEMENTS WITH SEXUALITY AND HIV AND AIDS EDUCATION .... 67
  3.3.1 Policy and program initiatives under the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) ....69
  3.3.2 Teaching sexuality in Uganda's secondary school education curriculum ..................74
  3.3.3 Presentation format/instructional methods of sexuality knowledge ......................... 85
3.4 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM .......................................................................................................... 87
  3.4.1 The general aim and objectives of the Study ............................................................... 88
3.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY ................................................................................................. 89
3.6 SUMMARY ..................................................................................................................................... 90
CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION............................................................................................................................... 91
4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN ............................................................................................................................. 91
4.3 SAMPLING DESIGN AND SIZE ........................................................................................................ 92
  4.3.1 The study area.............................................................................................................................. 92
  4.3.2 Selection of study schools........................................................................................................... 95
  4.3.3 Selection of Respondents........................................................................................................... 95
4.4 METHODS AND TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION ........................................................................ 98
  4.4.1 In-depth and key informant interviews ................................................................................... 98
  4.4.2 Focus group discussions (FGDs)............................................................................................... 98
  4.4.3 Observation ............................................................................................................................. 99
  4.4.4 Secondary data review ............................................................................................................. 100
4.5 THE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE ....................................................................................................... 100
  4.5.1 Phase I - Preliminary preparations for data collection .............................................................. 100
  4.5.2 Phase II – Data collection......................................................................................................... 101
  4.5.3 Reflections on the research process ......................................................................................... 102
  4.5.4 Limitations to the study ........................................................................................................... 104
  4.5.5 Validity and reliability of data ................................................................................................. 106
4.6 DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS .......................................................................................... 106
4.7 SUMMARY........................................................................................................................................ 107

CHAPTER FIVE: STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS SEXUALITY EDUCATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION................................................................................................................................ 109
5.2 THE GENDERED SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT .................................................................................. 109
  5.2.1 Gender segregation in school organizational set up ............................................................... 109
  5.2.2 Students’ sexual attitudes, behaviours and practices ............................................................... 114
5.3 STUDENTS’ PURSUIT OF SEXUALITY KNOWLEDGE.................................................................... 122
  5.3.1 Education level at which students first acquired sexuality knowledge and their first source of information ......................................................................................... 122
  5.3.2 Students’ current sources of sexuality knowledge ................................................................. 123
  5.3.3 Students’ views about the role of parents in sexuality education ........................................ 126
5.4 STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCES WITH THE OFFICIAL SCHOOL SEXUALITY EDUCATION CURRICULUM .......................................................................................................................... 129
  5.4.1 Students’ experiences with the different curricula content .................................................... 129
  5.4.2 Students’ opinions and assessment of the sexuality education content coverage and orientation ........................................................................................................................................ 136
  5.4.3 The teaching strategies employed during the sexuality education lessons ............................ 142
  5.4.4 Students’ opinions about single and mixed sex teaching of sexuality issues ..................... 147
  5.4.5 Levels of students’ participation and gender dynamics during the lessons ......................... 154
  5.4.6 Students’ opinions about the effect of sex of the teacher during sexuality education lessons ................................................................................................................................. 156
5.5 PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SCHOOL SEXUALITY KNOWLEDGE AND STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS SCHOOL SEXUALITY EDUCATION ........................................................................ 162
5.6 SUMMARY........................................................................................................................................ 166

CHAPTER SIX: TEACHERS’ AND PARENTS’ ENGAGEMENT IN SEXUALITY EDUCATION .......................................................................................................................... 168

6.1 INTRODUCTION................................................................................................................................ 168
6.2 TEACHERS’ EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SEXUALITY EDUCATION .................. 168
  6.2.1 Teachers’ views about the gender dynamics in students’ interactions ................................. 168
  6.2.2 Teachers’ views about students’ sexual behaviours and practices in schools .................... 170
6.2.3 Teachers' views about students' sources of sexuality knowledge .......................................................... 172
6.2.4 Teachers' experiences with the official school sexuality education curriculum .................................. 175
6.2.5 Teachers' views about students' participation and interaction in class and the nature of gender relations .......................................................................................................................... 181
6.2.6 Teaching strategies (methods and approach) .......................................................................................... 183
6.2.7 Teachers' opinions about conducting sexuality education in either single or mixed sex lessons .......... 186
6.2.8 Teachers' opinions about the effect of sex of teacher in sexuality education lesson ............................. 189
6.2.9 Teachers' opinions about teaching sexuality in schools ....................................................................... 192
6.3 PARENTS' VIEWS, EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SEXUALITY EDUCATION .................. 194
6.3.1 Parents' role in sexuality education at home ............................................................................................ 194
6.3.2 Teaching methods employed by parents .................................................................................................. 199
6.3.3 Parental support for and perceptions about comprehensive sexuality education in schools ........... 202
6.4 SUMMARY ............................................................................................................................................. 208

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ................................................. 210
7.1 INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................................................ 210
7.2 THE GENDERED SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT ............................................................................................ 210
  7.2.1 The construction and mediation of sexuality and gender relations in the school space .................. 210
  7.2.2 Students' sexual attitudes, behaviours and practices ................................................................. 212
7.3 STUDENTS' PURSUIT OF SEXUAL KNOWLEDGE .............................................................................. 215
7.4 STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES WITH THE SCHOOL SEXUALITY EDUCATION CURRICULUM ............. 218
  7.4.1 Students' participation and interaction in sexuality education lessons ....................................... 220
  7.4.2 Teaching methods ............................................................................................................................... 225
  7.4.3 Practical application of school sexuality knowledge ....................................................................... 228
7.5 TEACHERS' INTERACTION WITH THE SCHOOL SEXUALITY EDUCATION CURRICULAR ...... 230
7.6 PERCEPTIONS ABOUT AND SUPPORT FOR TEACHING SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS AND AT HOME .............................................................................................................. 231
7.7 EMERGING APPROACHES TO COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN CONTEMPORARY UGANDA ............................................................................................................................ 233
7.8 CONCLUSION ........................................................................................................................................... 235
  7.8.1 Implications for further research ........................................................................................................ 239

REFERENCES .................................................................................................................................................. 241

ANNEX 1: UGANDA'S GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR ADDRESSING GENDER DISPARITIES IN EDUCATION ................................................................................................................................. 269

ANNEX 2: LIST OF SEX SPECIFIC AND GENDER SPECIFIC TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS COVERED IN THE INDIVIDUAL TEXTBOOKS ........................................................................... 275

ANNEX 3: IN-DEPTH/FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR STUDENTS ........................................... 278

ANNEX 4: TEACHERS IN-DEPTH/FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE .................................................... 280

ANNEX 5: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE PARENTS ......................................................................... 281

ANNEX 6: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION CHECKLIST ............................................................................... 282

ANNEX 7: PERMISSION FORM ..................................................................................................................... 283
## List of Tables

| Table 5.1 | Students' first source of sexuality information | 123 |
| Table 5.2 | Students' current sources of sexuality information | 125 |
| Table 5.3 | Students' sexuality information from parents | 126 |
| Table 5.4 | Students' opinions about which parent was most helpful in providing information and guidance about their sexuality | 128 |
| Table 5.5 | Sexuality issues identified by students from the Biology lessons by sex | 130 |
| Table 5.6 | Sexuality issues identified by students in Christian Religious Education lessons by sex | 131 |
| Table 5.7 | Sexuality issues students identified in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) | 133 |
| Table 5.8 | Students' proposed sexuality topics to be addressed in a sexuality education curriculum | 141 |
| Table 5.9 | Students' opinions about the teaching strategies | 143 |
| Table 5.10 | Students' preferred teaching strategies | 147 |
| Table 5.11 | Students' reasons for single sex teaching | 148 |
| Table 5.12 | Students' reasons for mixed sex teaching | 150 |
| Table 5.13 | Students' reasons for preferring to be taught by a male teacher | 157 |
| Table 5.14 | Practical application and usefulness of school sexuality information | 163 |
| Table 6.1 | Sexuality related topics addressed in Biology, CRE and IRE | 175 |
| Table 6.2 | Sexuality issues covered in Social Etiquette and Moral Education | 176 |
| Table 6.3 | Topics proposed by teachers as being essential in sexuality education | 193 |
| Table 6.4 | Sexuality information currently acquired by girls and boys from parents | 198 |
| Table 6.5 | Topics proposed by parents as being essential in sexuality education | 206 |
List of Figures

Figure 4.1 Map of Uganda showing the location of the study area................................. 93
Figure 4.2 Map of Wakiso district – the study district................................................. 94
Figure 5.1 Percentage numbers of students by sex, who encountered sexual advances........ 115
Figure 5.2 Students’ opinions about the time teachers spent on explanations in class...... 139
Figure 5.3 Teaching methods employed during sexuality education lessons.................. 142
Figure 5.4 Students’ preferred approach of teaching sexuality issues............................ 148
Figure 5.5 Students’ sex preference of the teacher in sexuality education lessons.............. 156
Figure 6.1 Teachers’ preference for either single or mixed sex sexuality education lessons.. 187
Figure 6.2 Teachers’ opinions about the sex of the teacher in sexuality education.......... 189
Abstract

Within international theory of gender and education, sexuality is implicated as one of the major factors responsible for the differential participation of boys and girls in schooling and the persistent gender inequalities in education in Sub-Saharan African countries and Uganda in particular. In spite of multiple interventions to address the inequalities, gender disparities remain apparent and such disparities continue to entail increased vulnerability to sexual abuse, HIV transmission, unwanted teenage pregnancies, sexual exploitation and the overall silence about sexual experience, for those gendered as girls and women. Comprehensive gendered sexuality education is widely seen as a valuable site of intervention for addressing these problems, thereby facilitating the process of attaining gender equality and equity in society.

The relationship between sexuality education and gender dynamics remain, however, complex at multiple levels of the educational process. The main objective of this study is to explore the operation of gender dynamics in school sexuality education. The research interrogates the interactions between contemporary curriculum based ideas of sexuality education in Uganda and the gendered realities of key participants in the pedagogic process. The substantive focus of my study is on secondary school students’ and teachers’ experiences and interactions with formal school sexuality curriculum. Under the notion that the community of pedagogy for students comprises parents, the research includes an exploration of parents’ engagement with the school-based sexuality education.

My study draws on qualitative data obtained through qualitative methods namely observation, in-depth and key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Template and thematic analysis was used.

The study theorises that the current sexuality education being conducted in Uganda’s secondary schools is deficient in terms of content and approach and is based on gender biased materials and textbooks. Overall the education offered is inadequate, largely prescriptive and feminized, generally divorced from students’ personal experiences, and sometimes even contradictory. The study reveals complex gendered sexual experiences of students that position boys and girls differently often causing gender inequalities in sexuality education classrooms. The study illuminates the need for a rigorous re-examination of the current curriculum learning resources and advocates an empowerment approach that integrates considerations of gender dynamics throughout the approach to formal sexuality education in a bid to challenge gendered discrimination.
CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction
The focus of my research is on gender, sexuality and education. It is strongly influenced by both my background training and my deep engagement with gender issues in education particularly research and community sensitization about girls’ education. After my graduate training, mainly in social sciences and demography, I was given an opportunity to participate in a Family Life Education (FLE) project run by Action for Development (ACFODE)\(^1\), which exposed me to issues of gender and sexuality education. The FLE project’s main focus was the training and sensitization of parents, teachers and students about the importance of girls’ education and educating students about their sexuality (particularly their sexual development, challenges and ways of addressing them). Furthermore, my exposure to feminist literature about gender and sexuality education made me aware of the lack of explicit understanding (among most researchers, educators and policy makers) of the social and cultural constructions of sexuality and the connection between gender, sexuality and education. As a scholar interested in gender equity and equality, I became deeply interested in an in-depth exploration of the gender dynamics in sexuality education\(^2\) in schools. The main objective of my research is to explore the gender dynamics in school sexuality education and discuss the challenges of gendered teaching of sexuality issues in Uganda’s secondary schools, alongside the opportunities comprehensive sexuality education may offer to building notions of gender equality.

My thesis is comprised of seven chapters. This chapter (Chapter One) provides the general introduction to the study through a review of research on gender and education in Sub-Saharan Africa. The review highlights dominant gender issues in education and describes the policy related initiatives to address a broad range of concerns about the gender disparities in education in the region. The chapter then introduces the Ugandan context, reviews research on gender and education in Uganda and concludes with an introduction to the Ugandan policy for addressing inequality issues in education. The theoretical debates and literature about the discourses of gender, sexuality and education are addressed in chapter two. Chapters three and four focus on the research agenda and

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\(^1\) ACFODE is women’s non-governmental organization (non profit making) in Kampala working for gender equity and equality.

\(^2\) It is a lifelong process of acquiring information and forming attitudes, beliefs and values about identity, relationships and intimacy. It encompasses sexual development, reproductive health, interpersonal, cultural, psychological and spiritual dimensions of sexuality from the cognitive domain (information), the affective domain (feelings, values and attitudes), and the behavioural domain (communication, decision-making and other relevant personal skills) (SIECUS, 1996:6)
the methodology respectively. The research findings and the analytic discussion are presented in chapters five, six and seven.

1.2 Gender equity and equality issues in Sub Saharan Africa’s education system

While education in general is essential to socio-economic development (Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991; King and Hill, 1993; Colclough and Lewin, 1993; Bloch and Vavrus, 1998), scholars note that female education in particular is considered an investment with higher social and economic returns in the development of a nation. Girls’ education particularly contributes to increased economic growth and productivity, improved nutrition, lower infant/child and maternal mortality, improved family health and nutrition, lower fertility rates and improved opportunities for women’s access to paid employment (Floro and Wolf, 1990; Mannathoko, 1992; Schultz, 1993; Hyde, 1993; Schultz, 1995; Odaga and Heneveld, 1995; Kwegis, 2002). Women’s education is theorized as multi-influential through stimulating mothers’ interest in educating their children including girls and thus establishing a cycle of gender equitable investment in schooling. However, in spite of the benefits that accrue from female education, gender inequalities and inequities in education remain prevalent in most Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) countries. The disparity is reflected in the lower enrolment levels, higher dropout and repetitions rates and lower levels of attainment for girls at all levels of schooling especially at secondary and higher education (University and other tertiary institutions) levels (Hyde, 1993; Stromquist, 1998) as well as lower literacy rates for girls and women in many countries. According to the UNESCO (2000) report, the literacy rates in SSA are 50.1% for women and 66.7% for men.

I have drawn on SSA to locate geographically a number of salient issues that relate to the education of girls and women. While I acknowledge that not all the countries are at the same level of development, there is some degree of similarity in education experiences shared by the countries in the SSA region. However, researching SSA as a homogeneous zone sets a number of challenges. Although, such homogeneity provides a picture of the global trends around discourses of gender and education in the region, it glosses over the regional and national variations across the different countries that make up SSA. These variations are embedded within individual country specific domestic histories, cultures, economic, political and educational policies. These country specificities have implications of a gendered nature on the status of education. This section highlights the status of gender in access, persistence and performance in education in SSA region and the policy initiatives adopted by the different SSA countries to address gender disparities in education.
1.2.1 Access, persistence and performance in school

\textit{a) Education access}

The increasing appreciation of the benefits of education to economic and social development has led to increasing efforts in education provision by many governments in SSA (Colclough, Al-Samarrai, Rose and Tembon, 2003). Consequently, ensuring universal access to education, especially basic education (primary schooling), has become a major policy goal in most developing countries, particularly in SSA. Since the 1960's, there has been rapid expansion of education both in terms of the number of schools as well as Gross Enrolment Ratio [GER] for both boys and girls at all levels of schooling (Abagi, Yamahiu and Wassuna, 1997; Colclough et al, 2003).

Although many countries have made tremendous progress in widening education access especially at primary school education level, gender disparities in access are still prevalent in most SSA countries (UNESCO, 1998: 2000; Association for the Development of Education in Africa [ADEA], 2000). While the primary school GER for both males and females has been increasing over the last two decades, there has also been a persistent wide gender gap (13%) with variations across the SSA region where some countries had narrow gender gap (Gender Parity Index [GPI]) between 0.96 – 0.99 and others had wide gender gaps (GPI below 0.70) UNESCO (2004). Similar trends in the gender gaps are evident at secondary school level. Although access to education at this level is limited for both boys and girls, the GER for girls is much lower (23.7%) than that for boys (30%) (UNESCO, 2004). The lower GERs at secondary level influence the enrolment levels for high education making it even lower and the gender disparities more glaring. The UNESCO (2000) report shows that the overall GER for higher education is much lower (3.9%) with that of males being higher (5.1%) than for females (2.8%). Again variations are evident across the different countries with some countries having GER as low as 0.1% and others as high as 15.9%.

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5 Not only does primary schooling have greater social returns than those at higher education levels but it also serves as a foundation upon which the entire education system is built (Colclough and Lewin, 1993).
4 GER is the total enrolment at a given level of schooling irrespective of the age of the students as a percentage of the population, which according to the national regulations, is of an age to attend at that level (the school going age population).
6 Absolute gender gap (male enrolment rate – female enrolment rate) indicate that on an average about 13% more boys than girls are enrolled in primary school per year.
7 Cape Verde, Congo, Gabon, Kenya, Malawi, Madagascar, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.
8 Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Niger and Central African Republic
9 Guinea-Bissau
10 Mauritius
On the other hand, in some countries such as Botswana and Mauritius, female enrolment in primary schooling has achieved parity with male enrolment (Bloch and Vavras, 1998; UNESCO, 2004), where as countries like Lesotho and Namibia are said to have higher enrolment rates for girls than for boys (UNESCO, 2004). Like primary school education, access to secondary education also varies between countries with countries such as Botswana, Cape Verde, South Africa, Seychelles, Namibia and Lesotho having more girls than boys (GPI >1) and others including Swaziland having attained gender parity (UNESCO, 2004). These countries' experiences show an interesting picture which seems to challenge the general trend.

Gender inequality is also apparent in the different curricular choices offered to or made by students at the secondary and tertiary levels (Hyde, 1993; Beoku-Betts, 1998; Stromquist, 1998). Most notable is the low enrolment figures of females in the science and technical fields. In SSA, 67% of the females are in arts disciplines particularly in the social sciences (31%) and only 32% in science courses of which less than 10% are represented in natural sciences, medical sciences, mathematics, engineering and agriculture (Beoku-Betts, 1998). The under- representation of women in 'non-traditional' (science and technology) disciplines at higher levels of education limits women's future prospects in the labour market as well as their career mobility patterns in professional and managerial fields.

b) Persistence in school

Persistence indicators in most SSA countries generally show that females have higher dropout and repetition rates and lower completion rates than males with the greatest disparity occurring at the highest levels of schooling (beyond primary) (King and Hill, 1993) with the exception of a few countries such as Botswana and Lesotho where girls are less likely to drop out of school than boys (Bloch and Vavras, 1998; Stromquist, 1998). Some researchers hypothesize that three quarters of the first grade entrants in SSA who reach grade five dropout of school before they attain durable standards of literacy and numeracy (Colclough et al, 2003). According to Boek-Betts (1998), the average gender ratio in repetition at secondary school level for some SSA countries is 1:1.07 indicating that more girls than boys repeat a class. As in access, UNESCO, (2004) indicates country variations with some countries having same repetition rates for girls and boys and others having higher repetition rates for boys than girls particularly those countries which have either attained parity or have more girls than boys. In addition, girls in the Western Africa sub region are reported to have the lowest years of schooling (2.0) and those in the Eastern Africa have the highest (5.1) schooling years (Stromquist, 1998).

11 dropout, repetition and completion rates
12 Niger, Ghana, Kenya, Cameroon, Senegal and Botswana
c) Performance in school

School performance in national examinations (both at primary and secondary levels) in many African countries has been reported to follow similar trends, just as boys access education more than girls, boys generally perform better than girls (Rose, Getachew, Asmaru, and Tegegn, 1997; Peasgood, Bandera, Namsifuel and Kisanga, 1997; Colclough, et al, 2003). Gender gaps, where boys perform far better than girls in Science and Mathematics, have been reported in many African countries (Swainson, 1997; Tembon, Sony Diallo, Djenabou and Alpha Aliou, 1997; Avotri, Owusu-Darko, Eghan and Ocansey, 2000). However, variations across and within countries are also evident.

The above trends in SSA education explicitly show that although there has been improved participation in education, persistent gender gaps are apparent with girls’ education lagging behind that of boys in most countries in the region with some few exceptions. The greatest disparities are experienced at secondary and higher education levels. The persistent gender disparities and the low success rates may not only cause one to question the effectiveness of countries’ interventions in addressing the gender inequalities but also demonstrate a need for governments and other stakeholders to set clearer priorities to step up their efforts for achieving equality and equity in education.

1.2.2 Factors causing the gender disparities in SSA education

Gender, as a social construct, influences all aspects of social organization. Thus researchers are faced with a challenge in trying to explain the diverse causes of gender disparities in education. Different researchers therefore construct different frameworks for explaining the range of factors responsible for the persistent gender disparities in SSA education institutions. The different frameworks highlight diverse but interrelated factors which reinforce one another to result in gender discrimination. However, the weight given to each of these factors varies from country to country (Colclough and Lewin, 1993). These factors have been categorized under four main themes: the social cultural, institutional, social-economic and political/administrative factors.

a) The socio-cultural factors

One of the social cultural factors can be identified as the patriarchal value system, embedded within diverse practices, which obliges parents to uphold the needs and interests of the male above those of the female child and to view girls’ education as an opportunity cost (Hyde, 1993; Odaga and Heneveld, 1995; Peasgood et al, 1997; Hollos, 1998; Kajawu, 2001). Other researchers identify traditional practices and attitudes such as initiation rituals, early marriage, bride wealth payment and

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13 Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Senegal, Ethiopia, Tanzania
parents' fear of their daughters' pregnancy as inhibitions to girls' schooling (Hyde, 1993; Temboni et al, 1997; Rose et al, 1997; Kadzamira and Chibwana, 2000; Kajawu, 2001; Colclough et al, 2003). Beoku-Betts, (1998); Gaidzanwa, (1997) and Assie-Lumumba, (1997) acknowledge the impact of religious beliefs which reinforce cultural practices such as restricted movement outside the home for girls and women, fear of their moral laxity and an emphasis on motherhood and the 'naturalness' of women's subordination. Researchers further note that the traditional division of labour in the home and at school exert greater social demands on the girl than the boy and often compel her to drop out of school to assume domestic duties (Tietjen, 1991; Odaga and Heneveld, 1995; Gaidzanwa, 1997; Kajawu, 2001). Lack of role models (learned professional women) in the home and society are also reported to significantly influence female education (Brock and Cammish, 1991; Njeuma, 1995; Hyde, 1993; Gaidzanwa, 1997; Tembon et al, 1997). Other social factors identified by researchers as key to understanding gender patterns in education are teenage pregnancy, lack of interest, age of entry into school, poor performance (Tembon et al, 1997; Zougrana, Tokindang, Marcoux and Mamadou, 1997; Kadzamira and Chibwana, 2000) and HIV and AIDS (causing an increased labour demand on girls)(Kajawu, 2001).

b) Institutional factors

Research which explores the education institutional environment points to factors such as inadequate facilities especially sanitation facilities for female students in co-educational institutions. Availability of places and proximity to school also plays a role (Tembon et al, 1997; World Bank, 1998; Beoku-Betts, 1998; Colclough et al, 2003). According to Hyde, (1993), Fuller and Clarke, (1994), Hollos, (1998) and Kajawu (2001) negative gender stereotyping in the curriculum, instructional materials, teaching/learning methodology and assessment systems affect girls participation in schooling and shape their subject choices. Other institutional factors that inhibit girls' participation in schools include lack of female role models among the teaching and administrative cadres at all levels of the education system, negative/biased teacher attitudes towards girls, inadequate career guidance and corporal punishment (Delamount, 1996; Rose et al, 1997; Tembon et al, 1997; Avotri et al, 2000; Kajawu, 2001; Kwasiga, 2002). The impact of an insecure school environment, in which sexual harassment and abuse is prevalent is also highlighted (Tembon et al, 1997; Clarke, 1997; Tsegaye, 1999; Forum for African Women Educationalist [FAWE], 2001; Kajawu, 2001; Bennett, 2002).

c) Socio-economic factors

The social economic factors relate to household income levels and household size (Zougrana et al, 1997). Zougrana et al, (1997) note that many households lack adequate resources to provide support for their children's schooling which in turn forces parents to make choices about which child should
go to school. These researchers point out that in such cases, preference is always given to boys' education. Factors such as education level and occupation of the parents which are directly related to income are renowned for inhibiting girls' participation in schooling. Scholars such as Hyde (1993) and Kwesiga, (2002) note that mothers with a high education level are more likely to send their children to school. Some scholars have also linked gender and social class with children's participation in school. They note that there are cumulative disadvantages suffered by females who come from socio-economically disadvantaged families (Hyde, 1993). Girls from less privileged class are doubly disadvantaged in school. Such girls are less likely to enter and remain in school. Although they undergo same experience of class inequality as their male counterparts, they also receive messages about their subordinate status in society.

d) The political and administrative factors
The political and administrative factors include economic conditions of the country, insufficient resource allocation to girls' education initiatives and inadequate enforcement of available laws and regulations particularly laws relating to defilement (Gertler and Glewwe, 1990; Colclough, 1994; Beoku-Betts, 1998). Consequently, girls' needs and concerns cannot be adequately addressed and their protection against sexual harassment and abuse is at stake. Research confirms that gender based violence is a significant problem for girls in school and yet the school administration fails to acknowledge its existence or respond to it (Clarke, 1997; Wolpe et al, 1997). Findings also draw attention to the limited public awareness about the importance of girls' education and the need to provide a secure environment for female students. Other scholars note that most educational policies adopted in African countries have not been adequately implemented and lack a gender perspective (Assie-Lumumba, 1997; Gidzana, 1997; ADEA, 2000; Colclough et al, 2003).

Overall, this research reveals a complex array of factors that affect women's and girls' participation in education. An analysis of these factors in their multiple and integrated manifestation at the school, family and community levels is fundamental in ensuring that appropriate interventions are put in place. It is important to note that although issues concerning sexuality are frequently mentioned as key factors that inhibit young peoples' schooling especially the girls, there is lack of explicit recognition of sexuality as a core zone of gendered difficulty. Researchers often fail to appreciate sexuality as it manifests itself in most of the factors identified above that cause disparities in education. Sexuality is embedded in almost all the factors especially those that relate to the social cultural milieu. For instance, the involvement of girls in domestic activities is indirectly related to their perceived role of motherhood. Most research fails to make a clear connection between sexuality and other factors. Consequently, sexuality issues are glossed over in most educational interventions. The
complex inter-relationship between gendered sexuality and schooling suggests a great need for policy intervention, but a prior call for better understanding of the deep connections between gender, sexuality and education.

1.2.3 Government policy initiatives addressing gender disparities in education

The research initiatives, advocacy and policy negotiations of feminist scholars and the women’s movement at global, regional and national levels have drawn the attention of many international bodies, non-governmental organizations and governments to the discourse of gender and education and the need to address the inherent gender disparities. This concern stems from the realization that girls are not given equal opportunities in education and from the recognition of the benefits of girls’ education to socio-economic development (Floro and Wolf, 1990; Mannathoko, 1992; Hyde, 1993; Schultz, 1995; Odaga and Heneveld, 1995; Kwasiga, 2002).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 which states that everyone has a right to education and calls for free and compulsory education in the elementary and fundamental stages as well as access to technical, professional and higher education, stimulated policy emphasis on issues of gender equality and equity in educational provision in the 1960’s (Abagi et al, 1997; Hoppers, 1997; Stromquist, 1998; Bloch and Vavrus, 1998). The 1962 UNESCO Convention calls for the formulation of policies, which promote equal opportunity and widely accessible, diverse forms of educational institutions. The link between development and women’s education and training was emphasized during the 1975 UN International Women’s year where theorists and activists linked women’s absence from “development” to their inadequate educational opportunities. These discussions were reinforced by international policy and declarations such as the 1981 United Nations Convention on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women [CEDAW] through article 10, which emphasizes elimination of discrimination in all spheres of life and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child which established universal access to primary education with special emphasis on girls, as a goal for children’s development in the 1990’s. Further efforts for enhancing women’s status and their role in development through the ‘girl child’ education were asserted in the World Summit for Children in New York in 1990.

Explicit focus on girls’ education was indicated in the World Conference on Education For All [EFA] that took place in 1990 (Jomtien), the conference of African Ministers of Education and Economic Planning, Dakar, Senegal – 1991, and the Ouagadougou Declaration of 1993. These international events affirmed the need to reduce gender disparities in education with a central objective of ‘universalizing access’ and promoting equity. They advocated policy attention to vulnerable groups
particularly girls and illiterate women. Other regional milestones that recognized gender inequality and stressed the need to increase access to education and equality of opportunity include the Abuja Treaty on the establishment of the African Economic Community (1991), the 5th African Regional Conference held in Dakar Senegal (1994), the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing (1995), the meeting of Ministers of Education held in Bamako, Mali (1996), the Mid Decade Review (Amman, 1996) and many others.

As a result of these international efforts, several countries in Africa such as Malawi, Ghana, Ethiopia, Guinea, Angola, Mozambique, Congo, Botswana, Tanzania, Senegal, Mali, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Namibia, Cameroon and Uganda have undertaken a range of policy reform initiatives (both equity and gender-specific policy initiatives) in an attempt to increase access and address gender disparities in education and other socio-economic spheres (Colelough and Lewin, 1993; Hoppers, 1997; Colclough et al, 2003). The policy reform initiatives focus mainly on universal access to education through school fees waivers, offering bursaries and incentives to schools and girls especially at secondary school level, abolishing school uniforms, introducing flexible timetabling, carrying out public campaigns and gender sensitization about the importance of girls' education and addressing the traditional harmful practices such as early marriage and strengthening school community links (Colelough and Lewin, 1993; Hoppers, 1997; Stromquist, 1998; Tumushabe, Barasa, Muhanguzi and Otim-Nape, 2000; Colelough et al, 2003).

Several other policy reforms that have been undertaken by different African countries include curriculum reform (Bellew and King, 1993; Hoppers, 1997), pregnancy policies (Tietjen, 1997), increasing the minimum age for marriage to address the problem of early marriages and establishing Gender Units and Committees within state structures in charge of girls' education to facilitate the mainstreaming of gender in research, policy making and implementation process as well as monitoring and evaluation (Avotri et al, 2000; Tumushabe et al, 2000; Colelough et al, 2003). Countries such as Malawi, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya and Somalia have expanded the teaching force

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15 Benin, Ghana, Mali, Senegal, Zambia, Ethiopia, Malawi, Congo, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Tanzania, Angola, Benin
16 Ghana, Malawi
17 Ethiopia, Malawi, Zambia
18 Ethiopia, Malawi, Guinea, Senegal, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Tanzania, Angola, Benin, Mali, Morocco
19 Malawi, Kenya, South Africa
20 Malawi, Kenya, South Africa
21 Malawi and Guinea
22 Ghana, Mali, Guinea, Malawi, Senegal and Zambia
with special emphasis upon recruitment and training of female teachers, offering gender training to teacher trainers, primary school advisors and school personnel (Bellew and King, 1993; Hoppers, 1997; Stromquist, 1998; Kadzamira, 2000). In Ghana, a Science, Technology and Mathematics Education programme [STME] was introduced (in 1990) to promote and enhance girls' participation in the Science, Technology and Mathematics disciplines/professions (Avotri, 2000). Other initiatives include policies for enhancing quality such as improving school infrastructure, reducing class size, improving the gender sensitivity of the learning environment and adapting language of instruction (local language) as well as cost saving and shifting policies such as automatic promotion and encouraging private education provision (Tumushabe et al, 2000; Colclough et al, 2003).

The implementation of these policies varies from one country to another. However, although these policy initiatives have led to considerable progress in most SSA countries especially in enrolment at primary school level, their inadequate implementation has led to persistent gender inequalities in education (Beoku-Betts, 1998; Assie-Lumumba, 1997; Gaidzanwa, 1997; ADEA, 2000; Kwesiga, 2002). Most of the gender specific initiatives or programmes of education are initiated by international agencies operating outside the mainstream planning process of the governments. Consequently, the absorption of such initiatives into government policy and plans is weak and local ownership is limited by doubts raised about the sustainability of the programmes (Swainson, 2000).

Other limitations observed in most interventions include lack of adequate integration of gender concerns into the mainstream education sector endeavours (Hoppers, 1997; Colclough et al, 2003), weak Gender Units and Committees (Avotri, 2000; Kadzamira, 2000; Colclough et al, 2003; Kwesiga, 2003) and lack of specific strategies to achieve gender equity and equality (Colclough et al, 2003). As a result the practicality of incorporating a strong gender strategy subsequent to the policies being developed and implemented and funding being agreed is questionable. It is noteworthy that the deep connections between gendered hierarchies, sexuality and culture have remained largely unaddressed by policy recommendations. Implementation is thus challenged by local connections between sexuality and gender identity. Connections that are hard to dislodge by simple assertions about the need for gender equality in access to education.

One of the strategies that can greatly contribute to the reduction or elimination of the reported gender disparities is adequate attention to sexuality issues which include both the home life of students and their school environment (Stromquist, 1998). As pointed out by Stromquist (1998),

23 For example the USAID sponsored Girls Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education programme (GABLE) in Malawi, programme for the advancement of girls education (PAGE) by UNICEF and ministry of Education in Zambia.
although issues associated with sexuality, including sexual stereotypes, teachers’ and parents’ patriarchal differential expectations of girls and boys and problems connected with children’s sexual growth and development are consistently mentioned among the causes of the gender disparities, there are few adequate deliberate or concrete strategies or policy initiatives in place to address such issues. Sexuality education is named as an effective strategy in addressing issues of teenage pregnancy and other sexuality issues (see Chapter Two Section 2.3). The pregnancy policies instituted in a few countries remain controversial and their impact has not yet been assessed. Expulsion of pregnant girls from school and conducting pregnancy tests at the beginning of first term done in some countries as a strategy to address teenage pregnancy is a double punishment to the girl child and a discriminatory practice because the partner whether teacher or boy is not punished (Assie-Lumumba, 1997; Kwesiga, 2002). The policy of ensuring that such girls continue schooling remains opposed by many people who view it as promoting immorality (Kwesiga, 2002; Colclough et al, 2003).

Sexuality education could have a positive effect on the schooling and welfare of boys and girls as well as addressing the inherent gender inequalities (Stromquist, 1998). Although there is increasing focus on sexuality concerns of young people, it is only within the ambit of government policy approach to HIV that there has been recognition of the link between youth sexuality, education and national priorities. There is increasing concern in Sub Saharan Africa about the increasing premarital sexual activity among young people especially the 15-24 year olds, who are reportedly hard hit by HIV infection (Rivers and Aggleton, 1999). Consequently, provision of sexuality information and youth friendly sexual and reproductive health services is sometimes seen as a valuable intervention for addressing these sexuality concerns, but in-depth exploration of the connections between policies on improving gender equality and policies cognisant of sexuality concerns is missing.

1.3 The status of gender and education in Uganda

While recognizing the broader SSA education experiences, this section interrogates gender issues in Uganda’s education system as a way of introducing the Ugandan context. The section addresses issues of access, persistence and performance and concludes with Uganda’s education policy framework.

In Uganda, as in the other SSA countries, gender inequalities characterize the education system (access, persistence and performance) although access to schooling for boys and girls at the various

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24 Malawi, Guinea
levels of education has improved over the years. The country registered a lot of progress in enrolment, especially at primary school level, after the introduction of Universal Primary Education [UPE] in 1997. This led to the narrowing of the average gender gap from 15% (1996) to 3.8% (2002) (Ministry of Education and Sports [MOES], 1996; 2002). The gender disparities are more apparent at post primary education level where girls' schooling lags behind that of boys although access for both boys and girls is limited. At secondary school level, it is estimated that of all those who complete the primary level only 30-40% access post primary education (O and A' level and training institutions) (Kwesiga, 2002) with more males than females enrolling at this level. For instance in 2003 female GER was 18.5% compared to 21.4% for males (MOES, 2003). Total percentages of females in relation to males decline further in higher education. Females form the smallest proportion of enrolment (37.5%) at this level (MOES, 2002). As in other SSA countries tertiary education is not only accessible to few women but is also skewed towards the conventional fields of study with high concentration of female students in the arts as opposed to the sciences (Kwesiga, 2002; Kasozi, 2003).

In 2001, more boys (67%) than girls (57%) survive to P7 (Kwesiga, 2002) due to high repetition and dropout rates. While more boys than girls repeat P.6, P.7, S4 and S6, girls' repetition rates are higher in lower classes (MOES statistical abstracts, 1997-2002). According to some parents, girls' repetition is a waste of time and resources and parents fear that girls would get pregnant before completing the education cycle (Tumushabe et al, 2000). Other parents opt for girls' marriage instead of their re-enrolment in school (The Republic of Uganda, 2000). At all levels (primary and secondary school), the overall female dropout as a percentage of all female pupils is slightly higher than that of male dropouts with the highest dropout occurring at P1, P2, P5, P6 and P7, S1 and S2 (MOES, 2002). However, in the upper secondary, more boys than girls drop out mainly because of lack of school fees, expulsion due to disobedience and poor performance.

Uganda's overall performance data indicate similar trends as in other SSA countries with boys performing generally better than girls across all the levels of schooling. Gender differences are also observed in performance in the different subjects with boys performing better across all subjects with

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25 Uganda's education structure follows a 7-4-2-3 system of seven years of primary, fours years of lower secondary (Ordinary level), two years of upper secondary (Advanced level) and three to five years of university and other tertiary education. Pre-primary education is offered to children of 2-5 years old and six years is the official age for starting primary schooling (Primary 1) (The Republic of Uganda, 1992).
26 For every 100 boys enrolled 96.2 girls entered the system in 2002
27 GER does not include enrolment in other post secondary training institutions (Technical schools and Teacher Training Colleges)
28 Percentage of pupils/students who actually complete a given cycle of education (Kwesiga, 2002).
29 The fourth year of secondary education (Senior four)
30 The sixth year of secondary education (Senior six)
the exception of English where girls perform better than the boys (Uganda National Examination Board [UNEB], 2001b). However, there are a few girls from the few relatively high quality schools who have excelled in the national examinations (Kwesiga, 2002).

**Causes of gender disparities in Uganda's education system**

Factors that have been identified as causing gender disparities in Uganda's education system are not unique to Uganda. They are similar to those identified in the other SSA countries (section 1.2.2) as evidenced from a number of research projects conducted in the country (Flueret, 1992; Kwesiga, 1993; Nalwadda and Kakande, 1994; Kwesiga and Kasente, 1996; Carasco, Munene, Kasente and Odada, 1996; Natukunda, 1997; ACFODE, 1997; Mwaka and Tumushabe, 1996; Manyire, 1997; Musoke, 1997; Tumushabe, Nyakikongoro and Kakuhikire, 1997; Tumushabe et al, 2000; Kwesiga; 2002). An issue that seem not prominent in studies conducted in other countries but has been identified by research from Uganda as inhibiting girls' schooling is family instability (Opolot, 1994). In addition, the National Strategy for Girls Education in Uganda (The Republic of Uganda, 1999) notes that lack of comfortable, appropriate clothing hampers girls' freedom and active participation in a variety of school activities. In Uganda, as in other SSA countries, problems related to sexuality emerge as critical barriers to boys' and girls' participation in education particularly in persisting in school and acquiring the basic learning competencies as well as their general welfare and career prospects (Kamuli and Katahoire, 2003). This has led to a call for a shift away from the sole focus of expanding access towards providing quality education that ensures retention and high attainment levels for both boys and girls through sexuality education.

1.3.1 **Gender and education policy framework in Uganda**

As with other SSA countries, attention to gender inequality in education in Uganda is one of the key areas of government intervention. Policy work on encouraging women and girls into formal schooling is not a new phenomenon.

a) **Historical developments**

Before the colonial experience, education in Uganda was informal and the nature of education given to male and female children was closely related to the gender-based labour in society. This implies that access to learning was based on ideologies about a man's and woman's place in society (Gateley, 1968). For example, girls and women received education related to their reproductive roles since they were valued more for their role as mothers and wives, whereas boys received education that related to the productive roles and the public sphere since they were expected to be the breadwinners and participants in public affairs (Gateley, 1971; Kwesiga, 2002).
When formal education was introduced by the missionaries in 1877, their focus was on the male pupils who, unlike their female counterparts, were valued for their clerical support to the colonial administration as well as providing labour in the mines, plantations, teaching scriptures and participating in civic matters (Lugumba and Ssekamwa, 1973). Emphasis on girls' education was slow to emerge and was limited to literacy. Training focused on areas such as digging, making mats, cooking and sweeping (Lugumba and Ssekamwa, 1973; Kwesiga, 2002) and emphasized the notion of a good housewife rather than 'education' per se. In addition, most parents were unwilling to release their daughters for schooling because they feared that education would raise their status, consequently inhibiting their participation in domestic chores. Parents further felt that girls' education would interfere with the traditional customs\textsuperscript{31} and beliefs particularly altering the gender division of labour in the family\textsuperscript{32} (Gateley, 1971; Kirunda, 1976). The influence of these traditional beliefs on girls' schooling was more apparent especially in families where resources were scarce (Gateley, 1971; Kwesiga, 2002). Government established some initiatives to attract girls to schools such as providing scholarships, extra financial assistance to schools with boarding facilities for girls, increasing the number of post primary home craft courses, and having at least 2 women teachers in co-educational schools, though girls' education lagged far behind that of boys (Lugumba and Ssekamwa, 1973). These initiatives indicate that affirmative action has a long history.

As in other SSA, explicit appreciation and recognition of the need to increase girls' education in Uganda became apparent in the 1960s following increased research and advocacy initiatives by feminist scholars and activists (see section 1.2.3). In Uganda, activism for women's concerns increased during the United Nations Decade for Women – 'the Women's Decade' (1975–85) during which a National Council for women\textsuperscript{33} was established (1978) in response to the UN requirement that member states should establish a machinery to address women's issues especially elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and respect for women's rights (Kwesiga, 1995). Uganda joined the rest of the world in recognizing education of females as a vehicle for development and participated in both international and regional events (see section 1.2.3) that stressed and advocated for increased attention to women's education and elimination of all forms of discrimination in all spheres of life. Uganda's commitment is evidenced by the signing and adopting most of the international instruments including conventions, declarations and platforms of action resulting from these international events. Since then, most education policies have been aimed at increasing the

\textsuperscript{31} Participation in household work, break the various food taboos, no longer give respect to the men symbolized in kneeling while greeting and saying their husband names.

\textsuperscript{32} Marriage, mothering and take care of their husbands.

\textsuperscript{33} Council responsible for women's activities and for which all women's organizations were to be affiliated.
GER and attaining Education For All [EFA]. However, although governments between the 1960's and the early 1980s indicated commitment to girls' education, the existing policies at the time did not have specific strategies to address gender concerns in education and therefore issues of female education and development were either completely ignored or received minimal attention (Kajubi, 1989).


Unequivocal recognition of gender issues in education and the persistent gender disparities in Uganda emerged in the 1987 Education Policy Review Commission which noted girls' low levels of enrolment, persistence and performance (Kajubi, 1989). The commission also noted that education is a basic human right of all Ugandans regardless of their social status, physical form, mental ability, sex, age, birth place and one's ethnic origin. It further observed that the formal education system of Uganda had not been able to provide facilities and opportunities for all school going age children. Consequently, the commission recommended universalisation and democratization of Education. The commission's recommendations specific for the education of women included the following:

1. Greater access to education particularly for girls and other disadvantaged groups;
2. Provision of more secondary schools exclusively for girls to ensure their security while at school;
3. In co-educational schools, either the head or the deputy head to be a woman in order to give adequate attention to special needs of girls (puberty related issues);
4. In order to encourage the enrolment of girls in greater numbers, adequate facilities and opportunities to be provided for girls in co-educational post primary institutions;
5. Adequate and appropriate facilities (dormitories, toilets etc) to be provided for girls in tertiary institutions;
6. Courses in women studies, family life education, food technology and home economics should be introduced in universities and
7. In the polytechnics and Uganda Teachers Colleges [UTCs], more opportunities for girls to be provided by reserving a minimum number of places in certain technical subjects such as computer science and electronics for qualified female students.

The commission's recommendations were accepted and adopted into a new policy, (the 1992 Government White Paper on Education [GWPE]) with slight modifications (particularly on the year for achieving UPE and provision of more secondary schools exclusively for girls). The 1992 GWPE observed that exclusive secondary schools for girls cannot provide a real guarantee for the security of girls because girls are not only harassed by school boys but also mature 'unprincipled' men in the

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34 Provision of basic education for all irrespective of age, sex, race, religion or region.
community. The policy further pointed out that single sex schools complicate the important processes of emancipation of women and democratization of education and that the correct, progressive and constructive values, ethics, emotions, morality, social decorum, etiquettes and attitudes are better evolved among boys and girls when there is constant and continuous social interaction in a mixed setting. Segregation of sexes was noted to prevent the healthy social process that is required for the inculcation of attitudes necessary for social tolerance and balanced emotional control and for other desirable social habits and practices (The Republic of Uganda, 1992).

In this regard the policy (The 1992 GWPE) emphasized establishment of co-educational schools and provision of adequate physical and instructional facilities for girls and women in the existing and all new educational institutions. In recognition of the long historical factors that have caused women's disadvantaged social and educational positions, the government pledged to provide special incentives and concessions to stimulate and encourage females' effective participation in education at all levels and in both the formal and non formal sectors (The Republic of Uganda, 1992). Consequently, government initiated several gender responsive programmes (both equity and gender specific policy and programme initiatives) to expand and improve the education of girls. The initiatives include school fees waivers (UPE), bursaries, abolition of school uniform, flexible timetabling (in pastoral communities), affirmative action, setting minimum age at marriage, establishment of the gender unit/committee and development of the National Strategy for Girls Education [NSGE] (see Annex I for a detailed discussion of these programmes). These initiatives are not unique to Uganda but have also been undertaken by some SSA countries (see section 1.2.3). The 1992 GWPE guided the education sector until 1997 when the Education Strategic Investment Plan [ESIP] was developed and adopted for the 1998 – 2003 period as the overall education policy framework for Uganda's education sector. The ESIP aims at making significant and permanent gains in achieving equitable access to education for all and at all levels of education (The Republic of Uganda, 1998). In the ESIP, government pledged commitment towards increasing access, equity and quality of education for all.

These policy initiatives, together with interventions by several international and national organizations, especially women's non governmental organizations35, have contributed significantly to the increased access and participation of females in education at all levels. However, in spite of all the efforts that have been, and are still being expended to promote girls’ education, Uganda’s achievements in advancing female education still fall far short of the typical indicators of gender parity in education. Its’ performance has not yet caught up with that of its’ neighbours such as

35 These include Forum for Women Educationalists (FAWF), Action for Development (ACFODE), Association of Women Engineers, Technicians and Scientist in Uganda (WETSU) and the Uganda Association of University Women (UAUW).
Rwanda, Kenya and Congo (UNESCO, 2004). This has been attributed to a weak gender unit, lack of a gender policy in education and lack of a systematic mechanism for ensuring that gender oriented policies and strategies are adequately integrated and implemented in the overall policy framework (ESIP) (Kwesiga, 2003).

Studies conducted by Makerere University researchers (Nakanyike, Kasente and Balihuta, 2002; Kisamba-Mugerwa, 2003; Katahoire and Ndinde, 2003; Kasente, Nakanyike and Balihuta, 2003; Kamuli and Katahoire, 2003), reveal that the poor management of the process of sexual maturation within the education system inhibit girls' participation in education, lead to high school dropout rates, low achievement and act as a hidden barrier to the acquisition of some of the basic learning competencies such as literacy. These researchers observe that the menstruation period is particularly disruptive to girls' participation in education because it causes fear and embarrassment, absenteeism and lack of concentration in class. They note that the culture of silence surrounding sexuality resulted in lack of information and misinformation leading to something that is natural being perceived as shameful (Kamuli and Katahoire, 2003). The studies further acknowledge that there is urgent need to provide appropriate knowledge about sexuality issues so as to empower students with skills for managing their sexuality. Providing sexuality information is particularly important in addressing HIV and AIDS transmission and mitigating its wide spread effects in society. Through HIV and AIDS research and activism, there is increasing recognition of the importance of sexuality education in addressing the nature and perpetuation of the gender gaps. Consequently, government has introduced a number of initiatives such as the sexual maturation project (in 2003), reproductive health and responsible sexuality by adolescents (The Presidential Initiative on AIDS Strategy for Communication to Youth [PIASCY] (in 2001)) and curriculum review (in 1998). These are explored in detail in chapter three, section 3.3.

1.4 Summary
This chapter shows that while access to education in SSA and Uganda in particular, has been expanded, most of the girl children who enter the system are unable to complete a given cycle because of the social, cultural, institutional, socio-economic and political factors. Gender disparities are more apparent at post primary level. Although issues of sexuality namely teenage pregnancies, sexual abuse/harassment, STDs, HIV and AIDS infection and early marriage are consistently reported among the barriers to students' participation in education especially girl children, a few adequate policies and interventions have been initiated to address these issues. While much of the research and interventions on gender and education in Uganda and Sub-Saharan Africa in general can be fruitful, they have had difficulties in accommodating the unique gendered sexuality experiences. Consequently
there is lack of explicit attention to the gender dynamics of boys’ and girls’ sexuality. Also evident is the lack of understanding of the connection between gender, sexuality and education in most interventions. This further suggests failure to recognize boys’ and girls’ realities as sexual beings in the education process and the role of gendered sexual dynamics in constructing notions of gender equity and equality in schooling.
CHAPTER TWO

GENDER, SEXUALITY AND EDUCATION: LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL REFLECTIONS

2.1 Introduction

There is an increasing body of literature that has provided insight into the broad issues of gender, sexuality and sexuality education. The first section of this chapter examines the theories and debates around the discourse of gender and sexuality and the sexual dynamics associated with schooling. The reviewed theories offer theoretical frameworks capable of analysing the importance of approaching issues of sexuality education through feminist grounding in theories of gender that are attentive to sexuality. The first section of my literature review explores such frameworks, which link the interrogation of gender to questions of sexualities and schooling. In subsequent sections, I review the theoretical arguments and discussions around the discourse of sexuality education, focusing on the content, format and nature of gender relations. It is, however, noteworthy that literature on gender, sexuality and sexuality education in Uganda is scanty. My review therefore draws mainly on a wide range of literature from other countries, both Western and African. While I appreciate the differences and similarities between Western and African feminist scholarship in the conceptualization of gender and sexuality, my review does not intend to analyse these but rather to review literature from different contexts, seeking theoretical approaches, which will help to unfold frameworks that will assist in studying gender and sexuality education in the context of Uganda.

2.2 Gender and sexuality

Current theories on gender and sexuality draw from multiple sources within twentieth century socio-cultural theory. Foucault’s analysis of sexuality as a systemic network of options, prohibitions, and prescriptions deployed in the political interests of particular regimes and subject to change across time and context (Foucault, 1979), the insights of feminist interpretations of psychoanalytic theory, which reveal the intimate linkages between constructions of femininity and notions of ‘healthy sexuality’ (Mitchell, 1974), and social interactionist theory, which stresses the impact of social interactivity on individual constructions of identity (including gender identity) (Gagnon and Simon, 1973) have all deeply influenced broad feminist perspectives on sexuality as a social and historical construction, subject to changes in meaning, expression and experience as a result of changing historical conditions (Vance, 1984, 1995; Richardson, 1993, 1996; Jackson, 1996; Segal, 1998). According to McFadden (1992:168), “sexuality is a learned behaviour, which is related to the instinct
and the need to reproduce species as well as the desire for sensual pleasure." Theorization by feminists stresses the centrality of gender and power in the analysis of sexuality (Richardson, 1993). Sexuality is conceived as being intimately linked to gender relations and to political, economic and cultural processes (McFadden, 1992; Finnemore, 1996; Lancaster & di Leonardo, 1997). The linkages between gender and sexuality are clearly articulated by Giddens (1992: 1), who asserts that: "When I set out to write about sexuality, I found myself writing about gender." According to Giddens (1992), sexuality is a central element through which our identities, our bodies and our social experiences are mediated. According to Butler (1990), gender is performed, and it is a performance both created by, and legible through, contextually dominant notions of heterosexuality. Access to gender as a framework for self-narration, and for locating subjects within social communities is negotiated through sexuality, and as a corollary, access to 'legitimate' sexuality is organized via gender systems (Weeks, 1985; Butler, 1990; McFadden, 1992; Giddens, 1992; Richardson, 1996).

In their conceptualization of gender and sexuality, West and Zimmerman (1991) argue that socio-cultural constructions of gender identities lead to a notion of essentialist female and male sexual attributes that are commonly recognizable as acceptable and legitimate. Sexuality thus provides the most basic narrative, through which gender identities, almost always dichotomized into 'male' and 'female', are channelled within dominant discourses around the legitimacy both of heterosexuality, and simultaneously of 'complementary' femininity and masculinity (Richardson, 1996; Segal, 1998). In such a case sexual desire in sexual relationships is conceptualized in terms of attraction to difference, i.e. to 'the other', where gender is a key marker of difference. Richardson, (1996: 6) argues that traditionally female sexuality has been configured as different from, yet complementary to, male sexuality and that it is this difference, constructed as "gendered power difference" that is assumed to be "natural" and essential to sexual arousal and pleasure.

Feminist constructions of sexuality emerged from two distinct trajectories: the first looked at sexuality as a vector through which power was organized (Vance, 1984; Rubin,1984); the second emerged from the work of queer theorists interrogating historical legitimizations of heterosexuality and de-linking the existing / current theory on sexuality from notions of patriarchal masculinity (Weeks, 1985). With regard to the first, both Vance (1984, 1995) and Rubin (1984) view sexuality as a political struggle involving two domains: repression and danger on the one hand, and exploration, pleasure and agency on the other. Both Vance and Rubin describe sexual politics as involving rewards and encouragement of some sexual activities, while punishing and suppressing others, thereby creating a sexual hierarchy.
Rubin called this hierarchy “the charmed circle”\(^{36}\) (which refers to the “good, normal, natural, blessed sexuality”) and “the outer limits”\(^{37}\) (otherwise known as the ‘bad’, ‘abnormal’, ‘unnatural’ and ‘damned’ sexuality) (Rubin, 1984: 281). In her work on traffic in women, Rubin (1975) argues that prohibitions of same sex relations not only bar women from phallic power but rather legitimizes heterosexual alliances. Vance and Rubin thus object to the single sexual standard and advocate the recognition of sexual variation.

Secondly, queer theorists such as Weeks (1985: 16), note that sexuality is a “transmission belt” of wider social anxieties\(^{38}\) and a focus of struggles over power, constructing notions of domination and subordination. The prevalence and power of patriarchal structures within contemporary political contexts is assumed, lending particular colour to interpretations of gendered psychology, behaviour and cultural practice (Jeffreys, 1990). Feminists such as Jeffreys, (1990), Jackson, (1996) and Shefer and Foster, (2001) argue that within patriarchy, (hetero)sexuality is a site of male power, particularly defined and constructed from a masculine perspective and serves the interests of men, privileged by the patriarchal orders of their context (ethnicity, race, age and class). Heterosexuality is thus politically characterized by gendered patterns of domination and subordination (Jeffreys, 1990; Kitzinger and Wilkinson, 1993; Richardson, 1996) and therefore constitutes a key institution of gendered politics (Jackson, 1996). Heterosexuality is a fundamental mechanism through which women’s sexuality is controlled; and perpetuates male dominance in society (Richardson, 1993; McFadden, 1994; Tamale, 2003).

West and Zimmerman (1991) observe that dominance (or control of power) and subordination (or lack of power and agency) are associated with masculinity and femininity respectively. Sexuality is therefore conceptualized as being located within masculine and feminine identity, whose interaction is predicated upon an unequal status of power and gender relations. Within this conceptualization, sexual activity is defined as quintessentially heterosexual, centred on vaginal penetration and perceived in terms of an active subject (the male) and a passive object (the female) (Jackson, 1996; Shefer and Foster, 2001). Female sexuality is largely constructed in relation to male sexuality and pleasure, and is intimately linked to reproduction (McFadden, 1992; Mager, 1996; Jackson, 1996; Tamale, 2003). These scholars challenge the relations of dominance and submission inscribed in conventional heterosexual practice, and note that such relations are neither natural nor inevitable but

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\(^{36}\) Heterosexual, married, monogamous, procreative, non-commercial, in pairs, in a relationship, same generation, in private, no pornography, bodies only and vanilla.

\(^{37}\) Homosexual, unmarried, promiscuous, non-procreative, commercial, lone or in groups, causal, cross-generational, in public, pornography, with manufactured objects and sadomasochistic.

\(^{38}\) resulting from society’s’ beliefs about the appropriate ways of sexual expression and shifts in sexual attitudes and behaviours
are a result of the gender hierarchies. Feminists work further highlights the repression of women's sexual agency and the lack of a positive language that acknowledges women's sexual desires as a significant component of power inequality in heterosexuality (Kapppa et al., 1990; Holland et al., 1991).

Framing heterosexual as the only 'normal' expression of sexuality, as mentioned earlier, has made same sex relations invisible (Jackson, 1996; Richardson, 1996; Siyanqo, 1996; Tambo, 1997). Consequently, as Oyedele (1996) argues, passive objects (Campbell, 1980; Jackson, 1992; Richardson, 1993). Scholars assert that (even) passive sex with men can be enjoyable and that its pleasure for women is not merely derived from the level of interpersonal relations or practice, nor is experience wholly determined by patriarchal structures and ideologies. Researchers argue that heterosexual women do not have the opportunity to assert themselves and to define their pleasure as well as to question the phallocentric models of sexuality by deconstructing and recontextualizing in ways that do not position them as

developed out of the gender and sexuality within the African context. African feminist writing has challenged the need to go beyond the Western feminist conceptual structure of colonial and postcolonial constructions of African sexualities based upon dichotomies (Amulah, 1991; Makanju, 1997; Tambo, 2001; Kolawo, 2004). They are thus "placed at the margins of the normative social realm." (for instance, Makanju, 1991; Tambo, 2003; Makanju, 2004). Consequently, as in Okon (1993) argues, experience is based on equality.
Western feminist tendency to ‘other’ African women and African sexualities and they also challenge
the universalistic conceptualizations of women’s subordination and suppression of female sexuality.
They thus emphasize the importance of understanding the context in analysing gender and sexuality
issues in Africa. They appreciate the variation of African sexuality and note the need to recognize the
diverse constructions of African women’s sexualities across time, space, ethnicity, religion, class, age
and across regions (McFadden, 1992; Pereira, 2003; Arnfred, 2004). The debate is extensive and
intensive; however, as it is not possible within the confines of this thesis to provide an in-depth
exploration of the colonial and post-colonial discourses of African sexualities, the following
paragraphs simply note key points within current African scholarship.

African sexualities are constructed within a dominant patriarchal context of political struggles for the
creation and preservation of gender hierarchy (McFadden, 1992; Tamale, 2003; Arnfred, 2004),
patterned by cultural forms of masculinity and femininity (Machera, 2004; Ezumah, 2000) which
define men as active and dominant and women as passive and submissive. Heterosexuality is
perceived as the only natural form of sexual expression manifested in relations of male/female
domination/subordination (McFadden, 1992, 2003; Shefer, 1999; Shefer and Foster, 2001; Tamale,
2003; Arnfred, 2004). In her work on sexual politics in Uganda, Tamale (2003) argues that by
maintaining compulsory heterosexuality through repression of other sexual practices, conventional
gender relations and identities are enforced and kept in place. Feminists argue that within such a
dominant patriarchal milieu, which privileges heterosexuality, female sexuality is highly controlled and
suppressed (McFadden, 1992; Mager, 1996; Tamale, 2003; Machera, 2004; Arnfred, 2004).

In Africa, institutions, such as the law, religion (church), school and family, direct and control
sexuality through legitimizing some forms of sexual expression while suppressing others (Lalloo,
2000; Tamale, 2003; Arnfred, 2004; Machera, 2004). Among the African Christian and Muslim
communities, sex is a moral issue, permitted within socially regulated space (viz. marriage) and
legitimized only as a means of procreation (Webster, 1996; Lalloo, 2000; Ezumah, 2000; Tamale,
the Igbo of Nigeria notes that being wife and mother are important distinguishing features of
womanhood. “Women’s sexuality is thus reduced to women’s conventional mothering roles,
conflated with their reproductive capacities” (Tamale, 2003: 45). Such construction marginalizes
female sexual aspects of pleasure and desire. Female sexuality, particularly sexual pleasure, and desire
is suppressed, pathologised and constructed as sinful (McFadden, 1992, 2003; Mager, 1996; Arnfred,
2004). The work of Shefer and Foster (2001) on women’s heterosexuality and desire in South Africa
reveals a conspicuous lack of a positive discourse and marginalization of women’s sexuality and
According to Tamale (2001), African women's sexual pleasure is constructed as unimportant and mysterious. Scholars from the different parts of the continent (Uganda, Kenya and South Africa) note that women who overtly express sexual pleasure and desire are labelled as immoral, promiscuous, 'slags', 'sluts' or loose (Balmer et al, 1995; de La Rey and Friedman, 1996; Shefer, 1999; Machera, 2004; Arnfred, 2004). The work of Brent et al, (2000) on women's status and negotiation in respect of sex in Uganda reveals how women are portrayed as sexually weak and irresponsible, and therefore needing control of men. Shefer's (1999) work on heterosexual subjectivity and negotiation in South Africa highlights how women's efforts to initiate sex and be in control of a sexual relationship are considered as an attempt to challenge men's domination and question their masculine identity. In her work conducted in Kenya, Machera (2004:166) shows how sex is configured as a masculine construct, where sexual fulfilment is never a central concern to females: "She is pleased only to the extent that she is able to please". A similar finding is reported by Shefer and Foster (2001) in South Africa and Tamale (2001) in her study about the age of consent in Uganda. Women's lack of agency is attributed to the socialization process that places particular emphasis on meek and subservient behaviours for women in sexual encounters (Ssekibboobo, 1992) – also see Section 2.2.1 below.

The separation of sexuality from procreation emerged through the use of contraception and family planning (Machera, 2004). Scholars observe that, while female chastity is emphasized and marital infidelity is frowned upon, men's engagement in multiple sexual liaisons is condoned (Shefer, 1999; Ezumah, 2000; Hlatshwayo and Klugman, 2001; Arnfred, 2004). Brent et al (2000) in their work on women's status and negotiation in respect of sex in Uganda, highlight the double standards that pervade heterosexual relationships where women are expected to be faithful, whereas men are permitted to engage in extramarital relations. Consequently, polygamy is a common practice in most parts of Africa (Kilbride and Kilbride, 1990; Ezumah, 2000; Kwesiga, 2002). Such constructions illustrate the cultural configuration of women's sexuality as passive (as well as asexual) and men's sexuality as active (and therefore powerful and uncontrollable) (Strobel, 1996; Shefer, 1999; Shefer and Foster, 2001).

Scholars such as Tamale (2003) argue that socio-cultural norms and religious beliefs, including genital cutting, virginity testing, female chastity and taboos around polyandry are used to control female sexuality in many African societies. Her argument is supported by Machera (2004) and Arnfred.
(2004) who report that female circumcision\(^\text{39}\) is a way of controlling women's sexual pleasure and desire.

Shrouding sexuality in secrecy and taboo is another form of control of sexuality and one of the ways in which patriarchy creates and sustains gender hierarchy in African societies (Tamale, 2003). Similarly Pereira (2003: 61) notes how female sexuality is repressed and observes that sex talk is not encouraged: "'Good' women do not discuss sexuality in public." Such silencing of sex talk is mentioned in the work of a number of scholars (de La Rey and Friedman, 1996; Bennett, 2000; Machera, 2004; Arnfred, 2004). Although the high incidence of HIV and AIDS and gender violence has provided an opportunity to talk more openly about sex and sexuality (Hlatshwayo and Klugman, 2001), in most countries the prevalent discourse is that of the Madonna versus the Whore, and issues of desire and pleasure are silenced (Arnfred, 2004). Klugman (2000), Gupta (2000) and Hlatshwayo and Klugman (2001) argue that shrouding sex and sexuality in mystery and silence not only ignores the context within which it is experienced, but also reinforces the status quo. Machera (2004) contends that female sexuality is not only silenced but also configured in negative terms. Her work reveals how the female genitalia are denigrated through naming them as shameful or 'dirty'. Male sexuality, in contrast, is characterised by performance and achievement and not shameful. She notes that female circumcision is thus performed to 'clean up' the genitals. Similar arguments have been articulated in the work of McFadden (2003).

The unequal status of power and gender relations associated with (hetero)sexuality renders women vulnerable to gender based violence and sexual coercion (Owens, 2000; Hlatshwayo and Klufman, 2001). A number of scholars attest to the pervasiveness of sexual violence within heterosexual relationships in Africa (Vogel and Eagle, 1991; Heise et al, 1994; Helitzer-Allen, 1994; Jenkins et al, 1995; Varge and Makubulo, 1996; Wood et al, 1996; Wood and Jewkes, 1998, 1997; Bennett, 2000; Shefer et al, 2000). They highlight how the reproduction of male power and coercive practices is / are endemic within heterosexual relationships perpetuated by boyfriends, husbands and friends. Shefer et al, (2000) and Shefer (1999) illustrate how heterosexuality constitute the primary site for violence against women in South Africa. They argue that violence is a means of regulating women’s sexuality. In Shefer's (1999) study, students spoke of how women are constructed as powerless and oppressed, and of how the man's sexual encounter with the woman proves his powerfulness. In another study by Hlatshwayo and Klufman (2001) in the Gauteng region of South Africa, boys reportedly viewed rape as a game and showed overt support of sexual violence. They argue that unequal power relations between men and women in relationships do not only render women vulnerable to coerced or

\(^{39}\) Female circumcision refers to the removal of the clitoris, the centre of female sexual pleasure and orgasm.
unwanted sex, but also that they cause psychological and physical injuries and place women at risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV and AIDS and unwanted pregnancies. They further argue that sexual violence undermines women’s ability to experience sex as a positive experience and means of building intimate relationships.

In Africa, heteronormativity is taken for granted and any other forms of sexual expression are interpreted as a Western form, condemned and suppressed as perverse, unnatural, deviant, sinful, silenced, pathologized and criminalized (McFadden, 1992; de La Rey and Friedman, 1996; Tamale, 2003; Machera, 2004; Arnfred, 2004). Bennett (2000) notes that “those who live as lesbians, gay people, or transgendered attest to ongoing persecution often from the highest levels of government.” As a result, homosexuality has become a political issue, with prominent African state leaders denouncing its existence (Bennett, 2000; Machera, 2004), even though it undoubtedly exists. Tamale (2003), writing about sexual politics in Uganda, reveals how the law has been used to prohibit same sex relationships. She argues that same sex relations are suppressed because they threaten patriarchy, given that they subvert the conventional gender relations and hierarchies and challenge the deep-seated masculine power within African sexual relations. In South Africa, Webster (1996) argues that homosexual women face a double burden in terms of their gender and sexual orientation. Although scholars note the commonly held view that same sex relations do not exist in Africa, both Tamale (2003) and Arnfred (2004) drawing on Murray and Roscoe, 1998 work, assert that same sex relations are not a Western import but that they have always existed in Africa. Tamale highlights how she has encountered gays and lesbians in Uganda who have never come into contact with Whites. Machera (2004) posits that sexual preference should not be regionalized (Western/African); individual freedoms should include the freedom of sexual choice without fear of punishment.

Although African feminist scholars acknowledge that female sexuality, and particularly sexual pleasure and desire, is restricted, repressed and controlled throughout Africa, they do appreciate the existing variations in African sexualities and note the need to recognize the diverse constructions of African women’s sexualities across time, space, ethnicity, religion, class, age and regions (McFadden, 1992; Pereira, 2003; Arnfred, 2004). Pereira (2003), like many other African feminists, cautions against universalising the suppression of women’s sexuality and subordination. She instead calls for consideration of the different contexts in which sexualities have been constructed, and the possibility of change in meanings and conceptualisation about sexuality. While in some cultures female sexuality is pathologised (McFadden, 2003), in other cultures (especially among the Islamic communities), women’s sexuality is viewed as a powerful force that needs to be controlled (Pereira, 2003). Scholars report that in some African countries, such as Mali (Arnfred, 2004), Uganda and Mozambique
(Machera, 2004), practices such as the elongation of the vagina labia minora is encouraged, supposedly to enhance sexual pleasure in married life. However, this view is challenged by Kweyiga (2002), who argues that elongation of vagina labia minora in the Ugandan context has a male orientation, in that it is for the enhancement of male sexual pleasure.

Anfred (2004), in “Re-thinking sexualities in Africa”, gives evidence of women’s agency in some communities in Nigeria, especially in matrilineal societies. She argues that female sexual agency is reflected in women’s initiative and engagement in negotiations for extra-marital sexual, romantic love involving notions of reciprocity and acknowledgement of sex by gifts of money and permissive social codes (e.g. engagement in sex before marriage). Other scholars, such as Obbo (1980), Amadiume (1987) and Maina-Ahlberg (1991) acknowledge women’s agency over their sexuality in Africa especially in the pre-colonial period. Machera (2004) for instance notes how in some societies (in Cameroon) women collectively confronted male offenders by singing abusive songs accompanied by obscene gestures.

While heterosexuality has been problematised as a site for women’s oppression, scholars challenge most feminist literature, which construct heterosex as equivalent to male power, inherently lacking negotiation and equity (Shefer, 1999; Shefer et al., 2000; Shefer and Foster, 2001). Shefer’s study in South Africa reveals women’s ambivalence about the dominant/submissive male-female relationships, noting that power inequality in relationships does not automatically exclude an enjoyable experience. She argues that women’s acknowledgement of such experiences is fundamental in the conceptual understanding of the reproduction of heterosexual power relations, and that it adds some weight to the theoretical feminist work on the eroticization of the dominant-submissive conceptualization of heterosexuality. Shefer and Foster (2001) suggest the development of a discourse acknowledging variations within heterosexual experiences and the possibility of positive and enjoyable heterosexual relationships that resist hegemonic masculinity and femininity.

On the whole, African feminists call for the development and promotion of new sexual paradigms and positive discourses that enhance the value of female sexuality including issues of pleasure and desire (Wood and Foster, 1995; Cheryl, 1996; Shefer, 1999; Shefer and Foster, 2001; Machera, 2004) and for an alternative discourse on masculine sexualities (Shefer and Foster, 2001). Others recommend an open debate on female and male sexualities, and moreover a debate that is not developed entirely on the terrain of mainstream HIV and AIDS, but one that appreciates female sexual agency and challenges hegemonic masculine power (Tamale, 2003; Anfred, 2004). While Bennett (2000) notes society’s’ reluctance to engage with the changing norms of sexualities, she calls
for approaches that challenge homophobia. Tamale (2001) challenges the effectiveness of legislation in controlling sexuality, and recommends sexuality education as the most effective way of addressing such issues. Her suggestion is supported by other scholars, such as Ezumah (2000), Hlatswayo and Klugman (2001) and Shefer and Foster (2001). The latter, for example, argue that sexuality education in schools is fundamental in reconstructing and transforming existing discourses on female sexuality and masculinity. Other benefits of sexuality education include a greater ability to make informed choices and to take responsibility in sexual relationships (Ezumah, 2000), and an ability to explore available choices and to handle sexuality related problems (Hlatswayo and Klugman, 2001).

Although the discourses of patriarchy and heterosexuality appear to take on particular local meanings, they do have much in common globally. The significance of religious and cultural discourse in constructing female sexuality is evident. Literature from Western and African contexts indicates the need to deconstruct and restructure the meanings of femininity and masculinity. The idea that sexuality is historically and culturally constructed and variable holds out some hope for the future transformation of sexual relations becoming a political goal.

2.2.1 Gendering sexualities
This section reviews the gendering process of young people, generally and specifically in Africa and highlights some of the theoretical underpinnings of becoming gendered sexual beings. However, given that my study deals with school pupils, aged 15-17 years, who are neither legal ‘adults’ nor functional ‘children’, I do not intend to provide an in-depth coverage of all theories and research relevant to the gendering process within different contexts, but mainly to offer an overview of theories on how gender and sexuality are learned.

As seen from the discussion in Section 2.2 above, gender identity and practice is theorised as socially and historically constructed and therefore ever-changing [although society is also averse to change and seeks to preserve the status quo]. The construction of ‘appropriately gendered’ sexuality commences very early in life, actually from the time of conception throughout the entire life cycle (Masters et al, 1995). Freud and Burlinghan (1944, quoted in Vas Dias, 2001) note that already at the age of 2 years and above, both boys and girls begin to understand and have a sense of themselves as being either male or female, with masculine and feminine behavioural traits. Learning ‘gendered sexuality’ is a deeply complex process, embedded with religious and cultural norms, and with the family offering the most influential context (Kakavoulis, 2001). Other agents in the gendering process include the school (teachers and peers) and the community (Measor and Sikes, 1992; Kakavoulis, 2001). Shefer (1999) argues that gendered sexualities are set up within a network of prescriptive
representations and relations subject to dominant discourses of gendered subjectivity. The gendering process involves patterns of socialisation, which in turn involve inscriptions to the male and female bodies as masculine and feminine based on the “body size and shape, dress, facial characteristics, presentation and movement” (Shefer, 1999:47). For instance ‘slimness’, ‘modesty’, ‘tenderness’ and ‘passivity’ as inscriptions for ‘ideal femininity’. However, inscriptions are culturally and historically constructed. Understanding one’s self involves a process of constant reinterpretation, sometimes by resisting or rebelling against ‘others’ and the dominant discourse, which may shift and change over time and in different contexts (Shefer, 1999). According to Bartky (1990), different levels of status are embodied in the masculine and the feminine, with the woman’s body given an inferior status.

The dominant theories that examine the gendering process include the social learning theory, the cognitive development theory, and the psychoanalytic theory. Firstly, proponents of social learning theory suggest that children learn ‘appropriate’ behaviours and attitudes important for the development of gender and sexual identity through everyday interaction with individuals and groups (such as parents, peers and teachers) and in response to events (Kelly, 1981). This social learning theory emphasizes the notion of reinforcement, which entails rewards and punishments, and the notion of observation (imitation and modelling). With reinforcement, “children learn that appropriate behaviour is rewarded and hence reinforced, while inappropriate behaviour is discouraged or even punished and therefore to be avoided” (Measor and Sikes, 1992: 9). In addition, through imitation and modelling, children learn by imitating adults and other children (Bandura, 1971), particularly people with whom they identify, i.e. same sex peers and adults (Measor and Sikes, 1992) and those whom they admire or respect (Kakavoulis, 2001).

Secondly, according to Measor and Sikes (1992), the cognitive development theory focuses on learned behaviour, which is seen as appropriate for one gender or the other in a particular society. They further argue that society presents images of what is feminine and masculine to children, who then put together a cluster of these attributes that they label as either masculine or feminine, and which they then try to copy. As children come to understand what their gender label means, they begin to seek out information by observing and imitating behaviours, which they view as relevant to their own gender code (Lloyd and Duveen, 1992). All these theories posit the family as central in influencing children’s gendered sexual identity and behaviour.

Thirdly, psychoanalytic theory (by which I am referring to the feminist reinterpretation of Freud by Mitchell, 1974, and Chodorow, 1978) draws attention through recognition of the formation of the unconscious to the emotional processes and psychological dynamics that prevail in the family unit. It
addresses the early years of life and the intense feelings and conflicts that confront the child as he/she grows. Feminists argue that children, both boys and girls, have a strong attachment to the mother, which they have to break in order to become fully established as separate and autonomous individuals. The break-away process is different for boys and girls, in the sense that boys have to cross the bridge to be with the father. According to Chodorow (1978), the development of girls is seen to be continuous and femininity is understood in terms of motherhood. Because society categorises things into masculine and feminine, boys and girls learn to fit within the appropriate category. Chodorow (1978) argues that boys try to achieve manhood through a process of making themselves different and distant from women and femininity, which (unfortunately) entails devaluing and attacking girls, and all that is feminine.

In the African context, researchers note that the gendering process varies across time, space, age, ethnicity and region (Shefer, 1999; Kinsman, Nyanzi, and Pool, 2000). Kinsman et al, (2000) acknowledge that different cultures construct meanings around events of the body in different ways. While some scholars argue that encouraging children to experience their sexuality helps them to become better functioning adults (Weeks, 1985), children’s exploration of their sexuality in African contexts is often severely repressed and controlled by their parents (and especially their mothers, aunts and grandmothers) by means of threats, actual physical beatings and warnings about alleged abnormalities, if the activity continues (McFadden, 1994; Shefer, 1999; McFadden 2003; Machera, 2004).

African feminists articulate the complex political context within which the gendering process occurs. For example, Shefer (1999) argues that the gendered subject is located within discourses of power relations where male and female bodies are inscribed differently as the ‘other’ and unequally in relation to power and control. In their work, entitled “Sexuality too narrow to fit” in South Africa, Fredman and Potgieter (1996) argue that children’s sexual actions are given meaning by the adult within a patriarchal heterosexist social context, where power relations are important. They argue that in all societies adults exercise power over children, and that this power is manifested in gendered ways by according boy’s actions more power than those of girls, which effectively gives boys more power over the girls. They further note that this power gap is created by approving of the behaviours and actions of boys and terminating those of girls. In this way, boys are socialized to be supposedly more in control.

Mager (1996), studying sexuality, fertility and male power in the Eastern Cape (South Africa), observes that regulation of sexuality, and particularly of female sexuality, begins from childhood and
is deeply embedded in political, historical context. Machera’s work (2004:160) in Kenya sheds some light on how girls are reproved for exploring their sexuality, labelling it negatively by saying: “It’s bad manners” and “a good girl never looks at that place, a girl sits properly with her legs drawn together and never talks about the vagina”. Boys’ explorations of their sexuality, in contrast, are condoned and even encouraged. Machera (2004) argues that discovering one’s sexuality is regarded indulgently in boys but rigidly suppressed in girls. Shefer (1999) and McFadden (2003) both show how girls receive negative messages about their bodies. Shefer notes, for example, that children’s learning of sexuality is interwoven within discourses of shame and censure, particularly with regard to female sexuality. In some African cultures, childhood adolescent socialization does not embrace the pleasurable aspects of sex, especially for the girl child, but confines this to the institution of marriage (Ezumah, 2000; Tamale, 2001; Machera, 2004). They argue that female virginity and chastity are emphasized, manifested in virginity testing in some countries such as Uganda and South Africa and providing rewards (Uganda) (Kinsman et al, 2000; Leclerc-Madlala, 2003).

Quoting Bem (1993), Mager (1996:13) notes that gendering occurs from a “cultural template” and that it is divided into stages according to age and sex. The critical moment when girls’ bodies are established and interpreted as sexed begins with puberty, i.e. at about the age of 12. In South Africa, key moments of gendering are tied to girls’ bodily changes (biology), which are closely policed by mothers, more specifically with regard to the capacity to procreate, and their styles of dress (Mager, 1996), whereas the sexual development of boys is marked by changing social duties, responsibilities and authority over girls. Shefer’s work (1999) shows how the mother-daughter relationship is central in reproducing femininity and gender relations through constructing daughters as vulnerable and susceptible to danger (in other words, by constructing them as victims). According to Tamale (2001) and Kinsman et al, (2000), by controlling and suppressing their sexuality, girls are socialized to strive towards becoming good wives and dutiful mothers. Research work by Kinsman et al (2000) in Uganda reveals that formal sexuality education is rarely done until the time of marriage, and that it focuses mainly on girls with an emphasis on issues, such as elongation of the labia minora and telling girls never to deny their husbands the right to sexual intercourse. Sekiboobo (1992), studying women’s social and reproductive rights in Uganda, notes that women are socialized to prioritise male pleasure in sexual partnerships. A similar emphasis on prioritising male desire is reported in Machera’s work (2004) in Kenya. Mager (1996) argues similarly that female sexuality is shaped alongside and in relation to male sexuality and in relation to the dominant gender codes.

According to Jackson (1982), the gendering process involves a continuum from dependency to independence, in terms of which boys are actively encouraged to break away from their mothers at an
early age and to engage in behaviours that assert their masculinity, autonomy, assertiveness, activity and ambition. This also permeates their construction of sexual meanings, in terms of which boys are much more likely to organize sexuality around the satisfaction of their own needs and to see themselves in control of sexual relationships. In contrast, girls often learn that their world is much more limited and are encouraged to be both compliant and complicit with this version of space. In many contexts, they learn that to be sexually assertive is to be considered unladylike. This influences the meanings they attach to their sexuality, particularly the idea that sexuality is much more a matter of something that masculine others do ‘to’ them and define for them. Levet (1987) argues in addition that female childhood sexuality, in contexts where gender-based violence is prevalent, has been constructed around the fear of rape or childhood sexual abuse. In this sexual scripting, girls are socialised into accepting their gendered position as sexually impotent: ‘potency’, in other words, is associated with masculinity.

Scholars such as Shefer (1999) theorize that, while the subject is active in repeating dominant constructions of him- or herself as man and woman, s/he may also be active in resisting and defying such constructions. She argues that subjects may consequently take on forms of gendered subjectivity that challenge the dominant discourses, “albeit in a fluid, shifting contradictory, irrational and unconscious manner” (Shefer, 1999: 58). For example, Kinsman et al’s (2000) study conducted in Uganda shows how girls contest and resist the preservation of virginity, even though female chastity is emphasised. They found that girls despised other girls who were determined to retain their virginity and labelled them as “not good people” who are largely ignorant of female matters, and have problems in dealing with their menstruation (Kinsman et al, 2000: 159). Similar findings are reported by Busulwa (1995) and Renne (1993) (see also Section 2.2.2 about school pupils’ own constructions of sexuality). According to Shefer (1999), the moments of resistance and conflict reveal how dominant gender positions are constructed and what meanings they have for particular groups.

Society’s gendered construction of sexuality, predicated upon unequal power relations between male and females, thus influences how young people understand and live out their sexuality. This has clear implications for experiences of schooling as highlighted in the next section.

2.2.2 Gender, sexuality and schooling

This section interrogates the connection between gender, sexuality and schooling. It reviews the literature on students’ gendered experiences and their construction of own sexuality within the gendered school environment.
Young people enter school as social and sexual beings; they experience changes in their bodies, that are characterised by intense sexual desires, experimentation and risk taking, and are embedded in attempts to understand the self, often in the context of stressful lives. They also seek to gain independence from parents and other adults through intense engagement with often coercive peer cultures (Seifert and Hoffnung, 1987; Bowser and Wingood, 1992; Heaven, 1996; Morrell et al, 2002). In his study of girls’ experiences of menstruation in English schools, Prendergast (1995) argues that a school provides the perfect space where young people can learn, experience, explore and manage the changes in their bodies in the company of people of the same age.

Sexuality is part and parcel of school pupils’ experiences of schooling and manifests in personal friendship and relations, expectations about future destinies, interaction among teachers and students in and outside the classroom (Epstein and Johnson, 1998). Epstein and Johnson (1998) argue further that schools are sites where sexual identities and other identities are developed, practiced and even actively produced. According to Epstein (1997), schools are highly sexualized sites, within which struggles around sexuality are pervasive, of consuming interest and, paradoxically, at the same time taboo. He notes that “struggles around sexuality are intimately connected with struggles around gender” (Epstein, 1997:105). Mac an Ghaill (1994) contends that the process of constructing identities in the school space is a collective engagement operating at the level of the institution and in the organization of peer networks. He argues that through the peer networks a range of social and sexual identities are negotiated and produced. Within these networks, school pupils not only learn the heterosexual codes that mark their right of passage into ‘manhood’ and ‘womanhood’ (Mac an Ghaill, 1994), but they also establish themselves as appropriately feminine or masculine (Measor, 1984, quoted in Measor, and Sikes, 1992). In their peer groups, young people (especially adolescents) are preoccupied with their sexual feelings and the development of their sexual organs, a preoccupation that includes constant examination of their own, and others’, bodies (Mac an Ghaill, 1994). This process involves boys distancing themselves from girls and all that is feminine, while maintaining the social superiority of masculinity (Mac an Ghaill, 1994). According to Mirembe and Davies (2001), in their study of the school culture in Uganda, hegemonic masculinity is reinforced and encouraged in schools through male control of leadership and the schools’ social organization. Consequently, the power imbalances between boys and girls are translated into sexual behaviour, which demands that boys have to prove themselves in terms of heterosexuality, which manifests through homophobia and the attendant rejection of femininity.

Drawing on resources and cultural repertoires outside the school, which organize relations around heterosexuality, adolescent boys are under pressure to engage in sexual relationships (Willis, 1977;
Connolly, 1995; Epstein and Johnson, 1998; Mirembe and Davies, 2001; Harrison, 2002). Boys are made to believe that engagement in sexual intercourse is an expression of one’s masculinity, and one’s power over women (Thorpe, 2002; Burns, 2002). Other scholars have observed that the establishment of one’s masculine credentials in many African societies is dependent upon having many heterosexual liaisons (Wood and Jewkes, 1998; Shefer, 1999; Mirembe and Davies, 2001; Morrell et al, 2002). Boys who do not conform to such expected versions of masculinity risk disciplinary measures by peers manifested through teasing and ostracising non conformists (Morrell, 1998b; Shefer, 1999; Mirembe and Davies, 2001). Holland et al, (1993) note tensions and contradictions in the pressures and risks of male peer groups. They observe that boys’ attempts to affirm male power often create unsupportive and competitive environments that render individuals highly vulnerable. They contend that boys in such groups are subjected to teasing and the pressure to express and define themselves in a particular way, in order to prove their manhood. They indicate that;

Aggression too can be seen in the negative labelling of those who fall short or whose sexual claims are not believed ‘wimps’ ‘wallies’ and ‘wakers’. What the group does seem to support is a particular concept of hegemonic masculinity and separation from effeminacy or homosexuality (Holland et al, 1993: 12-13).

Those who do not adequately fulfil the prescriptions of masculinity are simply labelled as “queer” (Shefer, 1999: 216). Mirembe and Davies (2001), while researching the school culture in Uganda, noted that boys struggled to get ‘girlfriends’ for fear of being teased and called homosexuals.

Unlike male peer relationships, female ones do not seem to follow the masculine route (McRobbie, 1980, quoted in Mac an Ghaill, 1994). Studies conducted in Africa indicate that the construction of female identity entails the enforcement of passive forms of femininity (Wolpe et al, 1997; Clarke, 1997; Shefer, 1999). In her work on the role played by masculinity in HIV interventions in South Africa, Thorpe (2002) notes that female sexuality is constructed as being nurturing, submissive and emotional. According to Lees (1986), girls are defined in terms of their sexual reputation. Girls’ sexuality is surrounded by double standards: on the one hand, they are expected to be asexual, “the appropriate behaviour being romantic silliness” (Delamont, 1990:48). At the same time, they risk harassment by boys for rejecting their sexual invitations and advances (Mirembe and Davies, 2001). Despite this, Mac an Ghaill (1994) study on masculinities, sexualities and schooling in English schools observes that girls also experience similar pressures as the boys in their peer groups to get ‘boyfriends’ as proof of young women’s ‘normal’ heterosexuality and more ‘grown-up’ femininity. Similar pressures from the peers have been reported in studies conducted in Africa (Uganda and South Africa) (Wood and Jewkes, 1998; Shefer, 1999; Kinsman et al, 2000; Harrison, 2002; Morrell et
In their work on the school setting and integrating gender equality and HIV risk reduction interventions in South Africa, Morrell et al (2002:13) note that construction of femininity amongst young African women emphasises the importance of “having a boyfriend”. Another study by Silberschmidt (2001) in Tanzania reports that developing heterosexual relationships is a highly prized aspect of femininity.

Construction of femininity is particularly evident at the onset of puberty, which is often signified by menstruation (Shefer, 1999). Shefer, (1999) argues that menstruation positions girls as intrinsically vulnerable and potential victims of sexual abuse and susceptible to becoming pregnant. Yet they are not given any information and preparation for the event. In her study, Shefer observes confusing, traumatic experiences of females fraught with contradictory messages and silences. She notes that lack of knowledge about the event led girls to associate menstruation with a ‘wound’. Most studies, like Shefer’s (1999), report how girls are often not prepared for this experience, which leads them to develop negative perceptions about the event (Kirumira, 2003; Kisamba-Mugerwa, 2003; Katahoire and Ndiddde, 2003). The whole experience of puberty, menstruation and the related body changes is constructed as an extremely uncomfortable change, impacting negatively on women’s self-confidence (Shefer, 1999). Prendergast (1995) while studying English girls similarly argues that girls’ experiences of schooling are embedded in the notion of regulation of self involving restrictions and rigid modes of behaviour (because of fear of staining their clothes, severe pains, inadequate sanitation and protective materials). She notes that girls in schools have to be constantly on guard about their bodies, particularly dealing with anxieties associated with menstruation. Similar experiences are reported by studies conducted in Uganda on sexual maturation and the management of menstruation (Kisamba-Mugerwa, 2003; Katahoire and Ndiddde, 2003). Menstruation is powerfully linked to a woman’s heterosexuality and fertility, (potential for pregnancy) and therefore signals danger to men who might make them pregnant (Shefer, 1999). The onset of puberty in boys, conversely, represents strength and self-confidence, and places pressure on them to be sexually active.

As boys and girls attempt to confirm to the respective and very different ideals of masculinity and femininity, they are exposed to risks, such as contracting STDs (including HIV and AIDS), teenage pregnancies and subsequent negative consequences including abortion and death (Olsen et al, 1992; Population Reference Bureau [PRB], 1994; Njau and Wamahi, 1994; Arkutu, 1995; United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], 1997). Literature from both the West and from Africa indicates high levels of early and unsafe sexual activity among young people that often starts in their early teenage life (Olsen et al, 1992; World Health Organization [WHO], 1993, 1998; Balmer et al, 1997; Rivers and Aggleton, 1999; Niehaus, 2000). Studies further report that pre-marital sexual activity with multiple
and casual partners are more prevalent among males than females. Although both boys and girls are at risk, the unequal power relations actually increase girls' vulnerability due to their apparent inability to negotiate the terms of sexual relationships (Serwadda et al., 1995; Mager, 1996; Rivers and Aggleton, 1999; Morrell et al., 2002). For instance, Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States [SIECUS] (2002) shows that 2.6 million males of age 15-24 are living with HIV and AIDS in the Sub-Saharan region, compared to 5.6 million females. The high numbers of HIV and AIDS infection among school going age people has negative implications for schooling.

Epstein and Johnson (1998) argue that sexualities at school are lived out through the dynamics of control and resistance. They maintain that the sexuality of school pupils is regulated and organized under the rubric of education that draws on notions of protection, while engaging discourses that forbid expressions of sexuality. Such regulation is ensured through constant surveillance and policing, which often involves greater focus on girls than on the boys, thereby leading girls to take on the position of ‘victim’, as the rules and restrictions are supposedly for ‘their safety’ (Fine, 1988; Mirembe and Davies, 2001). Greater policing of girls is justified by the belief that girls are wilful initiators of sexual activity through their transgressive performances of femininities, which seek to attract male attention through dress and self-adornment. Mirembe and Davies (2001) argue that, as the girls experience greater domination by male students and policing by teachers, elders, parents, there is a subsequent cycle of lack of self-direction and increased dependency. They note that such protectionism reinforces female helplessness on the one hand, while it encourages risk-taking beyond boundaries on the other. Girls who refuse such coercive ‘protections’ and who suffer abuse or have unpleasant sexual experiences are thus blamed for their own behaviour as being ‘bad girls’. Niehaus’ (2000) work on masculinity, sexuality and power in South Africa, uncovers the complexity and contradictions related to teachers’ control and regulation of school pupils’ sexuality. She notes that, although teachers strictly prohibit and harshly punish all forms of sexual expression and exploration between pupils, male teachers nonetheless freely engage in sexual liaisons with school girls. Such cases of teachers engaging in sexual relationships with school girls have also been reported in other African countries (Twa Twa, 1997; Kinsman et al., 1999; Mukasa, 1999; Webster, 1999; Mirembe and Davies, 2001).

Female sexuality is further controlled informally through sexual harassment, which is mainly perpetrated by male students. According to Hebert (1989), sexual harassment is a demonstration of informal power, and a kind of control practiced by a (dominant) group of people on another (subservient) one. There is evidence that girls are subjected to substantial sexual abuse and harassment (verbal and physical) largely from boys in the schools and male teachers, and that such
harassment is often taken for granted (Mahony, 1985; Lees, 1987; Squirrel, 1990; Measor and Sikes, 1992; Clarke, 1997; Heise et al, 1994; Larkin, 1994; Prendergast, 1995; Mager, 1996; Morrell, 1998; Mukasa, 1999; Webster, 1999; Tsegaye, 1999; Niehaus, 2000; Mirembe and Davies, 2001; Morrell et al, 2002).

Studies conducted in Africa indicate that, although sexual harassment is widespread in schools, it is ignored by the school authorities and even by female teachers who should be more vigilant in challenging the practice. Nonetheless, they dismiss it either by calling it ‘playing’ or ‘boys and girls getting used to each other’ or by saying that ‘girls have asked for it’ (Mukasa, 1999; Human Rights Watch [HRW], 2001; Mirembe and Davies, 2001). Ezurnah (2004) points to the trivialization of the problem as a woman’s issue and criticises the tendency of the school management to condone it as ‘normal’ male behaviour. Clarke (1997) and Wolpe et al (1997) attribute this kind of response to rationalization used by teachers for their passive support. The failure of teachers and the school administration to acknowledge such behaviour and to respond to it appropriately, underplays girls’ and some boys’ attempts to deal with the problem themselves (Clarke, 1997). Mirembe and Davies (2001) assert that the reluctance of schools to address sexual abuse and harassment ultimately encourages homophobia and misogyny, and that it legitimizes male power, thereby widening the power disparities between boys and girls. They further note that such harassment is used not only to denigrate female bodies, but also to intimidate girls and ensure their subordination.

Sexual abuse and harassment is noted to have profound effects on girls’ schooling and their general wellbeing. Scholarly work from both Western (Lees, 1987; Measor and Sikes, 1992) and African countries (Clarke, 1997; Tsegaye, 1999; FAWE, 2001; HRW, 2001; Mirembe and Davies, 2001) have identified a wide range of effects, including a loss of self esteem, low participation in school activities both in and outside the classroom, embarrassment, shame, powerlessness, loss of faith in schools, inability to sleep and a fear of attending school. Such a climate of fear affects girls’ learning and performance (Tsegaye, 1999; FAWE, 2001). Consequently, boys tend to control the school space, as girls are forced into silence (Mirembe and Davies, 2001). Sexual harassment is thus implicated for causing school girls to drop out of school (HRW, 2001; Kwesiga, 2002; also see Chapter 1, Sections 1.2.2 and 1.3 above).

According to Clarke (1997), the threat of harassment and violence influences girls’ behaviours and understanding about what it means to be a girl. She argues that it often limits girls’ freedom of movement and that it teaches them that to be a girl is to be a potential target of sexual harassment, abuse and violence. They learn to be constantly on guard, to be careful about appearance and
behaviour, not to draw attention to themselves and that they have fewer rights, less options and less access to power than boys. Clarke (1997) further acknowledges that girls do not passively accept these messages but actively engage with these experiences, sometimes resisting the restrictions and ascriptions, whereas others take up these labels and actively engage in harassment of fellow girls (verbal abuse). Similar harassment of boys by girls (though not common) who do not conform to the local versions of dominant masculinity and other fellow girls has been acknowledged by Mager (1996).

The performance of homophobia constructs heterosexual masculinities and femininities in schools (Mahony, 1985; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Epstein, 1997; Mirembe and Davies, 2001). Homophobic values and practices are not only exhibited by students but also by the school administration. Mirembe and Davies (2001), studying school culture in Uganda, report threats by the school administration to punish students who are ‘different’ (engaging in same sex relationships).

Studies conducted on adolescent sexuality and education attribute young people's sexual problems to the lack of appropriate and sufficient information and life skills among the adolescent boys and girls to address the challenges of their developing sexualities (UNFPA, 1997; Panos, 1999; Hyde, 1999; Rivers and Aggleton, 1999; Obbo et al, 2000; Samkange, 2000). Studies on young people's sexual health and maturation note that the majority of adolescent boys and girls have poor knowledge about the body, its functions and responses to puberty (Fuglesang, 1998; Rivers and Aggleton, 1999; Kirumira, 2003). For instance, studies on sexual maturation by Kirumira (2003), Kisamba-Mugerwa (2003) and Katahore and Ndidde, (2003) in Uganda and Samkange (2000) in Zimbabwe attest to students' limited information about their developing sexuality. These scholars argue that young people, especially adolescents, need to be empowered with the necessary knowledge and life skills to enable them face the challenges of adolescent development and sexuality. Tamale (2001) recommends compulsory sexuality education rather than legislation and suppression of young peoples' sexuality. She suggests the deployment of a multi-prolonged strategy that demystifies sex, that dissociates teenagers from the belief that sex is a taboo activity, that dissociates sex from procreation and morality, and that engages teenagers with effective sexuality education.

The literature from diverse contexts (Western and African) suggests that sexuality permeates all aspects of the everyday experience of young people and that it influences their schooling experiences in specific, gendered ways. The school plays a significant role in mediating the meaning given to sexuality and in how sexuality is constructed as either ‘feminine’ or ‘masculine’. The literature further reveals complex tensions and contradictions surrounding boys’ and girls’ constructions of sexuality.
that are predicated upon unequal power relations. The sexual landscape is characterized by homophobia, misogyny, sexual abuse and harassment, engagement in sexual relationships, and control of female sexuality, all of which complicate girls' expression of their sexuality and undermine girls’ schooling. This poses particular challenges for sexuality education, which is an important terrain in which these dynamics can be addressed. But as a thread of ‘education’ within these complex environments, sexuality education may be co-opted and absorbed into the gendered sexuality already existing within the school walls.

2.2.3 The school as a gendered institution

The school is a principal agent of socialization, an organizer of relationships as well as a stimulator of sentiments and attitude ( Cotterel, 1996). Schools seek to pass on to children the knowledge, skills, beliefs and values that have been built up over time, and to provide children with the resources they will need in their adult roles. However, in terms of socialization, schools are gendered places, characterized by specific gender codes, which reproduce existing power relations through a particular gender hierarchy characterised by male dominance (Connell, 1987; Acker, 1994).

Feminist critical education theorists conceptualise the education system as being structurally related to power and control in the wider society and as being involved in perpetuating contextually dominant class, gender and racial groups (Trudell, 1993; Acker, 1994; Arnot, 2002). They recognize the important role of a curriculum in shaping cultural values, and share a conviction that the content and form of classroom knowledge is not neutral but privileges the interests of particular social groups over others. Scholars, including Bernstein (1977), Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), Apple (1979), McRobbie (1978), McNeil (1981, 1986), Everhart (1983) and Valli (1986), have deeply influenced feminist analysis of how gender power is structured and how social control within schools as well as social relations are produced, reproduced and transmitted through schooling (Arnot, 2002). Bernstein (1977), Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) and Apple (1979) argue that schools are both cultural and economic institutions, which reproduce and legitimate the knowledge and communicative forms of dominant groups. They focus on the structural and interactive aspects of cultural practices within schools, including curriculum content, organization, and mode of transmission and assessment processes. According to these researchers, the underlying organisation of schools includes the hidden curriculum (informal school knowledge that tacitly teaches important norms and values), which socializes students into consciousness, accentuating particular dispositions and traits such as respect for authority, obedience and punctuality, which are essential to capitalism and neo-capitalism. Schools are thus mainly concerned with power relations, social control, domination and oppression.
Education theorists argue that the underlying structural reality of seemingly neutral educational practices, such as the so-called ‘objective assessment’ of students or of streaming them into merit-based classes, actually serve the needs of dominant class and race groups, thus perpetuating ‘normalized’ unequal social relations (Bernstein, 1977; Apple, 1979). From this perspective, schools act as agents of cultural incorporation by making available to students particular selections of ‘knowledge’ with certain information chosen for emphasis and other information excluded (Trudell, 1993). Both the content and the form of this chosen knowledge tacitly support the interests and views of the dominant groups, aiming to create citizens who do not question the status quo because their consciousness and whole process of living has been thoroughly saturated with the knowledge and values of the dominant culture. However, this theory has been challenged by other scholars (Willis, 1977; McRobbie, 1978; McNeil, 1981; 1986; Everhart, 1983; Valli, 1986) for its failure to recognise the day-to-day interactions within schools, which include the perceptions and activities of students and teachers (who are perhaps resistant to the hegemonic values discussed in the previous paragraph). These researchers consequently focus on the processes of negotiation between coercion, compliance, resistance and reward, by which relations of domination and subordination are both perpetuated and challenged. They focus on everyday cultural practices in the schools by analysing the day-to-day activities within the school. They argue that, while the interaction of students and teachers in the school space is characterised by rationality, collectivity, accommodation and resistance, the perspectives of the dominant group may not simply be passed on by teachers and be passively absorbed by students. They contend that the process is in fact permeated by contradictions and tensions between and within the groups, as they negotiate their way through daily life at school.

Drawing on the above theories, feminists researching education have noted the role of gender as an organising principle of social hierarchies and social inequalities in schools. They have developed a concept of a gender code as the mode of transmission of gender relations in schools (Thorne, 1993; Acker, 1994; Arnot, 2002). They argue that such gender codes are enforced through gender classification, where gender or sex is used as the basis for differentiation throughout school life, including registration, seating, queuing, behaviour in class and other co-curricular activities. Through the gender code, a range of messages are transmitted, and a number of views of what it means to be a boy or a girl are demonstrated (Connell, 1987). Through the process of gender attribution, concepts of masculinity and femininity, which are thought to be appropriate to each gender, are recontextualised in the curriculum (Arnot, 2002). Students then choose elements of this gender code and mix it with ideas derived from their own background and community (Skeggs, 1989). Studies conducted in Africa on gender and education (see Chapter One above) have found that the school plays an important role in constructing gendered citizenship through constant gender classifications.
that pervades the schools’ organizational setup (Fuller and Clarke, 1994; Hyde, 1993; Delamont, 1996; Rose et al, 1997; Tembon et al, 1997; Hollos, 1998; Avotri et al, 1999; Kwesiga, 2002). Researchers attest to the apparent male dominance and gender bias embedded in the both formal and non-formal curriculum. Although they recognize the inherent gender inequalities, these studies do not explicitly show how the school perpetuates these inequalities with particularly reference to sexuality. Thorne (1993) argues that the school environment and its social structures play a significant role in shaping boys’ and girls’ sexual identities and gender relations. Morrell (1998b) and Connell, (1995) note that, while schools are responsible for producing and perpetuating gender inequalities, they nonetheless also have the capacity for being forces of emancipation.

2.3 Gender and sexuality education

While it has been widely recognized that sexuality is an important part of young people’s development, little attention has been paid to their sexuality concerns until recently. The need to protect their sexual health has now, however, been recognized by governments in international treaties, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Programme of Action from the International Conference on Population and Development [ICPD] held in Cairo in 1994, and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Nevertheless, debates continue in many regions of the world on how best to address the sexual health risks for young people, with some arguing in favour of keeping them away from sex, while others recognize that most young people are sexually active anyway (Panos, 1999). Despite these debates, sexuality education has become an accepted part of the response to the high rates of adolescent pregnancies, sexual abuse and harassment and the threat of HIV and AIDS infection. At the ICPD, governments acknowledged that the provision of sexuality information was a fundamental strategy to address young people’s sexuality problems. They agreed that:

Information and services should be made available to adolescents to help them understand their sexuality and protect themselves from unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and subsequent risks of infertility. This could be combined with the education of young men to respect women’s self determination and to share responsibility with women in matters of sexuality and reproduction (ICPD Programme of Action, para 7.41).

While in the Western world, the discourse on sexuality has moved from the private domain to the public domain, in Africa, open and formal discussions about sexuality remain limited (McFadden, 1994). Ambivalences about the provision of sexuality information to young people remain in place, because of the uncertainties associated with the outcome of this type of education, particularly with regard to fears that it may promote promiscuity and immorality (Fuglesang, 1998; Grunseit and Aggleton, 1998; Panos, 1999; Rivers and Aggleton, 1999). Sik-Ying and Tsang (2002), in their work
"relocating the penis in sex education in Hong Kong", contest such protectionism, arguing that educating young people about their sexuality helps them to find out what it means to be male and female. They note that protectionism does not form a successful shield against early exposure to sexual activity. More evidence from both the developed world (Zabin et al, 1986; Greydanus and Shearin, 1990; WHO, 1993; Hedgepeth and Helmich, 1996; Ingham, 1997; Epstein and Johnson, 1998) and Africa (Grunseit and Aggleton, 1998; Neema, Musisi, and Kibombo, 2004) shows that sexuality education has positive outcomes, including declines in risky sexual behaviour, the construction of useful images of responsible behaviour, lower rates of sexual abuse, lower rates of teenage pregnancies and STDs, increase in students’ knowledge about sexuality and tolerance of the views of others, increase in contraceptive use, reduction of anxieties associated with the process of growth and development during adolescence, delays in the onset of sexual activity, and greater confidence in negotiating sexual encounters and self-esteem.

2.3.1 Family and community involvement in formal sexuality education

As noted in Section 2.2.1 above, sexuality as a social construction is an integral part of life and is influenced by different social forces, such as the family, peers, religion and other factors in one’s environment. The family and the home are the primary sources of children’s sexuality education, as this is where they receive their conception of love, security and family interrelationships (section, 2.2.1).

Provision of sexual knowledge varies from one family to another and from one community to another. While in some families such education is conducted informally, in other families adults rarely discuss these issues with young people (Rivers and Aggleton, 1999). Rivers and Aggleton (1999), for instance, note that in many societies, and especially in Africa, gendered education and guidance was traditionally provided by relatives (extended family members) and community members, usually through initiation ceremonies that are part of the preparation for adult roles. Through this process, communities developed rules concerning the expression of sexuality, as well as mechanisms for controlling sexual behaviour (Fuglesang, 1997). However, Balmer et al (1997), Tumwesigye and Fiedler (1999), Rivers and Aggleton (1999), Burns (2002) and Falola-Amoemweah (2004) all argue that, due to increased urbanisation, migration, African family networks have become widely dispersed and the traditional mechanisms for providing this kind of information have lost significance, leaving the role of sexuality education for parents and other sources, such as the media, school and friends. The weakening of traditional channels of sexuality education in Uganda and South Africa has been reported by other scholars such as Neema et al (2004), Kinsman et al (2001) and de La Rey and Friedman (1996).
Parents, especially mothers, have a significant influence of their sons' and daughters' sexuality (Went, 1985; Allen, 1987). Fine (1988) believes, consequently, that adolescent risky sexual behaviour will decrease, if families are entrusted with sexuality education. Thorogood (2000:431), quoting Weeks (1986), however argues that making parents responsible for giving sexuality education to their children is a "dismissal failure in terms of quantity, relevance and accuracy". Indeed, most research evidence both from the developed world and from Africa has indicated that parents tend to be reluctant to discuss matters of sexuality with their children, either out of a belief that they can keep them 'innocent' by denying them access to such information, or because they are embarrassed to discuss such issues with their sons and daughters (Spender and Sarah, 1988; Hincks, 1991; Rivers and Aggleton, 1999; Mohamud and Murphy, 2001). According to Spender and Sarah (1988), some parents regard information about sexuality as inappropriate for young people and in fact as dangerous. They note that children are thus assumed to need 'protecting' against this aspect of social reality until they are old enough to receive such information. Consequently, children especially boys receive little or no formal education from their parents (Allen, 1987; Holland et al, 1990; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Prendergast, 1996; Rivers and Aggleton, 1999; Mohamud and Murphy, 2001; Kirumira, 2003). Prendergast (1996) stresses that little work has been done on boys' developing sexuality, and thus called for particular attention to be given to the boys.

Research suggests that, when parents do attempt to discuss issues around sexuality, the information concentrates on the biological aspects and is heterosexist (Mac an Ghaill, 1994). It also tends to be generalized, one-sided, authoritarian and prescriptive (Wilson et al, 1994). In addition, it is often sporadic, of poor quality and full of uncertainty about the quality of the information being transmitted, and about parents' own role as 'sexuality teachers'. Some parents feel that children should receive vital information about sexuality from their teachers and from peers (Hyde, 1999; Cotterel, 1996). Avoiding sexuality education discussions with children affects whether and how children receive messages about sexuality from other sources.

In most of the literature on the topic, young people reportedly receive most of the sexual information they want from sources other than their parents, especially from peers (Fine, 1988; Jackson, 1988; Rivers and Aggleton, 1999). Given that many of these young people have been similarly deprived of reliable adult guidance, the accuracy of such information is highly questionable. Consequently, many young people have poor knowledge about their sexuality.
2.3.2 Gender and sexuality education in schools

There is an intimate connection between debates on sexuality education and the political, cultural and social contexts in which schools are located. Like all curriculum-based knowledge, the meaning of sexuality education interacts simultaneously with conservative forces seeking to preserve the ‘status quo’ and with the pressures of tensions and change within the context. While my review draws from research in a very wide range of contexts (Western and African), my main interest is in looking for ways in which theorisations emerging from these different contexts cohere in forming a framework that will be valuable for studying gender dynamics in sexuality education in Uganda.

Research on gender and sexuality education in Africa is scanty. The available literature on this topic from the West notes that there is significant debate about the content, method and timing of the curricula offerings (Trudell, 1993). Greydanus and Shearin (1990) note that when communities decide to provide comprehensive sexuality education in their schools, they wrestle with the complex task of resolving what to teach and when. Further concerns revolve around the moral framework within which sexuality education should take place (Reiss, 1998), who should teach it, the training that teachers should receive, and where the course should be located within the curriculum (Sanders and Swinden, 1990; Massey, 1991; Reiss, 1995, 1996). The belief and intention of most interventions is to reduce heterosexual coital activity among young people and emphasize self-control and postponement of sexual gratification (Trudell, 1993; Beyea et al, 1996). This is supported by those who perceive sexuality as being part of an individual morality and who permit sexual activity only within the context of marriage.

a) Sexuality education content

Globally, school sexuality education has been approached in various ways, always influenced by historical forces within a particular context. It has thus ranged from the provision of technology (i.e. condoms and contraceptives), to the analysis of the body (biology and sex lessons), through attempts to understand and prevent diseases (STDs), to a focus on communication skills (Morrell et al, 2002). Despite the complex history concerning the introduction of sexuality information into formal education, researchers have identified two broad approaches, namely an emphasis that is abstinence based and an emphasis on abstinence only.

According to Sears (1992), Trudell (1993) and Elia (2000), abstinence-based content emphasises abstinence, but also includes information about methods of protection to enable teenagers who may already be sexually active to minimise risks of pregnancy and STDs. This type of curriculum offers information on sexual and reproductive anatomy and physiology, giving only limited information
about contraception, and generally avoids more controversial issues, such as sexual pleasure, masturbation, homosexuality and abortion. This view stresses the biological basis of sex with reproductive capacity beginning in early adolescence. The approach therefore argues that adolescents require education about pregnancy prevention measures (Sears, 1992; Trudell, 1993). However, Olsen et al. (1992) argues that the approach either directly or indirectly results in an increase in sexual activity. Nevertheless, the gender focus of this approach is not shown or explained.

Proponents of abstinence-only education advocate the delay of sexual intercourse until adulthood (Sears, 1992; Olsen et al, 1992; Elia, 2000). They locate the expression of sexuality within the context of marriage, emphasise disease and pregnancy, and discourage sexual practices that are considered bad and unnatural, such as homosexuality, promiscuity and commercial sex. The abstinence-only approach has been criticized for its narrow focus and for the assumption that issues of sexuality relate only to adults (Elia, 2000; Goldfarb and McCaffree, 2000). Scholars note that this approach does not provide room for discussion about sexual decision-making, nor does it allow a full exploration of possible decisions about sexuality, and about the impacts of such decisions, within the context of students’ lives. The approach fails to recognize that some pupils are already sexually active; it also does not address other areas of sexuality unrelated to sexual intercourse and it shows an overall disregard for students’ points of view. According to Elia (2000), the abstinence-only approach is undemocratic, because it advances a particular point of view of sexuality by excluding other possibilities of sexual expression and by refusing to recognise those who are already sexually active. Elia’s (2000) work on democratic sexuality education highlights an ‘interminable debate’ in the United States about what should constitute sexuality education, and notes that this conflict reflects the larger societal tension about sexuality. She links the ongoing debate to the history of sexuality in the Western world, which regards sex as dangerous and destructive – a view that influenced sexuality education in the United States. The so-called ‘interminable debate’ is particularly over the teaching of issues related to homosexuality and other sexual practices considered bad and unnatural, which Rubin (1984) classified in the ‘outer limits’ (see Section 2.2 above). Elia (2000) notes that there is a clash between the restrictive (education is limited to teaching about reproductive anatomy and physiology with an abstinence until marriage approach) and permissive (offers a broad-based sexuality education covering a wide rage of topics including biological, ethical, psychological, socio-cultural and spiritual dimensions of sexuality) sexual ideologies existing in the United States.

There is therefore a considerable debate as to which approach is the best or the most effective in addressing the sexuality concerns of young people (Trudell, 1993; Elia, 2000; Hedgepeth, 2000). Nevertheless, both approaches are aimed at delaying sexual intercourse and giving knowledge to the
adolescents to protect themselves from sexual 'problems', which include early, or unwanted, pregnancy and STDs, HIV and AIDS (Trudell, 1993; WHO, 1993; Haffner, 1995). The approaches are also aimed at producing normal (heterosexual) masculinity and (heterosexual) femininity (Thorogood, 2000).

Many studies in the Western world reveal that most school-based sexuality education concentrates mainly on the biological aspects of sexuality, contraception and STDs, emphasizing sexual abstinence until marriage as the main message (Jackson, 1988; Wople, 1988; Lenski, 1990; Beyer et al, 1996; Ingham, 1997). Anecdotal research on sexuality in Africa (Rivers and Aggleton, 1999; Samkange 2000; Kinsman et al, 2000; Niehaus, 2000; Burns, 2002; Pattman and Chege, 2003; Nyanzi, 2004) indicates a similar curricular orientation. In South Africa, issues of rape and safe sex are also covered. The researchers named above note that little emphasis is given to the emotional aspects of sexuality or to managing the challenges faced by adolescents in the day-to-day encounters with sexuality through relationships and through popular media representations of sex, masculinity, femininity, violence and pleasure. According to Hedgepeth and Helmich (1996:62), most schools teach "organ recital and disaster prevention". Sexuality education, which locates itself within the biological discourses of reproduction, tends to concentrate on the dangers of sex to girls/women from boys/men, resulting in boys feeling that sexuality education is for girls only (Epstein and Johnson, 1998). They argue that such an approach encourages heterosexism, homophobia and misogyny, and advise that sexuality education should begin with issues of relationships, respect and differences, taking up issues of reproduction along the way rather than privileging them. In addition, De Mauro (1990) and Beyer et al (1996) acknowledge that most sexuality education interventions do not address topics related to gender roles and gender identification.

Most researchers agree that, overall, the information offered to students is not only shallow but also sexist and gender biased. According to Beyer et al (1996), topics continue to be presented and defined in masculine terms: reflecting the male as the main active subject (male focus) in the description of desire and sexual activity. Riess (1998), studying representations of human sexuality in textbooks, in the United Kingdom noted that more attention is paid to the genitalia of males than to those of females, rendering males more visible and thus more important by implication than females. He concludes that most textbooks in the United Kingdom are sexist, fail to tackle personal issues related to menstruation, ignore lesbian and gay issues, and disregard other important issues, such as sexual harassment and rape. His research argues that the 'sins' of most sexuality curricula materials are mostly those of omission rather than commission, and that complete or partial omission of topics
indicates both discrimination and sexism, because it renders particular individuals and groups invisible.

The presentation of the teenage pregnancy problem that is common in most schools today obscures the role of males, and tacitly focuses on individual young girls rather than on the role of men/boys in this issue (Trudell, 1993). Trudell (1993) notes that the measures taken to address this problem (mainly expulsion of the pregnant girl) perpetuate sexual stereotype and impose upon girls the responsibility for the pregnancy, while ignoring the inequalities of gendered power relations that place girls at risk during sexual intercourse. She further argues that such method of redress fails to challenge men's/boys' claim that they have a right to unfettered access to women's bodies. Feminists from Africa have also indicated similar gender bias. For instance, researching girls' education in Africa, Assie-Lumumba (1997) notes that girls are often blamed and punished for the pregnancies. She argues that this reflects the unquestioned male masculinity that is further promoted by patriarchy. She asserts as follows:

If the reason for such measures is to protect the other girls from the bad influence of such pregnant girls, the boys too share their experiences with other pupils. If the purpose of such measures is to punish and/or discourage other pupils from following the same example, how could it be that the boys are not included. Even if the expulsion has been abolished in some countries there is still a tendency to make only the girl responsible for pregnancies and to punish her (Assie-Lumumba, 1997: 309)

Acknowledging that conception must involve the interaction between a male and a female, Assie-Lumumba's (1997) argument illustrates how men are in fact protected from their sexual responsibility, ascribing it to women and girls instead. Richardson (1993), in a different context (Western), argues that deflecting responsibility away from boys/men positions girls/women in the role of 'gatekeepers', having to take responsibility for both their own and boys'/men's sexual behaviour. A study by Pleck et al (1993) found that teenage males who agreed with traditional cultural messages about masculinity were less likely than other young men to use condoms consistently (or to use them at all) and more likely to feel great ("real men") for impregnating a girl. They did not share responsibility for preventing pregnancy.

African scholars further criticize school sexuality education programmes in most African countries for their narrow conceptualization of sexuality and their limited discussions of gender and power relations (Wolpe et al, 1997; Clarke, 1997; Owens, 2000; Burns, 2002; Morrell et al, 2002; Harrison, 2002; Pattman and Chege, 2003). Morrell et al (2002) suggests that school-based interventions need to acknowledge the importance of gender equality in personal relationships when teaching sexuality and to address issues of gender and power relations. Owens (2000) points out that sexuality education
that does not address gender issues reinforces the traditional notions of gender identity, both overtly through prescribing particular roles and covertly through a 'resounding silence' about the impact of power differentials in sex roles and sexual experience. She argues that, in order to alter behaviours, it is necessary to engage consciously and vigorously with issues of gender inequality. Harrison (2002) suggests that 'enhanced skills' will not achieve better prevention outcomes, unless young people are made to understand the links between gender power relations and valuable, relevant sexuality knowledge. According to Morrell (1998b) and Wolpe et al (1997), school pupils in the South African context should be made to understand the underlying meanings and social constructions of normative notions of masculinity and femininity and how aggression can act dysfuctionally for boys and girls in their everyday lives.

Pillsbury et al (2000) argue that male attitudes towards gender and sexual relations arise in boyhood when these attitudes are often set for life, and emphasise that boys need to be socialised at an early age about concepts of sexual responsibility and to receive ongoing education and support to encourage healthy sexual and family formation behaviour. Research suggests that boys need to be taught to respect girls and to be determined to share responsibility with girls on matters of sexuality and reproduction (UNFPA, 1997). Measor et al, (1996) suggest that ways of reaching out to boys and to alter their sexist, or patriarchal, attitudes must be found. Family Health International (FHI) (1997) similarly stresses the need to focus on boys as much as on girls, in addressing issues of power relations. Kreuse (1992) asserts that it is necessary to deal with boys' gender identities, and to target their conceptualizations of masculinity. She argues that an exclusive focus on girls results in imposing upon them the whole responsibility for changing oppressive gender norms, thus buttressing the assumption that 'boys will be boys', impermeable to change.

Feminist scholars suggest that for any educational intervention to be effective, gender and empowerment should be the main focus. Addressing issues of gender and power relations in school sexuality education provides a good opportunity for the young people who are under pressure to conform to certain cultural norms upheld through gender stereotypes, to engage in gender equitable relationships (Wolpe et al, 1997; Steinberg et al, 1997; Owens, 2000; Pattman and Chege, 2003). Owens (2000) argues that a critical time to help young people to develop an understanding about relations of gender, power and non-violent forms of sexual behaviour is during their school-going

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40 refers to information about identity, relationships and intimacy, sexual development, reproductive health, interpersonal, cultural, psychological and spiritual dimensions of sexuality from the cognitive domain (information), the affective domain (feelings, values and attitudes), and the behavioural domain (communication, decision-making and other relevant personal skills).
years. Such an understanding would help students to form relationships, essential to life and learning, which recognize our common humanity and engender respect for the diversity and differences between people (Steinberg et al., 1997). PPFA (1998) contends that understanding sexuality from a gender perspective helps boys and girls to cope with their feelings and with peer pressure and to take charge of their lives.

Further critics of sexuality education in schools, both Western (Diorio, 1985; Wolpe, 1988; Sears, 1992, Curcio et al., 1996) and African (Mirembe and Davies, 2001; Mirembe, 2002), note the biased nature of the curricula towards heterosexuality and the promotion of homophobia. They argue that issues of sex orientation are not discussed at all and, where homosexuality is indeed discussed, it is done with a male bias, thereby minimizing lesbian issues. Klein (1992) recommends a form of sexuality education that addresses deterministic notions of male and female, heterosexual bias and the ethic of double standards. In some contexts (England and Wales) research comments upon tension in the debates around sexuality education regarding the commitment of all stakeholders to equality and diversity and the need to actively regulate behaviour within acceptable social norms (Thorogood, 2000). Thorogood (2000) notes that, if sexuality education is to tackle issues of gender, it needs to provide information in its broadest sense by giving students the opportunity to discuss issues of sexual orientation and gender identities.

Western scholars, such as Fine (1988), Haffner, (1992), Prendergast (1996), Mitchell (1998), Epstein and Johnson (1998) and Allen (2004) and some African researchers (Pattman and Chege, 2003; Nyanzi, 2004), point out that sexuality education on the whole tends to focus on the dangers of sexuality, while ignoring the positive aspects of sexuality, including the discourse of desire and pleasure. Fine (1988), Prendergast (1996) and Forrest (2000) note that female desire and pleasure are excluded from the official discourses of the classroom, and that male desire is often seen as dangerous to girls. Fine (1988) argues that such discourse ‘mis-educates’ girls and results in a discourse of sexuality based on the male’s search for desire and sexual fulfilment and on the female’s search for protection from this. Conversely, Epstein and Johnson (1998) argue that such a discourse should be analysed as actually being dangerous to young men/boys who are positioned as irresponsible adventurers and sexual thrill-seekers, regardless of individual experiences, emotions and interests. They also note that female de-eroticized education has a differential effect on young women’s and men’s heterosexual subjectivities. “Silencing the discourse of desire buttresses the icon of women-as-victims” (Fine, 1988: 42), which consequently denies women the right to control their own sexuality (Sik-Ying and Tsang, 2002). Through a study entitled “Relocating the penis in sex

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41 Research conducted in Botswana, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Uganda
education in Hong Kong”, Sik-Ying and Tsang (2002) demonstrate that the omission of such information only serves to deny girls the knowledge and the associated power and mastery over their own sexual destiny. Tolman (1994) concurs, noting that curbing desire exposes girls to the risk of feeling guilty about having sexual desires and feelings, and to the likelihood of responding to such feelings in ways that cannot bring joy or a sense of agency. Thomson and Holland (1998) contend that women’s empowerment in sexual encounters is intimately linked to the ability to perceive their sexual pleasure as a priority and hence to develop a sense of agency and control. All this research however assumes that discovering their sexual potential empowers women, giving them greater confidence and the strength to oppose their subordination (Richardson, 1993). According to Li (1998), the goal of sexuality education should therefore no longer be merely to protect young girls from sexual reality, but rather to expand possibilities for women’s liberation by focusing on equalising the genders and enhancing women’s opportunities for sexual knowledge and pleasure. Gilligan (1990), however, cautions that it is necessary to be cognisant of the danger faced by girls who do engage in such a discourse about pleasure and desire.

Research also notes that most sexuality education initiatives believe that adolescents engage in risky behaviours because of ignorance, and therefore aim to provide them with the relevant knowledge (Morrell et al, 2002). Contradictions about sexuality do abound, however. Some Knowledge, Attitude and Practice [KAP] surveys in the United States have shown that, while adolescents’ knowledge of HIV and AIDS is high, many continue to engage in risky behaviours (Fine, 1988; Shamai and Coambs, 1992). Studies conducted in Uganda and South Africa about HIV and AIDS interventions point to an over-emphasis on knowledge rather than on skills development as a major limitation in these interventions (Ministry of Education and Sports and UNICEF, 1996; Harrison, 2002; Burns, 2002). Evidence from research suggests that interventions that are simply ‘knowledge based’ (aiming to explain the process of HIV transmission, for example) do not result in changed patterns of behaviour, whereas interventions that aim to change the attitudes, values and norms of adolescents are more likely to result in new modes of interaction and new attitudes (Kirby, 1992). Other scholars from South Africa and Uganda assert that most sexuality education concentrates on changing morals and values by means of evangelical messages, which are usually crude and moralistic (Morrell et al, 2002; Hyde et al, 2001). Morrell et al (2002:16) argue that while this strategy “offers some choice, it is preachy” and does not address young people’s lived experiences.

On the whole, scholars from diverse contexts suggest that sexuality education should cover issues related to gender identity, power relations, sexual pleasures and desire, relationships, marriage, contraception, life skills and gender roles. Pillsbury et al (2000) believe that comprehensive coverage
of these topics will assist students to resist peer pressure and inappropriate sexual advances, as well as to help both boys and girls to recognize the merits of abstinence.

**b) Teaching strategies and approach**

Literature from the United States shows that sexuality education in secondary schools has been exclusively taught in the biological science, health and religious education curricula (Jackson, 1988; Elia, 2000). These researchers note that such a framework limits the scope of inquiry and confines the discussion within the disciplinary boundaries. Elia (2000) further argues that sexuality is an ‘interdisciplinary enterprise’ that could in fact be taught across the curriculum and hence should not be limited to a single discipline. Scholars from South Africa stress the importance of integrating sexuality topics within the school curriculum (Wood *et al*, 1996). The presentation of knowledge is important for effective learning of students. While it is important to have a curriculum, it is also crucial to ensure that it is effectively taught (Trudell, 1993). In their work on democratic sexuality education in the United States, Goldfarb and McCaffree (2000), teachers are reported to conduct sexuality courses in a way that does not allow open discussion; in most cases, and that they appear to be discard material that might be relevant to the real lives of boys and girls. Consequently, teachers fail to address many of the issues most central to students’ concerns, but instead provide information derived from their own culture and from their adult status (Measor, 1989).

Across diverse contexts, Western and African literature shows that most sexuality education initiatives draw upon patriarchal modes of communication where learners are expected to heed the wisdom of an all-knowing patriarch (Morrell *et al*, 2002; Nyanzi, 2004). School pedagogies are highly didactic, authoritarian, teacher centred and examination driven (Epstein and Johnson, 1998; Otoide and Okonofua, 1998; Hyde, 1999; Mirembe, 2002; Morrell *et al*, 2002; Pattman and Chege, 2003; Falola-Anosuah, 2004), yet it has been found that students are more interested in ‘active’ teaching (Strange *et al*, 2003). Similarly, Mac an Ghaill (1991) also reported that students in his study in England reported teachers who lacked a sense of progression (updated with students’ concerns/current students’ social realities) and were overtly teacher centred, offering information they found irrelevant, and which was repeated frequently throughout their schooling. Such research suggests that students are regarded as passive recipients of knowledge, and that there is minimal participatory learning to ensure critical questioning and challenging the normative gender-stereotyped sexual/gendered roles (Mirembe and Davies, 2001). Such teaching strategies are not suitable for life skills transmission, a fundamental aspect of sexuality education (Hincks, 1991; MOES & United Nations Fund for Children [UNICEF], 1996). Morrell *et al* (2002), quoting Paulo Freire, note that
education, when conceived as simply pouring knowledge into empty vessels (the learner), would not succeed in its objective of changing the knowledge base, perceptions and skills of the learner.

Fujimura-Fanselow (1996) and Goldfarb and McCaffree (2000) acknowledge the importance of content and emphasize the teaching process as a fundamental aspect of sexuality education. They assert that issues such as the pedagogical styles, the relationships between teachers and students, the relationships among students, and the classroom atmosphere are critical zones for effective delivery of sexuality knowledge. They maintain that reflecting on these zones is crucial for any educator committed to gender equity, justice, self-confidence and empowerment. Fujimura-Fanselow (1996) suggests the use of a feminist pedagogy that equips learners with confidence, knowledge and the skills to critique existing practices and institutions and to work for change at both personal and societal levels. She acknowledges the fact that many researchers have noted the myriad ways in which girls continue to be silenced and ignored at all levels of schooling, and notes that feminist pedagogy transforms and promotes more active participation of girls in the learning process. Some scholars, such as Hilton (2001), suggest that boys and girls have different learning styles, although she unfortunately offers relatively little concrete research on these different learning styles. Nonetheless, she does advise that teachers must recognise the gendered learning patterns of girls and boys when designing appropriate pedagogical approaches.

Scholars, such as Goldfarb and McCaffree (2000) recommend democratic sexuality education classrooms. Quoting Apple and Beane (1995) Goldfarb and McCaffree (2000:148) argue that democratic education should engage open discussions to allow the open flow of ideas and viewpoints, have faith in young people's abilities to ingest information and make healthy decisions, and develop the skills that students need to make decisions. Such open discussion would nurture competent, thinking, active participants, as well as developing thinking skills essential for critical self-reflection. They argue that such an approach helps boys and girls to be conscious of the decisions they make and that the opportunity to compare their personal beliefs and values with those of others and helps to solidify students' own beliefs and value systems. Apple and Beane (1995) further assert that sexuality education should encourage empathy, self-respect and respect for others, including a concern for the dignity and rights of other people. According to Mirembe (2002), democratic education, which involves young people in curriculum formulation, setting the agenda of what and how to learn, is an effective way of providing sexual knowledge to young people. She contends that such an approach, which pays attention to students' views, is an empowering tool to challenge inequality of any form in the class and makes the education relevant to their lived experiences. Other scholars who strongly advocate democratic sexuality education relevant to students' lives include
Hedgepeth (2000) and Elia, (2000). Hedgepeth and Helmich (1996) advise that educators should focus more on the needs and concerns of young people than upon pre-packaged messages. Elia (2000) contends that the questions, concerns, experiences and curiosities of students should be paramount, and that they must be the basis for sexuality education. She maintains that sexuality knowledge derived through democratic communication, and based on democratic ideals, creates meaningful and ethical educational experiences.

Goldfarb and McCaffree (2000) in their work in the United States further stress the need to recognize the power of speech (language) in teachers’ interactions with students. According to Klein (1992), similarly, the use of appropriate language in teaching gender and sexuality is critical. Goldfarb and McCaffree (2000) also recommend an ‘affirmative action’ pedagogy that not only encourages the acceptance of diverse viewpoints but also offers positive encouragement of the so-called ‘minority’ groups, such as girls and persons with disabilities. Evidence from diverse contexts shows a definite lack of gender sensitivity in teaching (Walkerdine, 1987; Wolpe et al, 1997; Kwisiga, 2002; Pattman and Chege, 2003; Morrell et al, 2002). They note teachers’ use of sexist and gender biased language in class and the fact that boys are permitted to control the classroom space.

General evidence from the research literature indicates that schools have largely failed to challenge contextual power imbalances based on gender (and on other factors) and thus reinforce the macro-customs that place undue pressure on boys to exploit the privileges offered. Consequently, boys’ control of knowledge delivered through the curriculum may serve to reproduce gender roles as well as dominant forms of sexuality (Kelly, 1992; Wolpe et al, 1997; Pattman and Chege, 2003). Accordingly, some researchers argue that sexuality information should be tailored to specific audiences. Most literature shows that boys tend to have more vocal space in class than girls (Kreuse, 1992; Lees, 1994; Measor et al, 1996; Pattman and Chege, 2003; Strange et al, 2003; Baxter, 2002). Sadker et al (1991) argue that in mixed sex classrooms, boys receive more attention from the teachers and generally dominate classroom activities. There is thus a debate about conducting sexuality education in either single sex or mixed sex classes. A number of researchers from the West have made it clear that most girls prefer to have sexuality lessons in single-sex settings (Measor, 1989; Larkin, 1994; Measor et al, 1996; Strange et al, 2003) because this gives them more freedom of expression. They therefore recommend that more sexuality education should be delivered in single sex groups. Despite this, some students prefer mixed sex lessons because of the opportunity to share experiences and to learn about the opposite sex. Lockheed and Klein (1985) and Dicenso et al (2001) concur, arguing that sex segregation inhibits cross-sex cooperation and reinforces gender stereotyping.
Scholars such as Kreuse (1992) recommend a mixed approach with sex-segregated groups working separately and then being brought together in a mixed sex environment. In her work in Danish schools, Kreuse (1992) observes that sex-segregated processes that are organized around the specific conditions and interests of a particular sex can support the development of a positive gender identity based on authentic values, rather than on merely becoming reflections of stereotyped ideas of the opposite sex. She maintains that a person is better qualified to participate on an equal footing with the opposite sex, if the person has had a chance to develop on his/her own terms. She contends that the second step should involve putting students in mixed settings to share new insights and to deal specifically with countering oppressive patterns of gendered assumptions or behaviours. Halstead (1991) and Kreuse (1992) argue that alternating between sex segregated and mixed learning processes creates conditions for change, raises consciousness and results in changes in attitude towards each other. Pattman’s work (1997) on sexual discourse and sexuality education in Zimbabwe recommends using the same strategy with single sex groups, discussing questions about particular issues and then reporting back in cross-gender groups. This argument is also supported by Davidson (1996:21) who contends that mixed sex groups work best “once some basic ground work has been done separately”.

A further concern in delivering sexuality education has been the teacher. According to Measar et al (1996), the influence of the teacher is a gendered one, associated with the teacher’s power and ability to control the class. This is particularly relevant in the case of boys when the teacher is a female. In their study conducted in the south of England, Measar et al (1996) found that boys reacted negatively and tended to be disruptive in classes conducted by female teachers. Similar negative reactions by boys to female facilitators have been recorded by Walkerdine (1987). Measar et al (1996) and Wood et al (1998) advise that more of the sexuality education for boys should be conducted by men. Conversely, Hilton (2001) and Strange et al (2003) indicate that the sex of the teacher may not be as important as their possession of adequate knowledge and skills to handle sexuality issues with young people. Strange et al (2003) point out that boys and girls in their study (in England) liked teachers whom they could relate to, who were perceived to hold similar values to their own, who were open, ‘fun’ and could have a ‘laugh’. Particular importance was put on being knowledgeable, confident and unembarrassed about the subject matter.

Several studies from the West (Hedgepeth and Helmich, 1996; Elia, 2000; Buston et al, 2001) and a few from Africa (Niehaus, 2000; Hyde et al, 2001) indicate that teachers experience difficulties with teaching sexuality topics. Consequently, teachers tend to conduct sexuality courses in a mechanical way, and in most cases discard material that might be meaningful to their students because of their
personal embarrassment about some topics. Most studies attribute teachers' difficulties with teaching sexuality issues to lack of training (Heaven, 1996; Hyde et al, 2001; Buston et al, 2001). Briggs (1994) reports that most teachers are moreover not conversant with changing adolescent sexual behaviours and lack the knowledge that would enable them to teach girls and boys sexuality related issues in a way that responds directly to students' dilemmas, experience, and interests. Adequate resources, such as staff and teaching materials, and especially trained staff, facilitate effective teaching of sexuality issues in schools (Cotterel, 1996; Heaven, 1996). Li (1998) and others (SIECUS, 1996; UNFPA, 1997; Schafani, 2000; Elia, 2000; Buston et al, 2001) recommend adequate training for educators to equip them with skills to talk about sex with their students. Schafani (2000) argues that improving the capacity of teachers strengthens their ability to provide quality services to the children. UNFPA (1997) pointed out that, when instructors are properly trained and supported, they are able to provide adequate education to the children. Although Elia (2000) appreciates the importance of training teachers in effectively delivering sexual information, she values particular qualities and commitments including the following:

feeling of satisfaction with and pride in one's sexuality, feeling secure about one's own sexual natures, communicating effectively about sexuality, expressing respect and tolerance of others' sexual values, encouraging others to explore sexual issues and their own sexual values, and acknowledging that sexuality is an important topic to people and therefore legitimate topic for intellectual inquiry (Elia, 2000: 126, quoting Bruess and Greenberg, 1988: 7)

She notes that teachers need to be caring, empathic, sensitive, attentive, dynamic, facilitative and curious. Some researchers argue for the use of outside experts, particularly health or sexuality education professionals from NGOs and other such institutions (Went, 1985; Allen, 1987), although Hilton (2001:37) contends that such a strategy is "not always the answer". She notes that outsiders are sometimes perceived by students as 'fair game' and so they do not pay attention to the message.

Research argues that, although the formal curriculum plays an important role in teaching youngsters about healthy habits, the environment (both within and outside the school) in which this curriculum is delivered becomes equally important as a location in which information is negotiated. Schools have spaces other than the formal curriculum where alternative social constructions about sexuality and what counts as appropriate sexual behaviour are communicated (Measor et al, 1996). Lees (1987), Connell (1987), Delamont (1990), Mac an Ghaill (1991), Peterson and Lach (1990), Wolpe et al (1997) and Morrell et al (2002) also argue that the social and cultural life of the school is not isolated from that of the family nor of the neighbourhood, which surround it. They argue that the socio-historical belief systems and practices within the school and the wider society are significant in students' construction of their own and each other's sexuality. They observe that by the time students enter
school, they exhibit gender role preferences and recognise feminine and masculine roles, which they
tend to act out both in and outside class. For this reason, Lees (1987) advocates the need for sexuality
education to be cross-curricular, focusing on the moral and social context in which relations between
sexes occur, not only in the classroom but also in the family, the neighbourhood and the entire arena
should attempt to transform gender relations in schools and to foster social and structural
environments that support the changes.

2.3.3 Students' response to sexuality education lessons
A wide range of Western literature (mainly from the United States and the United Kingdom) on
sexuality education in secondary schools has provided insights into students' responses to sexuality
education schemes. This research reveals that students' reactions and responses to the curriculum in
use are varied across gender lines. Scholars observe that student responses can either be positive
(acceptance) or negative (resistance) through either 'polite silence' or disruption in the flow of
attributes students' resistance to classroom schemes to discrepancies between the information
presented by the teacher as a fact and the knowledge the students glean from other sources, such as
the media, parents and books outside the school. Prendergast (1996) concurs with Trudell (1993),
arguing that boys and girls come to class with divergent knowledge, experiences, beliefs and
expectations, which influence their understanding and the meanings they attach to specific
information given to them. She notes that understanding young people's experiences, knowledge and
needs, requires taking into account their given sex and learned gender, and the interaction between
the two.

Measor et al (1996) argue that informal cultures of adolescents often influence pupils' reactions to the
material presented in class. Students bring with them their own perspectives drawn from a range of
localities, including the home, community and peer group, into sexuality education lessons. They
point out that if these perspectives are different from those the school is presenting as the norm,
some opposition can be expected. For instance, when exploring adolescent perspectives on sexuality
and their values and views on sexuality education in England, Measor et al (1996) found that girls and
boys responded differently to sexuality education schemes, and that boys often displayed negative
reactions. They attributed observed variations in reactions to contradictions in the messages
presented. The relevance and appropriateness of the material presented also influenced students' responses. They noted that the boys responded negatively to the sexuality education material offered because of its central focus on birth control methods, material they felt was inappropriate and did not
fit within their gender codes. Conversely, the girls responded positively because the information given was relevant to their lived experiences. Prendergast (1995) (in England) also reports similar responses from boys for the lessons that centred mainly on reproduction and therefore were dominated by references to and images of women's reproductive cycles. These studies suggest the need to consider students' values and concerns, as well as to look for ways of deconstructing and restructurin the students' meanings of femininity and masculinity.

2.4 The theoretical framework

My research is guided by existing feminist theories on gender, sexuality and education and I engage various approaches. I conceptualize sexuality and gender as socially constructed discourses, which are inseparable and explained by the interaction of the masculine and the feminine, predicated upon unequal power relations. Within this conceptualization, I work with a framework which recognizes gender as a powerful force constructing options for both boys and girls who actively learn as they engage with formal and informal processes of socialization. Their being male and female defines almost everything they do, who they are, their hopes and possibilities, their futures and how they relate to one another. Whereas some feminist literature has mainly focused on girls' negotiation of gender orders, recent scholars (Kreuse, 1992; Salisbury and Jackson, 1996; Morrell, 1998; Morrell, et al, 2002; Gupta et al, 2002; Harrison, 2002) insist on integrating masculinity as a critical zone for research. My research recognizes the limitations of an approach limited to theorization of the feminine for research aimed at changing African women's and girls' lives through advocating gender justice (Kolawole, 2004). An approach interested in the effects of gender for boys, as well as girls offers boys the opportunity to explore the disjuncture between their formal acceptance of gender equality and their sexual behaviours that continue to confer on them particular power. While cognizant of the disadvantaged position of girls and the inherent gender discrimination in the school context, the approach refuses to read the feminine simply in relation to 'victimhood', and seeks for nuance and tension in the terrain of changing gender constructions.

My theoretical perspective on sexuality prioritizes the interrelation of sexuality and gender (Morrell, et al, 2002, Gupta et al, 2002; Lancaster & di Leonardo 1997; Jackson, 1996; Butler, 1990). Sexuality as a socially constructed concept is an overriding component through which our identity, our body and our social experience is mediated. It is thus intimately linked to gender relations (West & Zimmerman, 1991; Giddens, 1992; Richardson, 1996). Thus my approach to this research is conscious and cognizant of the role of gender in sexuality. Consequently, all questions and issues concerning sexuality education addressed throughout this study are approached from a gendered perspective. My approach to sexuality is also informed by recent feminist work on constructions of
sexuality in African contexts which are alert to the interactions of political change and cultural conservatism.

My research recognizes education as a critical socializing institution (Gupta et al, 2002) which overtly and covertly reinforces norms concerning gender and sexuality. It acknowledges the potential power of formal education in the construction of 'new' norms and is a major site of 'reproduction' (Arnot, 2002). Education about gender and sexuality in schools offers an opportunity for transformation of society in terms of creating gender equitable relationships and changing the underlying conditions that cause gender inequality. Engaging with both the target population and their particular social context offers a good strategy for exploring the gender dynamics of sexuality education in schools.

I conceptualize teachers and students as active agents in the education process. The school constitutes a collective social life for students and a work place for teachers where they negotiate, construct, reinterpret and contest dominant cultural meanings and power embedded within the curriculum and organizational design of school. Such design incorporates the curriculum as a central discourse. Issues concerning the gender dynamics in the classroom, curriculum content and presentation format as well as the nature of gender relations within school culture are explored.

I do recognize and acknowledge, as pointed out by Morrell et al, (2002) that the learners and educators connect with the diverse world beyond the school walls. Therefore, the school intervention can impact on the wider society as a whole and contribute to the process of transforming oppressive norms inherent in our society, leading to eradication of wider social inequity and inequality. Alternatively, I recognise that educational institutions may normalise and 'reinvent' notions of gendered sexuality which perpetuate gender inequality. My research explores the terrain between the potential offered by the current sexuality education curriculum and the complex cultures of gendered sexualities operative within students' realities.

2.5 Summary

Literature from wide range of diverse contexts (Western and African) provides a helpful and broad understanding of the connections between gender, sexuality and education. There is a general acknowledgement of the historical and social construction of the nature of sexuality and its intimate connection with gender. Analysis of the foregoing literature has highlighted the political struggles embedded in the gendered construction of sexuality predicated upon unequal power relations between male and female and the privileging of heteronormativity over other forms of sexual expression. Within these constructions, female sexuality is suppressed and put under the control of
men. Key institutions identified as having a significant role in regulating and suppressing sexuality includes the law, the church, schools and the family. Colonial and post-colonial legacies as well as culture are implicated too, for having a significant influence on the current constructions of African sexualities.

Such constructions influence how young people understand and live out their sexuality, and affect their schooling experiences in different and gendered ways. The literature on gender, sexuality and schooling reveals complex tensions and contradictions surrounding boys’ and girls’ respective constructions of sexuality, predicated upon unequal power relations. Students’ constructions of sexuality revolve around notions of heterosexuality. The sexual landscape is thus characterised by homophobia, misogyny, sexual harassment, engagement in sexual relationships, and control of female sexuality, all of which work against girls’ expressions of their sexuality and undermine girls’ schooling and general welfare. Girls’ sexuality is surrounded by double standards. Sexualities are lived out through dynamics of control and resistance. Feminists argue that sexuality needs an alternative notion of sexuality, and a more emancipatory definition, including fundamental changes in power relations between males and females. My interrogation of the available literature has revealed that comprehensive gendered sexuality education is thus an important terrain to address and harmonise these tensions, contradictions and definitions, and to challenge the narrow constructions of sexuality.

The existing literature suggests that, while a number of efforts have been made to provide sexual knowledge to young people, most of the information is inadequate and gender biased, focusing mainly on the biological aspects of sexuality. The teaching strategies are also inadequate and are mainly teacher centred. Most sexuality education fails to take into account the needs and cultures of adolescents, and ignores issues of gender and power relations, which are crucial concepts in analysing sexuality. Across a wide spectrum of environments, it thus perpetuates male dominance and leaves young girls vulnerable. There is clearly a need to review most sexuality education interventions to provide more comprehensive education, which empowers both boys and girls to live healthy sexual lives, free of harassment, exploitation and disease. While there is a lot of literature about sexuality education in other countries, and especially in Western countries, little is known thus far about Uganda’s sexuality education interventions in spite of its great achievements in reducing the prevalence rate of HIV and AIDS infection in the country. The everyday gender dynamics within Uganda’s sexuality education have not been examined. While this chapter provides the theoretical and conceptual framework, the next chapter analyses Uganda’s engagements with sexuality education and contextualises the research agenda.
CHAPTER THREE

CONTEXTUALISING THE RESEARCH AGENDA

3.1 Introduction

While recognizing the global experiences, the status of gender, sexuality and education cannot be taken for granted in every setting but rather demands consideration of the national context. Although some factors cut across most SSA countries, the need for analysis and understanding of the context is fundamental in the study of gender, sexuality and education. The national context is significant in influencing the complex dynamic process through which people construct experience and define their sexual identities. This chapter contextualizes the issues of gender, sexuality and education by illuminating the Ugandan context introducing the political, economic, social and cultural contexts that may influence the construction of sexuality and educational alternatives in the country. The chapter interrogates Uganda's political engagements with sexuality education and then moves on to the statement of the problem and concludes with the significance of the study.

3.2 Uganda: The national context

This section seeks to highlight Uganda's historical, cultural, social, political and economic environment that shape the nature and extent of gender dynamics in sexuality and education as well as facilitate the attainment of gender equality and equity in the country.

3.2.1 The historical and current political setting

Uganda got its political independence from British colonial rule in 1962 and has ever since gone through a number of political regimes (Mutibwa, 1992; Kanyeihamba, 2002), which have had critical implications on the social and economic set up of the country. A few years after independence (in 1966) Uganda experienced a constitutional crisis (Mutibwa, 1992) which resulted in a long period of conflict, violence, insecurity characterised by political disorder, brutal dictatorship, military coup d'états, civil wars, loss of lives and property (1966 - 1985). This led to the deterioration of the political, social and economic situation of the country (Bwengye, 1985; Museveni, 1992; Mutibwa, 1992; Kabatoro, 1995; Brett, 1995; Hansen and Twaddle, 1995; Odongo, 2000; Kanyeihamba, 2002).

In 1986, a new government came into power under the leadership of Yoweri Kaguta Museveni who is the president of the Republic of Uganda to date. A broad based National Resistance Movement [NRM] Government was established and undertook constitutional reform; a process that culminated
in the promulgation of a new national Constitution in 1995 (Nyangabiyaki, 2001; Kanyeihamba, 2002). Although a few parts of the country, particularly the northern region, still experience civil wars (Lomo and Hovi, 2004), peace, security and respect for the rule of law were restored in most parts of the country. The NRM government emphasised democratic ideals and practices such as freedom of speech, press, expression and association and encouraged increased participation of the local population in decision-making processes. The 1995 Constitution further provided for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and recognised that equality and respect of human rights and specifically women’s rights were fundamental (Article 21 and 33 (1), (2), (3) and (4). The Constitution further provided for affirmative action (Article 32 (1), 33 (5) 78 (1 b)) as well as embracing gender sensitive language (The Republic of Uganda, 1995). It is thus considered one of the most gender sensitive constitutions in Africa. However, although it has strengthened the position of women and other marginalized groups, these provisions need to be translated into legislations that protect the rights of women especially at the family level.

The years 1966 – 1985 have had profound legacies in terms of the provision of education in the country including breakdown of the education infrastructure, reduced enrolment rates as well as persistence and performance. When the present government took over power in 1986, education became one of the top priorities and as a consequence, there has been marked improvement in access, persistence and performance for both girls and boys although gender disparities in these aspects of education have persisted (Chapter one, section 1.3).

3.2.2 Uganda’s socio-economic background

Uganda’s economy is predominantly agricultural with the majority (over 90%) of its population depending on subsistence farming and light agro-based industries. Agriculture accounts for 38.4% of the country’s Gross Domestic Product [GDP] (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development [MFPED], 2004). Over the last two decades, the country has experienced noticeable improvement in the real GDP and the average growth rate rose from 0.3% in 1985 to 6.4% per annum (Uganda Bureau of Statistics [UBOS], 2005a). According to MOES, (2003b) this improvement in economic performance is due to the government’s stabilisation and recovery programmes that have been operating since 198642. These programmes include the structural adjustment policy packages involving trade liberalisation and privatisation of public enterprise, foreign exchange liberalisation, reorganisation of tax revenue collection, civil service reform,

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42 Before then, Uganda's economy suffered severely and was characterised by declining GDP, declining agricultural and industrial output, a deterioration in export performance, high rates of inflation, wide spread poverty, poor health and education services brought about by civil strife and economic mismanagement (fiscal and monetary) by the previous regimes/governments.
reduction in the size of the army, decentralization, streamlining of the investment policy and rehabilitation of the socio-economic infrastructure. These strategies have led to the improved economic performance and increase in budgetary allocations to social service sectors such as health and education.

In spite of the improvements in economic growth, Uganda is still one of the poorest countries in the world and in terms of economic status it is ranked the 146th out of 177 countries (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2004). A large proportion (37.7%) of its population lives below the poverty line and the majority of these are women living in the rural areas (MFPED, 2004). Because of the state of poverty in most parts of the country particularly in the households and the poor social service sector, the government re-orientated its development programmes towards poverty eradication and improvement in social service delivery.

3.2.3 The socio-demographic profile of Uganda

Since 194843, Uganda’s population has been increasing rapidly at an average growth rate of 3.3%, causing nearly a fivefold increase from 5 million people in 1948 to 24.4 million people in 2002 (UBOS, 2005). Of these 24.4 million, more than half of the population (51%) is female. Uganda’s population is predominantly rural based (approximately 88%) with only 12% in the urban areas. The high rate of population growth is attributed to high fertility rates (7 children per woman), decline in infant mortality and the high incidences of early marriages (UBOS, 2003). According to UBOS (2001) 17% of the women get married before the age of 15 years and more than half (53.2%) are married by age 18 years. This exposes young girls to the risk of early childbearing and longer periods of reproduction especially given the low contraceptive use (only 9% of the women in the age group 15-19 years use contraceptives) (UBOS, 2001). According to 2000/2001 Uganda Demographic Health Survey (UBOS, 2001), 31 % of the women aged 15 –19 had began childbearing. The increase in the use of contraceptives (for women aged 15-49 years) from 15% in 1995 to 23 % in 2000/2001 has not yet had an effect on the total fertility levels (UBOS, 2001).

Uganda’s demographic structure indicates a relatively young population with 56.1% being under 18 years (UBOS, 2005). UBOS (2005) further shows that one in every four Ugandans (24 %) is an adolescent and one in every three (34.3%) is a young person. There are important linkages between these population dynamics and the quality of educational provision as well as the status of sexual and reproductive health and rights. A high population growth rate implies a high percentage of a relatively

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43 Population census in Uganda is conducted every 10 years and since the first census was held Uganda has conducted six censuses – 1948, 1959, 1969, 1980, 1991 and 2002.
youthful population and a high dependence ratio. Therefore, a rapidly expanding population lowers a country’s capacity to provide quality social services, magnifies the challenge of achieving quality Education for All and hinders the process of economic growth.

Uganda’s public health issues

Although there have been improvements in Uganda’s economy, the health status of the population remains poor especially among women and children. This is reflected by the persistent high maternal mortality rate (505 deaths per 100,000 live births), high morbidity among women (20.4% prenatal and maternal conditions) and the infant and child mortality (88 and 152 deaths per 1000 live births respectively), which has remained high despite the decline (UBOS, 2001). These health indicators have had a negative impact on the life expectancy, currently estimated at 50.5 for women and 45.7 for men (UBOS, 2003).

According to the MFPED, (2004) 60% of the deaths are due to preventable and curable diseases including prenatal and maternal related illnesses, malaria, Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI), and diarrhoea. Malaria has remained the major cause of morbidity and mortality in the country especially among children, estimated to be between 20-25% of child deaths and 40% of all hospital deaths (Ministry of Education [MOH], 2004). AIDS is the second leading cause of morbidity and mortality contributing to 13.8% among those aged 5 and above years (Kirya, 1998). According to Garbus and Marseille (2003), AIDS is the leading cause of deaths among those aged between 15-49 years.

Since the first HIV and AIDS case was identified in Uganda in 1982, about 1.017 million people (45% women, 44% men and 11% children) had died of AIDS by 2002 (MOH, 2002, 2003). Although there has been a reduction in the overall HIV and AIDS prevalence rates to 6.1%, (UNDP, 2002) the number of new infection cases among women remain high. The HIV and AIDS Surveillance Report (MOH, 2002) indicates that of the total 1,050,555 million people living with HIV and AIDS in Uganda, 51% are women; 39% are men and 10% are children below 15 years. HIV infection rates vary significantly with age. The rates of infection increase from among those aged between 14-19 and peak between ages 20-24 years (MOH, 2002). Among the 15-19 year olds, girls are six times more likely to be infected than boys. The main routes of transmission are through heterosexual contact (75%-85% of the new infections), mother to child transmission (18-22%), using infected blood (<2%) and sharing non-sterile sharp-piercing instruments (<1%). The high numbers of AIDS deaths suggest an increasing number of AIDS related orphans. Apart from the burden of infectious diseases, Uganda is also faced with the recurrence of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, mental illness, cancer, hypertension and chronic heart disease (MOH, 1999).
Following the abolition of cost sharing, people's access to health care has improved although the quality of services remains a challenge (MOH, 2004). The average distance to the nearest health facility is 5 km and the ratio of health facility to the population is 1:8,048 (UBOS, 2003). More than 40% of the population obtain services from untrained health personnel (Kirya, 1998) and the number of deliveries assisted by a trained medical professional has remained at 39 since 1995 (UBOS, 2001 and UNDP, 2004). Population per health personnel is very low estimated at 100,000 people per 5 physicians (UNDP, 2004), 4,730 people per nurse, 1,700 women aged 15-49 per midwife (Kirya, 1998).

One of the governments' priorities in the health sector has been mitigating the effects and transmission of the HIV and AIDS pandemic through the provision of cost-effective treatment, adolescent sexual and reproductive health policy and development of the framework for HIV and AIDS interventions (MOH, 2004). Government, through the Uganda Minimum Healthcare Package [UMHCP], has directed its efforts to immunization, malaria control, information, education and communication, reproductive health and HIV and AIDS to counteract the above health outcomes (MOH, 2004). Uganda's remarkable success to date in containing the HIV and AIDS transmission owes to a number of critical strategies including early response at national level and the country-wide public awareness campaigns. AIDS awareness is relatively high ranging from 69% to 85% in the northern and western parts of the country respectively (UBOS, 2003). About 78% of the females and 90% of the males know of one or more ways of avoiding HIV and AIDS (MOH, 2002). However, the decline in HIV prevalence rates and the increased levels of awareness provides no ground for comfort and complacency because the reported new infection cases remain high and only a small fraction of the cases are reported to the health facilities. AIDS is still a threat for the future country's population particularly the youth (Neema et al, 2004).

3.2.4 Uganda's social cultural setting

a) Religion

Uganda is composed of a variety of religions with the majority of population being Christians most of whom are Catholics (41.9%) and Protestants (35.9%). Other Christians include Seventh Day Adventists (1.5%), Pentecostals (4.6%), Orthodox (0.1%) and a group of Jehovah's Witnesses, Bahai, traditional, non Christians and Hindu (3.9%). A minority of Ugandans practice Islam (12.1%) (UBOS, 2005). Each of these religious affiliations is well spread throughout the country although there are tendencies of each being concentrated in particular areas. Religion in Uganda has been significant in education provision to the extent that most schools have specific religious denominations, majority of who are Christians. In addition, religion has profound influence on the
way people construct their sexuality. It is significant in structuring peoples' conceptual cosmos including the social, cultural and political representations of every day life.

b) Cultural values about sex and sexuality in the contemporary Uganda

Uganda is a patriarchal society with a mixture of cultures that profile men and women differently. Typical of this cultural diversity are patriarchal ideologies that uphold notions of male hegemony and distinctive gender roles. These discourses are not only intimately linked with gender inequality and the perpetuation of power imbalances between men and women (Mirembe, 2001) but also privilege men's control over decision making in all spheres of social organization (Kwesiga, 2002). While there has been increased activism and advocacy for women's empowerment and advancement both at international and national level, women's status in Uganda remains low. Although government has put in place a legal and policy framework for the protection and promotion of women's rights, many discriminatory cultures and traditions inherent in Ugandan society still undermine the status of women, particularly through the control of their sexuality.

Issues of sex and sexuality have for long been repressed and enshrined in secrecy and taboo (Tamale, 2003) until recently with the outbreak of the HIV and AIDS virus. The HIV and AIDS pandemic has created the need to rethink the definition of sex and sexuality in contemporary Uganda. Although 'formal' discussion about sex and sexuality is gaining new ground, people are still not comfortable discussing sexuality issues. Marriage, a highly valued aspect of a patriarchal system, is the only legitimate social institution through which sexuality is defined. Within this institution, sexuality is largely constructed in reproductive terms (Tamale, 2001; 2003). This construction is greatly influenced by religious teachings and practices which inculcate values that reinforce male domination and control over female sexuality. Most religions define sexuality as God given, purely for procreation and assert that man was created superior to woman. Consequently, mothering/procreation is central to the definition of womanhood and failure to conceive most often leads to either divorce or the man taking on another wife/wives (Kwesiga, 2002). Even among the elite who are quite knowledgeable about the biological mechanisms involved in reproduction, a man's responsibility over infertility is seldom considered. Since all men and women are expected to get married, celibacy is regarded as 'abnormal' and in most cultures is a curse that demands performance of rituals on the death of a woman, while a man may be acquitted (Kwesiga, 2002). Sexual interaction between woman and man is assumed the only 'legitimate' and 'normal' expression of ones sexuality and any variation in sexual activity from heteronormativity is considered "abnormal", "sinful", "evil" and "pathological" (Tamale, 2003:44). The opposition to expression of alternative forms of sexuality is deeply entrenched in conservative sexual prejudices. Homosexuality and lesbianism remain illegal in Uganda.
and are criminal offences. Although gay and lesbian people have begun to make their voices heard within the Ugandan society, the climate is still hostile.

In the seemingly universal institution of marriage, payment of bride wealth, a custom which women have no control over, is widely practiced as a major requisite that legitimizes the marriage in most cultures in Uganda. The payment of bride wealth bestows more powers to husbands and is used to control women’s sexuality (Brent, et al, 2000). Even in the twenty first century, where the woman may be the bread winner, as long as she needs a man as a sexual partner, the man still wields complex and even intangible power over her sexuality.

Other socio-cultural practices used to control women’s sexuality in Uganda include virginity testing, occult sexuality, Female Genital Mutilation [FGM] (Tamale, 2003) and pulling or elongation of the vagina labia minora44 (Kinsman et al, 2000; Kwesiga, 2002). While the girls and women are expected to refrain from pre-marital and extramarital relations, display patience, respect and obedience to their husbands, men’s engagement in multiple sexual relations is associated with positive masculinity and manhood (Kisseka, 1976; Kilbride and Kilbride, 1990; Brent, Blanc and Anastasia, 2000). In Uganda polygamy is widely spread across classes (despite differences in education) within rural and urban areas and is legalised by some religions (Islam). UBOS, (2001) reports that one in three married women is in a polygamous marriage and the majority of these are located in the urban areas. Polygamy does not only impinge on the legal status of a woman but also on her health status because it perpetuates the high risk behaviour which facilitates the spread of HIV and AIDS. Proposals to limit the number of wives have been met with opposition both from the non Muslim and Muslim people especially males on the pretext that such a law interferes with African traditional values and culture while others argue that it’s for the benefit of women. However, it remains a contentious issue in Uganda’s domestic relations law.

Notions of female sexual desire and pleasure are suppressed to the extent that even the elongation of the labia minora which is meant to enhance sexual pleasure and stimulation during sexual intercourse (Kisseka, 1973 quoted in Kinsman et al, 2000) is defined in terms of enhancement of male sexual pleasure (Kwesiga, 2002). This practice which is widely done in most cultures in Uganda is a valued aspect of becoming a sexual woman and ‘good’ sexual partner.

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44 A girl in her early adolescence is required to pull her labia over a period of weeks until they have reached a length of 2-4 cm (Kinsman et al, 2000)
While these practices are supposedly meant to maintain moral values, the sexual double standards (Brent et al, 2000) and the discrimination imposed on women have negative implications on women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights. On one hand they deter women from making safe choices and enforcing these choices, on the other, they compromise women’s reproductive health and rights. The unequal power in relationships invariably place the women and girls in a victimized position and render them vulnerable to coerced or unwanted sex as well as inhibiting their control over when, where and how sexual relations occur (Rivers and Aggleton, 1999; Garbus and Marseille, 2003). The ‘Age of Consent’ law\textsuperscript{45} which is supposedly meant to protect vulnerable children particularly girls from sexual abuse, does not recognize the socio-cultural realities of Ugandan society (Tamale, 2001). Accordingly, Tamale (2001) suggests a more realistic strategy of compulsory sexuality education as opposed to the approach of quantifying child sexual protection through the ‘age of consent’.

Although women have begun to challenge these restrictive attitudes and practices through women’s rights activism and to demand changes in the legal system and the redefinition of bride wealth to reflect a more equitable arrangement, all these advances have not changed the balance of power at the wider social level. The observable changes due to international influence, government support through constitutional provisions and increased women’s rights activism are undermined by the patriarchal ideologies that privilege men’s control over women’s sexuality. Although within urban areas there are indications that women’s status is changing, it is important to note that whatever social setting a woman finds herself in, in Uganda, she is regarded as a second class citizen vis-à-vis her male counterpart (Kwesiga, 2002). Tradition and custom remain strong in Ugandan society and tend to frustrate both government and NGO efforts to encourage gender equality. Consequently, the gendered cultural setting, values and beliefs about sex and sexuality have diverse effects of a gendered nature on young peoples’ constructions of their own and each others’ sexuality.

3.3 Uganda’s political engagements with sexuality and HIV and AIDS education

The government of Uganda recognizes the salience of providing information to its people and especially the young generation on issues of sexuality. This section presents Uganda’s involvement in sexuality and HIV and AIDS education and the gender dynamics. This involves a brief review of the government policy initiatives, programmes and the school sexuality education curriculum.

Provision of sexuality information has for long been done through the school curriculum and public health programs by the Ministry of Health particularly on the prevention and treatment of STDs. The

\textsuperscript{45} The legal age at which children are considered mature enough to make decisions about their sexuality is set at 18 years (Tamale, 2001)
identification of the HIV and AIDS victims in Uganda in 1982 led to the intensification of government’s efforts towards the promotion of sexuality education in the country especially information about HIV and AIDS. However, due to the socio-economic crisis and political instability at the time, government response was initially slow until 1986 when the NRM government came into power (Uganda AIDS Commission (UAC), 1996). AIDS was then recognized as a problem and the president spearheaded the massive campaigns against the epidemic throughout the country (Basaza and Kaija, 2002; Garbus and Marseille, 2003). He encouraged openness, constant and candid media coverage of all aspects of HIV and AIDS (Garbus and Marseille, 2003). Consequently, government put in place structures to ensure effective response to the epidemic and adopted a comprehensive behavioural change approach engaging three main messages, abstinence, partner reduction (faithfulness) and condom use (ABC approach) (Neema, et al, 2004).

A national AIDS control program was established in the Ministry of Health (in 1986) charged with the responsibility of dealing with the epidemic. Later it was realized that AIDS was not only a public health issue but also a social and economic problem that required involvement of all sectors (Museveni, 1992; Kirya, 1998). The government then adopted a multi-sectoral approach [MACA], developed a comprehensive national HIV and AIDS policy in 1993 (revised in 1996) and established the Uganda AIDS Commission in 1992 to co-ordinate all the HIV and AIDS activities. The government policy was formulated to ensure that all people especially women and adolescents are protected from HIV and AIDS through accessing information (UAC, 1993; 1996). Using the multi-sectoral approach, AIDS control programs were established in all government ministries and at district level. The multi-sectoral approach takes advantage of the unique and varying capabilities of the different actors in the prevention and control of sexuality related problems and especially HIV and AIDS. Through the multi-sectoral approach, the government in collaboration with religious and non government organizations have undertaken intensive education campaigns, voluntary HIV and AIDS testing and counselling, STDs treatment and control (Garbus and Marseille, 2003). The early and sustained political commitment to the fight against the epidemic has led increased awareness, behavioural change and eventual decline in the prevalence rate (Basaza and Kaija, 2002; Garbus and Marseille, 2003).

As noted earlier all government sectors are involved in interventions addressing the HIV and AIDS problem including providing information about sexuality. Policies promoting the provision of sexuality information to the young people include the National Youth Policy (Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development [MGLSD], 2001), National Policy on young people and HIV and AIDS, the Sexual and Reproductive Health Minimum Package (Ministry of Health, 1998), National
Population Policy (Government of Uganda, 1995), National Health Policy (MOH, 2000b), National Gender Policy (Government of Uganda, 1997), the Reproductive Health Policy (draft) (UAC, 1996), the National Adolescent Health Policy (MOH, 2000a), the HIV and AIDS Education Policy (draft) and the School Health Policy (MOES and MOH, 2003). However, sexuality and HIV and AIDS education for the young people, especially those in schools, is spearheaded by the education sector. The education sector, with its already established infrastructure, provides an effective mechanism of reaching out to a larger audience. Government believes that schools provide an environment conducive for channelling HIV and AIDS messages and life skills development to a wide segment of young people (The Republic of Uganda, 2004). Given that my study addresses sexuality education in schools, I mainly focus on initiatives within the Ministry of Education and Sports.

3.3.1 Policy and program initiatives under the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES)

According to the MOES officials, sexuality education through the school system was thought to be the best strategy because the school offers an opportunity for mass education beyond the immediate target group of learners and educators. In addition, most young people are in school which makes it an ideal location for sexuality education. They suggested that children can effect knowledge transfer to other children and parents through peer education. Hyde, (1999) and Weiss, Whelan, and Gupta, (2000) argue that intervening at this stage can have profound impact because the young girls and boys are in the early stages of developing their attitudes, communication patterns and behaviours related to sex and relationships. Although there is no official sexuality education policy, there has been a number of initiatives dating back 1986. The interventions include:

i) HIV and AIDS education policy and strategic plan

The persistent high incidence of HIV and AIDS infection among young people (4.9% in 2002)\(^{46}\) (MOH, 2003) and teenage pregnancies (31%) (UBOS, 2001) is increasingly attracting attention from the government and various national and international organizations. In an attempt to address these problems, the government of Uganda emphasizes communication and education as key strategies in changing people’s attitudes and practices as well as providing the required life skills to address sexuality problems. According to MOES officials, the HIV and AIDS education policy has been drafted and is being reviewed by various stakeholders. However, a strategic plan for HIV and AIDS intervention (2000-2006) in the education sector was developed and is being implemented (MOES, 2003d). The plan focuses on encouraging more open discussions on reproductive health, sexuality education, STDs, the status of the girl child, issues of discrimination and human rights in schools and advocates for the integration of these aspects into the school day to day activities. The strategy puts

\(^{46}\) compared to the national average prevalence rate of 6.1% (UNDP, 2002)
particular emphasis on health education and outlines several interventions such as formulation of an HIV and AIDS education policy, integrating life skills in the secondary school curriculum, peer education; and promotion of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools. To facilitate the process of HIV and AIDS education, a national Task Force on HIV and AIDS comprising of an HIV and AIDS Advisor and focal point officers from each of the 8 departments of the MOES was formed. According to the HIV and AIDS Education Advisor in the MOES, the government has priority focus on HIV and AIDS and sexuality education at all levels of schooling.

**ii) The School Health Policy**

The government has developed a school health policy as part of government interventions to provide quality education for all. It is aimed at creating a safe and healthy environment for children's learning. The policy is a fundamental part of the process of stimulating and institutionalizing school health activities/services in all educational institutions in the country. It mainly focuses on health education, adolescent and sexual reproductive health, prevention and protection of children against abuse and violence (sexual or otherwise), counselling and guidance (MOES and MOH, 2003). It seeks to integrate life skills based health education including sexuality education into the curricular at all levels of education. It is further aimed at improving access and utilization of Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH) services including HIV and AIDS, STDS and teenage pregnancy prevention in schools as well as mainstreaming gender concerns in the provision of school health services. One of the major guiding principles of the policy is the promotion and provision of school health services that take into account the core issues of equity especially in response to the special needs of the girl child and other disadvantaged groups. Unlike the HIV and AIDS policy, the school health policy addresses diverse health related issues. However, analysis of the two policies indicates an overlap in the activities which may necessitate harmonization and proper coordination to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure effective implementation.

**(iii) The School Health Project [SHEP]**

Through the Ministry of Education and Sports [MOES], the government in collaboration with UNICEF started a School Health Project [SHEP] in 1986 (MOES and MOH, 2003) to provide sexuality education to pupils and students. The SHEP aimed at general health education and emphasized the prevention of STDS and HIV infection among the school going youth aged 6 –20 years. The project considered this age group not only because of their high vulnerability to the infections but also due to the high risks of unwanted pregnancies, dropping out of school and getting into risky early marriages especially girls. Primary schools were privileged as the most important players in this programme because primary school children are still young and their behaviours could
be easily influenced or moulded. This project was first introduced to children of Primary six and seven who were then expected to pass on the information to other children as well as their parents. Through this strategy, a multiplier effect was expected to be created since many families had school going age children. Although the major project focused on primary schools, activities such as seminars, drama competitions were conducted at secondary schools and tertiary institutions. Massive community mobilization initiatives through local drama groups were also undertaken in order to increase their awareness on HIV and AIDS.

(iv) The Basic Education, Child Care and Protection and Adolescent Development [BECCAD] Life Skills Education Programme

When an impact assessment was carried out after ten years of operation of the SHEP (1986-1994), it was established that while children's knowledge on health issues had increased significantly, there was no corresponding behavioural change (Buczkiwicz and Carnegie, 2001; MOES and UNICEF, 1996). The evaluation revealed that the children lacked the life skills that could assist them to translate the acquired knowledge into positive health behaviours. Consequently, in 1995, the government in collaboration with UNICEF under the BECCAD programme initiated a life skills education programme. The main aim of this programme was to promote young peoples' positive health choices through making informed decisions, practicing healthy behaviours, recognizing and avoiding risky health situations and behaviours. The life skills education focused on 16 life skills including self awareness, self esteem, assertiveness, coping with emotion and stress, interpersonal relationships, friendship formation, empathy, peer resistance, negotiation, non violent conflict resolution, effective communication, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making and problem solving. These skills were infused in the curriculum of the teacher training institutes namely; Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo and the School of Education of Makerere University. This initiative aimed at producing a cadre of teachers who were conversant with life skills and would transfer them to the students. However, due to change in UNICEF’s priority focus, the programme was stopped in 2000 (Interview, with MOES official). Nevertheless, a recent study (Kabaterine, 2003) about curriculum policy and practice of life skills revealed lack of application of these skills by instructors/teachers both in the teacher training institutions and in the schools. Some of the factors reported to inhibit life skills development include crowded school curriculum which is examination oriented and more inclined towards examining facts than skills and teachers' rigidity.

(v) The Presidential Initiative on AIDS Strategy for Communication to Youth [PIASCY]

In 2001, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda expressed concern about sexuality matters in schooling and directed that comprehensive sexuality education be taught in primary
schools. This directive, named as “the Presidential Initiative on AIDS Strategy for Communication to Youth” [PIASCY] is currently underway in schools and mainly involves discussing HIV and AIDS matters with pupils during general assembly every fortnight. The PIASCY programme is aimed at increasing reproductive health knowledge among children in primary schools. Its main objective is to increase awareness and knowledge about sexuality and reproductive health issues among adolescents in schools.

Following the directive, a handbook for teachers outlining a wide range of sexuality topics with particular focus on girls’ sexuality problems was developed to assist in the teaching (MOES, 2002b). The primary teachers’ manual covers basic information about HIV and AIDS transmission and prevention, life skills, reproductive health, sexually transmitted infections, gender, culture and children’s rights. However, an analysis of this handbook reveals that gender concerns are not adequately addressed in each of the topics covered. In an interview with one of the officials in the MOES, it was revealed that a PIASCY teacher’s handbook for secondary schools is being developed.

(vi) Formation of Anti-AIDS/Health clubs in schools
According to the MOES officials, students in all secondary schools are encouraged to form Anti-AIDS clubs. The key objective of the clubs is health education with particular emphasis on HIV and AIDS. The guidelines outlining the mechanisms of establishing the clubs, objectives, activities and key outputs of the clubs are currently being developed by the MOES. The clubs are supported by patrons (teachers⁴⁷) who undergo orientation and training by the MOES on the type of activities to be carried out. The patrons are given guidelines on how to form clubs and are expected to develop work plans including the monitoring mechanisms. Some schools have already formed the clubs (see chapter five and six).

(iv) Sexual Maturation Project
Following studies conducted by Makerere University researchers (Nakanyike, Kasente and Balihuta, 2002; Kamuli and Katahoire, 2003; Kasente, Nakanyike and Balihuta, 2003) that revealed the poor management of the process of sexual maturation within the education system and the need for providing sexuality knowledge to students, “the sexual maturation project” was started. The project is aimed at improving the teaching and management of sexuality in primary schools in Uganda with particular focus on teacher training institutions as key entry points. Its long-term goal is to improve teachers’ knowledge and skills in teaching about the process of growing up and sexual maturation in order to enhance pupils’ retention and attainment in school. The project focuses on the physical.

⁴⁷ Criteria for selection of teachers was not established
physiological, psychological and social changes experienced by adolescent boys and girls. Menstruation and provision of environmentally friendly latrine and safe disposal facilities is emphasized. The projects' strategy for achieving this goal has been the systematic development of instructional materials for primary teacher education. The project is in its initial phase of implementation involving documenting the current status of teaching and management of sexual maturation in Primary Teachers Colleges and Primary Schools and identifying appropriate information that will constitute the instructional/teaching materials to be developed (Kamuli, 2003).

**vii) The school curriculum**

Sexuality issues are addressed in the school curriculum mainly in the subjects of Integrated Primary Science for primary schools; and biology, science, health education and religious education for secondary schools. In recognition of the limited coverage of sexuality knowledge especially information about HIV and AIDS within the curriculum, in 1998 government initiated a curricular review process with an intention to integrate sexuality and HIV and AIDS education in the mainstream primary teacher curriculum and the primary and secondary education curricular (interview with MOES official). A brief introduction to and analysis of these curricula is offered in the next section.

Other initiatives aimed at providing information on sexuality in schools have been through health education, counselling and guidance programmes in primary and secondary schools. These government initiatives have been supported by non-governmental organizations through provision of Family Life Education, health education, life skills and counselling and guidance targeting students and teachers. They do this through school visits, provision of newsletters, talks and workshops for students and teachers respectively (Hyde et al, 2001).

Although there is no explicit government policy on sexuality education in Uganda, these initiatives reveal an acceptance and understanding of the need and importance of sexuality education in schools. It further demonstrates the government's commitment towards provision of sexuality information to the young people. However, it is important to note that the extent to which these initiatives incorporate the gender issues and the varying degrees to which gender equity is operationalised is not well documented. In addition, information about the effectiveness of these initiatives in providing adequate sexuality knowledge is scanty. A survey carried out by African Youth Alliance [AYA] in 2000 (AYA, 2003) reveal that many stakeholders at national and district levels are not aware of some of the policies, which suggests limited implementation. While government is promoting the ABC approach, engagement with issues of gender equality is not well documented.
3.3.2 Teaching sexuality in Uganda's secondary school education curriculum

In my opinion, a school curriculum constitutes the main guiding framework of transmitting knowledge, skills, beliefs and values and forms part of our understanding of the world in which we live. It transmits messages about the relative importance of men and women in society (status and worth), what is appropriate and possible for students and teachers, male and female to say, think, feel and do. It is thus a gendered document that expresses ideas about gender relations (both consciously and unconsciously) and can reproduce practices marked by either gender equality or inequality (Clarke, 1997). Such practices are embedded in the content and the language structure and use in the curriculum materials. Thorne, Kramarae and Henley, (1983) argue that language does not only aid the defining and visibility of the different gender groups but also helps to maintain a gender hierarchy and control. It shapes our perceptions and determines not only how we think about things but also what we conceive. Therefore gender biased and sex typed information has adverse effects of a gendered nature on children (Mbilinyi and Omari, 1996) and perpetuates and legitimizes gender discrimination.

While a detailed gender analysis of the sexuality texts is fundamental in understanding the complex process of how children learn about gender, how children and their teachers read the images and how power relations are perpetuated, most analyses have been more of checklists of what images show. In addition, they have concentrated on literally and policy studies. Very few studies have examined the gender dynamics in sexuality curriculum materials (Pollis, 1986; Whatley, 1988; Jackson, 1988; Beyer et al, 1996; Reiss, 1998) and all are from the western countries. However, I am not intending to undertake a complex analysis of multiple texts but rather to provide a brief snapshot of the gender dynamics within the sexuality curricula materials as a starting point for understanding the nature of the context of sexuality education which the teachers and students have to negotiate with. My review is limited to specific sections of the curriculum which address sexuality topics as a way of locating some of the sexist trends in the curriculum materials including some selected textbooks. In Uganda's formal education system, textbooks are the main instructional materials used in schools and one of the means by which the curricula/syllabus content is transmitted to the learners. These textbooks are used by most learners both within and outside school lessons as reference materials. They contain factual information, stories, experiments and experiences on everyday life which moulds and shapes attitudes and ways of thinking of the learners. In addition to the written information, textbooks also carry messages through illustrations in the form of pictures, photographs, charts and tables, which often summarize or emphasize the written concepts within the text and complement the factual information given in the text (Mbilinyi and Omari, 1996; Beyer et al, 1996).
I adopt a narratological analysis (derived from the ABC of gender analysis) to provide insights into how gender relations appear, how images and models are created as well as how power relations are perpetuated (FAWE, 1997). The basic principle of the ABC of gender analysis is to reduce a text to its smaller components and analyze it systematically. This approach enables one to understand inter-relationships within the text and their underlying implications. Narratological analysis “recognises that any written, visualised and/or spoken text contains within it a gendered perspective that purports to mirror the reality of that which is written about, that which is spoken about and that which is visualised” (FAWE, 1997:10). My review focuses on key issues including the manner in which the information is narrated, the actions (activities), visibility (visualisation), power relations and language use (naming, use of nouns and pronouns, generics and vocatives). The review also involves examining illustrations, pictures and any other representation in the form of drawings within the text for action, visibility and power.

a) Gender and the curriculum content and materials (text books)

Uganda's secondary school curriculum covers 8 courses. These are: English language, humanities, languages, mathematics, science, cultural and technical subjects; and business studies (UNEB, 2001a). These courses are offered for 4 years during the first cycle of secondary education (Ordinary level) before the students proceed to high school (Advanced level) where they have to specialize in some of the courses. A number of subjects are covered within these courses and all school candidates must sit for a minimum of eight and a maximum of ten subjects in the Ordinary level (O'level) examination. Among these, there are compulsory subjects which every candidate must offer namely; English language, mathematics, biology, physics, chemistry and at least one subject chosen from the humanities. As long as the schools follow this regulation, they are free to teach subjects of their choice depending on their capacity and available facilities.

Uganda has no specific teaching curriculum and syllabus for sexuality education in schools. Instead sexuality issues/topics are mainly taught within the pre-existing courses including humanities in the subject of Christian Religious Education [CRE] and Islamic Religious Education [IRE], in the sciences under Biology and in cultural subjects under health science (UNEB, 2001a). Other subjects such as Social Etiquette and Moral Education also cover topics related to sexuality and supplement what is taught in the official curriculum but these subjects are offered in a few schools. It is important to note that, with such an arrangement where sexuality topics are subsumed in other subjects, the

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49 These courses are examined and contribute to the attainment of the Uganda Ordinary Certificate of Education (UCE)
50 these subjects are optional and are not examined
content tends to be circumscribed by the boundaries of the subject within which it is taught (Jackson, 1988). Although, the different subjects hold different theoretical perspectives or approaches, each makes a contribution to the broad discourse of sexuality education.

The available curriculum - the UNEB regulations and syllabuses 2001-2005 (UNEB, 2001a) was reviewed focusing mainly on three subjects namely Biology, CRE and IRE syllabi. However, although the document provides information about the different courses offered, the aims and objectives of each of the subjects and an outline of the major themes and sub themes of the subjects, the information is inadequate to allow a meaningful gender analysis. Given the narrowness of this UNEB document and the sparse coverage of topics, a review of some selected widely used textbooks (which constitute the main instructional materials) for the three subjects was undertaken, focusing mainly on those sections that address sexuality topics.

1) Sexuality knowledge offered through the different subjects

Biology

Four widely used biology textbooks (Soper and Smith 1976; Stone and Cozens, 1981; Mackean, 1984; Beckett, 1986) are reviewed. The analysis of all the four textbooks reveals particular sexist/gender biased tendencies in both the text and illustrations. In particular, biology organizes material on sexuality through 'reproduction' with a concentration on female reproductive biology, focusing mainly on the biology of foetal growth (without focusing on impact on women biology holistically). Such a paradigm thus moves into the presentation of sexuality through gender neutral 'scientific' information but then arranges 'biology' as though female reproduction constituted the meaning of 'sexuality information'. Such a focus suggests a tendency to show reproduction as a women's sphere/responsibility. This skewed presentation however, is contradicted by the inherent masculine view of information in which female sexuality is not only presented from a male perspective but limited to discourses of internal female sexual organs. While in all the textbooks the external genitalia of a male are well explained, the female genitalia are not described.

Much emphasis is placed on the functioning of the internal processes namely the meeting of ovum and sperm (conception and fertilization), the implantation and development of the fertilized ovum (pregnancy) than what is subjectively experienced by women during these processes. In addition, these internal processes are full of sexism and gender bias, defined in masculine terms emphasizing

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51 The document is both the teaching guideline and examination syllabus. It provides information about the different courses offered, the aims and objectives of each of the subjects and an outline of the major themes and sub themes of the subjects. Along with this guideline, teachers use textbooks to design their lessons.
male activity and female passivity. A classic example of a sexist attitude can be found in the way coition/copulation is described in one of the textbooks:

During copulation, the erect penis is inserted into the vagina of the female and moved back and forth. These movements stimulate the sense organs in the penis and eventually cause an ejaculation in which about 5 cm³ of liquid called semen is passed from the epididymis and sperm ducts into the female reproductive systems... (Beckett, 1986: 187).

Such descriptions of sexual intercourse in terms of ‘penetration’ or ‘insertion’ of the penis into the vagina (found in all the textbooks) illustrate the male-dominant explanation of sex ‘appropriate’ behaviour during heterosexual intercourse. The language used to describe fertilization conveys a similar message as shown in the extract from one of the textbooks:

Fertilization occurs internally when the sperms meet the ovum as it passes down the oviduct. They are introduced into the female through the penis which is placed in the vagina...the sperms deposited in the vagina swim through the cervix into the uterus and travel to the oviduct...if an ovum is present in the oviduct, one of the sperms will eventually collide with it and the head of the sperm sticks to the ovum.... (Mackean, 1984:115).

Common to all textbooks, the sperm is described as actively swimming upstream to penetrate the passive ovum or fertilizing the ovum (see also Stone and Cozens, 1981:230, 232; Beckett, 1986:185) rather than portraying the ovum as actively enveloping the sperm (Lenskyj, 1990). Thus females are viewed as passive recipients and facilitators of the process of which the male is the chief actor. Beyer et al, (1996) suggest a more gender neutral approach in dealing with the topic of conception by, for example expressing the event as “sperm and ovum unite”. While there is nothing told about female sexual arousal, male sexual arousal is presented as a female responsibility. For example in one of the textbooks it is noted:

The stimulus for erection is largely psychological and depends upon arousal and excitement of the male by the female (Soper and Smith, 1976:182)

Such a perspective negates male responsibility for his own sexuality.

The different textbooks describe various methods of contraception ranging from four to ten of which 70% are female methods particularly the pill, intra-uterine devices, spermicides, rhythm and diaphragm among others. Such female bias implicitly reinforces the notion of female responsibility for pregnancy and underplays the men’s role in contraception. While we appreciate the fact that currently there are more female than male contraceptive methods available, there is need to go beyond a description of the methods and to emphasize the role of both men and women in contraception. Men’s role in contraception or fertility regulation is often muted giving an impression that contraception is a female responsibility. Joint responsibility of couples (husband and wife) in
family planning and the effect of childbearing on a woman’s health is only acknowledged and appreciated in one textbook (Soper and Smith, 1976:185) as this excerpt shows:

some couples do not wish to risk having children because of the poor state of the wife’s health....there are several ways in which the size of a family can be fully planned, without the need to avoid sexual intercourse and thus risk damaging the loving relationship between husband and wife...

While knowledge about the reproductive processes is essential, it is probably of less immediate interest to adolescents than coming to terms with their sexuality (Jackson, 1988), particularly managing their own sexuality. Yet topics such as puberty and adolescence which appear to be of interest to students in secondary schools are given less attention. For instance in two of the four textbooks (Stone and Cozens, 1981; Beckett, 1986), nothing is mentioned about puberty apart from describing it as sexual maturity in girls in one of the textbooks. The other two textbooks also provide limited information about puberty focusing on the physiological issues (emphasis on the role of hormones in reproduction) than the personal issues which appear to be of interest to the boys and girls. For instance the textbooks provide lengthy and profusely illustrated accounts on physiological issues related to menstruation at the expense of the personal issues (coping mechanisms/strategies such as sanitary towels, tampons, pre-menstrual experiences, such as tension and period pains). Similarly boys’ concerns about how to deal with experiences such as erections and wet dreams are not covered. Yet many young people experience anxiety and tension when they reach puberty and they are ignorant about their developing bodies. I would argue that these are issues that are of immediate concern to the young boys and girls, and need to be taken as a matter of priority. Reiss (1998) acknowledges that such hormonal changes have differential effects on individual boys and girls. He suggests coverage of both physiological and personal issues, because omission of the personal aspects of sexuality gives the impression that such issues do not exist or are not important or are embarrassing to talk about.

The illustrations (mainly photographs and drawings) used in the textbooks influence the way boys and girls view themselves (attitudes, behaviours and practices) and their definitions of particular situations in the world they live in. Illustrations in the textbooks are similarly gender biased. In all the four biology textbooks, of all the 116 illustrations, female photographs/drawings are more than twice (79) the male ones (35), while the generic type52 are least represented (2) (Annex 2). The greater female representation in illustrations is logically explained by the occurrence of a larger number of sexuality topics dealing with issues of female reproductive biology particularly the internal

52 Used to classify illustrations whose sex could not be determined from the information provided and non-human figures and gender dynamics were not visible.
reproductive organs, ovulation, pregnancy and contraception. The female focus in illustrations affirms the view that sexuality is more about women’s rather than men’s reproductive biology.

Both in the syllabus and in textbooks, there are inherent sexist tendencies in the language usage involving use of the generic masculine: ‘man’, ‘his’, and ‘he’, not only to describe human relationships or events but also events where the female meaning is predominant. For example in one of the textbooks (Soper and Smith, 1986: 181) man is used describe oogenesis in mammals. There are also phrases like:

In man if the ovum is not fertilized, the lining cells gradually degenerate (Stone and Cozens, 1981:229), in man the released ovum is thought to live for about 24 hours (Mackean, 1984:115).

Although the general syllabus is brief and uninformative, lack of a gender perspective is evident. The gender bias is clearly shown by the masculinisation of the objectives and presentation of the topic as exemplified below:

To promote an understanding of the importance of biology in everyday life and the ways in which man influences his environment; To stimulate the pupils’ ability to find out biological information for himself from text and reference books, investigations and life experiences (UNEC, 2001:174)

Sexual reproduction in animals including man. (UNEC, 2001:180).

Frequent masculinisation of events through the use of the generic masculine is not only ambiguous but also discriminatory (Martyana, 1983) and subdues women’s visibility in the subject and content.

Sexuality knowledge in biology is organized around reproductive and masculine perspectives and the female body is consistently portrayed as the passive receptacle for the male organ. The masculine focus of sexual knowledge does not only perpetuate the idea that men are inherently sexual than women but also reflects the female subordinate role in society (Jackson, 1988). The reproductive focus equates sexuality to intercourse, ignoring the moral and emotional aspects and thus provides a narrow conceptualization of the broad discourse of human sexuality. The emphasis on masculine activity and reproduction is not only sexist but also heterosexist because it ignores the other dimensions of sexual expression. Such issues as sexual orientation are not discussed in any of the textbooks. Where homosexuality is discussed, it is mentioned as a disease vector (for syphilis) (Beckett, 1986:193). Although such issues as sexual orientation are criminal in Uganda, it does not justify it being omitted from the curriculum. It is important that students are given information about it to enable them appreciate such discourses.
Scholars argue that silence or omission or brief coverage of some topics is a form of discrimination (Reiss, 1998) and marginalization (Kippax and Crawford, 1997). Discrimination and marginalisation are manifested in the apparent tendencies to omit topics especially those that are perceived irrelevant to reproduction including masturbation, sexual orientation, female orgasm and sexual desire and external female sexual organs such as the clitoris as well as the exclusive adoption of the physiological approach to adolescent sexuality. Female orgasm and STDs and topics such as abortion were mentioned in only one of the four textbooks (Beckett, 1986:187 & 193-194 and Soper and Smith, 1976:187 respectively). Mirembe (2002) contends that such an exclusive approach provides insufficient information, promotes homophobia and is a violation of individual rights to knowledge.

ii) Religious Education

*Christian Religious Education (CRE)*

Sexuality issues in CRE are covered under two major themes namely “Man in a changing society” and “Man and woman”. The theme of “Man in a changing society” is taught during the 1st and 2nd years of secondary schooling and focuses mainly on living in a changing society, work and leisure. Sexuality issues are addressed through the sub-theme of “Living in a changing society” which focuses on experiences in life that man and woman face as result of changes in life and the response to these changes. It is presumed that topics about puberty and adolescence are covered as examples of change, although the syllabus is not explicit about this (UNEB, 2001:29).

The major theme of “Man and Woman” is covered in the 4th and final year of O’level (S4). Two specific sub-themes provide information about sexuality. These are “Sex differences and the person” and “Courtship and marriage”. The sub-theme of “sex differences and the person” focuses on the value of a person irrespective of sex, the search for identity and the meaning of growing into womanhood and manhood. Students are also expected to cover issues related to the changing gender roles, debates on gender discrimination and the cultural attitudes towards the roles of men and women. The sub-theme of “courtship and marriage” focuses on relationships and interaction between boys and girls, dating, choosing partners, marriage, premarital sex, bride wealth (bride price), and pre-marriage instruction. CRE locates sexuality information within the African traditional cultural framework that emphasizes the Christian value system of morality, chastity and sanctity. The apparent main focus of the syllabus is marriage and parenthood and is meant to encourage students to have due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life. As was the case with Biology, the CRE syllabus did not provide enough material to allow meaningful gender analysis. Consequently, a review of one of the widely used CRE textbooks (Chapman, 1975) was undertaken.

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53 Presented as a controversial issue in Uganda
In a book by Chapman (1975) commonly called "Christian Living Today Book Two", sexuality is perceived as influencing the entire personality. The textbook offers information about gender identity, growing up and relationships. Unlike Biology, the CRE textbook provides detailed accounts of the biological (Physiological), emotional and personal aspects of sexuality. It covers human sexual and personality development at the various stages from birth to adolescence. The only challenge is that this particular text is annexed which reduces its importance. However, within these detailed accounts, gender bias and stereotype tendencies are evident in what is perceived to be the role of men and women in sexual relationships and reproduction particularly expression of sexual desire and sexual intercourse as can be seen from the extracts below:

Adolescent girls often think of romantic love and security, while adolescent boys are more concerned about the physical aspects of sex. The sexual nature of boys is stronger than that of girls as it is the nature of a man to take the initiative in situations, including sexual ones. Girls ought to understand this and realize how young men are more easily aroused in their sexual desires… (Chapman, 1975:68).

You have seen that most of these [female sexual] organs are inside the body, and not on the outside like a man's. There is a reason for this. The female sex organs are protected in the warmth of a woman's inside because they are made to receive, welcome and preserve (Chapman, 1975:133)

These texts construct female sexuality as a passive receptacle of active male sexual desire. The first extract suggest tacit acceptance and naturalization of boys greater sexual desires and averts responsibility from boys, placing girls in the role of 'caretaker', with the responsibility of their own and boys' sexual behaviour (Richardson, 1993). Such construction of sexuality places girls in vulnerable positions and become victims of male aggression in case of non-conformity, particularly if they attempt to reject boys' sexual invitations. Whatley, (1991) argues that portrayal of boys as more easily aroused than girls increases the likelihood of their being sexual aggressors, while girls take the responsibility of protecting their virginity and preventing sexual assault. Similarly, Richardson, (1993) argues that the stereotype notion of feminine responsibility and male irresponsibility of own sexual feelings serves to naturalize oppressive male sexual behaviours and constitute a form of social control. Jackson, (1988) argues that once boys and girls are made to believe that boys have greater sexual desires than the girls, then a climate is created in which many unfortunate, violent and barbaric acts can occur. This reinforces boys' taken-for-granted control over girls' sexuality which culminates into girls' sexual exploitation and abuse. Such construction of sexuality do not only challenge but also contradict the proclaimed notion of equality, love and respect, which according to the Christian teaching is a basic foundation for human relationships (Chapman, 1975).
Within the religious framework of marriage and parenthood, sexuality is implicitly constructed as heterosexual intercourse mainly for the purpose of procreation. Thus sexuality education serves to prepare students for a married heterosexual future at the expense of addressing their present sexuality concerns. Feminists contend that heterosexual structures do not only perpetuate homophobia but also maintain male domination and control of female sexuality (Richardson, 1993). Marriage as an institution in both the African traditional and present society is a powerful site of male domination and female subordination.

Although the text provides brief information about the so called ‘controversial’ topics namely masturbation, homosexuality and lesbianism, they present prejudiced views presenting them as “troublesome habits” and “sexual aberrations” as well as “acquired mental illnesses”. Masturbation is presented as an abuse of awareness of true human development (Chapman, 1975:141). Mirembe (2002:292) advises that such education fails to inform and reinforces marginalization of those who are “different”. Other scholars such as Jackson (1988) argue that such an approach may neither help any young person experiencing feelings of attraction to their own sex nor will it make them any less negative in their attitude towards lesbian and homosexual members of the society. Homosexuality being a criminal offence in Uganda, does not justify omission or limited coverage of this topic in the syllabus, although this obviously complicates the possibility of presenting unbiased information and promoting open discussion.

Further analysis of the text reveals more use of male examples than of female and most of the female examples are couched in negative terms. For instance women are portrayed as sources of evil through which gender inequality originated (Chapman, 1975). They are the ones who engage in sexually promiscuous (sinful) activities such as prostitution and marital infidelity. Such gender bias and negative images of women reflects women’s invisibility in sexuality matters and serves to maintain male domination.

Also as in Biology, “Christian Living Today Book Two” (Chapman, 1975) provides slightly more female (54) than male (47) figures and the generic type (4). These illustrations are mainly on relationships and parenting (motherhood and fatherhood). The over-representation of female figures is explained by the greater focus on family and parenting. Parenting has a pro-feminine slant, in which women are presented serving primarily caring role particularly child care. This suggests gender role stereotyping and a negation of the male parent role in childcare.
While there is an attempt to use gender neutral language, as in Biology, use of gender biased language is evident particularly through the use of generic masculine ‘man’, ‘he’ ‘his’ and ‘himself’ both in the syllabus objectives and in the textbook to refer to human relationships involving both men and women. A typical example shown in the extract below:

Marriage is not just a private affair between two people, but it is also their relationship to the whole world of men...in a true friendship, there is no need for either person to pretend to be what he is not (Chapman, 1975:77 & 86)

As noted earlier, use of such sexist language portrays women’s invisibility. MacKay (1983) argues that repeated everyday experience of prescriptive he/man approach may contribute to the feelings of importance, power and superiority which are common among men and the feelings of unimportance, powerlessness and inferiority which are common among women. Martyana (1983:29) suggests “humanization of language, a language which neither obscures nor emphasizes the differences between the sexes, one which is clearly committed to expressing both maleness and femaleness rather than a maleness that is supposed to encompass us all. Eliminating the ambiguity and sex-exclusiveness of the generic masculine approach would enable us to clearly and fairly communicate about the sexes.” Martyana (1983) and MacKay (1983) advise replacement of the generic masculine pronoun with sex-inclusive54 (the prescription to stand in its place) or sex neutral forms55 or rewriting to avoid the need for singular pronoun/noun.

Overall sexuality knowledge delivered though Christian religious education provides more information than Biology. As in biology, sexuality is reduced to ‘reproduction’ with motherhood and heterosexual intercourse as the ‘natural’ and ‘valid’ expression of sexuality. Consequently in such discourses abstinence until marriage is implicitly implied. While this may be an easy way of getting sexuality information across in a rather conservative and religious society like that of Uganda, and particularly in this era of HIV and AIDS pandemic, it masks the complex dynamics of sexuality. Women are mainly represented in their stereotype roles of child care and as passive recipients of male sexual desires. The apparent gender bias in the language usage and the negative portrayal of women in examples render women’s visibility in sexual matters muted and perpetuates male domination.

Islamic Religious Education (IRE)
The main features of the IRE teaching syllabus56 (National Curriculum Development Centre [NCDC], 2001) are to cultivate morality, responsibility, honesty and positive attitudes to work and

54 Proposed alternative include use of sexist-inclusive forms, he or she, woman and man
55 Person, humanity, humankind, human being.
56 This subject is offered only in Muslim schools to students who do not study CRE.
development based on spiritual and moral values (sanctity). IRE sets sexuality within the framework of marriage and parenthood/procreation, with emphasis on chastity and abstinence from sexual activity until marriage. Analysis of two reference/teaching materials (Mwesigye, 2001, 1998) obtained from the Muslim school\(^{57}\) where the study was carried provided insights into the Islamic teachings about sexuality.

Contrary to CRE, in IRE sexuality knowledge is located within the broad paradigm of spiritual guidance on appropriate masculinity and femininity, placing emphasis on prescriptions and prohibitions which target women more than men. Females sexuality are constructed in relation to men, overtly expressed in the considerations for choosing a marriage partner, conditions for marriage and prohibited marriages (Mwesigye, 1998: 295-296 and 2001:112-115). For instance in Mwesigye (2001) eight (80%) out of the ten considerations for a marriage partner are all defined from a male perspective. While it is noted that one should marry a person of his/her choice, the considerations outlined in the books only refer to the kind of woman a man should marry but do not give provisions for the woman regarding the man she should get married to. Examples of some of the considerations include:

A woman could be married for her beauty....one choosing is allowed to look at those features of the lady which may encourage him, but at her home. In this regard she may not be putting on hijab.... a woman still in her iddah is prohibited ...A man should choose from the people of the book (Christians, Jews and Sabians) though a Muslim lady should not get married to them...marriage to a virgin is preferred to a woman who has been previously married...., a woman still in her iddah is prohibited ...one should avoid marriage with an infertile partner. Children are an important element of a successful marriage....(Mwesigye, 2001:113).

In addition to being male centred, the extract explicitly shows that motherhood is emphasized as the legitimate expression of female sexuality. Such construction does not only reduce female sexuality to discourses of 'reproduction' and compulsory heterosexuality, but also reinforces the notion of male domination and control over female sexuality. IRE advances entrenched ideologies of domesticity and femininity articulated as the duties of men and women. This is clearly shown in the following texts:

Man is the head of the family and therefore must take final decisions in the family.... Must provide for his wife and children for sustenance...men are a degree above women...[Duties of man]

While the man must satisfy his wife's sexual desires, the woman must make herself available to her husband whenever he desires her...not leave the matrimonial home without the

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\(^{57}\) The school which participated in the study
husband's permission...should obey, respect and serve her husband all the time... [Duties of a woman] Mwesigye (2001:118):

The above statements clearly indicate that man, as the head of the family and the breadwinner, should be the final decision maker while the woman must obey her husband all the time. Throughout the text, a woman's roles as wife and mother and domesticity are emphasized.

Information about family planning is provided while acknowledging the controversial stance of Islam on contraception. As in the other subjects female birth control methods predominate. Illustrations are very few and are only presented in one of the textbooks (Mwesigye 2001). They exclusively focus on family planning methods.

The sexuality knowledge transmitted through IRE is permeated with gender bias and stereotypes about sexuality. Sexuality is constructed within the framework of marriage and parenthood which emphasizes heterosexual relationships, abstinence until marriage and marital fidelity but allows men to have multiple relationships (up 4 wives). Jackson (1988) argues that discussion of sexual feelings primarily in relation to marriage inhibits any discussion of alternative means of sexual expression. She maintains that such a focus renders sexuality education to remain firmly related to the traditional feminine role and precludes the possibility of women (and men) discovering their own sexuality.

3.3.3 Presentation format/instructional methods of sexuality knowledge
Classroom dynamics involving interaction between teachers and pupils and teaching styles are significant parts of any curriculum including sexuality. Thus the curriculum as a policy statement should explicitly indicate the various approaches that are appropriate for teaching sexuality topics. However, the UNEB (2001a) regulations and syllabuses which acts as a curriculum guide for teachers, does not provide such information. Selection of teaching strategies is left at the discretion of the individual teachers, who are presumed to be conversant with the various methods of teaching. Such a supposition ignores the unique and complex discourse of teaching sexuality as a sensitive topic that may require more interactive and participatory methods rather than the conventional teaching methods used for other subjects.

Nevertheless, according to the IRE syllabus (NCDC, 2001), teachers are expected and encouraged to employ student-centered approaches through the use of multiple methods such as discussion and discovery, value clarification, exploration, story telling, lecture, question and answer, guided discussions, role play, brainstorming and sharing experiences. Teachers are further expected to draw
on the students’ experiences. While this document offers a dynamic approach involving various methods, it does not take into account the complex gender dynamics that underpin sexuality education lessons. Although such a gender neutral framework is usually preferred, Beyer et al. (1996) argue that gender neutrality in sexuality curriculum offers a false sense of security and presumes the absence of gender differences. Hilton, (2001) notes that boys and girls engage with different learning styles and advises that the ‘whole-class’ teaching style may not be suitable for sexuality education because it undermines different needs and interests of boys and girls.

Overall analysis of the curriculum reveals that school sexuality knowledge offered to students in the official curriculum includes a range of topics which are in themselves presented through tight and usually mutually exclusive disciplinary boundaries (‘biology’ and ‘religious education’). The different curricular paradigms stress different approaches to ‘sexuality’ and analysis revealed the gendered constructions of these approaches. IRE for example, locates sexuality education within the broad paradigm of spiritual guidance on appropriate masculinity and femininity, placing emphasis on prescriptions and prohibitions which target women more than men. On the other hand, biology approaches ‘the body’ as though it were a neutral entity, one to be studied regardless of students own gender. CRE sets sexuality knowledge within a framework of Christianity placing emphasis on marriage and parenthood based on the notion of equality, love and respect in human relations.

All the curricular, paradigms share conventional discourses on masculinisation and the normative assumptions of what constitutes legitimate sexuality expression. The texts provide an explication of compulsory heterosexuality (Lenskyj, 1990) and abstention from sex outside the ‘legalized union’. Trudell, (1993) argues that such curricula offer contradictory discourses and ignore the realities of a pluralistic society validating only traditional heterosexual family structures. While so much of the information on reproduction is on the female, it is presented from a masculine perspective. Such presentation visibly shows the apparent sexism and gender bias in sexuality education materials and reinforces stereotypes and patriarchal relations in sexuality.

The focus on reproduction underplays the other aspects of sexuality especially those that are not considered relevant for reproduction. Issues such as sexual exploitation, harassment and abuse are not covered. Uganda’s sexuality education curriculum faces a challenge of providing balanced sexual knowledge given the culturally rigid and conservative ideologies that underpin sexuality education in the country. Sexuality curricula materials are permeated with gender biased stereotyped, distorted and explicitly sexist views about sexuality. This is reflected in the overt masculinization and distorted images of female sexuality through language usage, presentation of information, examples and
illustrations across all subjects. Males are clearly more visible than females in language content and use. If teachers rely on such literature and students themselves refer to it, the misconceptions drawn from the focus on reproductive biology are likely to be strengthened and perpetuate sexist assumptions regarding female and male sexuality. However, with extensive gender awareness, the available curriculum and textbooks reviewed could afford a non sexist education resource if they are critically used. Teachers provide resources for dealing with sexist materials and play an important role in encouraging students to critique the inherent sexism in schools. Abraham (1989) argues that reducing sexism in schools depends on the changing attitudes of teachers towards use of sexist materials and their demand for non sexist materials. Researchers (see Chapter one Section 1.2.2b) attribute the persistent gender inequalities in African education system to gender biased curricula and teacher attitudes. In this regard, teacher training institutions need to consider intensive gender awareness as an important component in their teacher training curriculum so as to aid a more equitable and less discriminatory form of curriculum. The Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports has engaged in such efforts through the In-service Secondary Teacher Education Project [INSSTEP] and Teacher Development and Management System [TDMS] but their impact and practical application demand documentation. Some feminists, such as Marshall (1983) recognize teacher support in anti-sexist initiatives and emphasize the importance of teacher involvement in developing gender responsive materials.

3.4 The research problem

The above section (3.3) illustrates Uganda’s endeavours to provide sexuality knowledge to the young people through multiple interventions. However, information on the gender dimension of these interventions, particularly on sexuality education in schools, is scanty. Studies on sexuality and HIV and AIDS pandemic in Uganda have concentrated on knowledge, attitude and practice related issues of sexual and reproductive health of adolescents (Turyasingura, 1989; Agyei and Epema, 1991; Agyei, Mukiza and Epema, 1994; Ssamula and Kirumira, 1998). They focus largely on increase in sexual knowledge and change in sexual behaviour particularly risk taking behaviour. Studies conducted in Uganda on issues of sexuality and HIV and AIDS education, such as those by Burns (2002) and Mirembe, (2002) had a limited coverage and scope in gender analysis. They were limited to issues of HIV and AIDS transmission focusing mainly on acquisition of knowledge without explicit examination of the discourse of gender and power relations in the construction of sexuality knowledge in the school space.

Little is documented about the gender dynamics in sexuality education in Ugandan secondary schools and students’ and teachers’ experiences. This is important because boys and girls hear and interpret
messages in gender distinctive ways. Existing research and literature in Uganda do not provide comprehensive assessment of the day to day realities of classroom life regarding what happens in particular school contexts as the curriculum works its way through teacher and student (curriculum in-use), and exploring the gender dynamics of student-student and student-teacher interactions both in and outside class. Thus, current research provides little insight into the process by which relations of domination and subordination are perpetuated in the school setting. The school as a social institution plays a big role in perpetuating the dominant points of view and interest of certain social groups as well as challenging the stereotypical gender relations and the traditional sexuality norms (Trudell, 1993). Morrell et al, (2002) notes that schools are gendered institutions with their own complicated histories, and position within the community such that they cannot be treated as neutral venues. Although there are controversies and debates regarding the best strategy to guide the young people on sexuality issues, little attention has been given to the gendered perceptions of parents and teachers towards the teaching of sexuality issues in schools particularly the content, presentation format and appropriate age for receiving sexuality information for girls and boys.

Given the above information gaps, I undertook a comprehensive study to capture the multilayered complexity of lived school and classroom culture. My study interrogates the students' experiences of sexuality education and teachers' negotiation with and construction of the sexuality knowledge in the school space through both the planned and the hidden curriculum. Considering the importance of the social context in which the students reside, particularly in shaping their gender identities, the role of parents in providing sexuality knowledge and their perceptions towards comprehensive sexuality education is also explored.

3.4.1 The general aim and objectives of the Study

General aim of the study

The main aim of this study is to explore gender dynamics in school sexuality education and to illuminate the challenges in teaching of sexuality issues in Uganda's secondary schools, through a focus on these dynamics.

Specific objectives of the study

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:-

1. Interrogate the gender dynamics in the day to day process by which sexuality and gender relations are constructed within the school space.

2. Explore the students' experiences of the sexuality education curricula and the nature of gender relations in sexuality education lessons.
3. Investigate the responsiveness of sexuality information to students' gendered lived experiences.
4. Examine the role of teachers and parents in providing sexuality knowledge in schools.
5. Unearth the community (teachers and parents) and students' gendered perceptions of teaching sexuality in schools in terms of the content and presentation format/instructional methods.

3.5 Significance of the study
The study generates knowledge and information in the area of gender, sexuality and sexuality education in schools in Uganda. This is expected to lead to a better understanding of the connections between gender, sexuality and education, and the importance of gender in the analysis of sexuality. This information can be used as a basis for further research and review of the government programs in the respective line ministries such as the MOES, MOH and NGOs in the development of interventions that can make schooling more responsive to the challenges of adolescent health and sexuality. In particular, it contributes information towards government efforts in the implementation of the life skills program and the presidential initiative (PIASCY) in introducing sexuality education in primary and secondary schools to ensure that gender issues are addressed. It is only when sexuality education is analyzed from a gender perspective that problems of gender imbalance can be addressed within educational initiatives.

The generated information will also help in the development of appropriate quality and gender sensitive sexuality education curricula, teaching aids and instructional methods in school as well as in teacher training institutions. Such information will inform the development of programmes for skills training in gender analysis for teachers. The generated information is also expected to further raise public awareness about the opportunities and the importance of teaching sexuality education in schools from a gender perspective.

In addition, the findings of this study are timely during this era of HIV and AIDS pandemic that is claiming lives of millions of people, particularly from amongst the youth. Women and girls are more vulnerable because of their social location which inhibits their ability to protect themselves. In order to reduce the rate of infection especially among the students, a comprehensive sexuality education that addresses the issues of gender and power relations is important. The information is vital in the development of appropriate gender sensitive interventions from within formal educational framework in the fight against the spread of HIV and AIDS.
3.6 Summary

The chapter illuminates the complex interrelationship/interconnectedness between Uganda's political, social, cultural and economic context and social service provision especially health and education. Although government has put in place legal and policy framework for the promotion of gender equality at all levels of development, many discriminatory cultures and traditions inherent in the Ugandan society undermine the status of women, leading to persistent gender inequality in all spheres of life especially education and health. Sexuality as a marker of social identity is a source of discrimination and interacts with gender to influence men/boys and women/girls lives in different ways. Sexuality is implicated as one of the major factors responsible for the persistent gender inequalities in society, and consequent gender discrimination. Although sexuality education in schools has been identified as a valuable site of intervention to address the gender inequalities and inequities in all spheres of life especially education and health, there is an apparent lack of attention to gender dynamics in sexuality education initiatives, particularly sexuality education curriculum and teaching materials. There is a need for consideration of gender dynamics throughout the education system and sexuality education initiatives. It is also clear that the gender dynamics in sexuality education initiatives in Uganda's secondary schools are not well documented. The next chapter addresses the methodological framework.
CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction
This chapter outlines the overall methodological framework and reflects on the research process. It also describes the study area, target population, the sampling design and size, the methods and tools of data collection and data management and analysis. My personal field experience is also presented and the limitations to the study.

4.2 Research design
Studying gender dynamics in school sexuality education led to the adoption of a school-based approach to the questions animating the research. A participatory research strategy was preferred in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the students', teachers' and parents' experiences and views about the discourse of sexuality education. This strategy has been recommended by feminists because of its potential in facilitating a democratic process in the production of knowledge and the empowerment of participants (Mbilinyi, 1992). The approach further offered space within which the different respondents (parents, teachers and students) freely expressed themselves, presented their views, perceptions, ideas, concerns and needs regarding sexuality education. The choice of this strategy was based on the need to obtain in-depth information, which could only be got from techniques that allowed and / or encouraged open-ended questioning. Open-ended questions were preferred because they are less alienating and more democratic (Mbilinyi, 1992).

Qualitative methods of investigation were mainly employed including observation of both in and outside class activities, in-depth and key informant interviews and focus group discussions [FGDs]. As argued by Miles and Herberman, (1994) qualitative methods provide data that offers a source of well grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of process in identifiable contexts. I found qualitative methods well suited to researching peoples' lived experiences particularly in locating the meanings people placed on the events, processes and structures of their lives, their perceptions and presuppositions and connecting these meanings to the social world around them (Miles and Herberman, 1994 and Cassell and Symon, 1994). According to Cassell and Symon, (1994) qualitative methods allow flexibility in the research process and perceive individuals as active constructors of meaning rather than as passive observers of events, a process that is highly recommended by feminist
research. During data collection, a reflective diary was used to record impressions, informal discussions and tentative conclusions.

A comprehensive secondary data review on gender, sexuality, education and sexuality education in schools and the curriculum materials was also undertaken. This provided the background and the theoretical framework for my study. Bringing together multiple types of data allowed me to construct a comprehensive picture of the gender dynamics in sexuality education in schools.

4.3 Sampling design and size

4.3.1 The study area

The study was conducted in Wakiso district which is located in the central region of Uganda (Figures 4.1 and 4.2). Uganda is positioned in the Eastern part of Africa and is bordered by Kenya in the east, Sudan in the north, Rwanda and Tanzania in the south and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the west (Figure 1.1). The country is divided into four administrative regions namely Central, Eastern, Northern and Western regions which are further sub divided into 56 districts (Macmillan, 2004). It lies astride the equator and occupies a total area of 241,038 km², of which 18% consists of lakes, rivers and swamps and 12% forest and game reserves (UBOS, 2003).

The central region constitutes 13 districts and it was from among these that the study district was randomly selected. Wakiso district covers an area of 272.77 km² of which 36,000 hectares are under forest cover (Mugisha, 2002). It is divided into 3 counties (Busiro, Kyadondo and Entebbe Municipality) with 25 sub counties. The district population is estimated at 907,988 of which 51.5% are females (UBOS, 2005) and the main local language is Luganda. The district generally represents a rural-urban community although there are several small towns and a municipal centre which is a relatively big urban area (Figure 4.2). People’s main economic activities include fishing, small scale agriculture (mainly growing food and cash crops) and running small scale retail shops.

The district has 597 primary schools, 119 secondary schools (both private and government schools), 1 teacher training college, 2 technical institutes and one private university (Mugisha, 2002). While most of the primary schools are government aided, majority of the secondary schools are owned by individuals and communities.

The central region was selected for this study because schools in this region have had a wide exposure to sexuality education programmes by various NGOs such as Youth Alive, The AIDS Support Organisation, Family Life Network and AIDS Information Centre.
Figure 4.1 Map of Uganda showing the location of the study area.
Source: Mugisha 2002
Figure 4.2 Map of Wakiso district – the study district
4.3.2 Selection of study schools

Using a list of all schools in the district, 7 schools were selected to participate in the study. Selection was based on representation of the different school grades and two grades were considered namely first\(^58\) and 2\(^{nd}\) grade\(^59\) schools. Other considerations for selection included religious ideology/affiliation namely Christian (Catholic and protestant) and Islam, type of school (mixed and single sex schools), and school ownership (Community and government).

Of all the 7 selected schools, 3 were of first grade and the rest belonged to second grade schools. One of the three first grade schools was mixed and the other 2 were single (boys and girls only respectively) and two of them were Catholic founded\(^60\) and the other Protestant. The other 4 schools were second grade, co-educational and represented the three religious denominations (Protestant, Catholic and Muslim) with one of them being a private school. A pre-test of the study instruments was conducted on one other school randomly selected from the study district (see section 4.5.1b).

4.3.3 Selection of Respondents

Sampling involved both stratified\(^61\) and “target”\(^62\) sampling techniques (Mbiliyi, 1992: 60). These were employed to ensure that respondents possessed attributes relevant for the study (see below). After identifying my sample population, systematic random sampling was used to select the individual respondents. These included students, teachers, parents and key informants including officials from the MOES (from the Sex education co-ordination and HIV and AIDS Education Units) and the National Curriculum Development Centre.

\textbf{a) Selection of students}

The study focused on students in the fourth year of ordinary level (S4) who offered Biology, IRE and CRE subjects.

Using the class register of all S4 students in a particular school, stratified and systematic random sampling was employed to select 10 students (5 males and 5 females) in each of the selected co-educational schools. In the single sex schools, only five students were selected for the individual (in-depth) interviews. The overall total sample was 60 students (30 females and 30 females) in the 7

\(^{58}\) High quality facilities, high enrolment rates  
\(^{59}\) Inadequate facilities, low enrolment rates  
\(^{60}\) Most of the first grade single sex schools in the district are Catholic founded  
\(^{61}\) Division/selection of a population according to certain attributes such as sex and social status  
\(^{62}\) Selection of a population that meets special requirements/attributes/histories under study
schools. However, due to the researcher's time constraints, a total of 55 students of whom 27 were males and 28 females were interviewed.

Using the same registers, students who were not selected for the interviews formed another sampling frame from whom 20 students (10 males and 10 females) in each of the selected co-educational schools were selected to participate in the FGDs. On the other hand, 10 students were selected to participate in the focus group discussion held in each of the single sex schools, although some focus groups had more than 10 students because other students joined us as the discussions progressed. Consequently, a total of 129 students (65 males and 64 females) participated in the FGDs. A total of 12 FGDs (6 for girls and 6 for boys) with group size ranging from 8 to 14 members were conducted.

**Background characteristics of the students who participated in the study**

Students who participated in both the interviews and FGDs are aged between 14 and 19 years. The majority of the boys (n=52) are aged 17 years while the majority of the girls (n=54) are aged 16 years. On average girls are one year younger than the boys probably because in Uganda, girl children start schooling at a slightly younger age than boys.

Although most of the schools (n=4) which participated in the study are Catholic and have a relatively bigger number of Catholic students, other religious denominations including Protestants, Muslims and Seventh Day Adventist [SDA] are represented. Similarly, the schools which are either Protestant or Muslim founded are dominated by students of the founding religion. Of the students interviewed, 37 boys and 35 girls were Catholics, whereas 33 boys and 35 girls were Protestants. Sixteen boys and 18 girls were Muslims, while 6 boys and 4 girls were Pentecostal. The religious representation follows a similar pattern as that of the religious composition of the country's population (UBOS, 2005).

A large proportion of the interviewed students (41 boys and 38 girls) report that their fathers are engaged in trade/business as well as their mothers (32 boys and 24 girls). Other students report that their parents are engaged in professional work including engineering, teaching, accounting, medical doctors, designing and nursing. Students also report that some parents are engaged in farming while most mothers are housewives (28 boys and 25 girls).

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63 these were selected to increase on the sample size and capture more diverse views
64 Age did not affect their participation in the FGDs because they were held in single sex groups.
b) **Selection of Parents**

With the help of the local leaders in the communities within which the study schools were located, the parents who had children attending secondary school were identified to participate in the FGDs. Using the lottery method, a random sample of 50 (25 male and 25 females) parents was selected of which a total of 48 parents (25 males and 23 females) participated in the discussions. Five FGDs for parents were conducted with group size ranging from 9 to 10 members. A large proportion of the parents have post primary education (12 males and 11 females) followed by those with primary education (8 males and 9 females). A small proportion of the males (5) and females (3) have tertiary education with most of the men engaged in trade/business (12) while most of the women participate in farming (7). Six of the women are engaged in trade/business and a few are involved in teaching (3 of the females and 2 of the males). Other activities for the men include church work (2), carpentry (1) and driving (1) where as other women are involved in secretarial work (3), domestic work (3), tailoring/designing (1) and healthcare (nursing) (1).

A large proportion of the encountered male parents are Catholics (10) while majority of the female parents are Protestants (9). On the other hand, the Protestant male parents were eight while Catholic female parents were seven. Muslim parents were five females and five males. Other religions represented among the parents include Pentecostal (2 female and 1 male) and Seventh Day Adventist (1 male).

c) **Selection of Teachers**

The selection of the teachers who participated in the interviews and FGDs was both purposive and random. These involved the Senior Women and Men Teachers, the subject teachers of biology, CRE, IRE, Social etiquette and moral education, patrons of health/HIV and AIDS clubs, matrons and wardens. In all the study schools, a total of 24 teachers (10 males and 14 females) were interviewed. In each of the 6 study schools, 10 teachers (5 males and 5 females) were randomly selected to participate in the FGDs (n=60). A total of 6 FGDs involving 52 teachers of which 23 were female participated in the FGDs.

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65 However, it was difficult to establish whether their daughters or sons participated in study because parents' FGDs were conducted outside the school premises.
66 Teachers in one of the study schools did not participate in the FGDs because of the schools' tight programme (examinations and other school activities such as sports and the music festival) at the time of data collection.
d) **Selection of key informants**

Key informants were purposively selected and included officials from the governments' Ministry of Education and Sports [MOES] and the National Curriculum Development Centre [NCDC]. These were mainly programme officers/coordinators in the respective institutions.

4.4 **Methods and tools for data collection**

Data was collected using qualitative methods including in-depth and key informant interviews, FGDs and observation. The use of the various methods of data collection allowed for triangulation and helped to provide in-depth information about students' teachers' and parents' views, experiences and perceptions of school sexuality education (see analysis of data in section 4.6). All the methods covered similar material. Cassell and Symon, (1994) argues that triangulation of data by use of multi-method approach is essential to answer many important questions involving complex processes that engage a number of actors.

4.4.1 **In-depth and key informant interviews**

In-depth interviews were conducted for students, teachers and key informants from the selected schools, and government institutions using an unstructured/open-ended face-to-face interview schedule. The schedule contained a list of specific issues and questions that were explored (annexes 3 & 4). The in-depth interviews enabled respondents to give as much information as possible on the specific issues. Consequently the researcher gained more insights into the various respondents' views, opinions and perceptions about school sexuality education without imposing pre-determined categories of responses. In addition, the open-ended format allowed the interviewer flexibility to expand on the ideas and thoughts that emerged during the interview so as to elicit a clearer picture of the issues.

4.4.2 **Focus group discussions (FGDs)**

The FGDs provided an atmosphere for open dialogue and thus enabled the researcher to gain a more in-depth understanding of the respondents' views, pinions, experiences and perceptions towards school sexuality education. In addition, the FGDs were a useful method of eliciting information on sensitive issues about sexuality especially with some students who were shy about discussing such issues in the individual interviews. Students' FGDs were conducted in single sex sessions so as to enable the students to discuss issues in a relaxed atmosphere. Single sex discussion groups have been recommended because they take advantage of homogeneity in experience and enable same sex individuals to freely express themselves on sexuality matters (Burns, 2002). During the discussions I
took interest in the non-verbal gestures and hesitation which signal alternative interpretation, and made connections between the different ideas from the participants.

A focus group discussion guide (Annexes 3, 4 & 5) was used to explore a wide range of issues based on the objectives of the study. As recommended by King (1994) all respondents were assured of the confidentiality at the start of the interviews and agreed to the use of the information only in an anonymous form (Annex 7). They were clearly told how and what the information was to be used for – 'purely for academic purposes'. Permission to tape-record the interview was obtained.

4.4.3 Observation

Observations were made about the different activities and interactions which the students were engaged in while at school. The observations were made when students were in class undertaking lessons, during their free time and when they were involved in co-curricular activities. The exercise took a period of four months covering the schools' 2nd and 3rd terms. Using a notebook and an observation checklist, a record of the events was made. An observation checklist (annex 6) ensured consistency and collection of the required information. The lessons observed were of varied periods ranging from one to two hours. A total of 9 lessons were observed including 5 lessons for CRE, 2 for biology and 1 for social etiquette.

The activities observed included lessons of biology, CRE and social etiquette focusing on the topics that addressed sexuality issues such as reproduction, sex education and sex differences and the person. Observation of health and HIV and AIDS club meetings and careers days in some schools was also carried out. Other activities that were observed included extracurricular activities such as the general school assembly, sports and music festivals as well as students interaction in the school compound. During the class observations, the method of information presentation, the teachers' responses to students' reactions/questions/comments about the information given by the teacher, students' responses/comments about the teachers and fellow students' presentation and the nature of the gender relations were noted.

Observing co-curricular activities gave me the opportunity to explore the relationship between the classroom and its school context as a whole and the cultural experiences of students and teachers in the wider social context. This enabled introductory observation of the symbolic orders and messages of masculine and feminine constructions that permeate everyday life of students. Given the fact that my observations were limited by time and partiality, I drew on this data only as corroboration of
material surfaced through other methods and used it more to orient myself to the broad school environment than to draw upon for extensive analysis.

4.4.4 Secondary data review
This involved a review of several documents which contained information about gender, sexuality and education. The documents were from government, NGOs and other institutions. Those from government included the National Strategy for Girls' Education, the Education Strategic Investment Plan [ESIP], The Presidential Initiative on AIDS Strategy for Communication to Youth [PIASCY] teachers' handbook, The 1992 Government White Paper on Education, the 1989 Economic Policy Review Commission Report, the school health policy, the adolescent reproductive health policy, HIV and AIDS education policy (draft) and the secondary school curricula materials such as textbooks of Biology, CRE and IRE. While most of the reviewed government documents generally provided information about the national policies, initiatives and programmes about gender, sexuality and education, the school curriculum was intensively reviewed so as to determine its content coverage and to illuminate the gender dynamics within the sexuality content and format. An extensive literature review was also made about the research reports, text books, journals and workshop/conference papers in order to acquire a wide scope of the background information on gender, sexuality and education both at global, regional and national levels.

The other documents that were a source of data were from governments' Ministries of Health, Education and Sports and Gender, Labour and Social Development (the PEARL project), Makerere University, UNFPA, the National Population Secretariat and some NGOS dealing with Sexual and reproductive health education in schools such as straight talk foundation.

4.5 The research experience
Before the actual data collection process, preliminary preparations were made. These mainly involved obtaining research permission both at national, district and local levels (schools and the community) as well as pre-testing the study instruments.

4.5.1 Phase I - Preliminary preparations for data collection
a) Preliminary visit to the study district and selection of the study sites
Following, approval and clearance by the National Council for Science and Technology (NCST), a preliminary visit to the study district was made in order to get a research clearance from the district officials and to familiarize with the secondary schools in the district. Several meetings were held with the top district administration and officials in the district Education Department to inform them
about my research, obtain advice about the school calendar and seek approval to conduct research in the schools. The meetings held with education officials clarified issues pertaining to selection of schools and the overall school calendar. A list of all the secondary schools in the district was obtained and used as the sampling frame.

School visits were made and meetings held with the Head teachers and teachers in charge of teaching subjects such as Biology, CRE and IRE and other teachers such as the Senior Women and Men teachers, Wardens, Matrons and patrons of health/HIV and AIDS clubs. This involved holding discussions with the schools' Head teachers about the whole research process including the sample population and size, the activities to be undertaken, the school calendar as well as seeking permission to interview students.

\[b)\] \textit{Pre-testing the study instruments}

Before the actual data collection exercise, a pre-test of the research instruments was conducted in one secondary school in the study district to ensure that the questions were clear, meaningful and adequate in obtaining the required information. The pre-test also helped to identify the research needs and to refine the researchers' interviewing skills. This exercise took three weeks of making classroom observations and conducting interviews and FGDs with teachers and students. After the pre-test, an assessment of the instruments item by item was undertaken and the relevant adjustments made before final data collection was done. However, due to a relatively few activities undertaken in the pre-test school, the data collected has not been used in the final analysis and write up of this thesis.

4.5.2 Phase II - Data collection

The initial activities in this phase included observation of biology, CRE and social etiquette classes as well as the co-curricular activities such as games, music festivals, and assemblies. Observing these activities was useful in identifying issues for follow up in the interviews and focus group discussions.

Interviews and FGDs for students, teachers, parents and government officials were carried out concurrently at the respondents' convenience. At the beginning of each interview and FGDs, respondents were assured of confidentiality, told of their important role in this research as well as the manner in which the responses were to be recorded. Consent of the respondents on whether to tape

\[67\] In Uganda, interviewing students while at school does not require parental consent, but permission from the school administrators must be obtained.
record the discussion was made. During the FGDs, I facilitated the discussions with assistance of a trained research assistant (graduate of Social Sciences) who recorded the participants’ responses.

English and Luganda (the main local language of the area) were the languages used during the whole process of data collection. English was mainly used in the schools (with students and teachers) except for a few students who were not proficient in English especially students from the second grade schools. All FGDs involving parents were conducted in Luganda and translation was done thereafter (see section 4.6).

4.5.3 Reflections on the research process

Before undertaking field data collection, I was aware that several people including students and non students with whom I was going to interact would be sensitive about this unusual topic, especially as presented for discussion by myself, a stranger. I was conscious of the problematic nature (topic often considered controversial and taboo\(^{68}\)) and ethical dilemmas\(^{69}\) relating to doing research on sexuality and especially with children. Drawing on Taylor and Bogdamin, Waddington (1994: 109) “getting into a setting involves a process of managing your identity, projecting an image of yourself that will maximise your chances of gaining access… you want to convince gatekeepers that you are a non threatening person who will not harm the organisation or respondents in anyway” (emphasis added). Gaining access to the research site was facilitated by the letters of introduction and clearance from the National Council of Science and Technology (NCST) and the Head of Department of Women and Gender Studies, Makerere University. These letters of authorisation further helped to establish mutual trust and confidence with the study population. While some schools, especially the first grade schools, were very strict about the letters of introduction, others did not bother with the letters as long as I introduced myself as a student and lecturer from Makerere University. My knowledge of the local language (Luganda) was advantageous especially in establishing rapport. Most parents, the school administration, teachers and pupils were very cooperative and made the research easy and the interviewing process went on smoothly. While it was easy to access most individuals and institutions involved in this study, I found difficulties in accessing some teachers, parents and government officials because of their busy schedules.

My status as a university lecturer offered some advantages in gaining entry to both the schools and the community. The respondents seemed to regard me as an experienced and knowledgeable person about sexuality and adolescent problems through whom they could benefit. Consequently, the

\(^{68}\) and other issues such as the topic being regarded as titillating and entertaining and power distribution/asymmetry

\(^{69}\) relating to role conflict in terms of playing a dual role of being a researcher as well as a therapist or a counsellor.
students (both boys and girls) readily expressed willingness to participate in the study. They noted that they were more comfortable talking to me than their teachers because they felt that I had done a lot of research and was more knowledgeable about the issues discussed. They further noted that they found it easier to discuss such issues with a stranger whom they knew would not stay in the school. Most students and parents appreciated the discussions because to them this was a learning experience. Consequently respondents especially girls requested for more of such meetings and suggested that such discussions should be held with all the students. During the discussions, parents reflected on their experiences and finally shared views and strategies on how they would give information and guidance to their children on such sensitive matters. Teachers also found the discussions valuable and requested me to find time to talk to the students about sexuality issues. The educational value of FGDs has been highlighted by other scholars (for example Shefer, 1999). As advanced by Holland and Ramazanoglu, (1995), the interviews and discussions were social events which constituted a learning process for me and the informants.

Furthermore, I was conscious that being a female interviewer on sensitive issues such as sexuality might embarrass some respondents, especially male respondents and make it hard for them to give truthful answers. However, the preliminary visits in the school and interaction with students during observation of classes and school activities as well as maintaining a positive and non-threatening self-image (Waddington, 1994) helped to create rapport and establish mutual trust and confidence with the study population. I remained courteous, polite and avoided any unwarranted displays of friendliness and familiarity. The respondents were used to my presence and freely participated in the discussions and interviews. However, students’ levels of participation in the discussions and interviews were varied. Contribution of girls were generally much greater than that of boys whereby girls spoke more, showed enthusiasm of talking about the issues and contributed more ideas where as boys tended to react to prompts from the moderator. Other studies by Prendergast (1996) have also noted girls’ enthusiasm to talk about their feelings and complexities around sexuality issues while boys like to ‘larking around and having a laugh’. On the other hand boys’ level of participation could be attributed to researchers’ gender position. As argued by Holland and Ramazanoglu, (1995) differences in gender influence interaction in interviews. While single sex groups seemed to enable girls as well as boys to express and explore their views, there is need to explore the interaction of boys and girls in mixed sex FGDs. My research does not provide data on this since all the focus groups were single sex.

With regard to classroom observation, I was aware that I needed to demonstrate that I was not in the class to either critique or assist the teacher or report classroom occurrences to the head teacher or the
Ministry of Education and Sports. To ensure such a trusting and confidential relationship, I held meetings with subject teachers prior to any observation. Teachers’ awareness of the research as fully academic was helpful.

b) Lessons learned from the preliminary process

- The timing of lessons addressing sexuality issues and co-curricular activities such as music festivals, election of student leaders and sports’ competitions was difficult because different schools had different schedules of these activities. Since these activities had already taken place in some of the schools at the time of data collection, it was difficult to conduct systematic in-depth observation (ethnography) in the different schools. Consequently, my analysis focused mainly on in-depth interviews and FGDs with minimal reference to the observations undertaken.

- Refocusing of the study population was found necessary because sexuality issues were being taught in senior (S.3), senior four (S.4), senior five (S.5) and senior six (S.6) and NOT in senior one (S.1) as had earlier been envisaged. In addition, there were variations among schools regarding the sexuality topics taught at the different education levels/classes. There was therefore no standard timetable across all the schools as well as the classes. The time table would be drawn by the respective subject teachers basing on the syllabus provided by the Ministry of Education and Sports. Ultimately S4 formed my study population.

- Apart from the official curriculum, some schools had other supplementary programs and subjects where sexuality issues were addressed such as health and HIV and AIDS clubs, Social Etiquette and moral education. This widened the scope of my research, although I have not included much discussion from the data collected here due to length considerations.

- As a result of the pre-test of the research instruments, prior versions of the interview and FGD schedules were shortened and questions on other issues that emerged (such as the dress code and pornography) were added to the schedules.

- The timing of the activities such as conducting interviews and FGDs for teachers, pupils and parents was reprogrammed so as to fit within the school time table, to avoid interruptions of the normal school day and to ensure adequate cooperation of the respondents in the schools. Waddington (1994) advises paying homage to the routines of the participants by not requiring them to depart from their usual schedules.

4.5.4 Limitations to the study

Though the study was successfully completed, it had both logistical and methodological limitations.
a) Logistical limitations

- It was difficult to arrange FGDs involving parents who had children in the study schools. While Head teachers were willing to mobilise the parents, it was difficult to call parents to the school just to meet the researcher without any other school activity being organised. More so, some parents’ homes were far away from the schools and therefore inviting the parents to the schools had financial implications. Consequently parents with secondary school children were selected from the school catchment area.

- Respondents particularly the teachers and parents expected some form of reward. Consequently, I provided transport money and some allowance to the parents and teachers respectively simply to motivate them to attend the discussion meetings.

- There was lack of adequate cooperation from the female teachers because most of them preferred engaging in their conversations than participating in the activities associated with this study (interviews and FGDs). Therefore, I had to be patient and do a lot of mobilisation to convince them to participate in the study.

b) Methodological limitations

- While observation was very useful, in-depth ethnographic observation in a school setting may not be effective when studying more than one school. Effective ethnographic observation needs to be undertaken over a long period of time. Due to the short time I had to collect the data in the 7 schools, the observation of classes was limited to a few lessons per school.

- Since this research was exploratory and qualitative, it provided insights into peoples’ views and perceptions about gender and sexuality issues. However, the coverage was limited to one district and only in seven schools. Thus the data obtained may not be representative of all the secondary schools and all parents in the country.

- Regarding students’ experiences with the official school sexuality curriculum particularly the coverage (topics taught in class in the various subjects), the information obtained depended on what students remembered, in an informal non test driven engagement about the sexuality lessons. Although students identified broad topics with sketchy accounts of the content and orientation of the material, more complex profiles of students’ engagement with information on sexuality emerged through holistic readings of the interviews and FGDs. While students were asked to remember what they had learnt in the lessons, such kind of analysis is fraught with limitations such as recall bias. Respondents’ recollections concerning certain experiences can be problematic because participants find it hard to accurately remember the details of such
experiences (Davies and Dale, 1994). Therefore, there was no guarantee that the students could remember exactly what and how much they had learnt in a particular lesson.

- While I appreciate the importance of the curriculum in sexuality education, this study did not undertake an in-depth gender analysis of the curriculum but rather a brief review (see chapter three, 3.3.2) and largely concentrated on the students' and teachers' experiences of delivery of the curriculum.

4.5.5 Validity and reliability of data

I adopted a qualitative design utilising multiple methods which offered the opportunity for triangulation. Triangulation of methods is generally regarded as a good strategy of ensuring validity and reliability in qualitative methodologies (Lather, 1991; Silverman, 1993; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). This provided for trustworthiness of the qualitative data and helped to corroborate the data yielded from the different methods. Reliability of the interview schedules was ensured through pilot testing, after which question items were modified.

4.6 Data management and analysis

During the process of data collection, there was continuous recording of all relevant observations and students' responses in the interviews and FGDs. Besides the regular recording of observations and interviews, reflection and documentation of the overall perceptions and interpretation of the days' work were undertaken. As noted by Mbilinyi (1992) this strategy helped in identifying gaps as well as laying strategies for addressing them.

All the interviews and FGDs were tape-recorded to ensure the information was accurate; except one interview with a teacher who did not feel comfortable with the tape recorder. The tape recorded information was then transcribed (verbatim) and narrative reports written for each interview and FGDs. Transcribing was done concurrently with data collection whenever time allowed. The interviews/FGDs which were conducted in the local language were translated into English. Translation is however, a complex process that involves construction of a particular reality. This process is met with a number of challenges including misunderstandings in interpretation of the respondents' views, omissions and the influence of the researchers' own location (subjectivity) as a mediator. During translation, I was conscious of these challenges and am satisfied that the English versions are 'good' enough representation of what was said in the discussions.

The transcribed information was then analyzed using template analysis as an initial framework of analysis. According to King (1998) template analysis is useful for analysing qualitative data collected
through interviews and focus group discussions. This involves analysis of text through use of an analysis guide or codebook/template (Crabtree and Miller, 1992 cited in King 1994) comprising themes pertinent to the research questions. The different sets of data were analysed separately and later compared through triangulation to classify common themes (through collating and comparing responses through the construction of ‘themes’). The comparative technique facilitated the identification of common experiences among respondents (male versus female; female versus female and male versus male) as well as identifying individual unique experiences (Hallum, 2000; King, 1994). A statistical analysis was then carried out and frequencies and percentages were computed from the emerging patterns and themes to determine the most significant expressions from the interviews.

Text analysis of the individual interviews and FGD notes or the narrative reports gave a deeper understanding of the gendered discourses in sexuality education particularly through personal insights and anecdotes of respondents. Information from the different data sets was clustered and relationships identified to illustrate the gender dynamics operative in sexuality education in Uganda’s secondary schools. Data from FGDs was used to corroborate and to supplement data from the interviews but not to explore ‘complex’ discourses of subjectivity and participants’ positioning in relation to dominant discourses emerging from the discussions. The limitation to this kind of approach is that it does not engage full FGD analysis, which offers a route into sophisticated and complex illumination of different discourses operating at the lexical, syntactic, and semantic levels, within participants’ representations of their ideas and experience. This analytic route has been used powerfully by scholars such as Fatuma Chege, Rob Pattman, and Relebohile Moletsane in recent work on sexuality education within African secondary school contexts, and offers a rich source for understanding diverse orientations to meaning. I intend to undertake full FGD analysis in my subsequent work. Aware however of the fact that I was not going to use FGD data as primary data for this research project, my analysis therefore did not explore much of either “dissent” or of nuanced contradictions from within the FGD data While this limits the interpretation of the data to broad findings, it also creates the opportunity to move into concrete preliminary policy and planning recommendations.

4.7 Summary

The research process presented in this chapter serves to contextualise the findings presented in the next subsequent chapters. The study engaged with qualitative data that was valuable in interrogating respondents lived experiences in the discourse of gender, sexuality and education. Use of a variety of methods facilitated triangulation and corroboration of the research findings. The template approach
was used as preliminary analysis of the qualitative data. Chapters five and six present the findings of this preliminary analysis, and chapter seven offers in-depth discussion of these findings.
CHAPTER FIVE

STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS SEXUALITY EDUCATION

5.1 Introduction
This chapter presents the findings from the students’ in-depth interviews\(^7^0\) and focus group discussions\(^7^1\); and explores students’ experiences and engagement with the school sexuality education and other sources of sexuality knowledge. As noted in chapter four, FGD data is used to corroborate material from interviews and not as thorough “rereading” of the emerging discourses from the interviews. The first section interrogates the gendered school environment into which sexuality education is constructed and provides the context in which the formal school sexuality education curriculum is situated. It highlights the gender dynamics within patterns of social interaction in the school space including co-curricula activities. The second section draws attention to the students’ pursuit of sexuality knowledge and their experiences with different sources of sexuality knowledge. It further illuminates students’ experiences and negotiation of the school sexuality education curriculum including content, teaching strategies (instructional methods and approach), and presents students’ perceptions of the practical application of the sexuality information and their overall perceptions about teaching sexuality in schools.

5.2 The gendered school environment
The school as a social institution is characterized by a particular gender regime. Within this gendered environment students face hierarchical gender arrangements manifested in extensive segregation of boys and girls in the various school activities and in the location of facilities as part of everyday lived culture of the school.

5.2.1 Gender segregation in school organizational set up
a) Student gender segregation in the school space
The study reveals that the school space is characterized by frequent segregation of students starting with the school registers, school dress and in the co-curricular activities. In the school registers for all the schools visited, girls and boys were listed separately. Students were further distinguished from each other based on the school dress (uniform). The dress code in the different schools was clearly

\(^{70}\) 27 boys and 28 girls
\(^{71}\) 65 boys and 64 females
segregated placing great emphasis on decent dressing particularly for the girls. Students' comments about the dress code indicated that sexual connotations are attached to female teachers' and students' dress especially aimed at short and slit skirts/dresses and tight trousers. Girls' response to such sexualisation included pulling socks up high above the knees to prevent boys and male teachers from getting sexually attracted to them. Although boys reported that their clothing was also limited, analysis of all the comments about the dress code showed more strict rules about girls' dress code than about boys' attire.

Frequent sex segregation was reported in all school activities. For instance, while girls engaged in peeling either 'matoke' (Plantains) or sweet potatoes, boys took part in lifting heavy objects, carrying bunches of 'matoke', sacks of sweet potatoes and containers of food and removing the rubbish. While such gender divisions were reported to apply to other activities such as digging, planting flowers and trees, cleaning the school compound (sweeping, mopping and slashing), boys acknowledged that girls did most of the cleaning and gardening. Same gender clustering was also observed on school assemblies where individual boys and girls often stood in front or behind one another and girls often filled the front space or constructed same gender queues.

The location of resources in the institutional space including toilets, the playground/field in which football and netball are played and boarding facilities also constructed gendered space. There was extensive spatial separation between boys and girls, which students routinely spoke of "girls' end" and "boys' end". Consequently, the differential location of boys and girls in schools provides opportunities for the construction of gendered specific cultures and for the transmission of messages about gender and sexuality, which assume a dimorphic and segregated community.

b) Gender dynamics and students' participation in school co-curricula activities
The schools visited offered a number of co-curricular activities including games, clubs, music, dance and drama although the type and time allocated to these varied among schools. Boys and girls freely chose to participate in the different kinds of co-curricula activities. Based on the interviews and discussions, students noted that there was a gendered choice in co-curricula activities whereby few girls generally engaged in games while male students dominated the sporting and outdoor activities.

Boys and girls offered varied reasons for the gendered participation in co-curricula activities. According to the male students, female low participation in games was mainly because of their feminine qualities such as passiveness, softness, maintaining dignity, shyness, inability to engage in
“vigorous” activity, interest in reading books as well as their interest in ‘idle’ conversation (chatting) and their complaints about menstruation. For example some boys in the interviews pointed out that:

"I think most of them [girls] take light work whereas the boys engage in vigorous activity. Personally I think girls don't want to do exercise and they complain that they have diseases, they have complications, monthly periods [menstruation] but I think its lack of exercise and they say that they have many books to read. The boys have (books) but at least they can not live without sports..." (Interview, boy).

"I think girls like activities, which do not strain them..." (Interview, boy).

Boys’ opinions about the gendered participation in games indicate the perception that participation in games requires masculine qualities such as strength, outgoing energy and roughness. Boys further explained girls’ low participation in terms of their complaints about menstruation (ironically described as a “disease”) and other sexual issues such as maintaining their virginity and dignity. However, most boys appeared unconvinced that such sexual health concerns should deter girls from participating in games.

Girls offered similar reasons for their low participation and reported active engagement of boys in games particularly football. They also attributed boys’ active participation in games to masculine qualities such as “having a lot of energy” and “strength” to engage in activities they often described as “hard stuff” and rough. Girls’ low participation in games was associated with the body changes and their negative perception towards activities which require one to jump up and down because they do not want “their breasts to jump up and down.” Another girl also pointed out that:

"I think it's the adolescent age, the boys want to take off all the energy they have. They go for foot ball to exercise their bodies. Girls like leisure stuff because girls don't like doing hard stuff. They don't like to over-sweat; they don't like to jump around. They just want to sit and dance around to the best of their ability. Then they go for swimming just for relaxation. They really don't want something that tires them...” (Interview, girl).

As suggested in the excerpt above, girls’ major concern with participation in games was mainly related to the physiological and biological changes in their bodies. Consequently, they preferred staying in their dormitories reading and conversing as well as participating in club activities.

Within the clubs, students further noted gendered participation where girls were predominantly involved in religious and entertainment clubs such as music, dance and drama, and boys were actively involved in debating, Interact and Nkoba Zambogo (tribal based club for Baganda students) clubs.

"Majority of the girls are in the Scripture Union but the boys, belong to the other clubs... I have forgotten the name... because that one needs the stubborn boys where they go, laugh anyhow, bring their own languages in it, but for the case of Scripture Union, it is concerned about God. So most of the girls are in it..." (Interview, girl).

Girls noted that the boys participate in clubs in which 'shouting', 'roughness' and other masculine qualities are the norm.
The above mentioned gender variations in student participation in games and clubs suggest that students' choices of participation in co-curricular activities tend to be divided along the stereotypic masculine and feminine lines. This indicates students' own gender constructions of the day to day activities in the school.

c) Gender dynamics in student interaction in the day to day school activities

In all the schools visited, it was noted that students' interactions in class, co-curricular activities and in the dormitories are characterized by particular gender codes and are highly restricted and policed by teachers. However, based on the interviews and FGDs, both male and female students described some degree of gender, mixed, unsupervised interaction particularly group interaction for an academic purpose. Physical displays of affection such as hugging, holding hands and kissing were considered inappropriate by the teachers in the schools. There were certain restrictions by teachers as well as monitoring and policing of students' interaction including surveillance of individual boys and girls who spent time together, those sitting with a student of the opposite sex outside class time and those seen in isolated places such as dark corners and at night. Boys' views are represented in the following interview except from a group discussion with boys:

"We interact freely with the girls... but at specific times... Like at night after prep girls go to their end and boys to their end but during the day its okay we move, talk, we joke but you do not go beyond what is expected/required. ...We are not allowed to hug, hold hands. But we hug... So there is that rule." (FGD, boys)

Similar views about restricted interaction in the school space were given by girls as one of the girls in the interview observed:

"They say that that kind of interaction may cause some people to misbehave..." (Interview, girl).

Students noted that any interaction between a boy and a girl was interpreted by the teachers and fellow students as an unacceptable sexual relationship. Boys in one of the FGDs stated:

"The thing is that when teachers see you with a girl they may get a wrong impression, sometimes you are just good friends like how one would be with a fellow boy. But sometimes it's taken that there is a relationship or something. So rumours spread, then it brings in that tension. ...We fear. Now like I have boy friends, those ones I hold hands, relate and walk with. When it comes to the girls the moment you do that or become a friend with someone for a certain period of time, keep on relating, swinging around, going to their class, rumours spread — that's one problem. They follow you up and investigate and yet you are just friends..." (FGD, boys)

Students expressed tension and concern over teachers' restrictions and overt sexualisation of boys/girl interactions in the school space. Girls reported that any form of interaction involving students of the opposite sex was associated with "coupling" and "parking"72 and punishment including caning, slashing the compound and suspension was given for such behaviours, which

72 parking is a term used to mean a boy and a girl in a love relationship
students felt was unfair. Girls reported that many girls have been falsely accused of ‘pairing up’ with boys. Other forms of prohibited interaction included girls having boyfriends (lovers) and girls practicing football with boys. Students stated that they were being monitored through what they described as the “spy network”. Data suggests that students (both boys and girls) live under fear and tension in their seemingly free day to day interaction in the school. Similarly in the single sex schools, students reported restrictions and policing of interaction around any behaviour interpreted as ‘sexual’ by teachers. This included overt suspicions of lesbianism and homosexuality. Students reported cases of students who had been implicated as being lesbians and homosexuals and had been either suspended or expelled from school. However, it was noted that putting restrictions on student interaction did not deter them from expressing their sexual desires, as demonstrated by a male and female student who stated:

“As they are spectating, they get to support someone; you see them holding each other. Though we are supposed to go to the pitch to play, some do things that they are not supposed to do, like they go into corners kissing while others are watching football and other bad things like caressing the girls when the teachers are not around that area…” (Interview, boy).

“In this school they over protect us but when a girl gets a chance of getting related to a boy and they are really in love with each other, the outcome is that the girl may get pregnant. This overprotecting us is not good. For example there was a boy and a girl loving each other, the guy dated the girl. As we were in the Mosque reading, the boy came in the mosque, called (collected) the girl and they moved up here in the next classroom. There were no lights. Some people saw them, and said oh what’s wrong with those two people? May be there’s something funny there are going to do. One of the girls—a “shepat”—representative of Moslem girls in the school; followed them, went around the building and stood by the window of the class where they entered to see what exactly they were doing. What did she see? The two guys were having sex. The girl was so surprised, shocked. She kept quiet and returned to the Mosque continued with her reading. In the morning she had to report to the H/M. The two were called and suspended from school…” (Interview, girl).

The above statements attest to the fact that displays of affection and engagement in sexual intercourse exist below the grid of ‘visible’ hetero-sociality in schools. According to the interviewed students, various students’ physical displays of affection were common such as “hugging”, “parking”, “coupling”, either during revision/reading time at night, after classes, in dark corners, and during games. This suggests that overt proscriptions in themselves promote an interest in ‘the taboo’ and therefore ‘protectionism’ is a less effective strategy for regulating and controlling students’ sexuality.

d) The ‘gender geography’ in the classroom space

From the outside class activities, same gender clustering extended into the classroom, perpetuated by the students themselves. In the lessons I attended, the same gender clustering in the seating arrangement was clearly evident where girls sat in one side of the classroom and boys on the other side. Commonly, the boys occupied the back seats while the girls mainly filled the front and middle sections of the classroom. Whenever there was a mix of boys and girls, they still divided into smaller same gender groups.
In the Muslim school, students associated gender separation to the influence of the Sharia law which prohibits female and male interaction. Boys in one of the FGDs explained:

"Here we have what we call Sharia law. In any congregation, even in class girls separate from boys. For instance in class, girls sit there (on the right corner of the class) and boys sit at the back and left hand corner. When it comes to matters such as discussions and class work there we can come together but again there has to be some other people to monitor your interaction. If say you are two people and the teacher finds you together she/he will say you are “parking”... Here when students of the opposite sex meet for 3-4 minutes that's “parking”. Even one is not allowed to touch girls in the hands in Islam unless she is your sister....It is automatic that when you go to class girls sit that side and boys the other side..." (FGD, boys).

While students in the Muslim school stated that male and female students are prohibited from mixing in class, students from the other schools (Christian founded schools) reported that such gender segregation in the sitting arrangement was not dictated by the school administration. This suggests that religion may not be the only factor associated with gender segregation in class sitting arrangement; other factors related to the meaning of gender within the school culture, are clearly operative.

5.2.2 Students’ sexual attitudes, behaviours and practices

Students' lived experiences are characterized by curiosity, excitement, adventure, relationships and experimentation, driven by peer influence and complex negotiation of identity and competition for recognition and power within the school culture. The study explored students' own experiences and attitudes towards engagement in sexual behaviours.

a) Initiation of sexual relationships

Both boys and girls were asked about whether they have ever encountered any sexual advances or have ever been asked to engage in a love affair/sexual interaction. According to the interviews, the majority of the girls (78.6%) attested to having encountered sexual advances from peers in their school (Figure 5.1).
Similar experiences of sexual invitations from boys were reported by girls in the FGDs. However, none of the students reported actual sexual encounters but simply invitations. All the girls reported that they responded negatively and stated that their rejection of the boys’ advances did not deter them from making more advances, which in most cases led to hostility or harassment of the girls involved. The following comments from the individual interviews and group discussions with girls were typical of how boys exert pressure on girls for greater sexual activity:

“I have had cases where some people [boys] have abused me. Some threaten you that they are going to threaten you or do something bad to you. One may say I have already had sex with that girl… just spilling your name…” (Interview, girl).

“Sometimes they can even plan to beat you or to kill you because they feel like you ignored them, you think that they are ugly… you try to tell somebody he can’t understand you, he goes on talking, so you feel like you are just fed up, you can’t fit in that situation, everybody is just talking about you…” (FGD, girls).

“To me it came as a surprise, a person I thought to be my friend in class and then to tell me that I love you. It was like that person was joking, I told him that you are on a wrong number, Mr. I can’t. He was like why, why did you keep on forking why but you will not give an answer. The immediate answer is I don’t want. You know, these boys they get angry. It’s like they think when they come to you, it’s an automatic yes. I wonder why... The guy started saying you are ugly, with small legs, ugly lips… Some boys may tell you that you are baseless... It hurts but sometimes you have nothing you can do... In my former school I experienced it. There was some friend of mine, some boy approached her and told her that I love you and the girl didn’t do anything. She refused him. This boy went looking bad things about the girl and all the boys were against her, she was disapproved and changed schools. Because that boy had many groups. group of 6 or 7 boys. So when you refuse to love any of them they all beat you as if they are garbage about you. Everything they do is to embarrass you in front of your friends and even in class. You can’t even feel at ease, you start feeling sick and start missing class and in the end you are fed up of yourself... To me it can affect my studies because it hurts and the moment some one abuses me, for these two weeks I can’t read because I will be remembering what you told me in those two weeks I even feel sick…” (FGD, girl).

The above statements suggest that girls’ rejection of boys’ sexual advances is met with spiteful abuse and harassment that involved boys’ denigration of girls’ bodies. Such hostility was said to cause...
anxiety, stress, lack of concentration in class, absenteeism and self-disgust. Some girls spoke of their friends having had to change schools because of boys’ persistence and aggression. They noted boys’ ‘taken for granted attitude’ concerning control over girls’ sexuality.

Girls did not only encounter such negative experiences at school but also in the community from where they are a target of sexual harassment. They reported verbal abuse and threats of physical violence including beating, rape and boys’/men’s frequent visits to the girls’ homes, in response to girls’ rejection of sexual advances from boys/men in their communities during the holidays. A few boys (25.9%) also spoke of having encountered sexual advances although they felt that boys should be the ones initiating sexual engagement with girls. Most of the boys in the interviews and FGDs showed that the majority of the boys could not believe the girls’ actions and there was a lot of debate, laughter and astonishment about tales of girls taking the initiative sexually. Boys’ views are represented in the following extract from interviews with boys:

“It’s very rare instead it’s the boys who do that to the girls... When a girl comes to you and expresses that she wants to establish a relationship with you, you have to think twice. It’s scary for a girl to be so bold in that way. You can easily suspect something. The first thing you think about is that may be she is sick; she has the “kaching” [AIDS]. How can she? It can’t be! [why?] That is what it should be. It’s the men supposed to tell the girl...” (Interview, boy)

“If you do that to me I will think you are a prostitute or you are up to something... I would think a lot about that girl. I know immediately that; that one is a crook...” (Interview, boy).

“Instead boys approach girls... it is rare for a female to ask for a love relationship from a man unless that women or girl is sick and desperate, or has over grown and failed to get a partner...” (Interview, boy).

These responses suggest that girls’ active engagement with their sexuality is associated with sickness (AIDS), prostitution and desperation. Similar points of view were given by boys in the FGDs, who stated:

“It’s funny! ... If a girl is to approach you, you start wondering. How can this girl approach me? It seems this girl has a problem... yaa yaa yaa [all participants affirmed], ... You just run away. You will know that this girl is sick. You will wonder what is so special about me that has made this girl come to me... May be we just grow up with a mentality that the boys are the ones supposed to suggest first... They told us in Moral Training that if you are to act as a gentleman, it’s the boy to do things first and not a girl... It’s crazy how can a girl ask me?... Don’t take these things for granted [one boy said]... There are some desperate boys who do follow up, who just go in the wrong grand, but actually it doesn’t go for a love affair but just remains a friendship because I think those things end around there... I even think it’s mutual... It will be easy for a boy to accept but he will still wonder how can a girl approach me even though it’s mutual... Even as a boy if you tell a girl for example “Michella can we have a love affair and the girl just says... Ooh let’s go.” Again you will start asking... [laughter] Oh. Oh... Yaa Yaa... you are like... This girl is not serious, may be she is sick... It’s like when someone does that, he is expecting a No answer or let me think about it. But someone who is bold... Ooh Ooh ... [indicating don’t deal with that person, she is dangerous]...” (FGD, boys).

Girls’ initiation of relationships was further associated with lack of seriousness and trustworthiness (‘girls can’t be trusted’), and boys reiterated the traditional stereotype beliefs that “men are the ones to suggest first” and used Bible teachings about creation that “man was created first, he is the overall controller of everything, supposed to have desires and chose ladies.” According to most of the boys, it’s “abnormal” and
“funny” for a girl to initiate a sexual relationship. Boys’ attributed such beliefs to their upbringing, culture as well as training from school. Boys further associated girls’ quick acceptance of boys’ sexual invitations to frivolity and to economic concerns.

**The schools’ response to sexual harassment**

An interrogation with the students into the schools’ response to sexual abuse and harassment revealed institutional disregard of girls’ experiences. Girls reported that the teachers’ response was often unsympathetic, disbelieving and unsupportive. The administration was reported as saying the girl is just ‘making a fuss’, ‘is not interested in the teachers lessons’, ‘hates the teacher’, is ‘creating stories’ or ‘faking words on the teacher’ or that the girl is badly behaved. Girls’ sentiments are represented in the following interview excerpts from FGDs and interviews with girls:

“Such things sometimes you don’t tell the teachers...Even if you report, they do nothing, may be they think you are just faking it or creating stories...I have not seen any one being punished for that.”(FGD, girls).

“When you tell the headmaster, in most cases, he doesn’t respond fast. They say there are some girls who want to be thought to be good, so he thinks you are just, maybe you are lying. So when you tell your problems, he says you are the one who is badly behaved...He doesn’t care...Another thing you find that sometimes the headmaster considers or blames you that, that same person blames the teacher. There is no smoke without fire. If the teacher did something obviously the girl must have got a problem and that’s why she has come to report...”(FGD, girls).

“We have a suggestion box but I think it’s doing nothing. It’s just to deceive our parents that yaa...our children forward cases because we ever complain, people can complain over things, nothing is done at all and may be there are some of us who are just okay in reporting. But then the mere fact that the Headmistress is very tough, you can’t think you are taking there something useful... And that deputy headmaster teacher of ours is not a qualified teacher the way he treats the whole school it’s just inhuman including the teachers. Now forwarding such cases you are wasting your time...” (FGD, girls).

“Actually the school, we have ever told the headmaster but it seems he doesn’t react to that...For example there is a teacher who teaches in S.6, he got interested in a girl. He always bought things for the girl, but the girl did not like him. So the girl went and reported to the H/M.[headmaster] The only reaction the H/M told her that she was over making a fuss. She does not want the lesson or the teacher. She is faking words on him. The teacher continued to bring the stuff. The girl went and told her parents and the parent came and told the H/M about it. The H/M told the parents the bad side that the girl is misbehaving, that the girl does not want to study, may be she is tired of the school that’s why she is creating words on the teacher. What the girl did was to tell her parents that she takes her to another school if they wanted her to study...”(Interview, girl).

Such a response voiced in the above girls’ narratives cause girls to be reluctant to report their experiences not only because of seeing it as a waste of time since no serious and practical intervention would be taken, but also for fear of being victimised.

**b) Students’ engagement in heterosexual relationships**

Given the school defined discourses on sexual engagement, students’ opinions about engaging in sexual relationships at their age were sought. Only two out of 27 boys and none of the girls admitted being currently in a sexual relationship and all the students were aware of the consequences of
engaging in such behaviour such as contracting STDs, HIV and AIDS and pregnancy as well as ‘disrupting’ their education. Students interviewed rehearsed the predominant message about postponing sexual intercourse and believed that they could not make independent choices about engaging in sexual behaviours at their young age. Though students were reluctant to claim personal experience, most students reported that girls and boys were engaged in both heterosexual and same sex relationships both “casual” and “deep”, platonic and non platonic, single and multiple relationships, with fellow peers, teachers, sugar daddies and mummies. Students’ acknowledgement of the existence of such sexual relationships among fellow students and the claim that neither the interviewed boys nor girls were engaged in such relationships casts some doubt on the honesty of their own responses as a group about being in a relationship, and could be influenced by the awareness of the adult expectations about children engagement in sexual relationships at their age. The willingness to describe widespread sexual engagement among others but none among themselves attests to the power of the ‘parallel’ universes created by the interaction between adult surveillance and the students’ own worlds of gendered sexuality.

i) Students’ engagement in relationships with peers

Both male and female students indicated that several students were actively involved in sexual relationships, though they claimed that their relationships did not involve sexual intercourse just in “romance” and “kissing”. However, students’ denials that sexual intercourse was apart of peer relationships were challenged by several other students who felt that relationships between the opposite sex did often involve having sexual intercourse. This was evidenced by the following statements made by both girls and boys from the different schools. One of the girls noted:

"Relationships are there but I don’t know about sex. But obviously what do you expect out of girl/boy relationships?.. (Interview, girl).

Though this girl could not prove that sexual intercourse takes place, her view was supported by one of the boys’ view that boys’ engagement in relationships is meant for sex. He stated:

"Yes. Boys are just interested in having sex and that’s all…" (Interview, boy).

Evidence of students’ involvement in sexual intercourse at school was given by one of the girls who gave an account of a sexual act that took place in class (see section 5.2.1c).

During the interviews and FGDs, both boys and girls reported cases where some individuals were engaged in multiple relationships, and especially the boys. Among the Muslim male students, the general feeling was that having multiple relationships was okay because their religion allows it. This was pointed out in the FGD with the boys in a Muslim school.
Though the majority of the students reported that they were not in any relationship at the time of interview, some felt that there was nothing wrong about being in a relationship. This view was particularly prominent in the FGDs for both boys and girls. In one of the FGDs, boys stated:

"...As a fact of life it's okay to engage in sexual relationships. If our parents did not do it we would not be around. ... It's better we engage in such practices before its even time because the more experience you get, the more knowledge you can gain about protecting yourself and avoiding some relationships... the time for the youth to spend on earth has reduced to 43 years, so if you are to wait up to marriage, you may not enjoy there anything [laughter]... It's better to get in sexual relationships because when you are not involved you grow up when you are dormant... by the time you get married you come to bed and fail to do something there.....You fail to perform..." (FGD, boys).

Boys' support for engagement in relationships was associated with 'reproduction', acquiring experience and knowledge about their sexuality and the ways of protection. They also indicated that these relationships were needed in order to respond to the anxiety about impotence and sexual incompetence. Boys further expressed the need to engage in relationships for companionship and pleasure particularly during functions such as dances and dinner. They associated such relationships with prestige which occurred through peer recognition as one of the group, "not to stand out of the crowd." Some boys felt involvement in such relationships concerned lust alone. On the other hand, girls' support for relationships was clearly associated with ideas about preparation for marriage and being able to handle future relationships, as illustrated in the following interview excerpts from FGDs with girls:

"It's [relationships] good to some extent ... okay... now you find these girls, she has been in a single school and she doesn't get out, ... She reaches campus, she didn't know anything and by the way that is the time when she is free. Daddy is not watching, mummy is not watching, she is alone, so she will just go for anything but if I know and I have my boyfriend etc... I don't just go... relationships are helping us but we should consider where we are driving them to..." (FGD, girls).

"These relationships help one to know; like these days it's very common to hear that my future wife, my future husband. When you are in that relationship you can learn what kind of person you are to go for in future. You see a good man but is he faithful? Is he worth or he is a 'Malaya' (prostitute). You get to know someone's character how one behaves, the background so that in future when you are going to face the person you know the exact person you are going for. Not just to land on someone then after one month, the marriage has broken because of simple things... it's not bad but you should abstain from sex... Relationships aren't normally bad but it depends on the way you are related like if you know you have got some relationship with some person, may be your boyfriend, what you should agree on first is abstinence because sex is the most dangerous. It's a disaster because most of its outcomes are dangerous like pregnancy, STDs. But when you are in a relationship without participating in sex you can be there cool, easy. ...Yes they tell us that relationships are not always good before the right time but depending on what is taking place in the world today to some people especially boys it's really hard to live without a partner. Secondly some people cannot even handle feelings. Boys feel they should have someone. This is mostly brought about by peer pressure and those strong feelings, some people have they can't control. So its good you have just for the sake ... but you can abstain... nature cannot be escaped from..." (FGD, girls).

While girls support engagement in relationships, they stressed the need for abstinence from sexual engagements because of the negative consequences associated with sexual intercourse. They believed however, that some students especially boys cannot control their sexual feelings and find it difficult to live without a partner. Girls' reference to boys' sexual desires as a 'natural' force which cannot be
‘escaped’ indicate the students’ constructions of sexuality (particularly male sexuality) as being natural/biological rather than social. The other reasons given by girls for students’ involvement in relationships included peer pressure, lack of parental guidance and permissiveness as well as students taking sex as a ‘game’/fun.

Although some girls felt having relationships had several advantages, others commented that having sexual relationships was not “good” especially multiple relationships because it makes one appear “cheap”. They reported negative experiences in these relationships including lack of concentration in class, shame, exploitation and humiliation after engaging in sexual intercourse. Girls also were bothered by the negative perceptions boys may have about them after such an act of sex.

**ii) Students’ engagement in relationships with sugar daddies and mummies**

There were also reported cases of girls involved in relationships with older men commonly known as “sugar daddies” as this girl noted:

“Girls also have sugar daddies because of some problems like poverty at home. If your parent is poor or your dad is dead some girls get sugar daddies. Like here we have a problem some girls their parents do not visit them so they get sugar daddies to come and visit them on visiting days…” Interview, girl.

Girls’ involvements with “sugar daddies” were associated with the students’ search for more financial support, and lack of parental care. They noted that girls were propelled to seek for such care from older men whom they disguised as either their fathers or uncles. They suggested the idea of providing identification cards to parents and guardians so that “sugar daddies” could not access students but acknowledged that this would not address the problem of lack of adequate parental care, as shown in the extract below from one of the FGDs with girls:

“Those ones are definitely there. They have to be there. However much we don’t know like he comes on visiting day he asks for her name. It’s usually the girls. Some parents don’t give enough things to their girls. May be they don’t have enough money. So the girls get sugar daddies… Now they are going to introduce a policy of giving IDs to parents/guardians. The girls have a tendency of bringing their boyfriends and say this is my uncle, my dad. The policy of IDs is good, but it will not help some girls who have parents who don’t care to come on VDs [visiting days], to give them what they want…the girl will just be there.” (FGD, girls).

A few cases of boys having relationships with older women commonly known as “sugar mummies” were also reported. Boys also associated such engagements with older women with economic benefits:

“The sugar mummies do ask. Women have a tendency of cohabiting with young men…There are boys here who have sugar mummies…For me I had one, giving me a lot of money but for sure I didn’t do anything much. I upgraded her…Such cases of women cohabiting with young men are very common in Ntinda. There are two of my friends who have ever done such…” (FGD, boys).
The hint in the data of students engaging in relationships with older men and women suggests that students are involved in various forms of risky sexual relationships such as exposing the young people to STDS and causing them emotional stress.

**iii) Teacher-student relationships**

Although, none of the interviewed students admitted having had sexual relationship with teachers, in 5 out of 7 schools visited, students reported the existence of teacher-student relationships. Based on the interviews, 32% of the girls and 37% of the boys revealed that such relationships existed, while 18% of the girls and 19% of the boys reported rumours of such relationships. Female students indicated that although both married and unmarried male teachers were involved, such relationships were common among ‘student teachers’ and A’ level female students. Girls further noted that it was difficult for them to easily identify such cases because the practice was done secretly. However, girls were concerned about associating their interaction with male teachers with sexual relationships. Girls views are encapsulated in the voice of one of the girls in the FGDs who said:

"when someone goes over for a discussion people may suspect that she is moving out with that teacher, yet in actual sense it may be mathematics or a physics discussion..." (FGD, participant girls).

Although girls denied such allegations, boys felt that some girls pretend to be consulting teachers over academic issues, when they are discussing love issues.

Students (both boys and girls) reported that relationships with teachers caused competition and conflicts between male students and teachers over sharing girlfriends. While such conflicts led to hostility and harassment of male students by teachers including intimidation, caning, awarding low marks, asking and giving embarrassing questions and comments to the concerned students in class on one hand, girls who engaged in relationships with teachers received preferential treatment such as high marks on the other. Three male students reported having experienced confrontation with and harassment from teachers over sharing girlfriends. Some female students also reported hostility and harassment to girls who reject teachers’ sexual invitations.

**c) Same sex relationships (homosexuality and lesbianism)**

Same sex relationships (homosexuality and lesbianism) were also reported in some schools though students claimed that its occurrence was far less than that of heterosexual relationships. More than half of the boys (52%) and 32% of the girls interviewed acknowledged that ideas about existence of homosexuality were mostly based on rumours. Nevertheless, in some schools especially single sex schools, a few students (both male and female) spoke of some students who had been expelled because of being suspected to be engaging in homosexuality and lesbianism.
"We heard about rumours of lesbians in the girls end. Those who were suspected were expelled..." (FGD, boy).
"Sometimes back it was there. They expelled all the individuals who were found and whoever used to be in the company of the suspects..." (FGD, girls).
"In 2001, homosexuality was there, whenever electricity would go some boys would stay in the dormitory and would do it but they were expelled..." (Interview, boy).
"There were reported causes of homosexuality. The students were reported to the H/M and were expelled. These were girls and boys from other schools and had just joined us..." (Interview, girl).

In some schools students reported that individuals who are suspected to be engaged in same sex relationships undergo counselling.

**d) Teenage pregnancy and STDs/HIV and AIDS**

In all the schools visited more than half of the female (57%) and 48% of the male students reported that they had heard about pregnancy cases in their schools. Some girls' spoke of pregnant girls who had left school either by themselves or were expelled or were still in the school but of whom the school administration was not aware. All FGDs for girls and 2 FGDs for boys identified pregnancy cases which had occurred in the first term of the year or in the last one year. These pregnancy cases mentioned indicate that some students are involved in unprotected sex either within or outside the school although most students interviewed claimed that the affected girls became pregnant during school holidays. The school authorities routinely conducted pregnancy tests (carried out by professional doctors – gynaecologists to ensure accurate and reliable results) at the beginning of every academic year, where some pregnant students would be identified and expelled from the school. Some girls (n=2) and boys (n=5) reported that there were some cases of girls who had attempted to terminate their pregnancies. The students' narratives about incidences of pregnancy suggest lack of 'protection' and hence the risk of contracting STDs including HIV and AIDS. Students however, noted that it was difficult to detect whether someone had an STD or HIV and AIDS since this seemed to be a sensitive and private issue. Indeed none of the respondents could give own experience of such a disease.

**5.3 Students' pursuit of sexuality knowledge**

**5.3.1 Education level at which students first acquired sexuality knowledge and their first source of information**

Students acquire sexuality information from various sources including the formal school curriculum, the media, parents, relatives, friends and other resource persons from either government or non-government organizations. Students' responses showed that majority of the students (96% of the girls and 85% of the boys) received information before joining secondary schools with more girls having
got sexuality information earlier (P4 - 32% and P6 - 32%) than boys. More of the boys indicated that they got sexual information in P6 (30%) and P7 (30%).

According to Table 5.1, students' responses on the first source of sexuality knowledge indicate gender differences. More than a quarter of the girls (29%) reported that their first source of sexuality knowledge was from friends, closely followed by the science/CRE teachers (25%). Senior Women Teachers and mothers were also mentioned as first sources of information for 14% and 11% of the girls respectively.

A large proportion of the boys (41%) cited the class teacher as their first source of sexuality knowledge, followed by friends (30% of boys). Although both boys and girls refer to Straight/Young Talk newspapers and to their mother, more boys (19%) than girls (7%) seemed to get information from the newspapers while more girls than boys got information from their mothers. While some girls identified aunts, the headmistress, and grandmother as first source of information, no single boy mentioned these sources. While boys referred to their brothers and neighbours, girls did not. Neither girls nor boys identified fathers as first source of sexuality information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of sexuality information</th>
<th>Girls (N=28)</th>
<th>Boys (N=27)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Responses</td>
<td>% Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School-based</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science/CRE teacher</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Woman Teacher</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headmistress</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relatives</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandmother</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aunt</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The media</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight/Young Talk newspapers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Others</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbours</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Students’ Interviews

5.3.2 Students’ current sources of sexuality knowledge

Although students reported diverse sources of first information about sexuality (Table 5.1), a wider range of current sources of sexuality information was identified both in the interviews and FGDs
(Table 5.2), grouped under six categories namely school based, religious fora, the media, NGOs and reading materials. Findings from the table shows marked gender differences between the current sources of information for boys and girls. While most girls get information from the relatives especially parents73 (82%), the majority of the boys get information from school, particularly during the assembly (85%). A significant number of boys (70%) also obtain sexuality information from parents. The school assembly was also a significant current source of information for the girls (79 %), followed by peers (50%) and talks from outside resource persons (43%). More girls (50%) than boys (44 %) identified peers as current common sources of information. Among the different types of media, television emerged as a major source of information to more than half of the girls (53.6%). Both boys and girls identified newspapers with more girls than boys obtaining sexuality information from Bakedde and Red paper while more boys than girls got information from Straight Talk. Interviews further showed that more boys than girls listened to the radio and accessed information through reading materials such as magazines, novels and books. Students reported that pornographic materials were common among students especially boys. However, more boys than girls indicated that they got information from magazines than novels and books. Similar multiple sources of sexuality knowledge were identified by boys and girls in the FGDs. Students’ perceptions about the different sources are explored in section 5.4.2.

73 mothers’ and fathers’ role in providing sexuality information is discussed in section 5.3.2 b and Table 5.4
Table 5.2 Students' current sources of sexuality information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Source of knowledge</th>
<th>Girls (N=28)</th>
<th>Boys (N=27)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Responses</td>
<td>% Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School – based</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assembly</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>78.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer groups</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWT/Matron</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clubs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks from outside people/resource persons</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious Fora</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church, youth conferences</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosque – Sheik</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Seminars</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relatives</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>82.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aunts</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other relatives</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The media</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Talk newspaper</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>53.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers – Bukeke, Red paper</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NGOS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Planning Association Uganda</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading materials</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading books</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novels</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Students' interviews
Figures do not add up to 100% because of multiple responses – students identified more than one current source of information

The figures on the above table generally indicate that girls are more engaged with multiple sources of sexuality information than boys. The reported diverse sources of sexuality knowledge demonstrate that in addition to the school based sources, students are always on the look out for information from other sources.

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74 excludes the class based information from Biology, Religious Education, Social Etiquette and Moral Education
5.3.3 Students' views about the role of parents in sexuality education

a) Sexuality knowledge from parents

Parents constituted a current source of sexuality information for a majority of the students especially the girls. Students who indicated that they discuss sexual issues with their parents were asked about the information they got from their parents. Students' responses were categorized into six main themes75 (Table 5.3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexuality knowledge and messages</th>
<th>Girls (N=23)</th>
<th>Boys (N=19)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of</td>
<td>%Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menstruation and cleanliness</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of girlfriends/partners</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual behaviour</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding sexual activity - abstinence</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>91.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual health</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of condoms</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STDS and their prevention</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems caused by engaging in sex</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention of rape and defilement</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Society and culture</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decent behaviour in society (dressing)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of watching &quot;blue&quot; movies</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Students' Interviews*

*Figures do not add up to 100% because of multiple responses.*

According to all the boys and the majority of the girls (91%) who obtained sexuality information from parents, the most commonly addressed sexuality issue during talks with mothers and fathers concerned the need for abstinence from sex. Parents were described as encouraging their children not to engage in sexual relationships or activity until they finished their studies and became married. A relatively small proportion of students (less than 5% of the girls and 6% of the boys) acquired information about STDS and their prevention. While girls reported that they got information about the risks of engaging in sexual intercourse, the need to prevent rape and defilement, the meaning of 'decent behaviours', guidelines on handling menstruation and cleanliness, none of the boys indicated having got such information. Information about their selection of girlfriends/partners, their use of condoms and warnings about the influence of television (particularly the 'blue' movies) were exclusively reported by boys.

75 themes recommended by SIECUS (1996) as constituting comprehensive sexuality education
76 five girls and eight boys indicated that they did not get any information from parents
While female students reported that parents played a very significant role in the construction of their sexual attitudes, behaviour, personal values and decisions, boys viewed teachers as most influential. Girls expressed greater trust in parents’ information because they felt that their parents possessed the necessary experience and the information they gave was more genuinely interested in their well-being than that coming from teachers who were just fulfilling their obligations. They reported that parents’ information targets the individual child and addresses personal concerns of that child:

"...From parents, I know my parents are older than me and know everything more than I do. Whatever thing they tell me is the right thing...Where as at school I can note it and agree that it's the right thing but am not well convinced..." (Interview, girl).

"...from class we are so many and we are all from different backgrounds and have different problems. They cannot solve your problem as a person.... They can talk about the others but they cannot talk about your problem. So once you talk with your parents, your parents have to find a solution. Since you are one person and you are known to each other, the problem is easy to solve with your parent who knows you compared to class where by you are many...they cannot solve your problem as a person..." (Interview, girl).

"...When a parent is talking you feel they are genuine and you tend to follow what they say but that of teachers they are just teaching, it's their job...." (Interview, girl).

Similar views were echoed by the few boys (21%) who also explained that they gained more satisfaction from talking to their parents than from engaging with teachers and would not want to be disloyal or disappoint their parents by engaging in behaviours parents disapproved of. Similar views emerged from the FGDS. Students believed that parents help them to be responsible citizens. Despite these views most of the boys viewed classroom knowledge as having greater influence on their sexuality than parental teaching because it was more detailed and less unilaterally prescriptive:

"...I prefer that one got from teachers because like for me I have never discussed with my parents apart from them telling me not to engage in relationships and bad companies..." (Interview, boy).

"...The one from class because the one from my mother, it's just a caution but from class they give me the details..." (Interview, boy).

Boys expressed a preference for classroom knowledge because they had limited opportunity to discuss with their parents about sexual matters and some recognised the burdens of the domestic environment as a deterrent to discussions. Those who got a chance to talk with their parents only obtained prescriptive information. The following interview excerpts represent boys' views from FGDS:

"...We don't discuss with parents those things... Some parents do, personally my mum has been helpful... she says don't chill out those things; don't go in for girls... some parents can say something but not extreme. They just warn you about some things. The other things they expect you to know at least by now. You should have an idea.... They believe that when you come to school, you are supposed to learn everything. They assume that we are taught... But basically their part is mainly don't do this, don't do that... don't only... its not detailed...Parents fear to talk about such issues with their children because some parents think their kids don't know these things so they will be like they are training their own children....." (FGD, boys).

"...most of us fear to talk with our parents about those things. They can advise us but you cannot sit and discuss in detail...The parents are busy sometimes they come home when they are tired. Like my mum she comes and straight away goes to check in the kitchen, then checking this and that in the house and she can be there busy until supper time and after supper we go to bed...." (FGD, boys).
The above statements re-emphasize the opinions expressed by the boys in the interviews that the information from parents is couched in almost entirely negative terms such as “don’t do this, don’t do that, don’t only”. Students theorized their parents’ fear of sexual information’s capacity to ‘contaminate’ them and further pointed out that parents are too busy to have enough time for such discussion and that they assume that schools provide enough education. Male students further reported that parents’ advice or talk about sexuality only comes about if triggered by a problem, an approach they disapproved of.

b) Parents’ responsibility in sexuality education at home

Girls’ and boys’ views about mothers’ and fathers’ role in sexuality education were sought. Students reported that mothers played a more significant role than fathers in providing information and guidance especially to girls. Gender differences were observed regarding the most helpful parent; a large proportion of the girls (74%) and fewer boys (47%) reported that their mothers were more helpful and influential than their fathers (Table 5.4). On the other hand, a greater percentage of boys (42%) compared to the girls (26%) stated that both parents were equally helpful in providing information and guidance and influenced their sexual attitudes, behaviours and decisions. Only two boys and none of the girls reported that fathers alone influenced their sexuality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.4</th>
<th>Students’ opinions about which parent was most helpful in providing information and guidance about their sexuality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls (N=23)</td>
<td>Boys (N=19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most helpful parent</td>
<td>No. of Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Students’ interviews (students who indicated parents as sources of sexuality knowledge)

Several reasons inhibiting discussions of sexual issues between parents and children emerged during the FGDs. Girls’ reasons included their own discomfort, toughness of parents, their embarrassment and fear of being labelled as ‘spoilt children’ and their dislike of the way parents dominate the talk, as shown in the following excerpts from FGDs with girls:

“…Me I don’t discuss such things. I find it queer…its hard because when they are talking you feel uncomfortable you just let them talk and may not ask any questions…Some parents are very tough. You fear to ask them about such things. They may say you are getting spoilt…” [FGD, girls].

“…the only chance you can get to learn about that stuff is through school and friends. … The good thing is that there is an aunt of mine who stays at home. If someone is bothering me, I tell her and she gives me advice…” [FGD, girls].

“…I find it embarrassing at times. I have a feeling that whenever she looks she will know what is really happening with me….The first time I talked to my mum about menstruation, I was really shy, the whole day it was shocking. I
Girls reported that they turned to friends and other relatives such as aunts, sisters and house maids. Similarly, boys expressed fear and discomfort discussing sexual issues with parents particularly their fathers. While girls indicated that parents do most of the talking during the discussions, boys said at times they took the initiative asking their parents about their interest in their relationships and responding to their parents’ questions, often with scepticism or a sense of unease about the overwhelming negativity of parents’ approach to sexuality information.

5.4 Students’ experiences with the official school sexuality education curriculum

Students’ experiences with the official school sexuality education curriculum were explored by asking them about what they remembered (in an informal environment) about their engagement with sexuality education lessons focusing on the broad topics/themes that were covered in the biology, CRE and IRE lessons. The study did not undertake a deeper analysis of how much students knew or had learnt about the specific topics identified since this would have required an in-depth classroom observation with analysis of assignments and examinations as well as conducting tests to ascertain how much they had learnt about the specific topics.

Although the topics identified by students may not suggest much about the detailed content of what teachers presented in class, the students’ level of comprehension as well as their ideas about gendered politics of the content of the lessons, responses to other questions in the interviews offered deeper insights into students’ learning experience with the official school sexuality education and the practical application of the information to their lived experiences.

5.4.1 Students’ experiences with the different curricula content

a) Sexuality knowledge in Biology

To gain insight into what students perceived to be the teaching of sexuality, students were asked about the knowledge of sexuality learnt in Biology specifically through reproduction. Students identified a number of issues covered (Table 5.5). The issues have been grouped into themes corresponding to the six key concepts of comprehensive sexuality education recommended by SIECUS (1996). Generally, both male and female students identified issues related to human development and sexual health as the topics most attended to during biology lessons while issues about relationships and sexual behaviour were reported least attended to and no consideration is given to society and culture and personal skills.
Students’ responses indicate that there are clear gender differences regarding the sexuality issues identified by boys and girls from the Biology lessons (Table 5.5). Regarding human development, the majority of the girls (93%) than boys (63 %) noted that they had studied adolescence and the secondary characteristics of the reproductive system. Although both boys and girls reported that they had studied about menstruation, there was a marked gender difference between the percentage of girls (82%) and boys (30%) who mentioned having studied menstruation. In addition, slightly more girls mentioned having studied the reproductive system/organisms and their functions. With regard to biological topics, nearly the same percentage of boys and girls indicated that they had studied pregnancy, the functioning mechanisms of their bodies in response to the opposite sex, ideas about making friends and the wisdom of abstinence. Among the different aspects of sexual health, a relatively greater focus on the study of birth control and use of contraceptives was mentioned by most girls although a third of the boys also named this. In addition, the study of STDs was reported by a slightly higher number of girls than boys and only one boy reported having studied about abortion.

Table 5.5 Sexuality issues identified by students from the Biology lessons by sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues identified</th>
<th>Girls (N=28)</th>
<th>Boys (N=27)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of</td>
<td>% Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Human Development</td>
<td>Responses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reproductive system/organisms</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth and development/secondary characteristics of the reproductive system</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>92.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertilization</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menstruation</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>82.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The functioning mechanisms of our bodies in response to the opposite sex</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The effects of chromosomes and hormones on sexuality</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships/making friends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sexual behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effects of involvement in sex</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sexual health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to keep yourself safe</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth control, using contraceptives (pill, condom &amp; diaphragm)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>96.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STDs (syphilis, Gonorrhoea. HIV and AIDS)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstinence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene77</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Society and culture</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Personal skills, sexuality and society</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Students’ interviews

*The figures in the table do not add up to 100 percent because of multiple responses

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77 hygiene is used as a code to describe moral and deeply gendered constructions of cleanliness relating to menstruation and boys' and girls' bodies but mainly emphasised for the girls.
b) **Sexuality knowledge in Christian Religious Education (CRE)**

Based on the students' interviews and the FGDs, the data suggests that CRE covers a wider range of sexuality issues than Biology and that it focuses more on the social aspects of sexuality. The issues identified by students as having been studied in CRE were also grouped under the six categories (Table 5.6). As was the case of Biology, I did not assess students' level of comprehension about the specific issues identified.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.6</th>
<th>Sexuality issues identified by students in Christian Religious Education lessons by sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Issues identified</td>
<td>Girls (N=23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Human development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescence, secondary characteristics, puberty</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Relationships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting attracted to the opposite sex</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Personal skills, sexuality and society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self control, avoid temptation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sexual behaviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copulation</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premarital sex</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sexual health</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstinence</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth control/family planning</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Society and culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's marginalization, women's rights</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of partners</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's and men's roles and responsibilities, work</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What God wants us to do</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How girls are supposed to look after their bodies</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected behaviour in society</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't remember</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Students' interviews – excludes Muslim students who take IRE*

*The figures in the table do not add up to 100 percent because of multiple responses*
According to Table 5.6 for each of the specific issues studied under the six themes, there are evident gendered differences in the issues identified by boys and girls. A slightly higher percentage of girls cited relationships as one of the topics covered in CRE. This was followed by adolescence/puberty issues, which was mentioned by a slightly higher number of boys. On the other hand, a relatively higher number of girls than boys reported they covered birth control, women’s marginalization and rights as well as men’s roles and responsibilities respectively. While 7 of the boys mentioned having studied about pre-marital sex, 22% of the girls indicated lessons about the same topic.

On average, students (both boys and girls) remembered having studied at least two issues including the broad themes apart from the one boy who could not remember what was taught.

c) **Sexuality knowledge in Islamic Religious Education (IRE)**

In order to understand sexuality issues taught in IRE, students were asked to indicate the knowledge about sexuality that they had learnt in IRE lessons. Analysis of this question is based on interviews with relatively few students (n=9) who were studying IRE in one Muslim school\(^78\). The same categorization of identified issues was done as in the case of Biology (Table 5.5) and CRE (Table 5.6). The resulting students’ responses about the different sexuality issues varied between boys and girls and also within each sex (Table 5.7).

All the interviewed boys and girls who offered IRE indicated having learnt about sexual behaviour which addresses the fact that engaging in premarital sex is morally wrong. The data further shows gendered responses in the topics identified by boys and girls. While half of the boys indicated studying issues related to human development particularly about the male and female sexual reproductive organs and the secondary characteristics as well as girls dress code and expected behaviour in society, none of the girls mentioned these topics or any aspect of human development. Although some girls reported that they had learned about different aspects of sexual health, no single boy identified these aspects. In addition, none of the girls and boys reported having learned about issues concerning personal skills.

Discussions with Muslim students also revealed that students could mainly remember information on the negative consequences of engaging in sexual relationships before marriage namely, “Zina”, the “great crime in Islam”. According to the Muslim students, IRE stresses the negative aspects of sexuality and emphasizes non engagement in sexual relationships before marriage.

\(^{78}\) Muslim schools in Uganda form a small percentage of the total number of schools in the country.
Table 5.7  Sexuality issues students identified in Islamic Religious Education (IRE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues identified</th>
<th>Girls (N=5)</th>
<th>Boys N=4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Responses</td>
<td>% Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Human development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male and female sexual organs</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary characteristics in adolescents</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls should not be in contact with boys</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Personal skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sexual behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Ziina’ - engaging in premarital sex is bad</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladies should not be shy when making love with their husbands</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sexual health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STDs, HIV and AIDS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth control (not allowed in Islam)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleanliness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Society and culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharia Law and sexual intercourse</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls are not supposed to put on trousers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to behave in society</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Students’ interviews from the Muslim school which offer the subject (only 9 students offering IRE were interviewed and 20 participants in the FGDs. *The figures in the table do not add up to 100 percent because of multiple responses

The female students gave more detailed prescriptions about sexuality in Islam including facts about sanctions/punishments given to those who act against the Islamic expected behaviour. They spoke of the punishments given for engaging in premarital sex and marital infidelity such as being given 100 canes and being stoned to death respectively, and commented that such punishment was unfair. Regarding Sharia law and sexual intercourse, one of the girls reported that these frameworks encouraged being outgoing during marital sexual intercourse.

The other memories of IRE study reported during the FGDs of girls and boys included ideas about personal hygiene and non-involvement in sex during menstruation. Issues reported exclusively by girls’ FGDs included information on the fact that female genital mutilation was a violation, that circumcision for boys was to prevent infections and about recitation of “dhuwer” prayers before engaging in sex. Boys reported having studied about issues such as rape, incest, divorce, marriage and polygamy. Anal sex or homosexuality was reported in the boys FGDs as one of the issues that were discussed but as something prohibited by Islam.
d) **Other subjects addressing sexuality education in the study schools**

In addition to Biology and Religious Education (CRE & IRE), some schools had supplementary subjects that addressed sexuality issues namely; Social Etiquette and Moral Education or training. Although there is no standard national syllabus for these subjects, each school has developed an outline of the issues to be addressed. The subjects are not examined in the final national examinations at S.4 but schools conduct internal assessments every end of term and year.

i) **Social etiquette**

While Social Etiquette is taught across all classes, Moral Training is offered from S.1 up to S.3. Students’ views about what was covered in class in the two schools⁷⁹ which offered the subject were solicited. All the boys (n=4) as well as 60% (n=6) of the girls reported having covered hygiene. Students’ interviews revealed gendered responses with the majority of the girls (7 out of 10 girls) reporting having studied about relationships with the opposite sex. Furthermore, while a relatively bigger percentage of boys (3 out of 4 boys) than girls (n=1) reported having studied how to interact with the opposite sex, more girls (n=6) than boys (n=1) stated that they had learnt about the expected morals in society. Issues concerning self esteem, dignity, care for visitors, embroidery and dressing were exclusively identified by girls while issues such as public speaking and respect for elders were reported exclusively by boys (n=3).

In the mixed school, students stated that Social Etiquette lessons were held in single sex settings and focused on issues that concerned each gender group. This possibly could be the reason why boys and girls had differing responses to the information taught. Students also reported that while girls had regular and frequent meetings with their Senior Woman Teacher (SWT), boys met irregularly and less frequently with their Warden.

More in-depth commentary on the gendered focus of the Social Etiquette syllabi came out in the FGDs. Girls explained that in addition to hygiene and the need for abstinence, they are taught the expected gendered behaviours in society for a woman, such as “decency”, “dignity” and the notion of “a woman’s worth”, social tradition about dressing, kneeling before the elders/husbands and being reserved were covered. Other issues that emerged from the FGDs that were not mentioned in the interviews included ideas about parents’ responsibility for sexuality education and the danger of rape.

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⁷⁹ One school is a girls only school and the other is co-educational hence the 10 girls represent the 2 schools and the 4 boys are from one school.
On the other hand boys’ main memories of study included public speaking, guidelines for interaction between sexes and cautions against certain female behaviours that may cause boys to be tempted to engage in sexual activities. The following extract illustrates boys’ views from one of the FGDs:

"...we learnt how we should express ourselves... talk confidently in public... we learnt how girls tempt boys and know their actions and when they do it you can easily know how to go about it... (how do girls tempt boys?)... putting on indecently short skirts, long slit dresses, trousers which are too much on their bodies, the revealing ones, very tight... a girl can keep on asking you to do numbers for her... they put on make ups so that we get attracted..." (FGD boys).

Implied in the above boys’ commentary is the idea that girls’ bodies are regarded as constant sources of potential sexual attraction to males and that girls consciously tempt boys by their indecent dress. Although the topic of adolescent development was indicated among the issues covered in the syllabus, none of the male and female students reported having learnt about such topic.

A review of the syllabus and issues brought up by students in the interviews and FGDs suggest that Social Etiquette offers a highly gendered curriculum, addresses the social aspects of sexuality including differential expectations regarding boy/girl sexuality, and simultaneously prescribing gender-neutral warnings such as non engagement in sex before marriage, limited interaction between boys and girls, and the need for ‘decency’.

ii) Moral Education and Training

This is also a supplementary subject that was being offered in two of the study schools one coeducation and another single-sex school. The subject is offered to students of S.1 – S.3. Unlike the Social Etiquette lessons which were held in single sex classes in the mixed school, Moral Training was being taught to both boys and girls together (mixed sex class). Like the other subjects, students were asked to identify sexuality issues covered in Moral Education lessons.

According to the student interviews, various issues were covered in the lessons with boys reporting on more issues than girls. All the girls (n=4) and the majority of the boys (n=7) reported having learnt about society and culture especially the expected behaviour in society (such as prudence, courtesy, respect for elders and self respect). A relatively significant percentage of boys (>50%) indicated having learnt about relationships, public appearance and respect for parents and other people. While all the girls reported having learnt about courtship and marriage and half of the girls indicated that they learnt about dating and communication skills, no male student identified these issues. Whereas some boys reported having learnt about relationships (n=6) and self control (n=2), none of the girls reported on these issues, probably because such issues did not interest them.
5.4.2 Students' opinions and assessment of the sexuality education content coverage and orientation

Students' assessment of the in-class sexuality knowledge relates to the type and amount of information presented and evaluation of its relevance to their experiences. Students compared in-class information with other sources. They pointed out that teachers mainly focused on the biological aspects of sexuality and gave more of the restrictive, protective/preventive material about sexuality with either little or no information about safety measures such as condom use. Some students especially boys commented that the material presented was often brief, plain and familiar. Boys were concerned about teacher censorship of the information and omission of issues which they described as "hard stuff" particularly the meaning of sex as demonstrated by groups of boys in the FGDS and in one interview:

"...We did not get enough information...The teacher gave us some brief sheet about it...We had small stuff, it was just what we had been used to hear. Yaa, the obvious! ... (FGD, boys).

"...The teachers just give it plain such that you keep on getting the urge to find out and I think it's good as a base...It gives us the base to gather more information...a teacher may say certain things and leave out certain things...They tell us but then they have a limit....The information is less analytical than when you are outside because in class a teacher can just talk about sex — a man and a woman joining together, and stops there but outside you are told the steps you have to take when you are getting into a sexual action --in our groups and in some magazines. The outside information gives more knowledge on our sexuality. In class they give us more of protective information...they [teachers] usually leave out some part they are not supposed to teach us... [Laughter]...A teacher cannot demonstrate to you how to have sex...They leave out the hard stuff...But then for us we shall go out and find out, search and get the movies. But then we are not sure of that.... There is also a problem of age; the age of search, the teacher will say don't do this and you are going to be so inquisitive that what if I do it what will happen so you go ahead and do it...." (FGD, boys).

"...It's not enough. It's like the teachers don't want to display so much..." (Interview, boy).

It is evident from the above excerpts that teachers' censorship of information propelled students to seek for more information from other sources such as the peers. Boys' concern over teachers' censorship of the information was confirmed by girls. They noted that teachers did not want to give details during lessons because of the perception that students would get 'spoilt':

"...When we are studying these topics teachers tend to over rush as if we are aware of everything or maybe they are just biding way so that we don't understand clearly. Maybe they think we can go astray because of the information we get...they think that we are going to practice what they tell us..." (FGD, girls).

Students described peer-based system of information exchange and noted that in this terrain, freedom of expression, familiarity and lack of embarrassment enabled consultation. The information gleaned from the different sources was gendered, as these girls show in the following excerpt from one of the group discussions with girls:

"...For me I think the outside education on sexuality is more than the one in class for example when we look at the Straight Talk when they put the information you find that when you read it, you can understand it more than in class whereby you have different teachers, there is a teacher who can teach you and you understand but there is one who can teach and you don't get anything. So when you read it in the newspaper you can get it better...."
Girls were more interested in information about their bodies, hygiene, and family and marriage issues (such as how to make a successful marriage). Girls noted that sexuality information obtained from the media such as *Straight Talk* and other newspapers and radio was more detailed, easier to understand and were of more practical application than presentations by teachers. They pointed out that the media such as the radios and newspapers provide details on issues which teachers were shy to talk about and which the girls were more interested in especially those concerning marriage such as “visiting the bush” (pulling of the vaginal labia minora⁸⁰) and hygiene⁸¹. In all the FGDs of girls, the meaning of pulling of the vaginal labia minora and desire for more information about the practice was a consistent question at the end of the discussions.

Although students can freely consult amongst themselves, some students especially girls expressed scepticism about the reliability of the information received from friends. They noted that such information is often complicated as these girls explained:

> “...from friends. Friends can give wrong advices. For example I had a friend who was pregnant, then when she asked for advice from a friend. She was advised to abort which is not good. But for me I told her don't do so because you may die in the process.” (Interview, girl).

> “...A girl will only pretend that she is your friend but one time she will lead you into a mess…” (FGD, participant girl).

Though subjects like CRE and Social Etiquette offered gender stereotypic information, students indicated they were sometimes applicable to their lived experiences:

> “...CRE works around our normal life...You find that we have to reflect upon certain things...learn to accept others like they say men are superior and women are inferior... Learn to accept certain things they way they are in society...” (Interview, girl).

> “…Sex differences and the person, courtship and marriage in CRE has taught me how to relate to the opposite sex though sometimes I feel like I could be their equal. I learnt that we are not really supposed to be....” (FGD, girls).

While girls acknowledged the significance of CREs’ focus on the social aspects of their sexuality, they further noted the unequal power relations stressed by the knowledge gained from the lessons. Boys and girls also stated that the emphasis put on religious values in the presentation of sexuality material

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⁸⁰ a cultural obligation for girls before they get married
⁸¹ especially during menstruation (see footnote on Table 5.5)
and the reference made to the Bible influenced their day to day lives. There was little questioning of this as a framework for sexuality education.

Although the majority of the students indicated that class-based information was similar in content and broad themes to that offered elsewhere, over 80% stated that the information from other sources was “better” than that from class. The observed differences between the different sources of information involved teacher support (in terms of giving details and response to students’ information needs). Some students indicated concern about the contradicting massages particularly regarding safer sex practices and the right time to have sex. Students (both boys and girls) noted that while schools do not encourage condom use, the outside sources such as the media and friends encourage their use. They further reported that some teachers advised them that it’s fine to engage in sex after age 18 years while others told them to wait until marriage. The concern about the right time to engage in sexual relationships for young people was a recurrent question at every end of an interview and FGD.

Students appeared to value religious education and social etiquette than the biological information. Some students, however, seemed to feel that different sources of information in the end complimented one another in a useful way.

\[a\] Factors influencing the teachers' selection and organization of information (content) presented by teachers

According to the students, the amount and type of information presented in class was influenced by students’ reaction towards the teachers’ presentation such as their overt embarrassment, excitement or disruptive behaviours. They noted that such behaviours caused teachers to amputate presentations about sexuality topics. One of the boys reported that:

“... The way students react when the teacher says something makes him think that he is going beyond. Some students are sly and seem embarrassed at what the teacher is saying, others just laugh, make funny sounds…” (Interview, boy).

Students suggested that teachers are sometimes concerned about how much material they need to give students to avoid mutual embarrassment. This leads to some censorship of information. Students also indicated that some teachers were reluctant to talk about sexual issues in class.

Another factor which the students noted as an influence on the amount of information given in class was time. The majority of the male (82%) and female (64%) students indicated that the teachers had limited time in which to offer detailed explanations (Figure 5.2), and input was inadequate.
The following comments from the interviewed students highlight their sense that certain topics are rushed through:

"...Usually we have so many questions to ask and the teacher wants to finish the syllabus so she has to cut at short and continue. The time is short. May be we would have this right from S1 to S4. So that the topic is not only brought in at once in S1..." (Interview, girl).

"...The teacher can't get the time to answer everyone's question because of the short time and another lesson coming in......I think a bit more time is needed because teachers tend to be brief, rushing to teach other things and yet there are many things you have to learn. So I think we need more time to study about sexuality..." (Interview, girl).

"...Like in Biology the syllabus tends to be a little bit big. If they spend a bit of time on this there might not be time to look at other things..." (FGD, participant girl).

"...They don't have enough time because here the lesson takes between 30 to 45 minutes. The teacher sometimes has to go over the topic because he has to teach other things and finish the syllabus. There are also monthly tests which take part of the time..." (Interview, boy).

Students noted that teachers' time competed with other activities, such as monthly tests. In addition, students (boys and girls) felt that the scheduling of sexuality topics either in the 'middle' or end of other topics or at end of the term also contributed to abbreviated and unconsultative teaching.

Similarly, boys and girls in the FGDs pointed out that factors including teachers' workload, the need to complete the syllabus and teachers' tensions about the content influenced the amount of material covered during lessons. The students stressed the need for more time allocation to the teaching of sexuality issues because they felt they were importantly linked to the realities of their lives and the challenges that they face as youths both in school and out of school, as the following excerpts from one of the FGDs with boys and interviews shows:

"with the Uganda of today, HIV is killing so many young people, we need to talk about it, they should give it more time. Many girls are dropping out school because of getting pregnant. The population is very high; I..."
hear from the national census that it is about 24 millions. Some families like our neighbours, some of the children cannot go to school because of lack of school fees..." (FGD, boys).

"It is good because here in secondary schools most of the students who are here are adolescents. So that period disturbs students so much so it's important to tell them about it. So that they can't go wrong..." (Interview boys).

b) Students’ proposed changes on the structure and content of the curriculum

Having identified various inadequacies in the official curriculum structure, students made several suggestions which can help to strengthen the teaching of sexuality issues in schools. The key suggestions included provision of sexuality education as a subject of its own, offering age appropriate information as well as regular teaching about sexual issues. Offering sexuality education as subject was mainly suggested by girls. Girls suggestions are represented in the following interview extract from one girl and group discussion with girls who stated:

"...I think it is good and it should be one of the subjects on the main curriculum rather than leaving us to read the newspapers or waiting for people to come and talk to us..." (Interview, girl).

"...these teachers do not tell us everything but if it is a subject, they will be able to tell us more, even things that they hide from us...cover the social aspects..." (FGD, girls).

The girls suggested that providing sexuality education as a separate subject would address the problem of inadequate information given and would enable the provision of more detailed and comprehensive information covering all aspects of sexuality. On the other hand, while some students (both boys and girls) proposed that sexuality topics should be taught throughout the course of ordinary level (from S.1-S.4) instead of covering these issues at S.4 as has been the tradition in most schools (usually taught at the end of the course), one of the students (male) preferred to have sexuality issues taught after the syllabus is completed (at end of third term of S.4) because he believed such an arrangement allows time for discussions.

Given the teachers' workload and limited time, some of the male students pointed out that more time outside the timetable should be set aside for people from outside the school (resource persons) to come and give talks about some sexuality issues.

Students’ opinions about the issues that should be addressed in sexuality education

Students identified a number of topics which they felt should be covered in sexuality education. The identified topics were organized into six categories namely human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behaviour, sexual health and society and culture (Table 5.8). Although, some topics were desired by both male and female students, analysis of the topics suggested for inclusion in school sexuality education indicated students’ gendered priorities about sexuality knowledge they wanted. Nearly the same number of girls and boys expressed desire for lessons about relationships. On the other hand, more boys than girls were interested in learning about topics related to sexual health particularly STDs and HIV and AIDS.
Table 5.8  Students' proposed sexuality topics to be addressed in a sexuality education curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues identified</th>
<th>Girls (N=28)</th>
<th>Boys (N=27)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Responses</td>
<td>% Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Human development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menstruation/ovulation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reproduction in general</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genetics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex differences</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our body and the changes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causes of sexual drive in boys and girls</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courship and marriage</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling proposals from boys and men</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualities of a good partner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to relate, interact with boys/girls</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faithfulness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to develop positive attitude towards each other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Personal skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self esteem</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision making</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to manage ourselves</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sexual behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstinence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The age of starting sexual intercourse</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantages of pre-mature sex</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to use of condoms</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual abuse – rape and defilement</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not involving in prostitution</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sexual health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STDS, HIV and AIDS</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth control, Family planning/pregnancy prevention</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>53.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent life and precautions</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Society and culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulling of the Labia &quot;visiting the bush&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self respect and respect for others</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress code</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behaviour in society</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family life/marriage</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer pressure</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Students' interviews

Figures do not add to 100% because of multiple responses

A significant number of girls desired information about pregnancy prevention (54%), followed by an interest in reproduction and expected behaviours in society. Slightly more girls than boys proposed learning about hygiene. Generally a larger proportion of the boys appreciated information about use
of condoms, interaction with the opposite sex and abstinence. A larger proportion of the girls proposed lessons about menstruation. A relatively equal number of boys and girls desired information about the body changes. Sexual abuse, pulling of the Labia minora, self respect and respect for others, handling proposals from boys/men, genetics, sex differences, faithfulness, qualities of a good partner and family life were exclusively suggested by girls. All in all, girls were more interested in learning about issues that are perceived to be female issues while boys were more interested in relationships and STDs and how to relate with the girls. While boys seemed to relate sexuality knowledge to sexual intercourse, relationships, STDs and body changes, girls gave a broader picture of sexuality knowledge including ideas about violence, culture and preparation for their adult life as well as provision of a framework helping them to live healthy sexual lives as they were now.

5.4.3 The teaching strategies employed during the sexuality education lessons

As was noted in Chapter three section 3.3.2(b) teachers are free to employ any teaching methods deemed appropriate and teaching is conducted according to the specific school timetable. To gain insights into students' classroom experiences, students' opinions about the teaching methods employed during sexuality education lessons were explored. Most of the boys (82%) and girls (71%) indicated that lessons about sexuality were conducted mainly using the lecture method (Figure 5.3). The students explained that the method involves dictation of notes (information) and provision of brief explanations by the teacher. The other methods reported were discussion (29% of the girls and 19% of the boys) and chalk and talk (14% of the girls and 11% of the boys).

![Figure 5.3 Teaching methods employed during sexuality education lessons](image)

*Source: Students' interviews*

Tr. = Teacher; Expl. = Explanation; D.notes = Dictation of notes.
Students explained that the information given during the lessons was presented largely as bodies of facts with little elaboration. All the students indicated that teachers did not use any teaching aids during the lessons with the exception of one girl who reported use of charts.

**a) Students' opinions and assessment of the in-class teaching strategies**

Given the multiple sources of information identified by students, their opinions and assessment of the in-class teaching methods was explored to provide insights into the value that students attached to sexuality education delivery. Several of the interviewed students (50% of the girls and 48% of the boys) stated that the teaching was “theoretical” and did not offer any practical guidelines or examples. Smaller number (36% of the girls and 40% of the boys) acknowledged that the methods used were appropriate and helped them to relate the facts to their life experiences (Table 5.9).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion about the methods</th>
<th>Girls (N=28)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Boys (N=27)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Responses</td>
<td>% Total</td>
<td>No. of Responses</td>
<td>% Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical/not practical</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Its okay and appropriate</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacks details</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam oriented teaching</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Students' interviews*

*The figures in the table do not add up to 100 percent because of multiple responses*

Slightly more girls (32%) than boys (30%) reported that teachers did not provide detailed explanations because of fear concerning sexuality talk. A small number of students indicated that teaching was predominantly exam oriented.

Students' meanings of the lessons being “theoretical” were mainly associated with the teachers' limited use of practical methods such as demonstrations and illustrations, live examples, case studies and audio visual aids such as films, videos and other teaching aids as these girls in the interviews noted:

"...I think they should apply more methods because some people do not know how the diaphragn looks like, some people do not know how people who are injected look like, they don't know the effects of some of the diseases... At least they should show us some films. The methods are too theoretical. They should add in some practical bit..." (Interview, girl).

"...What I find not useful is the fact that they just keep saying...they just keep talking to us. It is better to learn from something more practical, plays and videos would bring out something more real than telling a girl that this thing is not good for you, show how something happens, she will get into it..." (Interview, girl).
Girls observed that the use of plays and videos would present the information more clearly than just talking. As indicated in the above excerpts, the girls’ concern was mainly the failure to use real life experiences, live examples as well as failing to relate the information to current events. Students especially females preferred methods that would engage them in interactive discussions:

"...the classroom methods are okay but I prefer other methods like if someone came and talked to a group of people, it would be better if a group discussion is held and you really ask everything that you need to ask, share experiences, you will be able to learn from each other's experience...." (Interview, girl).

Further students’ concerns about the theoretical nature of the teaching methods were pointed out by boys. For instance one of the boys noted that:

"The method is good but sometimes you are telling people how to use a condom and you use your finger to demonstrate. Some people will take it that you have to put it on your finger. If you are going to have sex and it won't help..." (Interview, boy).

The above statement reveals students’ awareness of the complexity of demonstration of sexuality issues in classroom environment. While some male students were concerned about lack of demonstrations and illustrations, others mentioned limited use of testimonies. Comparing male and female students’ comments about the teaching methods, there were gender differences in the responses. While girls were interested seeing family planning devices such as the diaphragm, the boys were interested in teachers’ demonstrating how to use condoms.

FGDs provided deeper insights into students’ meanings of teaching methods being “theoretical” and “practical”. Girls noted that lessons are academically oriented and did not relate the information to their social lives. The following excerpts represent girls’ and boys’ sentiments from group discussions with girls and boys:

"In most cases the method in class like in Biology and CRE; the practical bit of sex education comes as a by the way while those people who come, they come when they are really prepared and its what they want to tell us. ... the information from outside is practical. We discuss together, the teacher throws a question to us and then we discuss and share experiences... in discussion group everyone can bring his or her views for everyone to understand.... They mainly give time to teaching it such that you look at it as an academic study and not something social... But may be they find it difficult to integrate the two or they are too shy to start explaining all these things in detail as they ought to do.... There is a group of people who came to visit us. One of the girls had AIDS and had been raped. So the information is more practical, you are able to see the effects. Its real...Plays, films TV’s and movies like Kojamo shows what is happening, the effects. So the girls need to be exposed to see the effects, live examples....The people who came from Mulago were talking about STDs. Those people know things, they talked about the symptoms of HIV and AIDS, people they see with syphilis. They came with printed pictures showing how such people look like, how people are affected... so they gave live examples. This one gives you a visual view and it really makes you avoid it..." (FGD, girls).

"Too theoretical. Just teaching and then we write notes....We need more of the practical lessons using live examples, testimonies...sex education in class; the teacher teaches for the purpose of passing exams but not giving details like when you are discussing with fellow boys, one gets to know more about what sex is...." (FGD, boys).
As was the case in the interviews, FGDs also showed that both female and male students’ main concern was that teachers did not relate the presented material to the real life experiences by giving live examples and case studies. They also commented that teachers did not use audio-visual aids such as pictures, plays and films as well as interactive methods such as group discussions in which students’ experiences can be used as a testing ground for new information through sharing experiences. Students thus found the other sources more interesting, better than the in-class knowledge because they related to their daily lives. They acknowledged teachers’ difficulty in integrating academic material with the contemporary social issues. Female students further appreciated outside resource persons for being more knowledgeable and specialists in handling specific sexuality issues and stated that these people were usually more prepared in their presentations than their teachers. Consequently, students felt that in-class knowledge is to just help them attain high grades and thus “for examination purposes”, “an academic study” and may not be applicable to their daily lives, as these following extracts from FGDs with girls and boys illustrate:

“....I think the one we get from outside class is better because sometimes in class you don’t take it serious. You write it in the book, then you take it for examination purposes. We don’t take it that we should use it for practical life. But when someone comes and talks to you, you take it serious, because for example a teacher talks about something you may just write it down but you don’t consider it. If they bring a doctor, for instance there is a time when they brought in a lady doctor .... She tells you and you feel that practically she knows what is going on. You get to understand and live what she is saying. Some of the teachers give the impression that they are teaching, they’re not talking to you about life they are just teaching, just teaching what they write on the black board. We just sit in class and pay attention like we are studying another topic but when people from outside come and talk to us because they have been where these things are happening, they have seen people die of AIDS, they have seen people cry because they are pregnant, we take in the things much more than the class information. And teachers hardly have time to talk to us about AIDS issues. They mainly talk about academic... The class one you must read it because it’s on the syllabus and will be examined....In most cases teachers make the lessons so academic instead of making it look more social.....” (FGD, girls).

“...Most of the information outside is practical because you can call your friend and ask. Because in class it is as if they are telling us to read and pass, just teaching for us to pass exams...”....CRE and Biology has helped me to some extent but so many students live these things as they give them to us. They do not put them into consideration in whatever they do. You can find that there are even some of our classmates who end up getting pregnant yet the education was passed on....” (FGD boys).

Both boys and girls noted that teachers’ main concern was passing exams and hence provided little room for meaningful student dialogue with the presented information. They noted that what is given in class was “just book material” and may not be applicable to their daily lives. Male students noted that in spite of the knowledge gained, girls get pregnant.

Students noted that information presented by external people (visitors from outside the school) is often taken more seriously than that from the teachers. Some girls were also concerned about the teachers’ presentation and communication techniques which they described as being ‘unserious’ and ‘lathargic’ without the use of exciting or humorous examples to encourage active participation of students:
"...Well there is sometimes, like in reproduction if you are not careful at times you may not understand the teacher because the way he talks at times he borrows people, unless you ask. He talks slowly, jokingly, that's why some people get bored...I prefer him to be giving examples, which make you laugh at times. There you get more active in class and participate...sometimes the terms he uses are difficult to understand..." (Interview, girl).

From the above comment, it seems that at times the information was too abstract and difficult for students to 'grasp'.

Students did not only appreciate outside resource persons for their knowledge and expertise but also for being 'strangers'. They noted that they felt more comfortable, relaxed and at ease to discuss such issues with an outsider. Both male and female students were worried about what images the teachers may have about them if they express knowledge or interest in sexual issues. They expressed that resource persons offered an appropriate atmosphere where candid discussions can be held. The following excerpts represent girls’ and boys’ observations from FGDs and interviews with girls and boys:

"...The message we get from out is better than that one we get from class. When you are in class sometimes you feel shy to ask certain questions but when you are with the outsider person you are free because you know it's not your teacher and in any case she will be going away...At times in class we feel shy to ask some questions for fear that may be you give the picture of deep immorality with in you. So meetings with people from outside are quite better you are free to ask each and everything you need..." (FGD, girls).

With outside resource persons, we are free, we don’t fear people because they are not our teachers. When you are in class and you talk about these things they will say that may be you are a womanizer and teachers would suspect that may be that boy, that girl is sharp...” (FGD, boys):

"...With the other sources we feel free to ask anything. But in class you can’t just ask, they may think you are just making fun or they think you have been doing those things. So you somehow do not feel free. ....." (Interview, boy).

As demonstrated above, both boys and girls suggested that they felt more free with persons who occasionally visited their schools to address sexuality issues than with their regular school teachers with whom they stay all the time.

b) Students’ suggested teaching strategies in sexuality education class

Given students’ concern about the current teaching strategies in schools, students were asked to propose their preferred instructional methods for sexuality education. More than half of the girls (54 %) expressed a preference for greater use of group discussions, followed by use of case studies, live examples and life experiences (43%) and audiovisual materials such as films (32%) and the least number preferred either the lecture method or the use of reading materials (Table 5.1). On the other hand, large proportion of boys (33%) proposed the use of films and videos, followed by group discussions, use of reading materials, case studies, live examples and life experiences (30% for each method).
Students' suggestions showed a significant gender difference. While more girls indicated preference for a range of methods, more boys than girls were comfortable with lecture and explanation as well as use of reading materials such as magazines, books, posters, fliers and newspapers and suggested these should be used along with other methods. Nearly equal numbers of boys and girls in each case suggested use of films and videos; demonstrations and illustrations; drama and plays as well as use of outside professionals or resource persons.

Table 5.10  Students' preferred teaching strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferred methods</th>
<th>Girls (N=28)</th>
<th>Boys (N=27)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Responses</td>
<td>% Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group discussions</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>53.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of case studies, live examples, life experiences</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of films, videos</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration, illustrations</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use outside resource persons, professionals, experts</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama, plays</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading materials such as newspapers (ST) magazines, posters, pictures, fliers, reference books</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture/Notes and explanations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio talk shows</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Students' interviews  
*The figures in the table do not add up to 100 percent because of multiple responses – some students had one or two concrete suggestions of the preferred strategies.

While a few boys (< 12% in each case) suggested use of radios and the internet, none of the girls felt these were good teaching strategies. As in the interviews, students in the FGDs suggested similar teaching strategies.

5.4.4 Students' opinions about single and mixed sex teaching of sexuality issues

Students' opinions and views about conducting sexuality education lessons in single and mixed sex settings were solicited. They were particularly asked to give their preferences and the corresponding reasons for their choice. Students' interviews, especially with girls, suggest a debate within and between gender groups about preferences for sex separation in class where sexuality is discussed. The debate within the gender groups, particularly observed in the girls groups is reflected by half of the girls (50%) who indicated a preference for sex separation while 43% felt that mixed sex classes suited them better (Figure 5.4). On the other hand, the majority of the boys (74%) indicated a preference for mixed sex classes compared to 15% of the boys who indicated preference for separation into single sex groups. The debate suggests a gendered discourse in students' preference for single and
mixed sex lessons with more girls than boys indicating preference for separation (single sex groups).

The majority of the boys indicated preference for mixed sex sexuality education lessons.

![Bar chart showing percentage of students' preference for teaching sexuality issues by gender.]

**Source:** Students' interviews

According to most students who supported single sex classes (100% of the boys and 79% of the girls), the factor of feeling shy and uncomfortable to talk about personal issues in the presence of the opposite sex caused them to support single sex teaching about sexuality (Table 5.11). The other reason given for preference of single sex classes was that some issues concern one sex only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for single sex teaching</th>
<th>Girls (N=14)</th>
<th>Boys (4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of</td>
<td>% Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not feeling comfortable, shy</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>78.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some issues only concern one sex</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys make a lot of fun</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some boys feel intimidated</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Students' interviews

*The figures in the table do not add up to 50% girls and 15% boys because of multiple responses- some students indicated that several reasons motivated their choice.*

Students' concerns over discussing certain issues (personal issues) in mixed sex group indicate that students view themselves as gendered and therefore stress the need for certain issues to be discussed while in single sex group because they believe such setting offers girls and boys the freedom to express themselves. In addition, some girls were concerned about boys making fun of them in class
(14%) by raising aggressive questions and making comments about girls’ sexuality. While most boys and girls felt that girls were shy, one girl and two boys noted that some boys are also intimidated to speak in mixed sex lessons. However, 2 boys [one from a mixed school with more girls than boys in the class and another from a single sex school (boys only)] admitted that they find it difficult to ask certain questions. They expressed embarrassment at the idea of discussing sexuality issues in the presence of girls especially where girls formed the largest proportion of students in class.

FGDs offered more insight into students’ reasons for sex separation and non sex separation in sexuality education lessons. Students’ responses indicated that girls were interested in and valued single sex classes much more than the boys. Arguments for sex separation during sexuality classes made by girls included the idea that some issues are “private” matters for each gender group as these girls in the FGDs clearly stated:

"...I think to some extent there are some things that we take too personal as girls. We don't have to just expose everything on a silver plate because there are boys around and that they should know what we go through. There are some things that are so personal that we should as girls take so personal for example, like at home and may be you are going to dress, and may be you have some thing there and you are going to put on. You don't tell me that you will feel free when your brother is there because he knows it really happens but then you don't have to some extent be so open. That's why when we are having Social Etiquette lessons, the etiquette teacher tells boys go to the other side and girls the other side because there are some things that are private that we should as girls take private because girls are supposed to have their personal things. Things that are not supposed to be exposed to the public...." (FGD, girls).

"...Obviously madam for the woman we prefer to be talked to alone because there are certain questions we need to ask specifically for ourselves. You may have a question you want to ask the teacher, and then you may think you will be offended if you ask and you just keep quiet...they will think you are immoral... You can't ask a personal question because those people tend to laugh and start talking about you....Some people are shy, so if they are alone may be they can talk... " (FGD, girls).

"... I think that let them separate us because some of us are shy... Those boys can laugh at us when we are asking questions then after classes they start talking that girls do this and this. So it's better to separate us because even boys, some of them don't want to share their experiences...." (FGD, girls).

The above statements demonstrated girls’ perception of their bodies and sexuality issues as being deeply linked to their identity and often shrouded in a sense of secrecy and shame, therefore ‘private’ and not to be exposed in ‘public’. Consequently, girls viewed certain issues as concerning only one sex (females) and that such issues could be a source of embarrassment to them and ridicule from the opposite sex when brought up in mixed sex lessons. They noted that boys tend to laugh at them and were particularly concerned about being labelled and harassed for exposing their knowledge about sexuality.

Although most expressions indicating preference for single sex classes were common among girls, a few boys also acknowledged lack of freedom of expression about sexuality issues in mixed sex classes. They also spoke of the hostility of the classroom environment and preferred to be separated into small groups of people of same “calibre” (same sex and age group) to allow interactive discussions and sharing of experiences. They expressed that concerns about their reputation may hinder them
from asking questions about certain issues if lessons are conducted under mixed sex setting, as exemplified in the following excerpt:

"...when you don't understand or you are not satisfied with the explanation, sometimes you can fear to ask him or her. Sometimes when your friends see you asking something they can laugh at you or have negative impression of you. Somebody will keep on saying eeb eeh that boy is sharp... in class everybody knows you from the inside to the outside, you can't ask some things... You have to maintain your dignity to some extent... I think it's better the teacher divides you into small groups – people of the same caliber from where you can stand and ask something – some deeper information because you can utter out something you remain with nothing like dignity in the whole compound... (FGD, boys).

This expression also suggests that some students have negative perceptions about sexuality knowledge with regard to how much one should know about such issues. Someone with high knowledge about sexuality issues is perceived to be promiscuous. This suggests that interest or demonstration of knowledge in sexual issues is associated with promiscuity and can damage one's reputation as morally good and healthy. Single sex teaching was also preferred by some girls and boys because they felt that some teachers feared to mention certain issues in mixed sex settings. In addition, boys noted that sexuality topics can be sexually arousing causing them to harass girls in class, as represented in the voice of one of the boys:

"...In class when they are teaching those things and am sitting with a girl, I can easily disturb her because I will be feeling hot..." (Participant FGD, boys).

This indicates boys' perception of sexuality classes as sexual spaces that can encourage them to engage in sexual behaviours. Several reasons were given by varying numbers of boys and girls in support of conducting lessons about sexuality in mixed sex classes. Reasons including sharing knowledge, experiences and knowing what happens to the opposite sex were the most outstanding among girls (75% and 58%) and boys (35% and 35%) respectively (Table 5.12).

Table 5.12 Students' reasons for mixed sex teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Girls (N=12)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Boys (N=20)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharin g experiences, knowledge</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know what happens to the opposite sex</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make sessions more interesting</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have balanced discussion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eradicate shyness, pretence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid taking things for granted</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single sex make people more inquisitive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's boys who destroy girls</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn how to associate with opposite sex</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are all human beings</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdependence</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Students' interviews

*The figures in the table do not add up to 43 % girls and 74% boys because of multiple responses- some students indicated that several reasons motivated their choice.*

150
A few students (7% of the girls and 11% of the boys) supported both single and mixed sex teaching and gave similar reasons as those identified by boys and girls who preferred sex separation and non-separation respectively. The main ones were that single sex classes facilitate the discussion of personal issues and mixed classes enable boys and girls to get to know about each other and share experiences. Boys acknowledged gendered knowledge and the opportunity for sharing such knowledge in a mixed sex setting. For example one of the boys stated that:

"...I prefer mixed because if you separate when they are teaching ... you come to be aware that may be this thing is likely to occur in the presence of girls and boys. You get to know more information because there are other people who are experienced and some have read more about the topic. When we combine we share the views about the topic..." (Interview, boy).

FGDs provided more insights about students' reasons for supporting mixed sex classes. Within both all girls' and all boys' groups ambivalences were expressed. Debates emerged over the value of sharing information. Students' arguments for giving everyone access to diverse information during mixed sex classes was suggested mainly by boys and included the idea that gendered experiences need sharing. This view is illustrated in the following extract from a group discussion with boys who stated:

"...Girls will bring out a point which will help you to learn more also they can bring a point you have never heard of...For me I think studying together can help us share views. We can be able to know what girls are thinking about some things. Some people have more information than others so we share views..." (FGD boys).

In addition, students' accounts showed that where mixed sex classes were preferred, particularly by girls, it is because of the feeling that constant segregation exacerbates false emphasis on the complexity and particularity of girls' experiences:

"...I think it's good to separate us but sometimes it's not good because normally they are telling us that girls its your duty etc...but the boys never get such lessons on how take care of their hygiene. In most cases they just concentrate on the girls... They tend to over focus on the girls by saying girls, make sure you are not pregnant. At least if they bring the boys and tell them to be considerate to the girls, tell them that girls are human beings like them... But they mostly concentrate on the girls and leave the boys... The boys are part and parcel of the problems... They should at least call both of us so that the boys are also made to know that the girls go through when for example they make them pregnant...taking a topic like menstruation if somebody happens to get her menstruation period in class, all the boys do just laugh. I believe they should get them [boys and girls] together so that boys also get to know that such a thing is normal... so that the boys do not make fun of the girls if this happens. If it happens one can get a sweater and help you out. So that you don't feel so stupid for being in that state — problem... In most times when they call people from outside to talk about AIDS, its better they bring both sexes together..." (FGD, girls).

In the above statement, female students expressed concern about over emphasis on girls' sexuality issues and under emphasis of boys' sexuality. They expressed anxiety about the implications of such unbalanced and narrow focus, such as boys teasing and harassing the girls. The girls stressed that sexuality issues should be a concern for all genders, not only females as is often expressed by parents, teachers and educators. They noted that sharing information promotes tolerance, positive image,
interaction and relationships among boys and girls. Both boys and girls also indicated that the knowledge and appreciation of each others’ sexuality problems across gender required mixed sex classes.

The idea of direct experience being the best source of learning was again expressed as well as the lack of confidence in some of the information presented by teachers. Students also suggested that knowing one’s real life experience (direct experience) was the best source of learning as was clearly pointed out in the boys’ FGDs:

“...we get to know the real thing that happens between boys and girls e.g. menstruation a girl can explain her experience & wet dreaming in boys—we can explain directly convince someone about it but just hearing or reading from newspapers its very difficult to believe... You can also consult them for example if the teacher is teaching about reproduction then you can ask them is that true? (laughter). Because you never know the teacher may be lying. So we learn from experience from one another.” (FGD, boys).

According to these boys, having discussions together with girls would clarify some issues better than getting information from third parties or from someone who just gets information from newspapers and has not had the experience. Related to this point was girls’ concern about teachers’ bias in providing information about the opposite sex. They noted that:

“...You can find that when they separate us and teach boys alone and girls alone and when the male teacher is teaching girls and the same teacher is teaching boys and you will find that he will hint less in class on the point of the male he will hint much on the points of girls yet we want both so that we can ask and we argue with them in class. So it’s not good to teach separately...” (FGD girls).

In this FGD, girls were concerned about the unbalanced and biased teaching offered in a single sex lessons. They noted that in mixed sex lessons, teachers would ensure gender balanced coverage of issues/presentation of information that concerns both sexes.

Students further noted that mixed sex lessons were enjoyable and interesting; a point that was mainly expressed by boys both in the interviews and the FGDs. However, the most interesting experience that boys referred to was the tension created between boys and girls during discussions about sexuality. They pointed out:

“It’s better to mix. It is very interesting to look at those people [the girls] reactions to certain things. The way they react towards us [boys], they put us on tension, the way they react as we are watching. It’s just fun that it’s easy to retain the information in memory what’s taking place between both parties [boys and girls]...It also discourages us to go in for those people [girls] we are seated with because you are getting the same information from the same teacher...” (FGD, boys).

Boys further pointed out that debates or discussions between boys and girls in a mixed sex class offered a memorable experience. Boys’ comment above reveals boys’ meanings of knowledge
acquisition and initiation of relationships, where acquisition of same sexuality knowledge inhibits interest in sexual relationships.

Further support for mixed sex classes was based on the fact that girls felt that segregation of classes by sex reinforced mystification among boys and girls regarding the sexual experiences. This was particularly noted by girls in the FGDs as follows:

"...I have mixed feelings about single sex teaching because first of all they were telling us that how can boys and girls be friends without having sex.... And to me I think this can happen.... for example in Youth Alive when we go for functions we go with boys, say boys from St. Mary's College, Kisubi [boys school]. You find that the point you are having as girls, what you think of boys is not what they [boys] will really tell you when you are there. So here you can have a different view. You might even have a wrong view of what is really happening via those issues.... We prefer mixing because in that way we get opinions from both the boys and girls. You may be having a completely different perception for example most of our lives we have been here in this school. So we have not really got a chance to relate with them (boys). So I think it's better to have it together...." (FGD, girls).

Lack of accurate information across genders was a key concern in the above expression. Hence the students suggest that there was need to learn together in order to understand one another better. This was particularly expressed by girls who had had experience of studying in single sex school and supported by girls from the mixed sex schools. In addition, some girls noted that participating in mixed sex classes enhances their confidence about communicating and interacting with boys as stated by this girl:

"...mixed teaching is more useful to us because it takes away all this shyness from us and it gives us courage.... makes us feel that everything that happens to us is natural..." (Participant, FGD, girls).

Although the conducted interviews and FGDs involved students from seven different schools, the obtained responses showed no major differences. However, it is noteworthy that most students from single sex school either boys or girls valued teaching about sexuality issues in mixed sex groups. Their main argument for this preference was that there was need for both sexes to interact and get to know about each other better. While students from the single sex schools reported that they occasionally visited other schools of the opposite sex either for social or academic functions, their experience with mixed sex class set up was more to do with social interaction than the actual sexuality education. Although girls differed in their preferences for single or mixed sex lessons there were similarities regarding reasons why mixed settings were problematic for girls. There was a more visible debate (rather unusual) over the issue of mixed vis-à-vis single sex sexuality education lessons between the gender groups and among the gender groups in both the interviews and FGDs than other issues explored in this study.
5.4.5 Levels of students' participation and gender dynamics during the lessons

Although students expressed that sexuality education lessons conducted by teachers were theoretical, that the information was inadequate (section 5.4.3), they also demonstrated great enthusiasm for sexuality education lessons. In both the interviews and FGDs, students reported that the lessons were very interesting, and every student looked forward to attending which suggests students' relentless search for information about sexuality however constrained or inadequate. Students expressed that boys and girls tended to be more active when issues concerning the opposite sex were being discussed. However, in the mixed schools, students pointed out that although the level of participation depended on the topic being discussed, boys were generally more active than girls during the lessons. They noted that boys asked more questions and gave more comments than the girls. While boys acknowledged being comfortable in asking questions in class, girls acknowledged being nervous about raising issues in class. Girls' strained participation in lessons about sexuality was associated with the unbalanced focus of the sexuality information, where discussions in class concentrated on female than male sexuality. They noted that there is over emphasis on girls' sexuality, which negatively affects their level of participation in class, as the following excerpt from one of the girls' FGDs exemplify:

"...For the case of our class boys participate most because they have got too much interest and it's like the topic of reproduction is not balanced to me. It's too much of being on the girls' side. For the boys' side, it's just there, no joy in class as it is when they are talking on the girls' side. Girls tend to hide, so when the questions are too much on their side, some go out, some tend to be sleeping and getting headache but boys don't mind, whatever comes, they play it cool... Boys always think that, it's their topic. When boys know that they are going to teach that topic, they are very excited and happy..." (FGD, girls).

Other girls associated boys' enthusiasm in class to their limited knowledge about sexuality matters and consequent interest in any opportunity for new information. Girls in one of the FGDs agreed thus:

".....The boys in most cases do not receive education on such issues and more information about sex education compared to the girls so they have more things to ask about ...." (FGD, girls).

In another FGD, the girls associated boys' high participation in class to boys' interest in showing off that they are knowledgeable or experienced about sexuality issues. They said:

"... We all participate but the boys are more excited....the boys show a lot of excitement. They start talking about the things as if they are already experienced in such..." (FGD, girls).

Regarding girls' relatively low participation in class, some students argued that this was caused by fear of embarrassment and fear of loss of reputation (see section 5.4.2a preference for outside resource persons) if they asked questions about sex. Girls' views are captured in the following interview excerpts:

"...For instance when Father Mogandazh was teaching about dating students would not put up their hands and ask what they wanted. They would instead write chits and send to him instead of putting up your hand and asking directly.
to the teacher. They will think that so and so is like this. People are scared may be they think that when you ask people will think that you went through that... so they don’t want people to know that they ask about sex..... Sex and sexuality is something so private it’s very very [for emphasis] hard to come and just start talking .... because you might be there talking when he is standing there relating the information to you so you don’t feel safe... (FGD, girls).

“...When they [boys] hear the question they chant, they start mentioning certain things, the boys themselves. Like when you don’t attend on Friday and the teacher comes and asks for you, where is this one?, they say she is shy or “je konne akagere”[meaning that she is in her menstruation period]such things.... Boys throw more comments for example when they are talking about the female reproductive organs and they draw the structure of a female vagina; they tend to ask a lot of questions. What is this? Show me this, what is that? How wide is this? those things....They don’t even allow you to talk when they are commenting. They want you to keep quiet when they are commenting. And when it comes to talking about the side of boys, the male reproductive organs, when girls ask questions, ... they tend to shout that we shouldn’t ask such questions, that they are foolish questions, they usually say; stop asking such questions!. But when it comes on our side they ask and we don’t stop them from asking...boys tend to give in more questions and comments because when they hint on some issues girls tend to be shy and boys turn around to see girls who are shy and then girls also pretend....Girls don’t usually comment because they fear other things like telling them that they know better. So they leave it to boys to comment so that they look to be young and innocent...” (FGD, girls).

Girls expressed concerns about boys’ teasing, and theorised that ridiculing girls as well as shutting them down in class created an inhospitable participative environment. Consequently, boys are seen to control the classroom space. However, a few boys also expressed fear for their reputation as demonstrated by this boy:

“Someone has to keep his or her reputation for example if someone has to begin telling me about sex I will obviously know you had sex…[laughter]” (Participant, FGD, boys).

Unlike in the other schools, students in two of the sampled schools reported that girls were more active in class than the boys. This was particularly noted in the Muslim school and one of the Christian schools which had a larger proportion of girls than boys. One girl pointed out:

“In this school always boys are shy… There is no competition here as the boys are always quiet and don’t want to participate in class. They fear girls and are just there... We like talking to them, they are just there. But because they fear the Sharia law, like when found with a girl, oh oh oh! discussing... You can be sent home and most boys have parents who are most religious. Sharia law is highly respected among the Muslims... the girls’ side is always active...” (Interview, girl).

From the above statement, girls in the Muslim school associated boys’ low participation in class with school restrictions about girl/boy interaction and the Sharia law which prohibits active interaction between boys and girls. While the restricted interaction according to the Sharia law may not apply to classroom interaction during a lesson, it appears that this culture affects their participation in any environment where there are both boys and girls. In classes where girls outnumbered the boys, the boys also tended to be reserved, hence the low participation.
5.4.6 Students’ opinions about the effect of sex of the teacher during sexuality education lessons

Given the debate that emerged over conducting sexuality education classes in either single or mixed sex settings, I felt it important to solicit students’ views about their sex preference of the teacher. In all the visited schools, students noted that both male and female teachers were involved in teaching Biology and Religious Education. While Social Etiquette was being taught by a female teacher in the single sex school, both male and female teachers (the Senior Man and Woman Teachers) were in charge of the lessons in the mixed sex schools. Hence students’ opinions were based on their experiences and interaction with both male and female teachers.

There were varied opinions among students regarding whether they preferred to be taught by either a male or a female teacher in a sexuality education lesson. As with the approach to sexuality education classes, student interviews suggest a debate on the sex of the teacher between the gender groups and within the gender groups. While half of the girls (50%) indicated preference for a male teacher, 18% felt that a female teacher was better and 32% had no preference. On the other hand, the majority of the boys (63%) indicated preference for a male teacher, while 30% had no preference and only 7% felt a female teacher was better (Figure 5.5).

![Figure 5.5 Students’ sex preference of the teacher in sexuality education lessons](image)

Source: Students’ interviews

Although students gave several reasons for preferring to be taught by a male teacher, the ‘shyness’ of female teachers was pointed out by majority (>85%) of either boys or girls as the main reason (Table 5.13). Male teachers’ ability to control themselves and female teachers’ jealousy (of the girls’ beauty,
dress, make-up) were mentioned by one boy and girls (n=2) respectively as the cause for students' preference of male teachers.

Table 5.13 Students' reasons for preferring to be taught by a male teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for male preference</th>
<th>Girls (N=14)</th>
<th>Boys (N=17)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of</td>
<td>% Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female teachers are shy</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know what we experience</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can control himself</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female teachers cannot cope with boys opposition</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female teachers are rude</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female teachers are jealousy of the girls' beauty, dress</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Students’ interviews

*The figures in the table do not add up to 50% girls and 63% boys because of multiple responses- some students indicated that several reasons motivated their choice.

Some factors including male teachers’ knowledge about boys’ experiences and female teachers’ failure to cope with opposition from boys were only mentioned by boys. On the other hand, only female students mentioned female teachers’ rudeness as the cause for their preferring male teachers. Male teachers on the other hand were often noted to be open, frank, straightforward and detailed while female teachers were represented as brief and reluctant to talk about certain issues:

"...I think I prefer a male teacher because the females are usually very shy. There are very few females you would find and really tell you something. But even in this school there is a difference between the female CRE teacher and the Male CRE teacher. The males are more open in the information, although there are some stuff they don't say but they really tell the facts. The females I think just because they were made like that, to hide some things, women don't really give you all the information..." (Interview, girl).

"...Like I said, like poles always repel. I just don't want a female teacher to teach me. Male teachers are always frank. You can tell a woman your problem and she might ignore it. Even when you go to the clinic [school sick bay] and happen to find a lady, she will always act badly to you. She will be rude to you but a doctor; a man will attend to you. A man asks you your problem but the woman first leaves you there and does her things and later comes back to you..." (Interview, girl).

"...for males apart from a few, those who teach sex education are straight forward and they call a spade a spade. Female teachers tend to hide some things and cover up..." (Interview, boy).

In-depth exploration of the students’ opinions about the sex of the teacher in the FGDs revealed that the majority of the girls and boys indicated preference for the male teacher in a sexuality education lesson. Girls' reasons included female teachers' capacity for frankness and offering detailed information.
Girls in four of the 6 FGDs as well as boys in all the boys’ FGDs consistently referred to female teachers as being very shy to give details about sexual issues in class. Some boys associated female teachers’ shyness to motherhood:

“...The male is the best because for female teacher can’t do it better than the male teacher because I understand many of the female teachers have kids and then if they are to start talking about such stuff in front of children like us they will feel ashamed....” (FGD, boys).

Students’ accounts further indicate boys’ feminization of sexuality which was then linked to female reluctance to talk about their own experiences:

“...These things concerning sex are mostly in women and somehow they fear ‘speaking’[talking about] them out just because they do experience them but for the man since maybe he has just studied something, you find that for him he can easily say out ...It doesn’t affect him although be can maybe leave out some things. But according to me it’s a man just because I know all things concerning men and for him he can give me things concerning women...” (Interview, boy).

According to this student, male teachers are not shy talking about sexuality issues especially issues concerning females since they do not experience them but have just ‘studied’ about them. This was supported by some girls who suggested that a male teacher would be more free to discuss issues relating to the opposite sex because girls cannot relate the information to him, thus creating gendered boundaries between question and answer that prevent embarrassing intimacy. They noted that a male teacher helps them to understand the opposite sex better as well as how to relate with each other, as argued below:

“...sometimes when men are talking to ladies about some topics, they are so free, e.g. if he is talking about your body if he has studied and deals in that department, he is going to say everything because he knows what he’s talking about does not relate to him. He knows that as he is talking no one is relating them to him....On the topic of empathy, it’s sometimes good for the men to come talk to the girls. So that the man can tell the girls what the boys go through so that the women also talk to boys so that the boys get to understand from the women what the girls go through....” (FGD, girls).

“...if a teacher is a male, could do better the girls’ side because you find some ladies are shy they can’t tell you the exact things that happen but then a male teacher since it doesn’t happen to him and he knows what happens he is able to bring out the whole thing...” (FGD, girls).

While some girls suggested that lack of experience creates safety between teacher and student, others valued direct experience as the best source of knowledge particularly on male sexuality. As the girls, boys stressed the importance of being taught by male teacher because of the perceived experience on male sexuality issues. The boys therefore also valued direct experience as one way of getting accurate and reliable information as expressed in the following interview excerpts from one interview and FGDs with boys:

“...I feel a male teacher would do better for me, because that way you feel you are talking to someone who understands you....” (Interview, boy).

“...prefer a male teacher because a male teacher will understand me more than a female teacher... Sometimes a male teacher can understand more on the side of girls... Girls should have a female teacher and boys have a male teacher because once a girl talks about anything, which the teacher might have gone through, the teacher will understand and the same applies to boys, because they understand one another...” (FGD, boys).
"... He is older than me and has got wide experience, has led a successful life. I would want to follow him, he has seen more than me, and wants to reveal some of the good tips to me to put into practice. Where as the female teacher will just tell me all about the female side which myself I would want to adventure because adventure is deep in our hearts..." (FGD, boys).

"...We are very free with the men...It is not good to present your personal problems to a female, like the female nurse in the Sick bay, We want male nurses. If you have a sexual problem, you can’t present it to her, how?...If one had gonorrhea, syphilis, it would be easier to go to a male teacher..." (FGD boys).

Some boys further proposed recruitment of male nurses in the school sick bays. They viewed male teachers as role models who they would want to emulate.

As in the interviews, female students in the FGDs reported that female teachers were often rude and unwilling to help:

"Female teachers tend to be rude. There are some things you may ask and she doesn’t want to answer you. You may ask and everyone would want to hear the point you are giving them for her she tells you come tomorrow when you are alone... when you ask a question say if it is a female teacher, she will just say that girl asks a lot of questions, may be she thinks that you are involved in those things..." (FGD, girls).

The above extract further indicates concerns about female teachers’ anxiety when teaching certain sexuality issues particularly when it is a big group. Under such circumstances, students noted that teachers opted to hold discussions on such issues with individual students outside class. Students suggested that this anxiety constrained teachers’ relations with students, creating defensive teaching. Boys in both the interviews and FGDs associated such female teachers’ behaviours to lack of confidence, as demonstrated in the extracts below:

"... in most cases teachers are not confident of themselves especially the females... Sometimes when you ask a certain question, they think you are challenging them, which is not true. May be you want to know more about the topic..." (FGD, boys).

"...Most teachers especially the ladies, its like they fear, they don’t present themselves to the students properly. They don’t believe in themselves and don’t want to be challenged..." (Interview, boy).

These boys argue that female teachers appeared anxious about being challenged. Although female teachers may be “rude”, it appeared that some female students were biased about female teachers as can be observed by some female students’ comments “like poles always repel... I just don’t want a female teacher to teach me” and other girls who said “Maybe it’s that for girls a male teacher is better and for boys a female teacher is better”. The girls’ responses in the FGDs regarding their opinions about the sex of the teacher in a sexuality education lesson also point to students’ negative perceptions and stereotyped bias against female teachers who they described as being incapable of articulating issues clearly:

"...To me male teachers can do it best because girls have the mentality, whenever they see a woman they say aah... even what she will be teaching you won’t understand... its in girls when ever a man is teaching you seem to understand better and when you see a lady the dislike start coming in...A male teacher is okay when talking to a big number of people like all the students in class. They can do it better than the females but then when it comes discussing private issues outside class, the woman is better. Yaa. [Several girls affirmed] If you get out of class and you have a problem, a small problem it will be so hard for you to approach a male teacher like for example if a male teacher is on duty and you happen to have your monthly period [menstruation] and you want a chit to go back to the dorm and sort out your
self, we all find it a problem. If it is a female teacher it's just okay you just march [walk] up to her and tell her madam this and this has happened... So privately female teachers are okay..." (FGD, girls).

In the above statement, girls noted that female teachers were valued for their ability to handle or assist with 'unique' female sexual related matters. Similar bias against female teachers was noted by boys in the FGDs where they expressed that female teachers are "boring", "fear to talk about sex" and "it's fake to have a female teacher teaching these issues".

Both in the interviews and FGDs students noted that female teachers were unable to control class and cope with male students' disruptive behaviour and opposition. They further reported that boys deliberately opposed female teachers in class, as one of the boys indicates:

"...Male teachers usually explain well those things but female teachers fear because we boys are ever opposing. You know boys shout and make funny noise, they ask irrelevant questions..." (Interview, boy).

Boys in the FGDs gave an account of what they do to intimidate female teachers:

"... For a female teacher if you are in class and you look direct into her eyes in a rare way, she will have to avoid that corner. She will not come there any more...The female teachers feel the boys and therefore there is need for male teachers to pass on the information..." (FGD, boys).

The boys' comments are linked to the belief that women are 'soft' and cannot control classes in the overtly macho world of male adolescents. Some boys noted that students particularly the boys tend to ask irrelevant questions and create mockery of the subject and of class participants when the class is being conducted by a female teacher.

Despite disparagement of female teachers by some boys, others showed interest in female teachers. Their interest was rooted in ideas about obtaining knowledge of girls' sexuality from some one who has had the real experience, and in notions about motherhood as a resource for knowledge about sons' experience. The following extract illustrates boys' views:

"... The female teacher may not know more about us as boys but she knows more about herself and you are eager to find out more about the opposite sex than a man who is going to tell you what you know. It will be boring... she will tell me more about the boys side so that I know more about myself because females are our mothers, they look after us from the time we are born up to when we become men, so they know more about us..." (FGD, boys).

Some boys argued that they preferred female teachers because females are open about sexuality issues due to the fact that they have no vested interests in having intimate relationships with students while male teachers are somehow suspicious because they always want to have relationships with young girls. This was noted by a group of boys in one of the FGDs:

"...A female teacher is able to bring out everything simply because it's very obvious that a female teacher cannot go in for a young boy but a male teacher can go in for a young girl. That's why they have to protect themselves from ever explaining..." (FGD, boys).
The boys seemed to be concerned about male teachers befriending young girls in school and associated such with providing information about sexuality. The students' view about male teachers deliberately failing to talk about certain issues because of harbouring intentions to befriend 'unknowledgeable' female students points to the awareness of sexualisation inherent in giving information about sexuality as well as awareness that teaching about sexuality carries the possibility of embedding listeners and speakers in a sexual discourse.

Girls who preferred to be taught by female teachers reasoned that this arrangement enables them to have freedom of expression and to interact with a person of the same experience. Both in the interviews and FGDs, more girls than boys indicated preference for a female teacher. Girls noted that a class with a female teacher offered a safe environment:

"...I prefer a woman to teach about sex education ... I find it easier to ask anything I wish to know to a fellow woman than asking it a man because as you know we learn through experience now like the topic of menstruation, there is no way girl will go to a male teacher and ask him, sir, how does blood come ... what should you do when this and this happens? but a woman will tell you because she has experienced it..." (FGD, girls).

"...When they bring a facilitator who is a woman in most cases women are so straight, they bring out the point and you really get it. Sometimes men don't over emphasize issues ... If brought a man to talk to the girls about such issues girls will be so shy to ask things such as how to keep yourself clean. If you bring a lady, she also goes through the same state she knows everything. It depends on the topic to be addressed, like if you want to talk about AIDS-it can be a man or a woman but issues concerning only girls, of course a man cannot come to tell you about pads and does not know how to use pads because he may not be experienced and does not know what you go through.... A girl cannot feel free to talk to the male teacher, ...I will be free to talk to lady..." (FGD, girls).

At a more personal level, all the girls and a few boys (37%) expressed a lack of confidence in their teachers when it came to discussing students' personal sexual issues. Although some girls stated that they would prefer to talk to female teachers about their personal sexual issues, they had concerns about the confidentiality of the information they would discuss:

"...I am scared some times if it is a male teacher. But female teachers who I can really trust. These kinds of teachers who don't gossip, who keep to themselves. I can be free with her I tell her my problem...." (Interview, girl).

"...Me I can tell teachers my problems. You can tell a teacher and she starts telling others...." (Interview, girl).

"...Some teachers may tend to be less approachable. You have to be very sure because you cannot approach a teacher and trust him/her with all that information because maybe he can pass it on to other people you never wanted it to get to. You cannot trust a teacher because it is a large community and you cannot be sure where it is going..." (Interview, girl).

"...Teachers especially some female teachers you can't dare. Well there are some who are good and can be of help. You know they like talking in the staffroom and you cannot be sure of what they are conversing, in class when it's a general discussion, it's okay...." (FGD, girls).

"...We approach teachers when things are really bad. When you feel there is no way out may be this boy has really disturbed you, given you hard time and you feel you are dying. That's when you approach them. But most of the times we just keep our problems to ourselves. Sometimes you would want to talk to the teacher but then you say she is too close to this other teacher. What if she tells her and the teacher over talks, then that one tells the other one then finally the whole staff knows about it? There is lack of confidence....There are some teachers you can talk to and they think they are helping by telling other teachers thinking that through a group they are going to help you and they just destroy you..." (FGD, girls).

Although teachers' expertise was acknowledged, some teachers were seen as particularly unapproachable. Girls noted that some teachers were "harsh" and could not be trusted with
confidential/personal issues and problems. According to the girls, they approach the female teachers as a last resort. Girls explained that they preferred group discussions where issues cannot be referred to a particular individual, as these girls explained:

"I find it better when it's a group like in class, where you all ask questions and also talking to friends of your age. You are sometimes discussing what has happened to you or your friends. You are just sharing together...like personal things, you can't tell the teacher, may be a close friend. Some teachers especially the females will start talking in the staffroom. When you pass, they start talking about you..." (FGD, girls).

As was the case in the interviews, FGDs showed that only a few boys and girls were indifferent to the sex of the teacher handling sexuality education. They urged that all teachers receive the same kind of professional training and are therefore equally competent to teach the subject. They stressed that the ability to give detailed and accurate information and being open and frank was the most important pedagogical quality needed. Boys further indicated that it was advantageous to have both male and female teachers so as to share the experiences of both sexes as well as being able to handle sexuality issues they believed to be specific to boys or girls.

5.5 Practical application of school sexuality knowledge and students' perceptions towards school sexuality education

An investigation into the students' opinions about the usefulness of school sexuality education showed that all students appreciated it despite their deep critique, especially those who never get a chance to discuss sexuality issues with their parents. In addition, the school was seen as valuable place for sexuality knowledge since they spent longer hours in school than at home. Some female students acknowledged how ignorant they would be without education at school:

"...they should, I like it because for instance if it was not the school telling me about those things I could not have known them. Even I have not been able to see my Aunts..." (Interview, girl).

"...it is good because Uganda today children students spend little time with parents. So we need guidance from teachers whom we spend most of the time with. Then when we go for holidays we can get guidance from parents..." (Interview, girl).

Similar views were expressed by the boys. Some boys also said that the information acquired from teachers forms the foundation on which to live as responsible citizens. Boys in one of the FGDs agreed:

"...It's very appropriate in all schools because it gives a basis on how to live as responsible citizens in Uganda today...we spend most of the time in school and this is the time we should learn almost everything we shall recall in the future..." (FGD, boys).

The above statement stresses that the school as an education institution should take the responsibility of exposing students to different kinds of knowledge including sexuality, since they spent most of their life time there.

162
Table 5.14 shows that there are gender differences in the students’ opinions about the usefulness of classroom information about sexuality. Of the interviewed students, the largest proportion of boys (56%) than girls (46%) indicated that classroom knowledge helped them to know how to protect themselves against the dangers of early sex especially about prevention of diseases such as STDs/HIV and AIDS and pregnancy. A relatively higher proportion of girls (36%) than boys (30%) also stressed that they appreciated being taught about their bodies and the changes that occur as they grow. The girls were particularly happy about being able to handle situations like menstruation. While girls did not seem interested in information about boys’ bodies, some boys (11%) welcomed knowledge about girls’ bodies. In addition, more boys (41%) than girls (32%) valued the information for enabling them to pass examinations. Boys were also happy about having acquired knowledge about controlling their sexual feelings, interaction with the opposite sex and abortion. On the other hand, girls stressed the usefulness of the knowledge about family planning as well as gaining confidence which was not mentioned by boys. Information including knowledge about the dangers of engaging in sex at an early age, expected behaviours/morals in society and responsibility were pointed out by a bigger proportion of boys than girls as being useful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Usefulness of information</th>
<th>Girls (N=28)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Boys (N=27)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Responses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protection/prevention of disease and pregnancy</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing about our bodies and the body changes (secondary</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>characteristics)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge about birth control</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowing the dangers of sex</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>37.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pass examinations</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected behaviours/morals in society</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain confidence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share experiences</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility - know what is good and bad</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control of sexual feelings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Live with other people and not to discriminate against HIV</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive people</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Respect others and self</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn how to interact with the opposite sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about girls bodies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about new sexuality related issues e.g. abortion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Students’ interviews

Total responses do not add up to 100% because of multiple responses
A few boys and girls mentioned that they gained knowledge about hygiene, living with other people including those infected with HIV and AIDS and respect for others.

Similar views were voiced out in the FGDs. However, FGDs provided more in-depth exploration of the practical application of the information to students. The importance attached to learning about ways of protection against diseases such as STDs and unwanted pregnancies was stressed by a number of girls and boys in the FGDs as expressed below:

"...find it useful in a way that it helps us to learn to protect ourselves, how things come up and how we can avoid them... In biology we learn the reproductive parts of man. We learn how these parts are different from man... These lessons help us to learn more about like these days there are very many common diseases like STDs. So through learning them we get more information on how to prevent these STDs and how we can live healthy lives..." (FGD, girls).

"...Helps us to learn how we can protect our lives and how we can control our bodies safely. ... It's important because some of us like to enjoy live sex. They gave us a table, which shows the safe days. When they teach this and you put it in your mind, it can help to know the days when you have to play that live sex & days when you don't have to. ... Some body can know how to protect him / herself because these things we learn in class they contribute the way we are living; in that somebody knows how to clean him / herself. So when somebody grows up when the secondary characteristics come up like menstruation, somebody is supposed to know how to bath, use heavy "material" (meaning pads) that are used to control the flow of blood... It has helped us to know when to get into relationships. We got know about the methods and the precautions like condoms if you can't abstain..." (FGD, boys).

Students especially boys admitted their high interest in sex and therefore found the information very helpful as regards prevention and making decisions on when to have and not to have sex. They particularly appreciated information about safe days, use of condoms and hygiene. Consequently, students noted that knowing these issues was very helpful in making informed choices.

Knowledge about body changes seemed to be one of the most important uses of classroom knowledge as this group of girls stated:

"...Biology - about menstruation - We are given a lot of confidence because sometimes we feel low about being a girl, we feel bad about having to menstruate. It helps me gain confidence that am not surprised when such a thing happens to me - to know that having to menstruate is a normal thing... Biology most especially about pregnancy, shows us why parents don't want us to have sex at this stage because they tell us that our body might not be ready to hold the baby. So I learnt that I would have problems when I start engaging in sex at this age. I learnt to be patient... You find that girls are not exposed to these issues. You find that they will question for example why secondary characteristics? These things help us to know why we have some things on our bodies like breasts, so these things make us persevere in life when you know. One may find it weird to grow breasts, to have pubic hair, just because they don't know. Those things teach you, give you self esteem and teach you that sex is not good for you. Unlike the people who are ignorant like those people in the village, those girls in village who are not informed, those girls are used very many times. ... Its very bad to be ignorant... You find that some people are not exposed to some of these things in their homes... Its at school where most of us spend most of our time in the year... it will be the best place to have all this information... The Social Etiquette bit helps me to groom myself as I grow up into an adult, shape morals and keeps my behaviours upright in everything that I do... Social Etiquette helps me to learn about self esteem, have confidence about myself that I can do anything... teaches to be dignified. I may never get a chance to talk to my parents because they are too busy. So it gives us a chance to find out more about ourselves, things which we would not have known..." (FGD, girls).
Providing information on body changes was mentioned to be very helpful to the young people particularly girls in enhancing their confidence, respect and self-esteem as well as reducing anxieties caused by the body changes such as menstruation, growing breasts and pubic hair. With such information, they expressed that they were able to protect themselves as well as make informed choices about when to have and not sex and for what purpose. In addition, they are able to respond to the body changes as they arise. Girls acknowledged the power of knowledge and noted that some girls especially those in the village have been in most times exploited because of ignorance. Girls acknowledged the significant role of Social Etiquette lesson as a substitute of the cultural socialisation of boys and girls in the home, particularly for those whose parents are busy and never get time to talk to them. Although boys also expressed that they have gained confidence from the Social Etiquette lessons, their confidence gain was associated with public speaking and that of girls was mainly associated with accepting their position in society and keeping their "dignity" as women.

While the interviewed boys did not mention family planning as one of the acquired useful information, the FGDs indicated that both boys and girls appreciated the current and expected future use of the knowledge they had gained about family planning/birth control as these girls and boys explained:

"...We get to know the birth control methods like vasectomy, withdrawal, using condoms, which help to bring about planned population so that the country can plan for its population effectively for the limited resources. . . ." (FGD, boys).

"...We learn things that will help us now and in future. Things like birth control e.g. pills, condoms, and diaphragm. You get to know what to do in future. (FGD girls).

Students also pointed out that the knowledge has helped them to be aware of how to plan for their future families/marriage and their relations with the opposite sex:

"...Sex education and Social Etiquette teaches me to be an upright woman, someone of substance and how to relate with the opposite sex when I get married am to plan for my family and my kids..." (FGD, girls).

"...The information is very useful because like in Moral Training, they were teaching us about how to take ourselves, how to relate to each other, so that in future we are not shy and we are able to present ourselves in public, and know how to communicate to one another. . . . It is helping us for example in CRE, they teach us how to prepare our future marriages so we know when and how we should prepare ourselves..." (FGD, boys).

Students’ opinions about the usefulness of information revealed gendered concerns in sexuality knowledge as well as the overarching ‘value’ of the information as being protection embedded in all the messages put across. This suggests that despite students’ critical commentary about the material received from teachers, it was better than not having it at all.

Data from students’ interviews and discussions produced enormous information creating tension for analysis that requires corroboration with other data sources (from teachers and parents presented in
next chapter). Detailed discussion of the findings is therefore presented in the final chapter (Chapter seven).

5.6 Summary
The everyday lived culture of the school is permeated with stereotyped ideas about males and females and frequent segregation between boys and girls, with activities divided along stereotypical masculine and feminine lines through which consistent messages about gender and sexuality are constructed. Despite an overt discouragement of sexual activity, bolstered by construction of ‘decent’ boys and girls. Students’ interaction within the school space is highly sexualized, and monitored as much by students themselves and by adults in the school. However, despite the restrictions and monitoring of students’ social interaction, students’ responses here reveal active engagement in sexual behaviours and practices such as “hugging”, “parking”, “coupling” and sexual intercourse with peers, teachers and adults outside the school. Such realities alone highlight the background of students’ interest in sexuality information, attested to throughout their responses on sexuality education obtained in and outside the classroom. Girls’ accounts reveal pervasive sexual harassment and violence both in the school and in the community and lack of support to address the issue. This raises a huge tension around the meaning of ‘protection’ for girls (within traditional cultural ideas of gender/sx) and the meaning of ‘responsible’ sexuality for girls and boys: an important focus for sexuality education.

Students’ interviews and FGDs revealed students active engagement with multiple sources of sexuality knowledge including the school, friends, relatives especially parents, the media, resource persons/professionals from NGOS, reading materials such as text books, novels, magazines, newspapers and posters. Parents especially mothers and teachers were reported to play an important role in providing sexuality information. Mothers appeared to play a more significant role than teachers in female students’ construction of appropriate sexual attitudes, behaviours, values and decisions. More boys than girls would turn to their teachers with either a question or a sexual problem. It was clear that friends and especially peers were very important sources of information or misinformation.

Students’ responses regarding the topics taught during Biology and Religious Education indicate brief, restrictive, prescriptive and academic oriented sexuality curricula. There were clear gender differences regarding the sexuality issues identified by boys and girls from the different subjects, where girls and boys remembered topics that addressed their sense of their gendered sexualities. Students valued information from CRE and Social Etiquette more than from Biology because the biologic information was not immediately relevant to their lived experiences, though useful for their
future. Across all subjects, regardless of students’ preferences, the promotion of abstinence was identified as the main message. Given that students are not likely to be abstinent (section 5.2.2), this raises questions about the orientation of sexuality education in the current classrooms.

Students’ accounts revealed that the main teaching method was lecturing involving dictation of notes and provision of explanations as teaching progresses. Consequently, students described sexuality lessons as “theoretical” and ‘exam driven’ in which teachers presented brief, mostly technical details about the various aspects of sexuality with neither demonstration nor illustrations and use of teaching methods that encourage active participation of students like group discussions and plays, use of reading materials like Straight Talk newspapers and posters, case studies, giving life experiences and audio visual teaching aids including films, videos, pictures and radio talk shows. Majority of the students expressed the need for use of interactive and participatory methods and that lessons of sexuality should be offered in a regular basis, spread over the four years of Ordinary level secondary education. More girls than boys stated that they preferred all or most of the sexuality education lessons conducted in single sex settings. On the other hand, most boys and less than half of the interviewed girls especially from single sex school (girls only) preferred to have the lessons conducted under mixed sex set up. Although, overall most students preferred to be taught by male teachers with more boys than girls supporting this opinion, girls pointed out that female teachers were helpful in handling their personal and private sexuality issues particularly outside the formal classes. Students’ interviews and FGDs revealed gendered participation during lessons about sexuality in which boys took control of the classroom space.

Despite students being highly critical of sexuality education offered by teachers, they appreciated the information received, seeing its overarching value as protection against diseases and unwanted pregnancy as well as in its capacity to offer students with sexual confidence and self-esteem.
CHAPTER SIX

TEACHERS' AND PARENTS' ENGAGEMENT IN SEXUALITY EDUCATION

6.1 Introduction
This chapter presents findings from the interviews and FGDs\(^\text{82}\) with teachers\(^\text{83}\) and parents\(^\text{84}\) about their views on and experiences with sexuality education for young boys and girls. While parents are potentially an important source of information and support to young people on sexuality issues, their efforts are in constant negotiation with other sources especially teachers. Teachers' interviews focused on their experiences with teaching sexuality in schools, their perception of the gender dynamics in student interactions and their perceptions about comprehensive sexuality education in schools. Discussions with parents addressed their experiences with sexuality education at home and perceptions about comprehensive sexuality education in schools.

6.2 Teachers' experiences and perceptions about sexuality education

6.2.1 Teachers' views about the gender dynamics in students' interactions

\textit{a) Student participation in co-curricula activities}

Teachers were asked about their observations on students' participation in co-curricular activities and the nature of gender relations among students. Teachers overwhelmingly concurred that participation of students in co-curricular activities was gendered and organized around constructions both of certain activities as 'gendered' and of students' own identities as masculine or feminine. They noted that boys engaged in sports especially football and volleyball which they associated with 'masculine' qualities such as 'displaying physical strength and skills' while girls mainly participated in 'feminine' activities such as netball, music, dance and drama, fitness and acrobics, clubs and morale boosting during school/house competitions. They reported that participation in the clubs also varied along gender lines with more female participating in the religious clubs like scripture union, Legion of Mary and Young Christian Society [YCS] than males.

Teachers also generally approached questions of participation through 'biological' discourse about the body. They pointed out that the participation of girls in co-curricula activities was constrained by the

\(^{82}\) Again here as in chapter five, did not engage in full sophisticated and complex exploration of the discourses within respondents' representation of ideas and experiences.

\(^{83}\) 10 male and 14 female teachers were interviewed and 23 female and 29 male teachers participated in the FGDs

\(^{84}\) 25 male and 23 female parents participated in the FGDs
nature of their ‘developing’ and ‘changing’ bodies. They noted that body changes such as menstruation and growing breasts make girls feel uncomfortable, unable to freely participate in activities such as running, netball and swimming:

“... issues of development and growth among children especially adolescents affect their participation in both the class and outside class, co-curricula activities more especially the girls. Things like menstruation some girls miss class, some become reserved and shy to participate in class. They don’t want to participate in activities like running, even some in netball...” (Male teacher, interview).

“...something natural can end up affecting the child in a negative way. Somebody’s body is developing sexually but then if somebody is knowledgeable about it, then it would not be a big problem, they would study. Girls dodge lessons because they are in their menstruation; they don’t want to participate in sports such things. The boys are somehow not affected so much. Their main problem is relationships...” (Female teacher, interview).

“...they [body changes] disrupt children’s concentration in class, participation in co-curricular activities. Girls may not want to run because their breasts will jump up and down while others feel big...” (Male teacher, interview).

It is evident here that teachers believe girls’ body changes affect their participation in both class and outside classroom activities in a way inapplicable to boys and that girls’ relative lack of knowledge about such changes exacerbated the negativity. Teachers (both male and female) felt that girls opted for ‘idle conversations’ and ‘gossiping’. Apart from chasing the girls to go and participate in activities such as sports, there was no mention of any assistance offered to encourage their participation in these activities.

b) Students’ interaction during co-curricula activities

Teachers overall noted that co-curricular activities offered avenues for students’ interaction and socialization. However, the interaction was monitored to ensure students did not engage in sexual relationships. Some teachers in the interviews and one of the FGDs noted:

“...they [students] are free to interact. But when they are in these clubs or doing sports, a teacher must be there to see what is happening. These students are funny; you can’t let them alone...” (Male teacher, interview).

For me the Ugandan society especially the youth are undisciplined. Boys interacting with girls, a very small percentage if you are a boy interacting with a girl may be 10% may be genuine and innocent interaction for the purpose of academic. But in most cases these interactions end in premarital sexual relationships...” (Male teacher, interview).

“...They are not supposed to be in compromising situations as alone in hidden places, very often seen with each other a particular pair so much in each others company. What this school is trying to prevent or discourage development of sexual relationships...” (FGD, M&F85 teachers).

Teachers’ opinions demonstrate ways in which they believed boys’ and girls’ interactions were highly sexualized. These views indicate that adults are often suspicious of girls’ and boys’ relationships, which they described as being undisciplined, and likely to lead to premarital sexual relationships. Consequently, they justified their surveillance of students’ interactivity across gendered borders, monitoring their presence in “compromising situations”. Therefore, although the students were “free” to interact, their interaction was in fact openly restricted by the teachers. In the Muslim school,

85 M&F = Male and Female
the teachers also reported that free interaction was not allowed because the Islamic faith does not encourage this and mixing of girls and boys contradicts the Islamic principles of respecting separate spheres for males and females.

Not only was the boy/girl interaction sexualized by teachers, but they also focused particularly on girls’ dress. While the school dress code is overly targeted at ‘smartness’, it is also associated with gender-appropriate ideas about bodily appearances which should downplay any notion of sexual attractiveness:

“…Now, the reason behind [dress code in schools] may be one of them can be that you know these days there is away girls get attracted towards one another and I don’t know whether you have heard about that thing of lesbianism, homosexuality. There are some girls who have that weakness and they get attracted to one another. Then another thing also as these girls especially in single sex schools make up themselves there is that fear that some male teachers may be attracted to them…” (Female teacher, interview).

“…Decent dressing as you have seen them for us here they wear long black skirts…we discourage “maddonas” “kundishows”. Then wearing transparent clothes is not good for ladies. They should wear bras. Most of them are uncomfortable with bras. They wear “boob tubes.” You should ensure that your body is well covered leaving nothing to the imagination. Even when they wear trousers they should avoid these trousers which stop here [in the middle of the hips] and the panties are showing…” (Female teacher, interview).

It is evident in the first excerpt, that teachers’ regulation of students’ dressing and make-up was associated with homophobia and ideas about sexual harassment from male teachers. Girls are not allowed to put on tight trousers, short and transparent skirts, dresses and trousers, jewellery or wear make up. While teachers were strict with the girls, (and justified their regulation in terms of social norms) there was more laxity concerning boys on these issues. With boys they professed to be concerned with those behaviours generally perceived to be masculine including involvement in drinking alcohol, smoking, taking drugs, fighting, use of vulgar language and poor self respect and disrespect for others especially the elders.

The data reveals complex tensions and sexualisation of students’ interaction that pervades everyday lived culture of the school. Through such sexualisation messages about gender and sexuality are transmitted.

6.2.2 Teachers’ views about students’ sexual behaviours and practices in schools

a) Engagement in sexual relationships

In the schools visited, all the teachers spoke of their belief that most of the students in secondary schools were sexually active in various kinds of relationships. Teachers reported that ‘boyfriend’/‘girlfriend’ relationships were common, especially among peers either within or outside the school. Girls were also reported to engage in relationships with older men outside the school commonly known as the “sugar daddies”. Few cases of homosexuality were reported especially in
single sex schools and most teachers expressed the view that students reported to be engaging in such activities were just subjects of rumours:

"...It has been rumoured in the dorm but we have not got people red handed. May be something close to real we had some new student last year the boy came from the west, he was trying to grab some small boys..." (Female teacher, interview).

"...There are various allegations of homosexuality in the school. The only problem we have found with this and the reason why we have to be more careful is that the concept of homosexuality is understood differently from the way we understand it in Africa..." (Male teacher, interview).

Teachers' statements show lack of both knowledge about and acceptance of homosexuality and lesbianism as normal sexuality. There was some disagreement between male and female teachers concerning the specifics of student heterosexual liaisons in particular schools. While some female teachers reported cases where female students involved in intimate relationships with some male teachers, male teachers denied such engagements.

Teachers attested to a wide panoply of realities in their school-based experience of students, over years of teaching: pregnancies, abortions, vulnerability to STDs, HIV and their use of pornography. One of the female teachers noted:

"...In a normal school community just like any other communities you would expect that. For example we have a program in this school where they take the girls for pregnancy check ups; we want to modify it to general medical check ups. Normally we get some students as young as those in S.1 (pregnant) because of the long vacation, they come when they are already pregnant. When you go to our sickbay you find that most of these people are being treated for STDs. There are indicators some times in class, we get things related to boy/girl relationships for example written letters..." (Female teacher, interview).

In contrast incidences of teenage pregnancies were described common occurrences. The teachers however, appeared to suggest that the pregnancies (which were detected through conducting pregnancy checks at the beginning of the term) were caused by outsiders whom the girls met during the holidays. All of this suggests a rich and active sexual culture among school students. Teachers reported however, that it was not easy to detect HIV and AIDS among students.

b) Teachers' attitudes towards initiation of sexual relationships

While one of the female teachers in the interviews felt it was okay for females to initiate relationships, all the other teachers in both the interviews and FGDs noted that under 'normal' circumstances, it is only the males who were supposed to initiate relationships:

"...When you look at our African culture, even when there is so much talking about freedom, women emancipation has come; there are things, which still look awkward generally. However much we think we have been uplifted to a certain stage of emancipation and development, it looks awkward not only to a single individual you are talking to when you initiate a relationship but even how society would bear about it. I don't think that society has shifted from looking at it in away that for example you can suggest a relationship then they look at you as a decent and normal girl. Like you are suffering from who to have, you are actually sick...It's also not acceptable in our society especially for a girl to have many men. For a boy when he is growing up it may not be surprising to hear that he has a girlfriend here

171
and another one there. Still society would not encourage it even if it would be parents they would not love it but if it would be a girl who has done that, then it would be a spoiled girl. It's not something acceptable..." (Female teacher, interview).

"...There are some who demand sex from the opposite sex / boys. They should not demand for sex. It's the men to do that. At their age they should not be doing that [sexual relationships]... not even suggesting it...[FT87]. It has always been that it's the men who have more. Men don't hide when they have such relationships. But girls it's only a close friend who would know...MT87" (FGD, M&F teachers).

"...it is very queer to find girls initiating relationships. It's not okay. Society does not expect such thing to happen...[FT] ...I don't believe in a girl having so many boyfriends but it's also not good for boys to have many girlfriends. Someone in such a relationship, her dignity, they keep on talking eeh eeh that one she was with so and so...girls are more vulnerable than the boys. [FT] According to the society she is not expected to do that. That is why you see men having many girlfriends and boys at school think they should do the same and every body seem to be running for that one. And yet on the other hand they look at the girls as being promiscuous and so the loses her dignity...[MT] for men instead it increases it ... society thinks that men should have any number of women unlike the women...[FT]." (FGD, M&F teachers).

Teachers' accounts reveal both stereotypic constructions of sexuality and a sense of changing norms, of what they do not in general approve. Existence of double standards and control of female sexuality is clearly evident in the teachers' views about the meaning of male and female sexuality. The female teacher's views in the first excerpt suggests that advocacy for women's emancipation and freedom seems not have had a significant impact on society's rigid constructions of sexuality in Africa. Initiation of sexual relationships and engagement in multiple relationships remain to be perceived as masculine. Teachers seemed to justify society's rigid constructions and control of female sexuality around notions of female vulnerability.

6.2.3 Teachers' views about students' sources of sexuality knowledge

There was a general view that students acquired information from a number of sources including the school, home, friends (peers) and the media (magazines, newspapers, radio, internet and television). Teachers noted that students come to class when they already have some information about sexuality some of which is a mixture of misinformation and inaccurate concepts. Although one of the teachers said that for some students, class knowledge confirmed information gleaned from other sources, other teachers reported that students had limited knowledge, especially about the changes in the bodies. Teachers were concerned about the volatile impact the new information could have on the students' 'innocence' and also voiced fears about the information students acquire from the other sources.

Teachers appreciated the important role parents play in influencing their students' sexuality. During the interviews and FGDs, teachers noted that as children grow they are taught about what is expected

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86 FT=FEMALE TEACHER
87 MT=MEN TEACHER

172
Teachers also described parents’ role as gendered with mothers taking up the main role, in terms of being ‘gender/sexuality educators’:

"... As a child grows in a home, parents are supposed to teach them what to do both boys and girls. Mothers are expected to teach their girls what to do, how to behave not to involve in sexual intercourse before marriage..." (Male teachers, interview).

"...Families play a big role in influencing their children’s sexuality especially the mothers who spend more time with the children. She teaches them how to bath, tells them about their body parts. Also children copy what they see their parents doing..." (Female teachers, interview).

Teachers believe that children “copy” their parents’ behaviours including sexual behaviours, dressing styles and discipline. They suggested:

"... Most of the girls from single mother families behave in a funny way. They have come from a parent whose lifestyle, no particular parent (man) in the home. The mother goes out with someone and children come to learn that. You cannot enforce discipline on something you do not have. If you are not living it then how can you ask another person? I have seen a boy of a single mother really a problem with sexuality, disturbing the girls... Some mothers buy their children short things and these children also become a problem... Fathers may not have a big influence but mothers do. Families have a very big role to play because children normally copy what they see. They normally copy what we are. We are really what we are because of how our parents brought us up. If the woman comes with the a man at home and then may be after 6 months she gets another man to pick her, the girl is observing. What do the children learn from her especially the girl. They are very observant, very keen..." (Male teacher, interview).

"...Parents have a very big role to play in advising these young girls and boys. Children tend to copy what they see happening in the surroundings. If the father has say, many partners, this is what the children will do. If the mother puts on short skirts, this is what the daughter will do. So parents and other family members have to live by examples..." (Male teacher, interview).

"....... Films and TVs are not controlled in the home and the children are exposed to uncensored pornographic material. The family should be the first school to teach values and many families are failing to do this. There are also cases of increased incest between fathers and daughters or any other relative. Am sure you have had about this. These days there are so many in the media. Its terrible..." (Male teacher, interview).

Teachers’ views above reveal stereotypical constructions of single mothers, commonly seen as sexually ‘loose’ and/or immoral sexual beings who engage in multiple relationships, and whose social codes of behaviour influences their children’s sexuality, especially their daughters. The role the mother and father in constructing children’s gendered sexuality became even more apparent in the FGDs as evidenced by the following extracts:

"....The parents influence so much their children’s sexuality. ...Boys behave the way their fathers behave. If the father is the kind of man who changes, moves from girlfriend to girlfriend, the boy does the same. Through a lot of interrogations we come across such boys....[MT] That is what we call domestic background. So sometimes you find that a child who comes from the family where there is violence, there is fighting and all that, the father drinks and has many women, the boy is at liberty and feels it’s normal [MT]. We had a head boy who had that problem. And then he opened up and said this is what my father does. Daddy has a new ‘baby’ almost every time we go back for holidays. And indeed when we called the father, actually the father is sick, he sat there and said, 'est bane nga' [my colleagues]... it seems this thing runs in the blood... That was the father making a comment...[FT] And the girls, we’ve noticed that girls who have mothers from sometimes single mothers, like single mothers change men, and the way the mothers dress. There are times you really take on a student and you really wonder what’s wrong, the way they dress, always wrapping yourself around boys, when the mother comes on visiting Sunday and you see how the mother is dressed, you stop complaining... [FT]. The mother is almost nakied. The skirt is almost like a belt, so that is when you change the approach [FT] You realize that oh there is a problem at home and then you change your approaches all together and you get to know who really this girl is. That’s when you change the approach you get results out of her. .... [FT] so the way these parents behave influences these children’s sexuality....[MT]" (FGD, M&E teachers).
"...others are encouraging them to behave the way they behave for example. When the school identifies a wrong character and may be sends him or her home for the parents, on coming back the parent comes aligning with the child saying the teachers are just against the child. ...[MT] Parents at times sponsor their children to go for films, discos, parties. It's from there that they learn what I may call the bad behaviour. So in that way they contribute...[FT]" (FGD,M&F teachers).

The extracts from the teachers' FGDs reveal complex gendered meanings teachers attach to students' sexuality and their equally complex representation of homes as gendered sites not necessarily congruent with teachers' ideas of 'right' and 'wrong'. Teachers indicated that children take on their parents' talk with the children and the way parents set gendered norms around sexuality. However, teachers lamented that most parents did not talk to their sons and daughters much about sexuality and also behaved in ways that contradicted expected norms. They reported that most parents intervene in their children's sexuality matters only when they perceive a problem. They were concerned about parents' neglect of their educational role and noted that most parents had instead left this task of carrying out sexuality education entirely to the teachers, church leaders, housemaids, counsellors, friends and media such as television and pornographic films and magazines. According to the teachers, parents' failure to play this role, made it difficult for the teachers to effectively guide and advise students. They recognised students' trust in parental guidance despite parents' abdication of their educational role. They thus suggested that it was important to encourage parents to talk to their children and work together with schools to ensure effective and consistent information delivery. The teachers felt that providing sexuality education to students at school was crucial because most parents did not discuss these issues with their sons and daughters as well as the fact that children stay longer periods at school than at home.

The teachers also reported that boys' sexuality was not a major concern to parents and that in most cases boys seemed to lack parental guidance. This concern was raised in the interviews and more emphasised in the FGDs. Teachers in FGDs indicated that fathers were always reluctant to give sexuality information to children and that this had some affect on the boys' sexuality since education of the boy child was assumed to be largely handled by their fathers. Teachers' sentiments are represented in the following interview excerpt from a group discussion of male and female teachers who agreed:

"...It's like the parents especially the fathers as if they are less concerned all the time. One time there was a father of this boy, he was called to school to see what his son had done. He was involved in a relationship with one of the girls and had been warned several times. He [the father] first of all asked the Headmaster, that first show me the girl. But when he found that it was such a beautiful girl then the father just said, 'aba... matesane wange asitume' choice (my son has a choice) and just walked away..... He said he had made a good choice ...That just shows the kind of family. To him it's normal, he's powerful and yet the mother would have made a lot of noise about it. ...." (FGD,M&F teachers).
This teacher's anecdote demonstrates the view that fathers encouraged sons to engage in sexual relationships as expressions of masculinity, which mothers and schools may not approve of. Consequently, children receive conflicting messages. Teachers pointed out that parents needed to recognize their role in the education of their sons and daughters about sexuality and that this is an essential part of a framework in which they themselves, as teachers, can create appropriate sexuality information for their students.

6.2.4 Teachers' experiences with the official school sexuality education curriculum

a) Curriculum content

Teachers who taught subjects of Biology, CRE, IRE, Social Etiquette and Moral Education were interviewed to document the dynamic process through which sexuality knowledge was constructed in the official school curricula. A number of topics covered in the different subjects are shown on Tables 6.1 and 6.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.1 Sexuality related topics addressed in Biology, CRE and IRE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human development</strong></td>
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<td>Human reproductive system/organisms</td>
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<td>Fertilization</td>
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<td>Adolescence/secondary characteristics</td>
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<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Sexual behaviour</strong></td>
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<td>Birth control</td>
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<td><strong>Society and Culture</strong></td>
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Sources: Teachers' interviews
While the Biology teachers noted that sexuality issues were located within a reproductive framework focusing mainly on the biological function of male and female sexuality, religious education addressed both the biological and the social aspects of sexuality. Hence according to teachers the different subjects complement one another. The official curricula were also supplemented with information from subjects such as Social Etiquette and Moral Education. Issues covered in these two subjects are illustrated in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 Sexuality issues covered in Social Etiquette and Moral Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human development</th>
<th>Social Etiquette</th>
<th>Moral education</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
<td><strong>Adolescence</strong></td>
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<td>Relationships</td>
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<td>Sexual behaviour</td>
<td>Abstinence and brief highlights about STDs, HIV and AIDS</td>
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<td>Abstinence</td>
<td>current moral and social problems and human rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pornography</td>
<td>Morals and expected behaviour in society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual activity and its consequences</td>
<td>(dress code, courtesy, drug abuse, respect,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual health</td>
<td>non use of vulgar language)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family planning</td>
<td>Courtship, marriage and family</td>
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<td><strong>Society and culture</strong></td>
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<td>The code of conduct in society</td>
<td>Leadership – public speaking</td>
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<td>(dress code, greeting, courtesy,</td>
<td>Dating</td>
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<td>vulgar language)</td>
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<td>others problems and situation</td>
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<td>sexual development and the person</td>
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<td>awareness and self-esteem</td>
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*Sources: Teachers' interviews*

The Social Etiquette teachers reported that although all the above topics were taught to both boys and girls, some topics including handling relationships, decision making and the code of conduct in society such as kneeling and greeting were overemphasized to the girls. On the other hand, topics about respect, self control in sexual relationships and how to conduct themselves when they are with the opposite sex were especially emphasized to the boys. Moral Training emphasized character development of boys and girls. The teachers further noted that issues concerning sex and sexuality were taught based on Bible teachings with an emphasis on abstinence until marriage, and on marital
fidelity, stating that "premarital sex (fornication) and adultery are against God's commandments". Religiosity appeared to be a uniform pedagogic approach to sexuality in CRE, IRE, Social Etiquette and Moral Education in all schools that offer these subjects.

b) **Teachers' opinions about the content coverage**

While teachers indicated coverage of sexuality topics in the different subjects, they suggested that classroom sexuality knowledge was in fact inadequate and too academically oriented, as the following extracts from the teachers' interviews and a group discussion demonstrates:

"...The content needs to be supplemented to bring in the issue of guidance. The content as it is now is too academic. It needs to be expanded....to emphasize in the main curriculum that as one teaches these issues, he/she should guide the students on how to go through this challenging stage [adolescence]... Because the curriculum does not talk about anything on how to go about such issues so it is upon the creativity of the teacher. If the teacher is not creative he/she will just go over the issue with the content as it is..." (Male, Biology teacher, interview).

"...Yes there is [sexuality education] but not comprehensive. More needs to be done. Like the Moral Education that we give stops in S.3. This is not good given that students in upper classes like S.4 who are moving out into the world, may need this information more than anybody else. More so, there is no official syllabus. It's as the teachers who have to decide on what to teach and its being offered in just a few schools. I know of only two schools, that is here and Namibango College. There may be others but am not aware of them. The CRE and biology classes cannot be enough. It's not comprehensive they cover issues here and there. Like in biology it's mainly the biological facts. Students need the other bit, the social aspects and the like...." (Male CRE/ME* teacher, interview).

"...I think the way sex education is being handled today lacks (leaves) a lot to be desired. First, sex education is covered in a few subjects. Now, how do you cater for those who don't offer those subjects? Or suppose you don't finish the syllabus. I believe sex education in schools should be an on going and continuous program...." (Female teacher, interview).

"...Considering the weight of the questions students ask and the way we give bits and pieces of information I would think it would be good thing to have somebody specifically put aside or something put on the school time table specifically for such. We really tell you that we go to class but most times we go to class to teach what is in the book. It's once in a while that we mention such...." (FGD, M&E teachers).

According to the above extracts from interviews and FGDs, teachers' sense of the inadequacy of the curricula-based avenue to sexuality education was based on the lack of guidance on practical issues that are of immediate relevance to students' lives. They further noted that there was no official comprehensive school sexuality education syllabus that caters for all students, and instead "bits and pieces" of sexuality knowledge were being covered in various subjects, some of which are not offered in all schools and to all students. One of the Biology teachers expressed concerns about leaving the choice of topics to the discretion of teachers and noted that the kind and depth of sexuality information presented will depend on the teachers' creativity/creative teaching methods. The teachers suggested that sexuality education should be offered in all schools as an on going program for all the students and have clear syllabus with a specific teacher allocated to handle it.

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*ME = Moral Education"
Despite the fact that teachers were compelled to follow the syllabus, some noted that the classroom environment offered teachers the opportunity to enrich the content in order to provide information that is relevant to students' lives. They believed, students were given the opportunity to raise any issues related to the topic under discussion. This approach should ensure that the lessons were made more meaningful to the students' lived realities:

"...this is not in the syllabus... but you know as one is teaching and you anticipate the kind of danger they are likely to face in that period... in class as you are teaching... we focus on life skills of self esteem, encourage the girls to be assertive, be very good negotiators... for my particular case... I encourage critical thinking, very fast thinking so that you do not just do something for the sake of doing it. I always give them an example of "Sugar Daddies" they always play on their psychology, they know that you are moving on fast, they know that you are tired, if they talk of a lift .... Very fast you give in without first thinking about it..." (Male Biology teacher, interview).

"...Ours simply deals with the biological aspects. Even these things I simply bring them in because I know young people need that kind of information but in the syllabus it does not put such. We are supposed to teach reproduction, family planning. I simply chop in these things simply because I want these children to benefit because they are really very raw. They are lacking information...When am teaching any biological topic I normally try to relate it to life situation because I tell them this topic should help us understand the biological aspects and also help us to live... For me I begin by telling them that sex is good but has its own problems... if sex is not well handled, not done rightly, at the right time it can be disastrous... it's a matter of life and death if you engage in sex live without any protection; you can get pregnant or end up with AIDS or both... if you can manage you can postpone it, use a condom. I also warn them especially the girls that we men are very cunning...men can deceive women...never take a man for granted...some girls have put trust in men and ended up being raped by the very men or end up having situations of men who removed condoms...men are patient, they give you money, presents for yours and one day he will become a beast...." (Male teacher, interview).

These teachers' statements indicate recognition of the narrow focus of the syllabus and the need to provide guidance about sexuality through provision of information that responds to students' needs including life skills such as assertiveness, critical thinking, self esteem, negotiation and communication skills especially to the girls. Teachers' comments further revealed ways in which teachers construct and perceive students' sexuality as dangerous and risky especially for female students. This is reflected by the teachers' response to the students' questions and concerns, which focuses on negative aspects of sexuality for girls.

While some teachers expressed that the curriculum material was inadequate, a few teachers (male) were uncertain about the outcomes of giving detailed sexuality information; and felt it would promote sexual activity among students:

"...It should come in bits. Once you enlighten someone about something, they normally want to find out; in fact one may try to have sex to experiment... (MT). May be at the age of 18, you tell these young boys, you may spoil them... the more you talk about these sexual issues to these young boys the more active they become... the child may be innocent but once you start talking... (MT)" (Male participants FGD, M&F teachers).

The teachers' feelings expressed above reveal beliefs that exposure of students to sexuality knowledge through sexuality education could lead to promiscuity or risky experimentation. They proposed maintaining 'innocence' by either denying students information or consciously giving them partial information. This indicates that teachers themselves may inject personal fear and bias into the planned curriculum thus offering highly censored and incoherent sexuality knowledge.
Despite some teachers’ fears about giving detailed information to their students, they reported that
schools were aware of the inadequate coverage of sexuality information in the official curriculum and
the need to supplement class-based knowledge through organizing talks facilitated by either the
SWT/SMT or resource persons (‘experts’) from NGOS. In addition, some schools have established
HIV and AIDS and health clubs through which sexuality information was introduced and shared
among students. These included such clubs as AIDS challenges club, Young Start Alert, health clubs
and Youth Alive. Members of these clubs were encouraged to pass on new information to fellow
students and to other members of the society especially in their homes. In some schools a few
members from the clubs were occasionally selected to present to the whole school on assemblies.

Some female teachers noted that in schools as is the case at home, there was a tendency to
overemphasize girls’ sexuality rather than boys. They suggested that there is need to educate the boys
as much as the girls:

“...In fact, too much care is given to girls and boys are left out. They teach the girls to care for their future husbands
and boys are not taught how to care for their future wives; they teach girls to be submissive to their husbands and boys
are not taught that. I feel this is a gap which should be addressed....I believe that it’s a two way path both parties (boys and
girls) have to be submissive for the marriage to stabilize. Boys are brought up that they study these things for just to
pass their exams and it does not concern them...” (Female teacher, interview).

“...Most times we concentrate on the girl child and take it as if boys have no problem or are not part of the issue. We
have made a mistake. My experience with a boy, is that we need to talk to them about the changes in their bodies as
males. We have to tell them that when they feel the need of the opposite sex, it is natural, but it has time. We tell them
that we are different from animals, when you have such feelings..... as a human being, as man, you can choose, we can
suppress the feelings, you have to govern yourself, in fact you have to abstain until the time you get married... these
days there are so many broken homes and the main cause is that boys are not trained. When they grow they just take
their wives as animals...” (Female teacher, interview).

The above statements indicate some teachers’ recognition of the fact that there was constant
feminization of sexuality which reinforced male dominance as well as male denigration of female
bodies.

c) Factors influencing the selection and organization of sexuality information

Teachers’ views about the practical considerations for the selection and organization of sexuality
information during preparations for lessons about sexuality were solicited. All the teachers reported
that the school syllabus approved by the MOES provides guidelines about the broad topics to be
taught at each level of schooling although they were free to address other related issues not included
in the syllabus if they believed these had implications for the daily lives of their students. Teachers
also reported that they often had heavy workloads and the time allocated to the topics was limited.
They explained:
"The workload and time schedule also does affect what we give out. Our timetable is very tight for both teachers and students. Sometimes we would want to talk to these students even for long but here there is no free period even for students. They begin working as early as 5.00 am, some times after classes we do extra teaching, no time to rest. So sometimes you would want to have some more time with certain classes or even with individuals with social and academic problems but you cannot find time. Some of these students may come with immediate problems but you don’t even have time to attend to it. By the time you remember that there is a student I have to meet may be it has even expired or it has been taken over by events. The time here is so tight...." (Female teacher, interview).

"The workload has an effect on what I have to give out because since the workload is so much, sometimes you have to limit the material for instance that topic is supposed to be a two weeks topic but because they normally ask questions on social, cultural issues the children think it should be taught for three weeks. There are so many issues but because you do not want to lose track of what you are doing what you are supposed to cover you have to cut it short. There isn’t enough time because most of the time we are limited by the time. We just want to cover as much as possible...." (Male teacher, interview).

"... Sexuality issues may not be fully addressed in these subjects because some of the issues are not examined. And in most cases the issues, which are not examined, are the issues that may be important for the young people. Issues such as relationships. However meetings are organized when a problem crops up or when time allows. We have to appreciate the fact that our timetable is very tight and may not allow certain things to happen...." (Male teacher, interview).

The teachers’ statements indicate that the syllabi in which sexuality issues are addressed are too big to allow adequate time for detailed and comprehensive delivery of sexuality knowledge to the students. Teachers’ overloaded work schedule often causes concentration on academic issues which they know will be examined although they may not be of practical application to students’ realities. However, they pointed out that meetings are organized to address specific students’ problems whenever the need arises. The major administrative concern of completing the syllabus in preparation for the national examinations compels teachers to rush through subject content in the syllabus, offering less detail than in-depth exploration. Some teachers further indicated that societal values and beliefs influenced what was taught:

"... You feel after you have talked to them you have not said much because you were reserved especially when you know they are going to tell their parents that teacher told them bad manners. Some even cry and report you to the headmaster...." (Female teacher, interview).

According to this female teacher, providing young people with sexual information is ‘taboo’, described as teaching “bad manners”. Hence teachers are forced to hold back some of the information, for fear of transgressing societal beliefs. Teachers’ accounts further suggested that individual teachers’ personal comfort with sexual issues influenced their teaching. They noted that some teachers felt uncomfortable with certain words or with particular topics. They reported difficulty in using some important but sensitive words such as “penis”, “vagina” and “sexual intercourse”, resorting to either writing them on the chalk board or labelled the words or referring students to textbooks:

"... There are some things that some times even a teacher may fail to mention. For example penis, vagina because for us in our culture there are some things that you are not supposed to say by name. In English it sounds a bit okay. Things like sexual intercourse if said in vernacular aah No... you can’t so for me what I do I give them names at the beginning of the lesson so that I do not keep repeating them. For example I tell them that when I say “member” I mean the penis, but even that makes them get more interest. When I say the word it means sexual intercourse because
when you mention those things all the time the class will keep on laughing. For the vagina, we normally don’t mention, when you talk of the “member” and the “work”, students should understand what you mean. Students ask questions, even the one who has never asked a question will ask. They even ask questions that are not on the syllabus, but they will need to know everything. They are interested in knowing…” (Male teacher, interview).

The above statements illustrate teachers’ discomfort with teaching sexuality topics, often leading to the teachers’ censorship of information given to the students. The teacher’s views indicate apparent discomfort with naming of genitalia justified by culture and tabooring sexual speech and naming of the genitalia. He thus uses symbolic representation of the male genitalia and sexual intercourse. While a symbolic name is used to describe the male genitalia, the female genitalia are not named. Such gender biased representation suggests negative stereotypes associated with female genitalia; as ‘shameful things’ to talk about in public. The implication of teacher’s embarrassment about explicit naming of sexual organs and action and talk about sexuality is that students are made to believe that such talk and naming is embarrassing. All the teachers charged with teaching sexuality issues (except one) spoke of discomfort they felt when teaching sexuality.

6.2.5 Teachers’ views about students’ participation and interaction in class and the nature of gender relations

The gender dynamics of classroom interaction during sexuality education lessons are influential in creating students’ gendered constructions of the curriculum in use. Teachers believed that sexuality education lessons were more interesting and lively than the other lessons and that students always looked forward to attending them (though more interesting to the boys than to girls — see chapter 5 section 5.4.5). They noted that during the lessons, students were very active and asked all sorts of questions concerning issues which they were either experiencing or had heard or read about. Teachers further reported that students indicated gendered knowledge interests with the girls showing more interest in issues that seemed to directly affect them. Girls’ questions in Biology class revolved around issues of pregnancy and pregnancy prevention/birth control, menstruation, “pulling” of the vaginal Labia minora, causes of infertility (barrenness), impotence, condom use, a focus on relationships, and boys’ “lack of trustworthiness.” In CRE, girls were reported to show interest in menstruation, relationships and in the qualities of a “good partner” whereas in IRE they asked about family planning and raised concerns about the unfairness of the Qur’an on the use of contraceptives. On the other hand, Biology teachers reported that the boys mainly indicated interest in issues related to sexual desires and activity, relationships and condom use. In religious education (CRE and IRE) teachers claimed that boys also indicated interest in relationships. Issues such as family planning were perceived as a girl’s concern:

“… the boys do not believe that men can be fertile. When you talk about vasectomy the boys do not believe that men can deal with family planning. They feel it is the woman’s problem and therefore she should solve that problem herself…” (Female Biology teacher, interview).
Some teachers indicated that although the boys raised questions about the use of condoms, their main concern seemed to be related with disease prevention rather than with birth control. The Moral Education teacher also noted gendered knowledge interests with the girls showing more interest in issues related to body changes and the boys showing interest mainly in relationships.

The teachers further reported gender differences in the levels of students’ participation in the lessons. The majority of both male (8 out of 10) and female (12 out of 14) teachers reported that boys tended to participate more actively than girls. Only two (1 male and 1 female) teachers reported equal participation of girls and boys and another two reported active participation among girls than boys.

Teachers noted that boys generally asked many more questions and gave more comments than girls especially when dealing with female sexual issues. In both the interviews and FGDs teachers acknowledged that while boys appeared to enjoy the lessons, girls tended to be too “shy” and “embarrassed” to either ask questions or give comments. They reported that girls often wrote questions on pieces of papers and forwarded them to the teachers instead of asking them openly.

FGDs about students’ levels of participation revealed complex meanings attached to female sexuality and gender dynamics in sexuality education lessons. The teachers often suggested that this complexity arose from the highly gendered curriculum content that overemphasized female sexuality issues. In one of the FGDs, both male and female teachers pointed out:

“...Usually it is boys who are very active; they want to ask very many questions. Sometimes girls withdraw a bit. May be a few who are courageous, but it is always boys...[MT] Most of these discussions especially sex; there is a way a woman is put on the receiving end like she is... the man usually dominates and the woman takes the silent role. So even in some of these talks you find the woman is defeated especially in talks concerning sex and in those topics that they discuss you find that the woman is sometimes under played, and the joke is always on the women. So that’s why the girls withdraw, they feel like it touches them much more than it touches the boys and the boys are excited. So the girls usually... actually in my view the girls have always withdrawn. Unless you talk about a topic that specifically concerns men, now the girls will participate especially if you discuss things concerning violence in sex, then the girls come in and participate, ask questions. So, usually sex centres on the woman’s sexuality and in most cases the girls withdraw some are just too shy...[FT]” (FGD, M&F teachers).

The teachers’ responses indicated that discussions about sexuality tend to portray men as dominant and women as vulnerable and that jokes are directed at women and girls’ sexuality. Consequently, the girls feel more implicated by the discussions, and the boys on the other hand are excited by the sexualised context. Teachers’ views suggest that some teachers also tend to present female sexuality from a negative perspective, which creates anxiety among the girls as they watch the boys expressing excitement about negative aspects of their sexuality. The teachers’ comments further suggest that
boys' classroom experience is often interesting to them (even arousing) while girls experience strain, which demands them to be courageous in classroom participation.

Some teachers associated students' participation with religious backgrounds. They suggested that students (both boys and girls) who were very committed to the Christian religious faith tended to dislike talks about sexuality and appeared disinterested in class. They attributed such response to the fact that sex and sexuality is regarded as a private matter and portrayed as 'sinful' and 'shameful' discourses. This illustrates the role of the church in sexuality education.

Despite the dominant evidence of girls' recalcitrance, a few teachers particularly those from the Muslim and from one of the Christian schools reported that girls were more active than boys. Teachers in the Christian school attributed boys' low participation to the greater numbers of girls than boys in the class. In the FGDs, the teachers further expressed that most students do not have confidence in the teachers' ability to keep the confidentiality of class discussions about sexuality.

"...Well the teachers may be prepared and they are doing their best but the students may not trust them much because they know they are the same teachers who are teaching and when they come to the staff room ...[MT] When the students see us conversing and laughing and making fun they would think that may be they are telling us, and you never know some teachers may not have confidentiality in them. ...[FT] They may be saying you see that girl she just aborted the other time. She is there pretending. She is not holy at all. Anything can happen...[MT]." (FGD, M&E teachers).

Here, students' confidence in the teacher is seen to influence their participation in class as well as their readiness to take information seriously. Thus trust building between students and teachers is crucial in constructing students' participation in sexuality lessons.

6.2.6 Teaching strategies (methods and approach)

Given that the Uganda National Examinations Board "Uganda Certificate of Education Regulations and Syllabuses 2001-2005" (2001) which is a guiding document for teachers does not specify the methods teachers are expected to use, the teachers select any methods they feel most appropriate and convenient. Teachers reported that two main methods, lectures and guided discussions were being used. Though the teachers indicated that they attempted to relate the information to students' life experiences, they did not describe designing any practical sessions. Only one teacher of Moral Education reported that he used debates and role plays in his lessons. In addition, no teacher reported the use of teaching aids apart from their teaching notes and library reference books. They reported that they provided notes to students who are then referred to the library for detailed
information. Only one teacher from one of the sample schools reported that she used newspaper cuttings and radio cassettes during her Social Etiquette lessons.

The organizational arrangements such as subject requirements within the school were noted to influence the teaching strategies. Teachers explained that the choice of methods was influenced by the schools' teaching programme, which puts pressure on the teachers to complete the syllabus in the allocated time. Consequently, teachers relied mainly on use of the lecture method of teaching in order to save time.

The teachers' ability to handle sexuality education lessons also determined the teaching methods. Both male and female teachers in the FGDs expressed concern about the competence of the teachers who handled sexuality education. They wondered if teachers could cope with questions on sexual matters without embarrassment and noted that discussing certain topics in class caused extra tension and strained the teaching. The teachers' views are represented in the following interview extract from a group discussion of male and female teachers, who concurred:

"...It depends on the character because I know of what I would have said... a female teacher supposed to teach biology but she just writes on the blackboard and tells students, you copy notes, or she finds another teacher to come and teach for her. So it depends on the character of the teacher, how open you are. I know of a teacher, this time male, who told students that as you reach this age, you start growing hair and the students asked where, where, where? he could not explain to the students properly. So when he came to the staff room he told us, then we told him that's your problem. Why didn't you tell them? Then he said where do you begin?..." (FGD, M&F teachers).

The above excerpt illustrates teachers' discomfort with teaching sexuality topics, often leading to either their deployment of other people to handle their lessons or writing notes on the chalk board. Teachers (including the teachers charged with teaching sexuality) also admitted to these challenges for themselves and suggested that teaching sexuality required specialised training. They expressed that most of the teachers did not know how to handle sexuality issues as explained below:

"...Those who teach it now are not trained. They can't handle this now. I don't think they are really equipped. They need a guide..." (Male teacher, interview).

"...I think it's timely especially if it is brought in as a subject but also depends on how the teacher handles it because I have seen some young men teaching sexuality as if they are teaching biology; they are not teaching sexuality/sex education. I have had some young men who have just left the university they are teaching biology as if they are teaching sex; teaching ovulation, orgasm and I would imagine that the best way to teach is to teach like a counsellor..." (Male teacher, interview).

"...My comment is that teaching sexuality needs specialized training. It needs some skills in counselling and the course we do during the teacher training is really not enough. Problems of young people need some one to be fully trained on how to handle them. Yes we try as parents to help them but sometimes like issues of sexuality are not easy to handle..." (Female teacher, interview).

Teachers acknowledged the need for specialized training to be able to adequately teach issues of sex and sexuality effectively. They felt that sexuality was a complex area that demanded different styles of teaching than the methods used in other lessons. However, while training was noted to be essential,
some teachers in the FGDs spoke of students' trust in the teacher as being an overriding issue to training. Teachers' sentiments are represented by the voice of one of the male teachers in the FGD who said:

"...Yes, teachers may be trained but what becomes a problem is that you will say that it's Mr. Katabarwa and Ms. Mambane who are trained in that area. But does the person trust you? The person looks at you and says am going to see so and so... So if you are to take people who are trained in that area, you have to do it tactfully for that case..." (FGD, M&F teachers).

The teachers' views emphasise the earlier point about greater investment in trust building in order to encourage students' participation in sexuality education lessons raised in another FGD (section 6.2.5). The excerpt further suggests that training alone may not be sufficient.

b) Teachers’ opinions and suggestions about the appropriate sexuality education teaching methods

Despite, their own descriptions of their teaching methods, teachers identified a number of appropriate methods for sexuality education including use of discussions, illustrations, use of live examples and case studies, brainstorming, debates, role plays, providing reading materials with well packaged information, using audiovisual aids, news paper articles and use of outside resource persons. They recognized the importance of employing methods that encourage active participation of students as well as creating a friendly atmosphere. They suggested that teaching “like a counsellor” was crucial in sexuality education. For instance one of the teachers noted:

"...Teach like a counsellor. Teach like a parent and create a friendly atmosphere...The best way to teach sexuality is to let the children talk and you act as a guide. When they bring the issues out by themselves they tend to learn more and you as a teacher tactfully you know how you can bring in more issues. Use debates, games, group discussions, using some extracts from news papers..." (Male teacher, interview).

This emphasis suggests a tension between teachers' theories about sexuality education and their actual practice which was not described in these terms at all. According to some teachers employing 'scare tactics' was the most effective way of teaching sexuality. They emphasised that issues of sexuality should be presented using warnings as evidenced in the following excerpt:

"...Use problem approach such that children get to know that much as this is what is normal in society, it should not be them to make it abnormal....We are lucky that sexual activities by their nature have caused disaster in our community. Many of these children are orphans, relatives who have suffered from AIDS. It's good to show them that they are not supposed to be reckless. So when you use the problem approach that people misuse sex, then that will be the beginning point. Then you point out at various stages how a problem can arise...It's not good to present it as a point of leisure they can misunderstand you..." (Male teacher, interview).

Such a perception indicated in the above except, reinforces other data on teachers' surveillance of students' sexuality. The teachers' views indicate that although they tend to use non participatory and none practical methods, they are aware of the disadvantages of these methods in delivering sexuality
material as well as addressing students’ needs, although not aware of any disadvantages concerning the presentation of negative sexual experiences.

Comparing the classroom knowledge and knowledge from other sources especially outsiders, both male and female teachers indicated that outside visitors were greatly valued by most students:

“...For the teachers they are used to, some of them may not take you seriously, but for example if I invited you to address them over certain issues you will find them fully concentrated. At times they have confidence in outsiders more than us, sometimes they value outsiders more because they are used to us...” (Female teacher, interview).

“...The students seem to respond well to the messages from outsiders than we the teachers. They take them to be specialists and to know more than we do...” (Female teacher, interview).

“... When you talk in class, they take that as academic. You will not find them asking a question outside that or eager to ask questions. But when it is from out and is delivered to them by an outsider, they ask questions. In most cases you find them so happy or sympathetic about the situation that has been presented. For instance when we are in class, and you are delivering a lesson talking about AIDS may be its biology and your are talking about infection, to them you are just providing them with information but when they get a lecture from an outsider then it is fit to them and demand for their own life. Now they are looking at their life and not academic...” (Male teacher, interview).

I think we could have somebody like a counselor who comes once in a week and the children who have problems come to her. If we get somebody who is neutral, whom the students see once in while and they know she drives off. They will be more confident to forward their problems. But if it is a teacher they may think that Madam Josephine will go and tell Madam Eva... They may tell you some issues but some of the deep things they may leave them out...” (FGD, M&F teachers).

The teachers’ statements suggest teachers’ awareness of the value students attached to outside resource persons, not only because of their presumed expertise, possession of knowledge and skills in handling sexuality issues but also their being ‘strangers’. The excerpts also reveal teachers’ appreciation of the resource persons’ approaches to teaching about sexuality matters that they themselves did not offer in their lessons. The teachers indicated that there is need for creating a favourable atmosphere in which both boys and girls engage in critical discussion and are able to learn from one another.

6.2.7 Teachers’ opinions about conducting sexuality education in either single or mixed sex lessons

Results from the interviewed teachers showed that while a relatively bigger proportion of the male teachers preferred conducting sexuality lessons in mixed sex classes, a bigger proportion of females opted for single sex classes (Figure 6.1). On the other hand, the same number but relatively small proportions of male or female teachers stated that sexuality education lessons can be conducted in both single and mixed sex classes.
Source: Teachers' interviews

Teachers suggested that single sex classes were preferred because students, especially girls, can more freely express themselves. Female teachers noted that:

"...it would be good because there are certain things which may be girls would feel shy to share when the boys are around. I was telling my class that we need to discuss that these are very sensitive topics, which they will experience. So we have no alternative but to go through them. To me it seems very okay to have separate groups so that they are free to express themselves..." (Female teacher, interview).

"...It is better because they open up... In cases of mixed schools like this one some times the students ask me to separate them, the girls are shy..." (Female teacher, interview).

The teachers' expressions above suggest that single sex classes offer a favourable environment for girls to discuss "sensitive" issues and to share their experiences. They noted that girls were reluctant to discuss such issues in the presence of boys. Similarly, the male teachers who preferred single sex sexuality education lessons noted that such settings facilitated girls' expression of themselves. Teachers' accounts also indicate how teachers construct female sexuality which is perceived as secret and private issue, difficult to address in a public, classroom setting. In addition, both male and female teachers were concerned about boys' disruptive behaviour during the lessons:

"...When they are together, just teach about the changes but if you want to go into the details, you need to separate them because when you are teaching boys start screaming, making fun in class as if what you are teaching is fun...Single sex is good because they are all going through the same experience. Their biology syllabus is the same but I think it's not good to put them together. It's natural to teach like if a girl is sitting near a boy and you are talking about such... Then feelings have no boundaries." (Female teacher interview).

"...I think if this thing is to work, it should be done separately because if they are together the teacher may not finish the lesson because there will be a lot of noise...and you know children will talk a lot but I feel if they are separated they will concentrate better. Learning from what we teach them in biology when we are talking about reproduction the sort of reaction especially from the boys side they get excited about such things. So teaching separately works better so that each other side but its "cultivate" information that concerns boys or girls..." (Male teacher, interview).
According to these teachers, mixed sex lessons constitute sexual spaces which are sexually arousing thus causing disruptive behaviours in class. They therefore felt that such disruptive behaviours during the lessons could be best addressed by conducting lessons in single sex groups.

On the other hand, some teachers, especially male teachers preferred mixed sex classes because they provided both male and female students with the space to share and learn from each others' experiences and associate and interact freely. Teachers noted:

"...I think it is not bad [single sex] because girls have got their specific problems, but if it was to weigh, I think handling them together would be okay, so that each one gets to know the problems of the other so that given their related problems, if a girl sees a boy behaving in a certain manner she will know why because of what she was taught. The boy will also do the same. So, I think mixed. . . ." (Female teacher, interview).

"...I think it's more interesting when they are together because things of sexuality are interesting when both sexes are together... When you are in school, normally boys tend to take the opposite side and girls the opposite side and then it begins like a debate. During the debate boys normally talk openly and frankly and girls also frankly. They come to get a clear understanding because now they are not in relationships it's an academic purpose, sharing their experiences, what they think. Girls get to know better the behaviours of the young boys and men and also boys come to know more about the girls." (Male teacher, interview).

"...I think it [single sex lessons] leaves a lot of suspense because you get only one-sided reactions from the students. If they are mixed it is a better environment they are actually interacting and each tries to share their views with the other side and therefore bring out what they are, in terms of their sexuality. They discover more information when they are together." (Male teacher, interview).

Teachers' opinions about mixed sex classes suggest that both boys and girls bring into the class different sex specific sexuality experiences, where discussions could nonetheless be beneficial to both genders.

A few teachers suggested a mixed approach involving both mixed and single sex grouping because each setting serves a particular purpose. They noted that while "private" and "personal" issues (by which they usually meant girls' issues of physical sexual development) are best addressed in single sex classes, where the students, especially girls, are given the opportunity to freely express themselves, mixed sex classes were suitable for discussions about general sexuality matters and for developing stronger understanding between boys and girls. Considering the relative numbers of teachers (Figure 6.1) who supported both single and mixed sex lessons, it can be concluded that single sex classes were the most preferred particularly for the girls. FGDs corroborated this perspective, except that some participants however, felt that all the lessons should be conducted in a mixed sex setting to offer space for sharing and learning from one another and get know each other better. Teachers also indicated that mixed sex classes enhanced the idea of gender equality and transparency. While teachers appreciated the benefits derived from mixed sex teaching, they recognized the disadvantaged position of girls in a mixed sex classes, although their theories on this disadvantage varied.
6.2.8 Teachers' opinions about the effect of sex of teacher in sexuality education lesson

Teachers' interviews indicated significant gender differences in teachers' opinions about the sex of teachers who conduct sexuality education sessions (Figure 6.2). While most male teachers (80%) indicated that the sex of the teacher conducting sexuality education lessons was not significant, the majority of the female teachers (70%) believed that the sex of the teacher mattered especially for the girls. The female teachers noted that it was more appropriate for the male teacher to teach the boys and the female teacher to teach the girls because they believed girls are more comfortable discussing sexual issues with a female than a male teacher. Some female teachers suggested that students tended to be curious about teachers' reactions to sexual issues under discussion when being taught by the opposite sex, and distracted by this curiosity from concentration on content.

![Figure 6.2 Teachers' opinions about the sex of the teacher in sexuality education](image)

**Source:** Teachers' interviews

The view that students like to be taught by a teacher of the opposite sex was shared by some male teachers in the interviews (10%). They noted that:

"...You find students look at it differently if you look at girls when a female teacher talks their reactions may be different from when it is a male teacher. Because you find if it is a male teacher they will pay a lot of attention...But if it is a female teacher, the reactions may be slightly different...They have got their own reactions about who is actually passing on this information. So far I have observed that they actually prefer male teachers because they sometimes want to know what it means. They tend to dispute or sometimes not take seriously the female teachers. I do not know whether because they look at them as their rivals, some times they look at male as more serious and ready to offer assistance..." (Male teacher, interview).

"...I imagine if men are teaching sex education to the girls they will be more fascinated than if a woman or female is teaching.Usually female teachers are not open and free with the students but if they are really open they can teach..." (Male teacher, interview).
According to these male teachers, girls preferred male teachers because they tended to be interested in seeing the reactions of the teacher and like boys were fascinated by being taught by the teacher of the opposite sex. These teachers believed that male teachers were preferred because they were more serious and ready to assist than the female teachers. They hypothesized that female teachers were often not open with students. One of them noted that although some female teachers played a ‘motherly role’, several female teachers especially those who were not married were hostile to the students and failed to understand girls’ problems. Consequently, they said girls preferred to be taught by and sought assistance from the male teachers. He stated thus:

“...Most of the female teachers those who are married can play a very crucial role as mothers for example careers mistress is married, SWT is also married but there are some who are unmarried many of them are not so much involved ...Their work is simply to teach, not so much taken up by most of the issues but if there are any issues most women are out to make an analysis for example a girl comes to a staff room -- because there is a rule that students should not come to the staff room if you are a male teacher and a girl wants to come and see you, female teachers just shout at her... get out, get out ... you know... that kind of hostility. Every time I see girls come they are looking for male teachers. Teachers are addressing the issues aggressively. Most of these students their parents do not have time for them, they need that parental approach, counsel, talk to them but if you wait for the ease to appear and then you go in as a judge, that is unfortunate...” (Male teacher, interview).

From the above statement, male teachers complain about female teachers’ use of aggression and antipathy, especially to girls. The male teachers concern about female teachers’ response to female students’ problems revealed some of the stereotype perceptions towards female teachers in the school where the female teachers are approved of if they play roles of caring, offering counselling to students. Further, these teachers’ opinions indicate male teachers’ representations of tensions between female teachers and female students, as explanation for the girls’ preference for male teachers. The gendered perception of female teachers became clearer during FGDs where the existence of tensions between female teachers and female students and their attempts to negotiate their way through classroom and school day to day activities were revealed by both male and female teachers. The following extract was typical of these observations:

“...When it comes to female teachers and girls, there is a lot of fire there. They feel that we male teachers are more understanding. In fact you find that a girl can easily tell you a private problem as a man but she will not go to a female teacher...[MT] Apart from the other problem ...menstruation, which is natural ...Those ones they don’t tell men....[MT] They [girls] don’t trust them [female teachers] generally...[MT] Unlike poles attract...That is the major reason...[FT] For them a male voice has a little bit of “command less”; so when they find a female voice coming in to yell like a man is yelling, they find something wrong. [FT] You are just jealous, may be am more attractive than you are. The whole issue is; they feel for example when they are in S.3, 4, 5 they feel that if a shoe is cool, when the female teacher looks at it, she will react negatively. For example she can put on a very tight dress but may the fashion is bad, for me I can easily go and tell her that this is bad, and then you find that she may go back to the dormitory and change and she does not mind, she doesn’t even complain. But you let the female teacher go and tell her the same thing, you are jealous...[MT].” (FGD, M&F teachers).

According to the above teacher’s observations, a female teacher showing any signs of toughness contradicts with a woman’s expected traditional role of nurturing and caring and therefore demonstrated inappropriate aspects of the socially accepted definitions of femininity. Consequently,
when a female teacher administers a punishment, her action is interpreted negatively. In addition, tensions between female teachers and students were sexualised.

One of the female teachers pointed out that boys are more accommodating than girls and that they could easily put up with a teacher of the opposite sex. She further noted that while girls felt more comfortable discussing ‘personal’ sexual issues with female teachers, they were at the same time interested in male teachers when handling other topics not related to sexuality. She explained:

“...Boys are very accommodative. They do not mind whoever talks to them but girls prefer a lady to talk to them about sexuality issues. However, classes for other subjects, female students are much more interested in male teachers and male students in female teachers, but if it is a talk about sexuality, girls will be more comfortable with a lady but boys do not mind...” (Female teacher, interview).

Unlike their male counterparts, the FGDs revealed that most female teachers felt that it was better for females to teach females and males to teach males. As given in the interviews, the female teachers believed that same sex teachers in sexuality education lessons were preferable because this offers girls better opportunity for strong classroom participation. Some female teachers expressed anxiety about teaching sexuality topics particularly with classes of mature boys, as exemplified in the following extract from an interview with one female teacher:

“...one important thing is connected to your sex as a female teacher. You actually need to be firm and talk about all these things without hiding anything because some of these boys are mature (men) so if it is a young teacher not we the old ones, she can have a problem. You realize that out of their discussions they may derail you and maybe you waste a lot of time and people are asking ‘how do I withdraw, how do I practice it?’ these are very sensitive issues and you have to be firm and tell them exactly. So you need to be firm and talk about it...” (Female teacher, interview).

Only 10% of the interviewed male teachers felt that the sex of the teacher was important and that a male teacher might constrain female students’ participation. Thirty percent of the female teachers did not view sex of the teacher as being an issue as long as the teacher had adequate training. As indicated in the interviews, most male and a few female teachers in the FGDs also agreed that the sex of the teacher did not matter but that adequate training, the use of appropriate teaching methods and the teachers’ openness to the material were the major requirements:

“...I would not think so if the teacher is qualified ...[MT] how you handle the information in teaching for example are you inclined more to the girls or to the boys, there is away the learners perceive you to either open up or keep in their cocoons and keep quiet...[MT] So long as somebody has got the knowledge about those things, anybody can discuss it with any group...[FT]” (FGD, MoE/P teachers).

Another issue that came up in the FGDs was the age of the teacher. Some teachers expressed that some students would want to be taught by some one of their age while others would want someone who is old and motherly.
6.2.9 Teachers' opinions about teaching sexuality in schools

Recently, as surveyed in chapter three (section 3.3); sexuality education in Ugandan schools has received overwhelming support from government, professional educators and the general public. This is supported from the teachers' interviews and FGDs. The major reasons given for the support of a comprehensive sexuality education was that the information currently provided at home and in schools was inadequate. The teachers pointed out that:

"...I think it is good [comprehensive sexuality education].... This would help to have more detailed and focused discussions. There is away I feel we don't give enough because the guidelines are limiting and for a teacher to teach what is not on the syllabus, very few if not none can do it. There are certain things which we never think of e.g. issues of assertiveness, self esteem, and empathy. ...So that boys are more emphatic especially when girls become pregnant and they know that having open sex is terrible ... These are not covered. We just hint on them..." (Female teacher, interview).

"...It should be something which should be encouraged and the Ministry of Education should have something stronger to reinforce what is already there so that a little bit more information is brought in terms of helping these girls and boys to growing up responsibly..." (Male teacher, interview).

Teachers noted that while they appreciated that schools had all along been teaching about sexuality issues, they all agreed that the information currently offered needed to be reinforced with a more focused, comprehensive coverage of sexuality issues. This implies that teachers concur that more detailed discussions of sexuality issues are needed and a wide range of issues need embedding into the curriculum holistically.

a) Sexuality education topics proposed by teachers

In recognition of the inadequate coverage of sexuality topics in the different subjects, the teachers indicated that there was need for teaching a much broader range of topics than is currently directly included in the curricula. They identified a number of issues which they felt were important in sexuality education. These topics and issues have been organized under six themes (Table 6.3).
Table 6.3 Topics proposed by teachers as being essential in sexuality education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics proposed by teachers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female teachers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Human Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menstruation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships both non and sexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual desires and how to deal with such</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences of being sexually active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STDs/HIV and AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe sex practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstinence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences of sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Society and culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pornography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Personal skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to cope with the biological/body changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dignity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactions to sexual advances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self actualization - Avoid taking men's gifts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Teachers' interviews

Both male and female teachers noted that all students should be given the same information. They however had varied opinions about the points of emphasis for girls and boys, although suggestions from male teachers seem to be more extensive than those from female teachers. The female teachers expressed that the main emphasis for the girls should be placed on body changes, how to cope with the challenges associated with puberty and information about the life skills. On the other hand, both male and female teachers indicated that emphasis for the boys should be put on the topics about sexual desires and how to deal with these desires. They noted that this was important since the boys are usually the initiators of sexual relationships and are also the ones who are mainly interested in relationships. While the female teachers did not suggest coverage of sexual orientation, one of the

89 This could be attributed to the fact that males tend to dominate sexuality talks.
male teachers identified it as one of the important vices that needed to be addressed, but from a perspective of warning:

"...We need sex education for people to know masturbation is bad, homosexuality is bad, ...we need to warn these children..." (Male teacher, interview).

Though this teacher also recognized the need to teach about masturbation and sexual orientation, he again indicated that only their negative aspects should be emphasized while at the same time promoting heterosexuality, typical of homophobia. Teachers further suggested that education about hygiene for both male and female students was essential.

In the FGDs, the teachers emphasized that issues about body changes, coping with the demands of puberty and adolescence, the dangers of engaging in sexual relationships and abstinence should be adequately addressed in sexuality education. The teachers also suggested that students should be guided about career development and be made aware of the benefits and dangers of adopting western cultures. They noted that children should be encouraged to talk with their parents about sexuality. While teachers' suggested topics appear to be congruent with what is currently given in class, their suggestions offer a more comprehensive curricula coverage of the broad issues such as life skills, sexual desire and the controversial issues (sexual orientation and masturbation). Their proposed curricula coverage appears to emphasise the social and health aspects of sexuality than the biological aspects.

6.3 Parents' views, experiences and perceptions about sexuality education

This section illuminates parents' ideas about their roles in providing sexuality knowledge to their sons and daughters, and their views and perceptions about comprehensive sexuality education in schools. Their discussions also covered the kinds of information required by young people.

6.3.1 Parents' role in sexuality education at home

Parents in the FGDs acknowledged that they had an important role to play in sexuality education and expressed a lack of confidence in the other sources of information particularly the extended family system which was traditionally assigned this role. They (especially the mothers) reported that they occasionally talked about sexuality issues with their sons and daughters and advised them on the expected sexual behaviours, especially abstinence from sex until they were married and avoidance of multiple relationships. Gender was noted to be an important consideration in parents' discussions about sexuality with their sons and daughters where mothers took exclusive responsibility for their daughters' sexuality education and fathers were expected to handle the boys. Parents noted that:
"...Yes we do talk to these children, because like the girl children, okay we males we leave that to the mothers to handle because they have better experiences. And at that stage, girls are with their mothers most of the time." (male participant FGD, parents).

"...With boys, it is mainly the father to guide and teach them, well as a mother I can be concerned but not so much. I try to advise him on a few things such as the expected behaviour, but the biggest responsibility it is for the father. The father has to teach the son what he is expected of as man.... For us women we talk to the girls...As a mother, you have to sit with the girl and tell her, now you are an old girl; do not involve yourself in sexual relationships because you will get pregnant. ...." (female participants FGD, parents).

"...Me I have boys but you know in the Buganda culture, the office of girls is the kitchen with their mothers...The office of boys is when he is with his father outside that is when he sees him and starts telling him about those issues..." (male participants FGD, parents).

Both male and female parents agreed that though it was the main responsibility of the fathers to talk to the boys, the mothers addressed sexual issues with both male and female children especially where the father was perceived to be ignoring his role. Both male and female parents reported that although mothers took exclusive responsibility for their daughters’ sexuality education, there was not an equivalent degree of paternal responsibility for the boys because fathers seemed to neglect their role. Consequently, mothers reported taking responsibility for addressing their sons’ sexual concerns and needs, as perceived. However, mothers were apprehensive about discussing these matters with the boys:

"...Women teach the girls but boys don’t get time to talk with their fathers about those issues, so for them, they come this way in biology and learn everything by themselves... but it is not easy to sit with boys. They are hard to talk to and we fear them but for girls we talk with them those words...you can sit her down and talk to her and be listened..." (female participants FGD, parents).

"...It's nature but what am saying is that it's easy for a mother to talk to a boy than a father talking to the daughter. In fact there is so much that a boy tells the mother that he will not tell the father. That is how it is. As for me, the mother of the child, I find it easy to call him and tell him that I have heard you have a relationship with so and so’s daughter, that girl is not well behaved leave her alone. He can listen and stops it. But the father cannot tell him, it is difficult..." (female participants FGD, parents).

"...For me when I go home, I become a man and talk to my sons. My neighbour was complaining that his wife does not talk to the daughters but I told him that it was also his responsibility. ...we talk to them. We gain the courage and talk to them. You know us women these days have turned into men...." (female participants FGD, parents).

Although fathers were expected to be more involved in addressing sexuality matters of their sons, according to the parents, there seemed to be no close-knit intimacy between fathers and sons which excluded mothers as was the case of the relationship between the mothers and their daughters. Mothers noted further that it was easier for them to talk to their sons than it was for the fathers to talk to their daughters. It is also implied in the above extracts that when it is deemed necessary to talk to the boys about sexuality, the mothers have been willing to transform gender norms, moving away from gendered proscriptions about women ‘speaking sex’ to males.

The parents noted that mother/daughter relationship took an acutely private form with the fathers having little or no direct input in their daughters’ sexuality education. However, the exclusivity of the
mother-daughter relationship did not always mean that fathers had no influence over sexuality matters. The male parents reported that fathers supported their spouses’ responsibility by instituting disciplinary measures using force and threats to ensure that their sons and daughters adhered to the mothers’ advice. This approach was used to provide a coercive framework for mothers’ advice and guidance.

The fathers acknowledged that it was in fact difficult for them to either talk to the girls (daughter) or the boys (their sons). They expressed that:

"...we men usually don’t talk to boys about such things. They discover by themselves. They are difficult for us. How do you start telling him that so and so you did such a thing, ...am shy and when you tell the boy those words or you may want to use parables and he already has an idea, he shows you that what you are saying doesn’t help. ... Here in Buganda, talking about such issues is shameful, obscene we have not yet gained the courage as parents to discuss such issues with our children." (male participants FGD, parents).

"...For the boys it is difficult. It’s hard to discuss sexual issues with them. Some of us don’t talk to them. We leave it for the televisions... you tell the boys you are doing this and that you will get problems but he insists." (male participants FGD, parents).

"...These issues are very difficult to discuss. If am to talk about it, I can’t say it direct, I use another language, go round but finally the child will understand...for instance those nude shows, it’s embarrassing, you don’t even want it to come out of your mouth...Before you even finish your discussion, you can see the child moving away holding her mouth to burst with laughter. She is surprised she doesn’t believe that you know such things. Even even daddy knows such things! Something she does not expect from you..." (male participants FGD, parents).

These parents admitted that they were either shy or embarrassed to discuss or give advice about sexuality issues to their sons and let them to discover by themselves. While mothers are willing to transgress (by talking to boys); fathers appeared unwilling to transgress gender norms. Parents’ difficulty in talking to their children about sexual issues was further attributed to children’s negative responses and their contestation of parents’ messages and also to the overarching belief that sexuality issues are private and personal matters, too shameful and obscene to openly talk about. While parents acknowledged the need for their active involvement in providing sexuality information and could describe the gendered responsibilities of mother and fathers, there was a debate around the issue of “who should be responsible for sexuality education in the home?” Most parents especially the female parents felt that sexuality education in the home should in the end be a ‘joint responsibility’. The following extracts illustrate this view:

"...sometimes it is us the parents who spoil the children. Most times we do not talk to them because we feel shy,... and it should be the responsibility of both parents to handle all children...[FP90] We are all gifted in different ways. You may find in a family the father is the talkative one and free with the children or the other way round. But it should be a joint effort of both parents...[MP91]" (FGD, M&F parents).

"...The two parents are responsible...the guardian of the child, the person the child stays with because there are those who are not staying with their biological parents...[MP] It should be the responsibility of everyone as long as you have useful information to give him. You can talk to the child...[FP] We no longer use the ‘sengoas’. The one who stays with the child performs ‘sengoas’ role...If we don’t tell them they will go and find out...[FP] for me I have daughters,

90 FP=Female parent
91 MP=Male parent
though am a man, they are my children, so I have to tell them the truth, I don't fear. Am straightforward because I want them to understand what am talking about. [MP]" (FGD, M&F parents).

They noted that since the aunts have ceased their role, parents and guardians needed to take an active role in providing information. While some parents felt that sexuality education should be a joint responsibility, some fathers stressed that mothers were better placed to handle sexual issues of all children. They expressed thus:

"...Discussing such issues, it would be better for mothers to handle both boys and girls. She sits them in the kitchen, because they are usually free with her. They start discussing, tell stories as they carry on with kitchen work, then we can also come in to supplement... We are not running away from responsibility but when you look at it, the children, the girls might not like to hear such words from us [fathers]. Even then, children tend to listen to their mothers more. When you keep on talking about such, she may even make it a song [laughter]. So we decide to leave it to the mothers to handle... so if there is an issue that needs me [father], we can call all of them together and then we talk about it.... As parents when you have children, you try to observe their behaviours and if you discover that there are some who are getting spoilt, you try to put more emphasis on the particular ones who may influence the rest. This one may require the father to come and deal with them harshly or be tough on them to make sure they are put in the right direction..." (male participants FGD, parents).

"... In most cases it's better for the mother to handle both the boy and the girl because she spends most of the time with them especially when they are still young. The mother has enough time to be with the child, because men are working, they wake up early and go for work and come back late in the night. The woman stays at home with the children, provides food, she washes the child etc, and generally looks after the child well. But when they grow, I think it is better for the man now to also help because for a man when he talks, the child fears and can listen...." (male participants FGD, parents).

These fathers drew a gendered domesticity to rationalise their recommendation. The fathers were noted to be more uncomfortable about discussing sexuality issues with their children than the mothers.

There was agreement that society had a powerful role in the guidance of young people, one which had either disappeared or decreased in most parts of the country leaving parents with the sole responsibility of guiding and educating their children about sexual issues. This suggests that despite intensive government's stress on the need for sexuality education, parents still feel unsupported. Some parents said that talking to children was crucial but sometimes not influential – some children took their friends advice than that from parents.

a) **Sexuality issues addressed by parents**

FGDs revealed that parents address different kinds of sexuality knowledge with both boys and girls and particularly emphasise the dangers of sexuality to girls (Table 6.4).
Table 6.4 Sexuality information currently acquired by girls and boys from parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Caution them against movements in the village and particularly at night to places such as discos/night clubs without parents’ permission</td>
<td>• Check whether his reproductive systems work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Avoid sexual relationships, never to engage in sex before marriage because they will lose their value, dignity, “the natural warmth of a woman”, they will get pregnant, AIDS and other STDs,</td>
<td>• Caution them about movements in the village without parents’ knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Avoid sexual relationships, never to engage in sex before marriage because they will lose their value, dignity, “the natural warmth of a woman”, they will get pregnant, AIDS and other STDs,</td>
<td>• Advise on the ideal woman to marry – hardworking and not materialistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Menstruation and general cleanliness</td>
<td>• Cleanliness of their bodies, washing their clothes and panties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Visiting the bush”- pulling of the labia minora</td>
<td>• To be careful with relationships avoid getting AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How they should treat men – e.g kneeling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expected behaviour (in public) e.g. sitting while her legs are put together (do not squat), never to climb trees, not shout in public, not to engage in multiple relationships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Caution them against movements in the village and particularly at night to places such as discos/night clubs without parents’ permission</td>
<td>• Expected roles of men - What he is expected to do as a man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Avoid sexual relationships, never to engage in sex before marriage because they will lose their value, dignity, “the natural warmth of a woman”, they will get pregnant, AIDS and other STDs,</td>
<td>• Caution them about movements in the village without parents’ knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Caution them against cohabiting</td>
<td>• Check whether his reproductive systems work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To avoid interaction with boys</td>
<td>• The safe time to “meet” with girls – 10 days after she has had her menstruation period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tricks used by men to lure girls into sexual relationships</td>
<td>• caution against acquiring HIV and AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Never to sell their bodies for material gains/prostitution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Avoid undisciplined peer groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Parents' focus group discussions*

Parents’ discussion of sexual matters with boys and girls indicates a protective discourse especially for the girls whereby sexuality is perceived as a danger and risk involving diseases, unwanted pregnancies and death. While boys and girls are cautioned against excursions to night clubs and other places, the emphasis is placed on girls because they can easily be lured into sexual intercourse and become
pregnant. In addition, mothers’ sexuality knowledge given to girls mainly aims at preparing them for marriage as submissive wives and subject to male dominance. As for the boys, both mothers and fathers are mainly concerned with their interaction with girls and with the performance of their erection. Parents stated:

"...Me, what I have to care about is to see that this boy is normal. The more I stay with a boy I keep on looking at him... When you are breastfeeding and you touch on his penis, you know that he is normal or not, he has the strength to erect or not. The penis should be able to erect once you touch it...[FP] You keep observing him as he grows...[FP] These children [boys] when they are not normal, they do not talk to girls and he fears them and runs away from them. If your boy is like that then you know that he has a problem.... [MP] When the child [boy] is normal you always have cases to answer but when you don’t get such cases then your child is not fine....[MP] Another way you can know that he is not normal is when he has reached the age of 20 and he doesn’t converse with girls and there are no girlfriends who visit him...[FP]." (FGD, M&F parents).

While girls are not expected to associate with boys so as to preserve their virginity until marriage, boys are expected to associate and relate with girls to prove their potency. However, the boys are told to be careful about which girl they relate to, avoiding diseases such as HIV and AIDS:

"...Tell him to behave well, to stop moving about any how, be careful with relationships and to have friends but he should be wise.[FP] They should also be aware that there is AIDS. Because I already know that he has girlfriends and it may be hard to stop him...[FP] I tell them yes there are condoms but they are bad, they are not effective, I make sure I discourage them...[MP]." (FGD, M&F parents).

Parents further agreed that there should be concentration on the girls’ sexuality rather than on boys’ but some felt that there was need to take boys’ sexuality as seriously:

"...Boys are not talked to... You know the boys are not given such information as much as the girls yet they see and learn these things...[MF] the problem is things are one-sided. Most times the girls are the ones taught about marriage. We should change this attitude and approach...[MP]." (FGD, M&F parents).

"...I brought up boys but I don’t remember when their father called them and talked to them except for things like a man does these kinds of jobs but boys learn from their peers. They just find out for themselves..." (female participant FGD, parent).

Boys received much less family education about their sexuality and guidance on how to deal with the anxieties caused by changes in their bodies in the transition from childhood to adulthood. The parents noted that boys’ fathers, who were expected to educate them, rarely talked to them about such matters. Although some mothers reported that they talked to the boys about sexuality issues, they indicated that they may not give adequate information about boys’ sexual development, experiences and how to cope with the changes in their bodies. Parents indicated that boys tend to learn much of what they know about sexuality from other sources particularly from friends.

6.3.2 Teaching methods employed by parents
Presentation of sexuality information by parents in the home varied among individual parents. However, majority of the parents especially mothers reported that they held direct talks with their
children. While some parents especially the mothers were reported to hold polite talks and present life experiences or give examples of people (relatives and neighbours) they knew who had experienced sexual problems as ‘teaching tools’, others especially the men (fathers) were reported to be more of disciplinarians than educators. Parents’ views are represented in the following interview excerpt from a group discussion of male and female parents who noted:

“...That one depends on the individual parent in his home. There are those who sit with their children direct and politely, tell her or him that did you hear what happened to your friend so and so, please let it not happen to you. She can even say, mummy, don’t think of me to do that. I cannot. But my dear...Then there is that one who comes after he has taken the white stuff (Alcohol - Uganda wamuzi) and says, you Jane, they have told me that you have been with so and so, I don’t want to see you with him again!. When the girl tries to deny, she is given some canes...” (FGD, M&F parents).

Parents’ accounts suggest that while some parents used live examples, their talks or discussions about sexuality were often triggered by a precipitating event, usually a crisis such as a child being suspected to have involved in some sex related activity or an occurrence of a premarital pregnancy or death from HIV and AIDS in the neighbourhood. Parents’ views indicate that such interactions with the children were usually tense and took the form of angry orders, verbal abuse or physical violence/confrontations. Most parents and particularly the fathers admitted that they intervened in children’s sexual matters only when there was a problem as they pointed out below:

“...We wait for them to get problems then talk to them but we need to change this, and also talk to the children before such things happen.... [MP]...When a boy makes a mistake that is when you get a chance to even tell him these issues for example, you would tell him that you impregnated someone’s daughter...[MP]” (male participants FGD, parents).

In addition, the parents noted that reading materials such as newspapers was another medium through which sexuality knowledge was discussed in the home. They noted that Newspapers provided a starting point for parents talk about sexual issues particularly if the children were interested in them. They said:

“...Sometimes you buy the Buliende newspaper and they dash to read the “Senga”. This is where you should come in and start the discussion. So we use things they like e.g, Straight Talk...” (male participant FGD, parents).

The newspapers therefore acted as an icebreaker and gave the parent a starting point for discussing sexuality issues. This demonstrates that parents often found it difficult to initiate talks with their children about sexuality and consequently took advantage of reading materials that addressed some sexuality issues rather than holding an unprompted talk on such issues. Data shows that parents especially mothers talked to their sons and daughters while in the kitchen as they performed their domestic chores. Parents indicated a sense of strategy in planning such conversations, strategies informed by considerations of gender and by the idea that girls need special, private information:

“...You call all and talk to them at once.... for me I call girls alone and talk to them and then I talk to the boys alone.... [FP] another thing is that sometimes it may need to call the individual child in case you are suspicions of
Like many of the teachers, parents also stated that girls have unique sexual experiences and therefore discussions involving sexual experiences should be conducted in a single sex setting. In addition, the parents noted the need to consider the age of the children when giving sexuality information, as illustrated in the following extract from one of the group discussions with parents:

"... You can not sit them together because their ages are not the same ... It is necessary to group these children differently according to their age. You can't talk with the child of 8 years the same words with that of 18 years. The information you give to a girl or boy of 8 years is different from that of 12 years old and different from that of the 18 year old child ..." (FGD, M&F parents).

Parents’ views suggest that the information to be presented to the children needs to be selected carefully to ensure that it is suitable for a particular age. These concerns associated with age and unique sexuality experiences justify for them the importance of separating children according their gender group and age in order to provide appropriate sexuality knowledge.

a) Children’s response to parents’ discussions about sexuality

Another concern reported by the parents was that during talks about sexuality with their children, the children at times expressed a lack of interest. This was illustrated by children's negative response to parents’ advice and ideas portrayed by their behaviours such as pretending to be busy and refusing to take parents’ advice seriously or to accept criticisms of their own sexual performances (of dress, language or association). These kinds of behaviours and actions were mainly associated with boys than girls. Parents pointed out:

"...The child will pretend as if she is not interested or has never done it ... they pretend and make themselves busy trying to stay away from what you are telling them ... [MP] those children they do things not that they don’t know, they are aware of the consequences of their actions but they will never show it to you ... [FP] you know with boys, it is not easy to talk to them. They are very stubborn. When you are talking to him, he does not want to listen. He tells you directly without any fear ... [FP]" (FGD, M&F parents).

"...The girls may even say, Daddy I can’t do such a thing. She pretends as if she is not concerned with such. But she knows when she leaves home, that is her chance. She just keeps quiet and listens to you, without saying a word, not even looking into your face ... [MP] the boy will just laugh and can even talk back things you cannot understand. [MP] They have their language, which we do not understand [laughter]. [MP] Sometimes they take us to be fools and they ignore whatever you are telling them or bring in another story to divert the topic. They try show that you are wasting their time talking about such ... [FP] He can decide to touch on his head and keeps quiet, and you wonder, has he understood what I have talked about or not? And then you say to yourself, I think he has picked something ... while girls try to make themselves busy with other things, or even listen, the boys completely ignore and show you that he is less concerned with what you are talking about, those are ancient things, outdated ... [MP]"

(FGD, M&F parents).

"...Most children if they know that you are strict or tough they will not answer. They just keep silent and you think they are absorbing what you are saying yet they are not interested ... if they respond, they lie to you that they will first work and study then engage in sexual activities ... [FP] you know these adolescents do not take our advice seriously.
Once you talk to them especially the boys, they give us nicknames like 'karazende' [meaning an old person]. [FP] They feel that what we talk about is outdated . . . [MP] " (FGD, M&F parents).

... They consider our advice old fashioned and outdated even our nicknames like "muzende" [old man/woman] for example if you caution her to buy she says "those were applicable in your days, what is wrong with speaking with so and so he is just my friend" " (FGD, M&F parents).

Young peoples’ response as reported by parents indicate that children especially boys are perceived as contesting parents’ messages and parents explain that their messages are denigrated as irrelevant and out of date. The parents’ description of the responses also indicate their own sense of being alienated from the worlds inhabited by their children but their ability to decode their children’s resistances and avoidances suggests familiarity with their children, and yet at the same time, they are aware of being outside the world that the children find relevant.

6.3.3 Parental support for and perceptions about comprehensive sexuality education in schools

All parents that participated in the study indicated support for the provision of sexuality education both at schools and at home. The reasons for this support included the need to inform children about the body changes, good upbringing/morals and the importance of creating awareness of the dangers associated with early sexual relationships. Parents’ recognition of their own role in providing knowledge and guidance on sexual matters was associated with the fact that good upbringing and morals are attributed by teachers, as well as society at large, to parental guidance. Parents perceived their role in sexuality education as being a “natural” responsibility and that they had greater insights and experience in the development of their children’s sexuality:

"...it is necessary because it ensures good upbringing. If you do not do it, you the parents will end up being ashamed. Then people will wonder how and where the child was brought up. You talk to them regarding modern times and not the way our grand parents did it because she will challenge you with scientific evidence for example deterring girls to sit on a small wooden stool. To avoid children reacting like wild fire, parents have to tell them the truth that for instance if you sit on it (stool) with legs wide open you lose the natural warmth of a woman . . ." (FGD, M&F parents).

"...For me I have a feeling that we need to give our children all the information without hiding anything because there is no other person who is going to do that for us. That information which you don’t want to disclose to your child might cause her problems . . . we know our children more than anyone else . . ." (male participant FGD, parents).

"...It is good to talk about these issues . . . we should however, talk to them taking into consideration modern trends. the methods should be improved . . . [MP] We should not pretend these things do not exist. We should move with vigour. We should marry them with the traditional methods . . . [FP] I feel the parents we should take the responsibility of talking to our children ourselves . . . as a parent you know your child very well and should be the one to talk to him or her . . . [FP] " (FGD, M&F parent).

Parents also noted that they needed to be more open to their children and wanted to provide relevant, reliable and up to date detailed information while taking account of the current situation/developments. Some parents indicate concern over the changing gender norms and the
need to engage in less conventional approaches to sexuality. According to these parents, there is need for parents to be enthusiastic about their sons' and daughters' sexuality.

Nevertheless, parents accepted that sexuality education at school, in fact strengthened what they offered at home. All parents asserted the important role of the school in addressing sexuality matters of their children because most parents admitted that they neither talked to their children nor had enough time or were too shy to adequately address sexuality concerns of their children. Parents’ views are captured in the following interview excerpts from FGDs with male and female parents who concurred:

"... We need to educate them for them to know what is happening, but sometimes there are things, which we don’t talk about, and yet the child needs to know about them but you as parents you are shy to talk about them. But another person may talk about them... issues related to marriage, sex... teaching these issues at school is very good because there are many children who never get chance to talk to their parents. Most parents are busy looking for money... So if he gets this information from school, they will be good for him..." (FGD, M♂F parents).

"... At secondary level, it is [sexuality education] very good... we support that 100 percent because we with the child we tend to fear one another but the teacher will not fear the child and will tell her frankly and then also the child will respect what the teacher has told her and will listen... But when the parent is talking with a child, there is always tension, fear between the child and his/her parent..." (FGD, M♂F parents).

The above comments indicate parents’ lack trust in the ability of other parents (and themselves) to talk to their children about sexuality issues. Further, it suggests that schools act as support particularly for those students who never get a chance to discuss sexuality matters with their parents and hence some parents felt that teachers were best placed to take the responsibility of sexuality education. They acknowledged the role of an outsider such as the teacher in handling such sensitive issues because they believe that teachers are not wary of the issues and command respect from the students. In addition, parents felt that the teacher plays a crucial role as a ‘stranger’ in discussing sexuality issues with students, and this resolves tension which accumulates for parents around biological closeness and affection. Some parents also felt that students take notice if the knowledge was from the school and noted that children spend more time in school than at home. Parents views are represented by the voice of one of the female parents:

"... Teachers interact with these children for a longer period than we do. A child goes to school by 7.30 am and comes back home at 6.00pm... those from secondary come much later at about 9.00pm..." (female participant FGD, parents).

Some parents also believed that schools present more accurate and appropriate information and that their methods of presentation tended to be more easily understood by the students. They pointed out:

"... It’s good to talk to these children both at home and at school. In fact, it is much better at school because teachers know what to teach them. At home, we may tell these children what they are not supposed to know at their age and you make him want to try out what you talked about... You might awake a sleeping dog..." (FGD, M♂F parents).
"...For the teacher, they can discuss and even allow the child to ask questions where she doesn't understand, and she gets to understand better. This especially good when they are discussing as a group, with friends, they tend to be free. After all, he has gone to study, let him study everything... since the teacher is talking to many children and not one they can listen... ..." (FGD, M&E parents).

Parents' comments reveal a confidence in teachers, which they lacked in themselves as educators in this arena, and acknowledged that schools had more specific skills and knowledge advantages than they did. The parents also appreciated the strategy of having discussions held in groups of friends at school because they believed this enabled students to freely express themselves especially when addressing sensitive issues. They however, suggested that female teachers should teach female students while male teachers should teach male students because of the concern about ability to articulate sex specific sexual experiences.

While parents acknowledged the important role of schools in sexuality education and expressed confidence in schools' ability to handle the subject, some parents were concerned about the teachers' failure to do what was expected of them. In particular, they were troubled by existence of sexual harassment and abuse in schools whereby teachers engaged in sexual relationships with schoolgirls. They lamented that:

"...even some teachers spoil these girls. They send them to their houses all the time and because the girl fears, she has to do what the teacher tells her to do [have sex with him] and so the girl gets spoiled... its very good for teachers to talk to these children, but many times we hear of teachers who spoil the girls and make them pregnant. So sometimes, it is tricky. Things are bad these days. Teachers should be playing the role of parents. Some become wives of teachers... This in most cases happens when parents send their children for coaching, and the teacher does the 'real' coaching (laughter)..." (FGD, M&E parents).

Some parents noted that some teachers lacked credibility and did not play their role as role models as educators. According to these parents, the school itself constituted a risk especially for the girl child. Parents were concerned about teachers making their girls pregnant and "wives" instead of providing them with the necessary guidance and education (both academic and social). Teachers' lack of credibility was further indicated in the way teachers dressed:

"...the teachers themselves are not good examples because they come to class with very short dresses. If a teacher can behave in that manner, what example is she giving to these girls. The girls will definitely copy what this teacher is doing because for her she knows, the teacher is an old person and so what she has done is good. So you can see why our children are getting spoiled. In secondary they don't care about the children at all..." (FGD, M&E parents).

"You know the problem these days most teachers became so by accident after senior six they just applied to do education but they did not feel proud to be teachers so such teachers just teach anyhow without the spirit of a teacher. You know the children really believe in what the teachers teach them whether it is wrong or right so they would have trained to serve as good role models in behaviour, dress etc but these days teachers put on red lipstick, strappy shoes (tied up to the knees), short dresses and provoke the senior school boys..." (FGD, M&E parents).

According to the above statements, mothers disapproved of some teachers' behaviours and dress and believed that these had a negative impact on students because they regard teachers to be role models.
and believe in most of what they teach them as well as what they do. Parents also associated female teachers' styles of dressing with intentions to attract male students sexually. Such teacher behaviours and practices were further associated with the commercialization of education, as one of the female parents asserted:

"the schools have tried but because of the economic situation many are just teaching as a business. So they do not care about sex education. They only do academics..." (Female participant FGD, parents).

The parents felt that schools had become business oriented and mainly concentrated on academic work and gave minimal attention to the morals or social uprightness of the students.

Some parents suggested that there was a lack of commitment and dedication on the part of teachers to provide adequate sexuality knowledge as well as a lack of training or professionalism in most schools. They reported that some schools employed untrained teachers who could not give adequate guidance and appropriate knowledge about sexuality. Consequently, students did not get enough help but were instead blamed for the problems they faced as one of the parents observed:

"... There is a time when I had gone for a counselling training, and then they told me that some of the children had no respect for the teachers at all. They dodge lessons, they pretend that they are sick, but the few sessions I carried out in those schools, I discovered that this was not the case. The problem was with the teachers. When children particularly the girls tell the teachers their problems, the teachers do not take them seriously; they instead go in the staff room and start discussing what the girls have told them with their fellow staff members. Then the children decide to handle the problems on their own, the way they feel is appropriate. I think this is very bad..." (Male participant FGD, parents).

The parents were concerned about teachers' behaviours and emphasized that teachers needed specialized professional training particularly guidance and counselling. In addition, the parents expressed that they also needed to be sensitized and trained on how to adequately and effectively handle sexuality issues with their sons and daughters.

a) Appropriate sexuality knowledge

During the FGDs, the majority of the parents viewed sexuality education in a broad sense and explained that it should cover the biological, social and emotional aspects of sex and sexuality. Apart from issues related to 'home management', parents noted that issues to be taught at home should be similar to those handled by teachers. They believed that both boys and girls should be given information covering a number of issues indicated in Table 6.5 below.

The issues that were most frequently cited and emphasized included advocacy for abstinence and caution against engagement in sexual relationships and the consequences of pre-marital sex including STDs, HIV and AIDS. Topics such as menstruation and hygiene, teenage pregnancies, assertiveness
Table 6.5 Topics proposed by parents as being essential in sexuality education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed sexuality information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Human Development</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy</td>
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<tr>
<td>The physical and mental differences between men and women so that boys can know that men and women think differently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menstruation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reproduction</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2. Relationships</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Personal Skills sexuality and society</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer group - How to resist peer influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Sexual Behaviour</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstinence until marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caution against engagement in sexual relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Sexual Health</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangers of premarital sex for example STDs, HIV and AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe sex particularly use of condoms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning the private parts (sexual organs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Society and Culture</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation and developmental issues such as engaging in income generating activities such as handcraft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulling of the vaginal labia minora (&quot;visiting the bush&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perform household chores – home management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submissiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7. Others</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected behaviour in society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Decent dressing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangers and effects of drugs, alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advise the big children S4/6 to act as role models for the young ones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleanliness- washing clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncontrolled movements in the neighbourhood – going out for discos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Parents’ FGDs*
While parents expressed support for sexuality education, some parents especially fathers were apprehensive about the extent to which children were privy to details particular about intercourse:

"...Those things when they are being taught it doesn't require being straight forward the way teachers teach in biology. I think when you teach the children straight forward, that is what causes children to become enlightened so fast and they end up being unruly and engage in indiscipline when they are young..." (male participant FGD, parent).

"...They should be taught about reproduction and that's all. You may not need to go deep because you will spoil the child. They should tell them that if you do this, you will get into trouble. ...tell them that if you do such and such a thing, this is the danger..." (FGD, M&F parents).

These expressions reflect the parents' uneasiness about providing detailed discussion about sexuality issues and their emphasis on the negative and dangers of sexuality. Parents felt that giving details leads children to "indiscipline", behaviours outside their control. They indicated that they did not approve of teaching about certain issues, such as safe sexual practices. For example, some parents especially males did not support the idea of teaching about condom use:

"...it's both good and bad because you may talk to him, and then you spark it off when he had not even thought about it. You will be like a parent, who goes to the shop and buys condoms for her daughter. The girl will say, my father supports (encourage) it, he has even given me condoms to use. She goes when she is well equipped, confident because her daddy knows. It's normal. So it is 50:50. Somehow it may help to change the behaviour of the girl but on the other hand, it may spoil the child. ...But there are those ones who are bold and say, aah thank you for the support, encouragement..." (male participants FGD, parents).

"...For the issues of telling the child that she should use a condom, I think it's not good because they are not supposed to involve themselves in those sexual relationships. They should wait until they get married. But if you begin telling her those things, then you are encouraging her to misbehave. Instead, you should tell the child that these condoms are not effective, they can break, if you use a condom, you will be in trouble; instead, the best thing is to abstain until you get married. As parent you should discourage him to get involved in those things because once he has done it it's difficult to stop...I think those ones who give their children condoms are mad... For me I cannot support it. However, this child will go at Salonges shop and will buy the things (condoms)...." (male participants FGD, parents).

"...so that's why I am saying that its good to talk to these children and say my daughter, shalisha you should know that now you can conceive so that when she decides to engage in those things (sexual intercourse) then she knows what will happen to her... talk about things like condoms. So when she goes she knows what to do... we know that these children when they reach that stage, puberty, adolescence, naturally they have feelings, they have desires for sex, they get attracted to the opposite sex and they want to engage in sex. Instead of this girl getting pregnant and becoming a problem to you, she would rather go to Salonges shop and buys the condoms. Most girls experience such problems and they become problems to their parents, a problem which the parent should have prevented by talking to this girl about protection, the condom. I would rather sit with my daughter and we talk about it before she gets into problems. The boy will make her pregnant, he will dump her and it's the parent to suffer looking after your daughter and the grand child. So its better you talk....But even if you don't give it to her, she will look for it..." (Female participant FGD, parents).

Teaching about the use of condoms created a lot of debate between male and female parents. While most mothers supported the idea, most fathers totally rejected it for fear of promoting promiscuity. The mothers noted that denial of such information may not be the solution to young people's engagement in sexual relationships because they naturally develop desires for sex as they mature and that they can always acquire the information from other sources. Mothers also noted that such information would be beneficial to the girls regarding self protection. Generally, these parents' ideas reveal mixed feelings about the issue of providing concrete, issue-specific information about sexuality.

207
to their children. Therefore some parents suggested that the kind of sexuality information and the methods of presenting it should be carefully taken account of before sharing the information with their children. This should be done in order to promote only 'positive' change in behaviour.

6.4 Summary

Teachers' opinions about students' participation in school extra curricular activities revealed a complex gendering process within the school space in which activities were organized around gendered notions of sexuality with boys and girls participating in masculine and feminine activities respectively. Despite the restricted social interaction, students were believed to be actively engaged in various sexual behaviours. Teachers and parents believed students acquire sexuality knowledge from a variety of sources including parents, friends, the media and the school. Among the various sources, teachers noted that parents were most influential on children's sexual attitudes, behaviours and practices. While both parents were influential, the mothers were noted to be most significant and especially to the girls. Parents FGDs concur with teachers' views about parents' role in sexuality education. While parents especially mothers reported that they discussed sexual matters with their sons and daughters, they admitted some degree of anxiety and uneasiness. Mothers were seen to engage with the 'changing times' despite the challenges it faces them with. The differential roles of mothers and fathers in sexuality education were associated with the gendered pattern of parenting in provision of gendered sexuality knowledge to girls and boys.

While sexuality knowledge offered in the official school curriculum varied from biological facts to the social aspects of sexuality, parents' sexuality talks placed greater emphasis on girls' sexuality shaped by a protective discourse that stressed sexuality as a danger and risk. The findings revealed gendered dynamics in sexuality education classes with boys taking a more active part than the girls. Teachers reported that the major teaching method was lecturing conducted in mixed sex classes in the co-educational schools and single sex classes in single sex schools. Teachers' selection and presentation of sexuality topics was influenced by the administrative concern over completing the big syllabus, limited time allocation, lack of training as well as societal and individual personal comfort with sexual issues. In contrast, by drawing on the more routine levels of parenting, the informal modes of communication such as talks in the kitchen and newspapers provided parents with the opportunity to give their children sexuality knowledge. However, as the teachers, parents admitted that they have not played their educational role as expected and justified this failure by their shyness, busy schedules, embarrassment, lack of training and children's negative responses to their messages.
The majority of the female and some male teachers and all the parents valued single sex classes in favour of the girls especially when discussing 'private' issues. Most male teachers suggested mixed sex classes because of the need for sharing of experiences, promoting gender equality and developing a stronger understanding between boys and girls. While most female teachers and all parents felt that female teachers should teach female students and male teachers teach male students, most male teachers indicated that the sex of the teacher did not matter as long as the teacher was competent in handling sexuality matters. Teachers' accounts also revealed complex tensions between female teachers and female students.

All the teachers and parents voiced their support for sexuality education both at home and at school. Parents felt that sexuality education was an important area in which they ought to have an input, to which the teachers concurred with. They noted that they needed to be more open to their children and provide relevant, reliable and up to date detailed information while taking account of the current situation/developments. However, some parents and a few teachers, especially males were concerned that teaching sexuality could lead to promiscuity especially teaching about safer sex practices.

Despite the dilemma about the possible outcome of sexuality education, both parents and teachers agreed that sexuality education should focus on the broad issues of sexuality and not only the biological facts but also the social aspects, within a religious pedagogic framework. Parents saw the school as offering a complementary and professional service with teachers having more skills and knowledgeable advantage than they did. In contrast, the teachers saw parents as providing them a framework on which to provide sexuality education to students. While teachers viewed students as trusting more their parents despite their failure to provide adequate guidance/education, parents on the other hand strongly felt that students took notice of the teachers' guidance and education than that from parents. However, some parents were apprehensive about the teachers' lack of credibility and training and recommended specialized training for both teachers and parents.
CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the diverse and complex gendered experiences of various groups in engaging with sexuality education. The findings of chapters five and six are analyzed in the light of information gleaned from other studies and theoretical literature illuminating patterns of theoretical cohesion, areas of new complexity and new hypotheses concerning the interaction of gender dynamics and sexuality education in contemporary Uganda. The chapter highlights the gendered discourse underpinning sexuality education in Uganda noting the consistency within which males and females are differently positioned and through which gendered inequalities are reinscribed. The chapter also offers some hypotheses on the challenges and opportunities for sexuality education and also recommendations for a new approach to sexuality education. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications of these analyses for future research about teaching sexuality education to young people.

7.2 The gendered school environment

7.2.1 The construction and mediation of sexuality and gender relations in the school space

Students enter discourses of sexuality education from a zone characterized by gender differences and dynamics, through diverse social and discursive practices which form the everyday lived culture of the school. Typical of this culture is a particular gender code of complex and diverse stereotyped ideas about males and females across the social and moral ordering of the school, which provides opportunities for the construction of gendered specific cultures and messages about gender and sexuality (Prendergast, 1996). Although I did not undertake in-depth ethnographic recordings and analysis of this culture, my interaction with the students and teachers during the study period offered me access to the complexity, intimacy and ubiquity of the gendered sexual dynamics within the zones of activity contained through an institutional framework, the 'classroom', 'co-curricula' and other social spheres. However, I found outside classroom experiences important in reading the broader terrain through which sexuality education lessons are channelled. As noted by Sarah, (1988) and Trudell, (1993), sexuality education lessons do not exist in a vacuum but are situated within a terrain that encompasses people of various social groups. Within this broader environment feminine and

210
masculine subjectivities are constructed and negotiated, and messages about gender and sexuality are transmitted.

Before describing the gender dynamics of sexuality education in the classroom, it is essential therefore to illuminate the complex social, ideological and psychic power structures within which the school space serves to legitimize the promotion of specific forms of male and female gendered and sexual identities (Mac an Ghaill, 1994). In the schools visited, a hierarchically ordered range of masculinities and femininities constituted the students’ informal world with activities organized around gendered notions of sexuality. Boys engaged with masculine activities, usually involving outdoor and physically demanding tasks (sports and carrying heavy objects) and girls were immersed in feminine activities often domestic commitments (preparation of food, cleaning and club activities/meetings). The prescribed boundaries of what formed acceptable male and female behaviour were embedded in a moral order in which the teacher-student and student-student relations were policed and monitored by the teachers in the school. It was clear that students were not only monitored by the school personnel but also learnt to monitor themselves within a regime of normalizing practices involving the deployment of gender and sexuality through student-peer networks known as ‘the spy network’. Through the spy network students reported any forms of behaviours that did not conform to the expected school versions of behaviour. In this process a range of messages and views of what it meant to be a girl or a boy were transmitted and legitimated with students often constructing gendered relations of domination and subordination, in which girls are seen as ‘passive’ participants and boys as ‘active’ participants in the various social and discursive practices. Girls were described as unable to engage in ‘vigorous activities’, or ‘hard stuff’, and as people who always clustered around ‘quiet’ and domestic related responsibilities.

The study shows complex contradictions often reflected in the ubiquitous ‘sexualisation’ and ‘desexualisation’ of school events through extensive gender segregation and/or teacher surveillance and moral supervision especially for the female students. Discourses of ‘sexualization’ and ‘desexualization’ were manifested in the schools’ emphasis on decency but also attached sexual connotations to female dress that required female students to either put on long skirts or ‘pull up their socks’ over the knees for those who had short skirts. In addition, while students were supposedly encouraged to socialize, they were at the same time highly policed and monitored by the adults in the school. According to the teachers, adult policing and monitoring of student interaction was to prevent the development of sexual relationships, non-acceptable behaviour in the schools. However, teachers’ active ‘desexualization’ of students’ social interaction in school space is challenged by material from students’ own accounts which suggested that their sexual experience (engagement in
sexual behaviours) was pervasive in the wider school space. Students' and teachers' descriptions of acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours and interaction, reflect how norms of compulsory heterosexuality and attendant homophobia pervade students' everyday lives through frequent gender segregation and adult surveillance. Policing and monitoring of students' interactions did not only occur in co-educational schools but also existed in single sex schools to prevent same sex relationships. The constructions of gender within the school environment therefore includes both overt and covert discourses on the interaction of sexual and gendered identities and behaviours, creating a climate in which students are constructed simultaneously as 'learners free of gendered and sexual identities' and as 'girls/boys' deeply embedded within heterosexual trajectories.

7.2.2 Students' sexual attitudes, behaviours and practices

Students' lived experiences are characterized throughout the research data by active engagement and exploration of their sexuality, driven by peer influence and complex negotiation with identification and competition. It was clear from my study that students are sexually active in various ways, have sexual feelings and desires, are sexually explored particularly girls (by fellow students, teachers and adult males in the community), become pregnant, have abortions, contract STDs, explore their own and others sexualities as well as wrestle with issues of power and control. There were reported engagements in sexual relationships described as both "deep" and "casual", cases of pregnancy, abortion and sexual abuse.

The study revealed a vigorous social cultural discursive environment within the architecture of an "educational institution" where students interacted through gendered sexual expectations and power imbalances, all learners negotiating with the lack of female sexual autonomy in sexual relationships, compulsory heterosexuality, and the norms involving the cultural and political exploitation of females. While boys' initiation of sexual relationships was perceived as being normal and acceptable, girls' initiation of relationships and/ or expression of sexual desires or girls' quick acceptance of boys' sexual invitations was associated with 'prostitution', 'desperation', 'easy going behaviours', 'sickness from HIV and AIDS', 'lack of seriousness', 'untrustworthiness' and 'trying for economic benefits'. Yet girls' rejection of boys' invitations was always met with horrid abuse and harassment as girls tried to assert themselves or show control of their own sexuality. Boys believed that their masculinity entailed sexual control of heterosexual interactions, locating desire as a male emotion and choice of partners at will as a masculine prerogative, "it is the boys who do that to the girls". This shows the assumptions concerning girls' acceptance of boys' sexual invitations through which girls are imagined as passive recipients of boys' sexual advances, incapable of deciding for themselves and obliged to meet boys' sexual desires. The boys' accounts illustrate the existence of normalized double standards:
girls are simultaneously expected to both accept and reject boys. Such double standards have been identified by research in multiple contexts and serve to legitimate subtle forms of sexualized gender inequality (Willis, 1977; Measor and Sikes, 1992; FHI, 1997). Measor and Sikes, (1992) argue that such a discourse does not only affect boy-girl relationships negatively but also impacts upon girls’ sense of autonomy, independence and upon their ability to succeed in the world. Girls are positioned not only as experimental zones for boys’ sexual agency but as simultaneously devoid of sexual agency or capacity. These opinions also present male sexual desire as more potent and urgent than female sexual desire. Girls as well believed in boys’ possession of high sexual drives which they could not control. Such sexual attitudes have been recorded by other researchers (FHI, 1997; Richardson, 1993).

The complex manifestation of the double standards was also evident in teachers’ and parents’ strict surveillance over girls’ sexuality and relative laxity over control of boys’ sexuality. While both boys and girls were expected to stay away from sexual relationships, boys’ non-engagement in relationships or interaction with girls led to questions about their reproductive and sexual potential as men. Teachers naturalizing boys’ privilege in initiation of sexual relationships was evident. All teachers (male and female) believed that initiation of sexual relationships was a masculine construct: “girls should not demand for sex. It’s the men to do that... it’s very queer to find girls initiating relationships.”

These double standards were of concern to female students, and the data records their interpretations of being ‘taken for granted’ sexually and the experience of being consistently the object both of male sexual desires and of male regulation and / or control over their sexuality. Girls reported being pressured and harassed by male students, teachers and adult men in the community upon refusal of their sexual invitations. They noted “boys think we are there for them”. Although girls expressed a feeling of immense pressure from boys, it seemed clear that girls were in control of their sexuality and asserted themselves by resisting and rejecting these sexual pressures. For instance, all the girls in my study had received and rejected sexual invitations from boys, prioritizing their studies. Although such contestation and resistance could illustrate a sense of personal ‘empowerment’, it also raises questions about when resistance could be coded as ‘empowerment’ and / or evidence of ‘alternative construction of sexuality’ given that girls are expected to resist boys’ sexual invitations. As argued by Mac an Ghaill, (1994), girls’ resistance to male sexual pressures could be linked to objection towards the constructions of sexuality around the conventional active and passive dichotomy. Simultaneously, this resistance is constructed as part and parcel of conventional respectable, femininity, which clearly locates girls in a precarious relationship to masculine sexual aggression.
The belief that boys’ masculinity includes the right to sexual dominance is used to legitimate sexual violence and harassment (Richardson, 1993; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Varga and Makubalo, 1996), a major concern for the girls in my study. Male students’ harassment of girls was a major concern to female students. Some male teachers were also reportedly involved in sexual harassment although they denied this and spoke of the event reductively as a student inter-peer discourse. Sexual harassment of girls, especially that resulting from rejection of boys’ sexual invitations, acts as legitimation for, and articulation of, masculine power and subordination (Skeggs, 1991). As observed by Fine (1988), while there are too few safe spaces for adolescent women’s exploration of sexual subjectivities, there are all too many dangerous spots for their exploitation. The pervasiveness of sexual harassment could be attributed to the weak school support structures which were reportedly unsympathetic to the girls’ experiences especially where it involved a male teacher through such comments as “you are just making a fuss”, “faking words”, “creating stories”, “hates the teacher”, “not interested in the teachers lessons” or “badly behaved”. Similar weak support structures have been recorded by other researchers from the West (Squirrell, 1990; Mahony, 1985) and Africa (Kajawu, 2001; Mirembe, 2001; Pattman and Chege, 2003). Squirrell, (1990) notes that many students undergo institutionalized incredulity and disregard for their experiences as a daily phenomenon. While Squirrell (1990) attributes boys’ harassment of girls to boys ‘excessive knowledge’ about girls’ sexuality, in my study girls believed boys gaining such knowledge enhances positive image and interaction. The failure of schools to address boys’ and teachers’ harassment often led to girls’ silence about such experiences as they found it a waste of time reporting. Similar silences have been noted by Kitzinger and Jones (quoted in Squirrell, 1990) who found that only a third of the abuse is reported to the teachers. Sexual harassment coupled with an unsupportive atmosphere strains girls’ participation, contributes to poor academic performance and may lead to truancy, change of schools and eventual dropping out of school. Girls in my study reported friends who had changed schools due harassment from boys (see Chapter five, section 5.2.2 a).

Despite the familiarity with sexual harassment emerging from my study, the study further indicates that although students noted that it was not “good” to engage in sexual relationships at their age, they believed that such engagements had advantages. However, boys and girls had divergent views about such advantages. For boys, sex is a technical feat to be mastered (Forrest, 2000). According to the boys in my study, engagement in sexual relationships is ‘fun’, ‘pleasure’, ‘prestigious’, proof of (heterosexual) masculinity, and a powerful source of experience as well as creating homosocial cohesion, ‘being one of the group’. They noted “when you are not involved you grow up when you are dormant... by the time you get married you come to bed and fail to do something there...you fail to perform” Girls speak of themselves as concerned with preparation for marriage and as gaining experience in handling
future relationships as well as repulsing sexual temptations. Girls believed that relationships do not only help to know better their future marriage partners but also prevent them from engaging in sexual relations with other boys as they noted "If I know and have my boyfriend and I don't just go." Conscious of the social consequences of sexual intercourse, girls believed that although boys' sexual urges appear to be beyond their control, the girls indicated a marked need for abstinence in the relationships.

Students' representations of their sexual experiences and attitudes provide useful insights into the way students have been socialized to think about sexual matters and the myths, stereotypes and rigidity of notions about gender and sexual roles. The study reveals complex gendered contradictions and double standards at play in students' attitudes and constructions of own and each others' sexuality especially with regard to initiation of sexual relationships and the advantages and disadvantages of sexual relationships and intercourse. The findings show how discourses of gender and sexuality pervade students' every day lived experience in the school, despite of (or in negotiation with) concrete efforts by teachers and sometimes peers to 'desexualize' the school environment. Through the social and discursive practices, students construct gendered relations of domination and subordination, which influence all school members' interactions, both inside the classroom and beyond.

7.3 Students' pursuit of sexual knowledge
Students enter class as sexual and gendered subjects having experienced wider formal and informal sexual learning through a multiple of sources. The study revealed complex negotiations for students between information gleaned from the formal classroom environment and information from diverse informal educational sources. According to my study, this negotiation is also gendered in such a way that while girls suggested that they turned to mothers for advice, boys were more likely to approach teachers. The weight and relevance of sexuality information offered through curricula also differed along gender lines. The majority of female students believed curricular based information did not have significant influence on their own attitudes and behaviour, while most boys felt differently. The study therefore illuminates both the micro-political negotiation between diverse routes to 'sexuality information' for students and the fact that gender dynamics influence this negotiation.

The process of sexuality education at home was jointly constructed via traditional gender roles, the father as the authority, disciplinarian and the mother as cultural educator. However, mothers tended to have exclusive and / or full responsibility for sexuality education at home, although they often found such encounters very difficult, embarrassing and full of tension especially when discussing sexual issues with boys. The male parents supplemented mothers' role through 'harsh' and 'rough' treatment that involved caning and verbal abuse to "stubborn" daughters and sons. Parents expressed
tension between fathers’ reticence to talk to the boys and the mothers’ inevitable acceptance of this role through having to take responsibility which they felt ought to lie with the fathers. Parents noted “men usually don’t talk to the boys about such things...it would be better for the mother to handle both boys and girls.” The tension between parents in the provision of sexual knowledge to their daughters and sons usually means that the children receive little or no sexually relevant information especially the boys. This finding complements Allen’s (1987) position on parents’ responsibility in sexuality education in the United Kingdom. Parents’ lack of the psychological and moral space (confidence and skill) within which to discuss sexuality with their children makes the role of other sexuality educators (teachers and resource persons) fundamental in sexuality education. Hence, invoking the notion of ‘a stranger’ appeared to work best for parents and students vis-à-vis teachers and outside resource persons respectively. Parents and students preferred ‘outsiders’ as sexual educators not only because of the presumed professional skills, expertise and knowledge but also because they were ‘strangers’. Although girls and boys got most information from mothers and teachers respectively, in comparison with other sources students overall indicated preference for ‘outsiders’, “with the outside person you are free because you know it’s not your teacher and in any case she will be going away...” However, though such encounters with outside resource persons appeared to be rare, students acknowledged outside sources as being more practical, interesting, detailed, non-prescriptive/restrictive and the event was seen as being more confidential. ‘Outside sources’ provided a free atmosphere for students to explore and share experiences on sensitive issues. This suggests that use of outside experts would be a valuable resource in school sexuality education.

In this study, information from parents was not only described as being ‘brief’, ‘one sided’ ‘out dated’, ‘authoritarian’ and ‘prescriptive’ but also as shaped by protective discourses that stress sexuality as a danger and risk especially for the girls. In addition, the efficacy of their information is highly questionable, for instance sex after marriage does not guarantee protection against acquiring HIV and AIDS and STDS and engaging in sexual intercourse 10 days after menstruation may not be “safe”. One of the major concerns raised by students regarding parents’ approach was that their involvement in sexuality education was mainly triggered off by events concerning perceived vulnerability. Parents (especially fathers) rely on scare tactics (‘fear based curricula’) to exclusively promote chastity and avoidance of all sexual activity until marriage especially for the girls. Many parents do not go beyond telling their daughters and sons to stay away from sex and giving a few instructions on personal hygiene, home management as well as guidance on high risk places such as discos and night clubs.

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92 Outside resource persons refer to experts/specialists from NGOs such as Straight Talk Foundation, Youth Alive, The AIDS Support Organization [TASO] Family Life Network and government institutions such as the Ministry of Health [MOH] and Uganda AIDS Commission.
Parents’ gendered messages about sexuality appear to be congruent with adult ideals of masculinity and femininity and tend to subject girls to more sexual taboos than boys. For instance, girls were expected to act in accordance with specifically feminine conventions of modesty including sitting cross-legged, not sitting with legs apart, not climbing trees, not shouting in public, kneeling before the elders/husbands as well as pulling of the vagina labia minora. Pulling and elongation of the female external genitalia is cherished and widely practiced in most cultures in Uganda. It is mainly meant for pleasing the male during sexual intercourse. Women are therefore expected to do this in order to make good sexual partners. The motive behind such parental education is explicit preparation for marriage in which girls are expected to be good and submissive housewives. Boys’ education is mainly about manual labour, income generation and interaction with girls as well as the kind of woman to marry. This presents boy’s sexuality as primarily physical, a kind of masculinity which ignores the emotional aspects of male sexuality. On the one hand boys are given educational messages concerning an overt, vigorous, heterosexuality; on the other the dynamics of their sexuality are erased through the intense focus on girls as vulnerable to sexual experience. Boys’ sexuality appeared to be a neglected discourse and demanded particular attention. Allen, (1987) and Hilton, (2001) also point to the idea that boys receive little sexuality education from parents. Hilton (2001) in particular notes that parents appear to have more concern for protecting their daughters and concentrate far less on boys’ needs. However, her study does not illuminate parents as major focus areas in sexuality education as my study does.

Although I did not undertake in-depth analyses of what students discussed in their peer groups, it was clear that friends were very important sources of information or misinformation, though some of them (girls) were sceptical about the kind of information acquired from some of their friends. Mac an Ghaill, (1994) and Lees (1994) identify diverse gendered aspects of sex talk among students. They note that boys’ sexual narratives carry discourses of boasting and exaggeration of past heterosexual conquests and male heroic fantasies, and that girls’ sex conversation is mainly about boys. All students in my study found it easier to discuss sexual issues with friends (peers). Given that these studies are from a different setting (Europe), a study exploring students gendered talk about sex and sexuality in the Ugandan context would be valuable to provide insights into the information students engage with in their peer groups and the values attached.

While the media (print and electronic) emerged as another valuable source of information for most students, there were concerns over the apparent contradictory massages put across particularly regarding the appropriate age for sexual debut and safe sex practices. This appeared to cause confusion among the students particularly regarding the age of 18 years and marriage, which are used
as the ‘dividing line’ for engaging in sexual interactions. In addition, while some sources of information such as the media encourage use of condoms, some teachers and parents disapproved of condom use. This is indicative of the lack of clarity in the information gleaned from the various sources particularly on issues of abstinence vis-à-vis use of safer sex practices.

Students’ accounts indicate the apparent difficulty of getting accurate information, or information they trust, and their constant search for relevant information from peers; teachers of either same or opposite sex or other sources. Students thus come to class with some information and ideas about sexuality which are likely to influence classroom dynamics, and simultaneously create a deep interest in gleaning new information, relevant to their lives, which can be mapped into the kaleidoscope of guidelines, instructions, hints, and proscriptions around them.

7.4 Students’ experiences with the school sexuality education curriculum

Uganda’s sexuality curricula are gendered sites for sexuality education. Engagement with these curricula therefore, positions both teachers and students into gendered discourses. This section illuminates students’ intricate and dynamic interactions with the different sexuality curricular frameworks in the classroom, the teaching methods and pedagogic approach.

The study establishes gendered dynamics at play within curricular frameworks with which students have to negotiate. Gender impacted on students’ identification of topics salient to them, but not dramatically so. Girls were more likely to identify issues that were presented as important to girls’ sexuality, namely birth control/use of contraceptives, STDs, avoiding sexual relationships with the opposite sex, sexual anatomy menstruation and puberty issues. Their responses to this section of the data collection indicate a high degree of compliance with the notion that certain topics in sexuality education ‘naturally’ concern girls more than boys. On the other hand, the majority of boys identified issues related to their bodies, relationships and condom use, as topics that seem relevant to their personal experiences and enhance their sense of identity as well as fitting into their gender codes. Some issues which appeared to challenge men’s power/masculinities and are either a threat or interfere with the patriarchal ideologies of men’s domination and women’s subordination in society such as women’s rights, marginalization and emancipation, gender roles and responsibilities did not attract the attention of boys. These differing concerns and interests between male and female students (also highlighted by teachers – see chapter six, section 6.2.5) illustrate gendered orientations to sexuality information, orientations constructed within the curriculum itself and reflected in students’ own uptake of the material presented by teachers. Students’ gendered knowledge interests have been recorded in studies by Goldmann and Goldmann, (1982) about children’s sexual thinking.
and Prendergast, (1996) on the "discourse of the pinks and blues" and also in Halstead and Waite's (2001) study on gender differences in the developing sexual values and attitudes. However, in contrast to my study, boys in Halstead and Waite (2001) study showed interest in contraception, abortion and childbirth, issues which were identified by girls in my study. This could be due to the differing contexts under which the studies are located.

Through in-depth information from students, this study established that most of the sexuality information given to students in the different curricula was consistent with the dominant social norms including the notion of heterosexuality as fundamental to sexual practice and the notion of sexual practice as only sanctioned within marriage. Students' memory of 'sexuality information' privileged the prioritization of abstinence as the main message given in class through a 'plumbing and prevention approach' (Lensky, 1990) particularly in the biology lessons. However, although here sexuality is set within a 'scientific' discourse, it is concerned with the transmission of social values such as expected behaviours and gender roles especially when linked to information gleaned from religious education, social etiquette and moral education. It emerged that sexuality knowledge offered through religious education particularly IRE is located within moral frameworks that prioritize marriage and parenthood as the only legitimate expressions of sexuality. Sexuality is thus constructed as a dangerous zone for the young people (unmarried), one to be controlled and restrained by placing emphasis on prescriptions and prohibitions related to appropriate sexual norms and values within society. Although such construction of sexuality is an explicit recognition of students as sexual beings, it underplays students' lived realities.

Students' identification of sexuality topics presented in the different subjects (biology, CRE, IRE, Social Etiquette and Moral Education) suggests a lack of coverage of important sexuality topics which have a significant impact on young people's sexualities such as sexual response, pleasure, masturbation and sexual orientation, although students did not identify omission of these topics. Students' failure to note the absence of such issues could be attributed to the perceived negative construction of such sexuality matters. The absence of these sexual issues is indicative of how the lessons present a more restricted picture of sexuality, yet incidences of such issues as homosexuality and lesbianism exist in schools. Students were concerned about teachers' censorship of information, "say certain things and leave out certain things, leave out the hard stuff", their limited coverage of safer sex practices, their neglect of the meaning of sex and of other issues such as pulling of the vagina labia minora and personal hygiene. They thus depended on external consultations especially friends and the media. This suggests that the current sexual knowledge gleaned from the classroom does not respond to students' lived experiences and therefore becomes at one level irrelevant.
Students' accounts reveal feminization of sexuality in the classroom space, full of stereotyped and gender biased coverage of sexuality topics with lessons explicitly concentrated on 'female sexuality' issues in the classroom and through the tendency across different schools, of conducting regular meetings outside the official curriculum lessons exclusively for girls. Female students were particularly concerned about the coded warnings of the threat of pregnancy and hygiene, which were selectively given out to the girls but not to boys. Such feminized approaches do not only cause boys' treatment of key sexuality issues as girls' 'stuff' but also leads to consequent lack of shared responsibility in sexuality. My study supplements other studies by (Forrest, 2000; Squirrell, 1990; Power, 1995) who have noted that feminization of sexuality information leads to boys' disregard of sexuality knowledge. They ignore girls' experiences and also harass the girls.

It is significant, in addition, that the presentation of sexuality information through religious paradigms was preferred by all students to information presented as 'biology' as they noted "in Biology the teachers teach for examination. They don't teach us to apply in our normal life. CRE it's a different story, they teach while relating to our society..." This suggests that religious information though stereotypical appeared to appeal to students lived experiences as they noted that "works around our normal life". Noteworthy, however is the negative implications of gender biased religious information on gender equality and effective sexuality education initiatives. As suggested by Jackson (1988), my research found that the scientific information (the processes of reproduction – fertilization, foetal development and birth) was knowledge that may be of less immediate interest to young people than coming to terms with their own sexuality, as it is lived and experienced in day-to-day interactions. It also reveals students' awareness of the wider social norms about gender and the moral meanings about sexuality, which may influence their perceptions about the applicability and relevance of the information.

7.4.1 Students' participation and interaction in sexuality education lessons
Students can have a significant role in shaping classroom discourse. They are active negotiators in constructing the daily classroom experience and respond to classroom knowledge in various ways. Students and teachers accounts reveal the subtle aspects of classroom encounters characterized by a gendered hierarchy, in which boys emerge as dominant with much greater control over the classroom space than girls when it comes to authority around sexual information. As with classroom analyzed by various researchers94, discussions held in mixed sex lessons were usually dominated by boys thus allowing them greater vocal space and a range of more powerful subject positions than girls occupy. In my study this created gendered discourses that systematically produced marginalization and

93 particularly the prescribed gendered roles
'suppression of female voices and experiences' (Gillibrand et al, 1999). Although this finding agrees with that of most researchers (Measor et al, 1996; Baxter, 2002; Owens, 2000; Pattman and Chege, 2003; Strange et al, 2003), Prendergast, (1996) found that girls were more active, asked more questions in sexuality education lessons and were better informed about sexuality issues. In my case it was only in the Muslim school and in classes where more substantial numbers of girls than boys participated. Although, students attributed boys' low participation in class in the Muslim school to the Shari'a law, I did not find this particularly convincing because of the apparent Islamic notions of male dominance and female subordination. This phenomenon merits further investigation.

Boys’ dominance of the classroom space leaves the girls at a disadvantage. One of the consequences of girls not talking in class is that their interests and concerns cannot be directly addressed as part and parcel of negotiation with formal learning. Confusions and misunderstandings may be glossed over, go undetected and unresolved. Learning is an active process and requires talking, new information is not absorbed by some osmotic process but must be ‘talked into place’ (Douglas Barnes, 1976 in Spender, 1988). Some studies have noted that such patterns of inequality begin as early as nursery school (Measor and Sikes, 1992) and are reinforced by teachers’ actions and language (Delamont, 1980). Such patterns were observed in the four classroom observations of CRE lessons conducted in one of the schools in which the teachers’ sexist attitude and language encouraged macho behaviours among the boys and denigrated the girls, discouraging them to participate as actively as the boys (more of this is highlighted in section 7.4.5).

Interest in and demonstration of knowledge about sexual issues is gendered and entails issues of reputation and dignity where girls are particularly positioned. For the girls in my study, to be visibly proficient in sexuality knowledge implied transgression of the moral codes of ‘femininity’, “we feel shy to ask some questions for fear that may be you give the picture of deep immorality with in you...you may think you will be offended...they will think you are immoral... they start talking that girl's do this and this.” Girls are thus confronted with the task of deciding whether to opt for silence and maintain their moral dignity or whether to opt for active participation and risk their reputation. Boys’ vulnerability to codes of masculine power involving sexuality knowledge was also influential but not in a way that rendered them ‘immoral’ if they demonstrated comment of ‘dishonourable’ relevant information; they would rather be seen as being “sharp”. Very few boys were worried about their reputation. Such differentiated access to voice inhibits the learning process. Consequently, most girls prefer sexuality education conducted in single sex classes because segregation allows them to pursue their interests without any fear of being teased by boys or loosing their dignity and reputation. Girls identified sexuality lessons in mixed sex settings as unsafe environments because the subject matter provides
boys with an opportunity to use sexual information to attack them. Across the data there was a near universal description of victimization, harassment and teasing from boys, which caused girls to feel vulnerable, distressed, and unenthusiastic to participate in lessons. Girls expressed concern over boys directing questions about female sexual/reproductive organs such as “what is this, what is that, how wide is this?” to girls during the lessons or teasing girls for missing classes because of menstruation. Female students’ preference for single sex sexuality lessons has been reported in other studies (Kreuse, 1992; Salisbury and Jackson, 1996; Gillibrand et al, 1999; Baxter, 2002, Mirembe, 2002; Strange et al, 2003). Baxter, (2002) also notes that single sex classes free up the boys from the stereotyped role of giving girls a ‘hard time’. Pattman and Chege (2003) and Strange et al., (2003:) in their study noted that girls talked more openly and focused on issues of their interest while in single sex groups, which girls in my research referred to as “personal” and “private” issues. According to the teachers, single sex classes provide more freedom of expression about “sensitive issues” and ensure control over the frequent boys’ disruptive behaviour and may redress the considerable disadvantage which girls experience in mixed sex classes. Stanworth, (1981) argues that children who confine themselves to ‘monosyllabic’ answers in situations they see as threatening may become extremely talkative and articulate (expressive) when placed in more congenial surroundings. Given the apparent gender segregation in classroom, there is need for further research (my data did not establish this) exploring the possible relationship between seating practices and patterns of talk and interaction in classrooms.

Although a few boys acknowledged that mixed sex classes limited freedom of expression, they consistently referred to girls’ restricted expression in mixed sex classes. Boys’ reluctance to claim such experiences could illustrate attempts to conform to heterosexual masculinity. This is clearly explained by scholars such as Strange et al, (2003) and Salisbury and Jackson, (1996) who argue that boys’ acknowledgement of shyness or embarrassment about sexuality matters gives a negative impression about their masculinities and can lead to being victimized or labelled as sexually inadequate. These complex interactions illustrate students’ awareness of their gendered positions and the difficulties that girls and boys have in expressing their own views and engaging with ideas that have implications for gender identity.

While feminist scholars argue for separate spaces (single-sex education) (Sarah, 1988; Larkin, 1994 and Lee and Lockheed, 1998), my study reveals that mixed-sex education is valuable especially in preparation for ‘real life’, providing opportunity to learn about masculinity and femininity, fosters change in attitudes and promotes positive interaction. Nearly half of the girls, especially those from the single sex school, shared a general conviction that mixed-sex sexuality education, regardless of its shortcomings was useful. They were not enthusiastic about having exclusively single-sex sexuality
education lessons. Students from the single sex schools felt that sexuality education in mixed sex groups availed them of a valuable opportunity to interact and learn about the opposite sex. Young women in Spenders' study (1988) after spending years in single-sex schooling did not view themselves as equipped and confident to interact with men. They viewed single sex schooling as postponing having to interact with males, an experience they will have to meet in the adult roles. While creating separate spaces for girls shelters them from the prevailing "winds" of patriarchal culture of male domination while at school (Larkin, 1994), it may probably not be a solution particularly for the harassment and inequalities girls/women endure beyond the school setting. This is not to detract from the positive effects of single sex classes/education but to suggest a consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of the two approaches before any intervention can be undertaken. A lot of debate has gone on within feminist scholarship over the issues of single-sex vis-à-vis mixed-sex education and no conclusive arguments can be made. Lockheed and Klein (1985) argue that sex segregation inhibits cross-sex cooperation, loss of valuable learning experiences and in the long run perpetuates sex stereotypes present in the larger society rather than decrease these stereotypes. Similarly, Dicenso et al., (2001) also argue that sex segregation reinforces gender stereotyping.

While boys and girls in my study preserve gender dichotomy and see the experiences of the opposite sex as foreign, and feel that mixed sex lessons are an important terrain of information sharing, girls explain ideas of cross gender discussion in much more depth, and boys place much more emphasis on importance of interaction with girls' opinions and identity. The need to 'civilize' boys about girls' experiences (Prendergast, 1996) and guard against mystification regarding girls' sexual experiences was a recurrent theme in girls' accounts. This concern arose from the inherent feminization of sexuality through teachers' coded warnings about the threat of pregnancy and the perpetual concern over the need for girls to protect themselves, leaving out the males as if they are not part of the discourse. Girls thus expressed anxiety about the negative implications associated with such rigid constructions of female sexuality and stressed the importance of having boys 'on board' as they learn about sexuality issues. Power (1995) in her study found that excluding boys from lessons addressing sexuality issues such as menstruation, created confusion about their understanding of the female body and led to the harassment of girls. Researchers, such as Blumner (1998), have also noted that separation of the boys from the girls may not be the way forward and suggest finding other ways of dealing with boys' behaviours. Some students saw mixed-sex sexuality lessons as enhancing opportunities for gender equality, and fostering changes of attitude towards each others' sexuality and appreciation of each others' sexual experiences, problems and needs. Similar findings were recorded by Halstead (1991). She argues that mixed sex schooling results in healthier attitude to sex and relations between the sexes. A gendered discourse in which girls and boys simultaneously segregate
‘boyhood’ from ‘girlhood’ at the same time demanding for equality was revealed in the reasons given for mixed sex teaching such as having a ‘balanced discussion of issues that concern both genders’, acknowledgement of “all” being “human beings” and the need to know about the opposite sex.

Using both approaches (single and mixed sex) appears to be the ideal strategy because each setting seems to fulfil a particular purpose. The students’ arguments for or against single sex or mixed sex sexuality education classes illustrate the fact the students see themselves as gendered in relation to sexuality. Reasons for preference centred mainly on issues of content which are seen to galvanize the presence of sexual dynamics between students in the classroom space. Students’ zeal for either single sex or mixed sex lessons or both appeared to be influenced by both their previous experiences about sexuality education and their wider social experiences such as restricted interaction between boys and girls and the perception that contact with boys can damage girls sexual reputation and social status. The implication of this for sexuality education is for schools to use both approaches as is deemed appropriate, under analysis of the gendered dynamics within the school and through focused discussion on what aspects of these dynamics demand change in order to deepen girls’ access to full gender equality. The value of conducting sexuality education in both mixed and single sex groups has been expressed by other studies in Africa (Mirembe 2002; Pattman and Chege, 2003) and elsewhere (Prendergast, 1996; Measor et al, 1996; Hilton, 2001; Strange et al, 2003).

The students’ and teachers’ views about the gender dynamics in sexuality lessons suggest a construction of gendered discourse and practices that call for designing sexuality education in both single and mixed sex settings to cater for the needs of both boys and girls, and to negotiate with girls’ needs to move beyond conventional proscriptions against their sexual submission. This has implications for curricular structure. What emerges is the need for teachers and educators to provide space in which girls and boys know that they are equally valued and equally welcome. Such an atmosphere encourages them to freely voice their opinions and ideas and ensures effective learning. In a study by Mirembe (2002), it was found that setting ground rules together with the learners at the beginning of the lesson/session not only ensured active participation of both boys and girls but also embraced democratic values including respect, improved gender relations, control, ‘self-control and moral behaviour’. She argues that students are cooperative after being in charge of their learning. Such child-centred pedagogies did not feature in any of the schools I visited. Setting ground rules could be helpful in resolving issues of victimization, harassment and teasing of girls by boys, which appear to be typical of Ugandan sexuality education classrooms. Establishing ground rules in sexuality education lessons has also been recommended by Pattman and Chege (2003).
These findings reveal complex array of meanings behind the behaviour exhibited by boys and girls in the classroom space. Some students especially the girls who are reported to be shy and therefore did not participate as actively as the boys were calculating the risks of engagement, weighing their interests and strategizing around the implications of any active participation in class. Consequently, the majority of the girls preferred single sex to mixed teaching, although as noted above a number of them valued sexuality education delivered in mixed sex settings because of democratic ideas about fostering gender equality. These findings point to the juxtaposition of discourses concerning the 'equality' of men and women in contemporary Uganda and discourses embedded in notions of women's appropriate sexual submission to patriarchal authority, and have important implications for curriculum design and implementation.

7.4.2 Teaching methods
Students' insights are particularly salient in identifying constructive approaches in sexuality education pedagogical practice. They described the lessons as being 'under resourced', 'theoretical', 'examination driven' and overly teacher centred. Teachers spend most of the time dictating notes (lecturing), a method that demands students to memorize and reproduce the facts that are taught instead of getting them to think through the issues, explore values and opinions as well as practicing the skills. The major concern was about the use of methods that were not interactive, and failed to engage students directly in discussions which could be used as testing ground for new information and having 'hands on' experience. Students believed that the teachers' primary concern of completing the syllabus and preparing students for the final examinations was more valued than in-depth exploration of the issues. Such an approach is typical of defensive teaching and denies students a choice of producing knowledge as well as the opportunity of being in charge of their own learning (Mirembe, 2002). In my study students' interests appeared to focus on application of strategies that could create a classroom atmosphere that is supportive and respectful of the gendered student voices as well as of the values that individual students bring to class, where "we can ask everything that you need to ask, share experiences, learn from one another" Students' preference over the various teaching strategies was gendered. Girls prioritized the use of group discussions as a teaching tool that allowed them to ask and share experiences. More than half of the girls preferred use of group discussions and a third of the boys preferred use of audio visual aids such as films and videos. As argued by Wood (1998) the boys and girls in my study indicated interest in a more flamboyant and dynamic approach that engage a variety of methods including use of case studies, debates, brainstorming, role plays, use of outside resource persons, talk shows, music, dance and drama, skits, demonstrations, question and answer, as well as encouraging methods that enable students to secretly express their concerns such as individual counselling and asking students to write their questions on pieces of paper. The data suggest the need
for training of teachers on how to utilize practical, interactive and participatory strategies to provide more relevant and applicable sexuality education to the young people.

While institutional constraints presented structural dilemmas and conflicts between maintaining classroom control, encouraging student participation and passing examinations, the gender position of teachers appeared to be influential in classroom dynamics and students' interest in the subject matter. Female teachers' attempts to ensure class control influenced the teaching process and led to 'defensive' teaching. This has contradictory outcomes such as reinforcing gender stereotypes (Trudell, 1993), and my study illustrated this clearly. Students' accounts present negative perceptions about female teachers in teaching sexuality issues, opinions which seemed to be borne out by their current classroom experience. Students, especially boys', responses indicate homophobic and sexist perceptions of female teachers as being incapable of teaching sexuality issues. There was overwhelming disparagement of female teachers in their arguments for preferring a male teacher. Female teachers were described as shy, not open, 'hiding', 'fearful', 'soft', 'passive', 'unable to cope with boys opposition', 'negligent', 'evasive', 'self-pressuring' and 'dishonest and defensive'. Boys' sexist attitudes and arguments for a male teacher were overtly reflected in their view that 'it's fake to have a female teacher', 'female teachers don't believe in themselves, don't want to be challenged' and they attempted to intimidate the female teacher by looking directly into her face. A female looking straight into the eyes of a male suggests that she is 'too bold', an undesirable trait in the Ugandan culture because it contradicts the socially accepted definitions of 'femininity'. So male students use this kind of gesture to intimidate female teachers as well as to see their reaction. The stereotypic perceptions about the female teachers were especially prevalent among boys' representations of their teachers. As complex corroboration of the boys' rejection of female teachers' ability to 'handle' boys' sexuality education, according to the teachers and girls, boys' disruptive behaviours were common in lessons conducted by female teachers. Boys' disruptive behaviours could be associated with boys' attempts to prove their masculinity and "showing as if they are already experienced" as well as challenge female teachers' capacity to handle sexuality lessons. Stears et al (1995), Measor et al (1996) and Strange et al (2003) also recorded boys' disruptive behaviours in sexuality education lessons conducted by female facilitators. Strange et al (2003) note that sexuality education lessons provide increased opportunities for students to subvert authority by capitalizing on teachers' insecurities about professional and personal constraints on their practice.

It is clear from this study that teaching about sexuality in class carries the possibility of embedding listeners and speakers in a sexual discourse and points to awareness of sexualisation inherent in giving sexuality information. Some boys explicitly linked the subject matter with sexual arousal. Sexualisation
of lessons was also reflected in students' views about male teachers' deliberate failure to talk about certain sexuality issues because of harbouring intentions to 'befriend' the female students. This further shows students' construction of male exploitation of female sexuality as directly linked to female limited sexuality knowledge. Students' views here indicate a predatory relationship between girls and male teachers and students' constructions of the actual context of harassment are clear about the gender tensions at play.

Although there was a debate among students over the issue of the sex of the teacher, the debate was more visible among girls than boys. Their disagreement revolved around questions of identification, women's capacity for frankness and male teachers' competence in articulating female sexuality issues such as menstruation. The students were enmeshed in a gendered discourse about setting the boundaries, in which female teachers were valued mainly for their ability to handle pastoral matters (girls' personal and private issues) particularly outside class. While parents and female teachers believed that it was appropriate to have same sex teachers handling sexuality issues, girls had reservations about female teachers' capability of handling sexuality lessons. On the other hand, male teachers did not view the sex of the teacher as being important but rather valued adequate training, knowledge of the subject matter and teachers' confidence and comfort in handling the lessons. Girls' views on one hand point to the idea that just because the teacher is a female does not guarantee their increased interest in the lesson, but at the same time they acknowledge their female teachers' competence in handling sexuality matters. The students' divergent interests and priorities, and the disagreements among them about the way, in which the teacher's own gender becomes a tool within sexuality education classes, have implications for teacher training and recruitment.

Recruitment of female teachers in education institutions is one of the interventions that has been recommended widely in most literature internationally and nationally as a means for encouraging girls' participation in schooling. Many scholars argue that lack of female role models inhibits female participation in school and advise recruitment of more female staff in school. Although female teachers serve as influential role models for the girls, girls in my study however showed that recruitment of female teachers may not solve the problem entirely. What seemed to matter though was the hospitality and articulation of issues in class, which most female teachers they have been in contact had not exhibited. However, given that female teachers have a role to play in attending to girls personal concerns, strategies need to be laid to strengthen their role in sexuality education. In addition, there is need to explore the reasoning behind female teachers' assertions to conduct sexuality education for girls despite girls' preferences for male teachers.
7.4.3 Practical application of school sexuality knowledge

The study uncovered complex contradictions over the usefulness and practical application of the sexual knowledge obtained from school. In spite of students' disparagement of the sexual information they received from class, students were unanimous in considering sexuality education in schools as being valuable justified by lack of detailed and accurate information from parents. They saw sexuality education as an opportunity for both sexual and intellectual empowerment such as "knowing about our bodies and the body changes, prevention of disease, STDs and pregnancy, live healthy lives and passing examinations".

According to students, information from schools helped both boys and girls to know how to protect themselves against the dangers of early sex, and facilitated prevention of diseases such as STDs/HIV and AIDS and pregnancy. Students especially girls appreciated information about the body changes as it enhanced their confidence, self esteem which reduced anxieties caused by experiences such as menstruation, growing breasts and pubic hair. They acknowledged that knowledge about sexuality enables students to make informed choices about when to have and not to have sex as well as how to respond to the body changes as they come by especially menstruation. As noted in chapter five, section 5.4.2 b and 7.4 of this chapter, students showed gendered interests in sexuality topics, which is also reflected here as regards girls' disinterested stance in respect of male bodies. Girls acknowledged the power of knowledge in addressing sexual exploitation and vulnerability particularly knowledge about STDS, their bodies and the dangers of engaging in sex. Girls' comments such as "unlike the people who are ignorant...these girls in village who are not informed...those girls are used very many times...It's very bad to be ignorant" suggest that the information they received though not comprehensive was useful than not having information at all. The overarching 'value' of the information as protection which is embedded in all the curricular messages, suggests the sense of danger associated with sexuality, and affects both boys and girls. It is precisely this sense of 'protection' noted by girls as valuable. This points to the gendered co-operation between the girls' concerns and the orientation of the curriculum.

Despite the overarching support for the general idea of learning sexuality information through the school curriculum, students debated the value of their specific experience of sexuality education in the classroom. Student contestation of the school knowledge involves the content details, the teaching strategies and the ways in which teachers related the material to the students' lived realities. Although students did not openly challenge class versions of appropriate sexual behaviour, there were contradictions and complexities associated with their simple acceptance of sexuality information, particularly regarding students' engagement in sexual activities within and outside the school space. It
is noteworthy that their assent was not passive acceptance but active calculation of their own interests especially that of passing examinations as was articulated by some students "you don't take it serious...you write it in the book then take it for examination purposes.... We don't take it that we should use it for practical life.... We just sit in class and pay attention like we are studying another topic..." Behind their acquiescence, students were actively reinterpreting classroom information in the context of their lived experiences to construct their own understanding. Such students' submission to classroom knowledge has been recorded by Trudell (1993) in her study "Doing sex education". Students' accounts reveal more than simple acceptance of the information. The predominant classroom message, as interpreted by students, seems to be contradicted by peer dynamics and their lived experiences. Students comprehended the message from the classroom that it is better not to engage in sexual intercourse at their age but reported with occasional approbation students' active engagement in various kinds of sexual interaction, relationships and intercourse as well as incidences of pregnancy, STDs and abortion. In addition, some students (both boys and girls) expressed that being involved in sexual intercourse at their age had some advantages such as pleasure, gaining experience and preparation for marriage. This suggests that education that exclusively emphasizes abstinence and the dangers of pre-marital sex; the 'plumbing and prevention approach' such as those within the school system may not adequately address student realities. Some parents', especially mothers' and teachers', opinions about provision of information about safe sex practices appeared to question the effectiveness of abstinence only education. Students also questioned the effectiveness of the teachers' strategy of over protection, surveillance and policing of student interaction and relationships within the school space. By criticizing the conventional sexuality lessons, the students are challenging the structures and practices involved in the 'deshexualisation' of school life (Mac an Ghaill, 1994). Hence, approaches to providing appropriate sexuality education must derive from the students' lived experiences. There is a need to look at sexuality education through new conceptual lenses questioning the current norms, strategies, attitudes, beliefs, overt messages and pedagogical practices in an attempt to create an equal opportunities for girls and boys; a need for what Noddings (1986) called a 'caring community' is clearly visible from analysis of the data in this study.

The study reveals students' awareness of the underlying dominant ideologies that structure their lessons about sexuality, in which a narrow range of topics is discussed and overt and covert moral values are transmitted within the context of prescription. The official prescriptions about sexuality information at school and at home (by parents) operate with an almost uniform commitment to heterosexuality, procreation and abstinence before marriage. These encounters were described as being 'authoritarian', 'theoretical', 'feminized', 'under-resourced' and 'out dated', which motivated students to consult 'external sources' (friends, the media and 'outside resource persons'). With the
multiple sources of information, there seems to be a close link between comfort levels and seeking and/or providing information and advice about sexuality issues. Thus the nature of the relationship and trust appeared to be important factors in seeking and providing information and advice about sexuality. Students’ responses on the assessment of in class and outside class information particularly on the teaching strategies and sexuality education content have implications for teacher training and curriculum review.

7.5 Teachers’ interaction with the school sexuality education curricular

Teachers’ accounts confirm students’ views about the inadequacy and academic orientation of the sexuality knowledge offered in the different subjects. They described the syllabus as shallow and fragmented on topics related to sexuality. Institutional organizational requirements of completing the syllabus in preparation for the national examinations appeared to be a major element influencing teachers’ choice of what sexual knowledge to give to students. Teachers’ concerns over completing the syllabus coupled with teachers’ personal comfort with sexuality issues as well as concerns about society values presented dilemmas between providing academic material and in-depth coverage of sexuality knowledge relevant to students’ lived realities. Consequently, teachers were preoccupied with providing academic information and paid scant attention to students’ concerns that arose during the lessons. Thus the form of presentations and the scope of coverage superficially appeared to be in dialogue with students’ responses, but teachers mainly worked towards completing the syllabus.

Although, the classroom environment appeared to offer individual teachers an opportunity (selection of topics is left at the discretion of individual teacher) to enrich the curriculum by offering information relevant to the students’ lives, because of the limited time allocated to the lesson, teachers did not adequately probe for, nor address, students’ concerns. Such a working environment does not offer opportunities for using dynamic, participatory and interactive methods. It instead encourages the use of less time consuming methods such as lecturing. Although teachers mainly used lecturing during the lessons, they acknowledged the importance of using multiple and dynamic methods to keep students interested in the subject. Teachers indicated that teaching sexuality is not easy as evidenced in their comments — “Yes we try as parents to help them but sometimes like issues of sexuality are not easy to handle.... teaching sexuality needs specialized training.” Lack of professional training in handling sexuality topics appeared to be another constraint that influenced effective delivery of sexuality knowledge.

The teachers’ comments reveal ways in which they constructed and perceived sexuality as a dangerous zone of risk especially for the female students. Their accounts engage a ‘protective’
discourse in which girls are perceived to carry a heavy burden of responsibility for sexual health, portraying their sexuality as passive and leading to negative experience, "we actually emphasize the girls because at the end of the day it is the girls who suffer the consequences, we anticipate the kind of danger they are likely to face in that period, encourage the girls to be assertive, be very good negotiators". There is a hint here of teachers' recognition of the sexual harassment and sexual violence prevalent both within the broad social environment, and indeed within school boundaries themselves, but such a hint is never fully developed as a framework for the meaning of sexuality education for girls (nor as a framework for addressing masculine potential to abuse girls and women sexually) Consequently, female sexuality appeared to be a major concern rather than male sexuality. As with students, teachers privileged students' gendered knowledge requirements where girls are seen as mainly interested in information about the body changes, contraception, boys' lack of trustworthiness and with marriage while boys were understood as primarily interested in heterosexual liaisons.

While teachers appeared interested in sexuality education, the process of constructing and teaching the curriculum presented them with complex and contradictory experience of having to balance completion of the overarching syllabus (on Biology or CRE/IRE) against students' demands for in-depth exploration/coverage of sexuality issues. This difficulty was compounded by teachers' individual negotiations with comfort in addressing sexuality issues, within their gendered identities as 'teachers' in a classroom space governed by both social and institutional values.

7.6 Perceptions about and support for teaching sexuality education in schools and at home

There was overall support from students, teachers and parents for comprehensive sexuality education within the home and the schools with both spaces playing important and complementary roles. Researchers such as Greydanus and Shearin, (1990); Linda et al, (2000) and Mirembe, (2002) also reported public support towards the provision of sexuality knowledge to young people and spoke of the need to expand such education into comprehensive sexuality education programmes complementing the information students obtain from home. Support for comprehensive sexuality education stemmed from the realization that the current information being given to students at home and at school was inadequate. Although some parents believed that the schools were currently giving inadequate information, they expressed confidence in the schools' ability to provide more accurate and appropriate sexuality information, "teachers know what to teach, we may tell children what they are not supposed to know". Although my study suggests that perhaps this confidence is misplaced, it is clear that both teachers and parents are important agents in sexuality education. Such parental support for school involvement in sexuality education has been recorded in other studies by Allen, (1987) and
Linda et al., (2000). However, while these studies indicate parents’ demand for schools to introduce the subject to children formally so as to lay the factual ground upon which the parents would be able to confidently express their opinions about sexuality, my study prioritizes parents as the primary sources of sexual knowledge for students, despite the complications for girls and boys of this form of pedagogic interaction. Kirby et al., (1979) argue that school based programmes alone do not have a significant impact where parents have not made a strong commitment for supporting sexuality education of their children.

While parents were considered as the appropriate primary sources of sexual knowledge, in the current Ugandan context they appeared to abdicate this responsibility. Consequently, teachers appeared to play the biggest role in giving sexuality information to students especially the boys. However, teachers’ behaviour (such as sexual harassment and their hostility to their students) complicates their authority in their role in sexuality education, negating their credibility as educators and role models.

Under these circumstances the school itself may constitute a zone of risk, especially for the girl child, as well as posing a serious threat to sexuality education in schools.

The study also reveals complex negotiations over the unresolved contradiction between objectivity (providing ‘factual’ and ‘balanced’ information) and moral evangelisms where particular values about appropriate forms of femininity and womanhood were articulated via sexuality information. These contradictions create uncertainties for the analyst about the impact of comprehensive sexuality education that involves giving detailed, open and frank information. The study showed that there was tension and anxiety among some teachers and parents associated with beliefs that education about sex either “corrupts” innocent students or promotes sexual behaviour and experimentation rather than positively enhancing young people’s sexual ability to manage their sexual lives. Teachers and parents thus believed in censoring information before giving it to children and advised that “it should come in bits:” because “you might awake a sleeping dog”.

There were gendered conceptions about appropriate education and complex negotiation for parents particularly concerning information on safer sex practices. While mothers viewed proscription of such information as unhelpful to young people, fathers and some male teachers felt differently. They felt such information would promote promiscuity. On the other hand, mothers appreciated the ‘natural’ in children’s developing sexuality and acknowledged the fact, and value, of children’s exposure to multiple sources of information. Female and some male teachers held similar perspectives as those of the mothers and were particularly concerned about the benefits of such information in terms of protecting girls against the risks of unprotected sex such as pregnancy. Zabin
et al., (1986); Marsiglio (1986); Fine, (1988); Greydanus and Shearin, (1990), Rivers and Aggleton, (1999) and Pattman and Chege, (2003) also noted misconceptions among many individuals about the negative impact of sexuality education such as promoting promiscuity and immorality. They however, indicated that sexuality education increases students' knowledge of sexuality, increase students tolerance for the views of others, lead to a decrease in teenage pregnancy and delay in sexual intercourse. Parents’ and teachers’ opinions appeared to be largely based on assumptions and stereotypical ideas about young peoples’ interests in experimentation, risk-taking and pleasure seeking. However, these perspectives were also based on realistic assessment of the impact of gender inequalities in Ugandan contexts, and the possibility of unwanted pregnancies, and sexual assault. For parents and teachers to discover a balance between giving information that protected girls and giving those same girls access to options and resources was a visible challenge. Another challenge concerns educating boys against models of masculine sexual abuse, an issue which is most often not addressed.

While there is overwhelming support for comprehensive sexuality education to be conducted both at home and at school, there are uncertainties about its probable impact, educators’ lack of credibility, and there is certainly evidence of a marked need for sensitization and training to ensure effective delivery of sexuality knowledge to young people.

7.7 Emerging approaches to comprehensive sexuality education in contemporary Uganda

The study provides a ‘broad agenda’ for sexuality education that would be of value to all young people in the development of their sexual and gender identities. This broad agenda covers fundamental issues relating to pedagogy focusing on the need to develop strategies from life experiences, acknowledgement of the different needs and / or concerns of students, teachers and parents and recognition of gender debates as part and parcel of the need to develop approaches that challenge gendered discrimination.

Through the interviews and discussions, it became clear that an approach that engages student centred pedagogy with an understanding of the gendered discourses and practices within sexuality education was necessary. Students’ gendered identification of topics that address their individual sexualities and their expressed need for ‘balanced’ coverage of sexuality issues suggests the call for a participatory and/ or interactive approach that gives students space to generate knowledge, acknowledge diversity of knowledge and plan to address the realities of their sexuality (Mirembe, 2002). The study thus calls for adoption of an empowerment approach that prioritizes participation and individual responsibility for learning, alongside approaches that challenge gender discrimination. This approach allows for a less prescriptive or proscriptive stance and suggests the possibility of
individuals being 'empowered' to make a range of sexual choices (Thorogood, 2000). Feminist pedagogy has been highly recommended. This involves attempts to listen to students, to hear what is being said and to critically reflect upon the nature of the interactions and silences (Vertinky, 1995). Such a dynamic approach has been supported by other scholars such Wood (1998) Hilton (2001) and Pattman and Chege, (2003). The approach should be proactive and engage with life experiences, case studies, audio visual aids, role plays/drama, demonstrations, an approach Ugandan students described as being “practical”. This has implications for teacher training because many teachers may not find it easy to employ such dynamic and multiple strategies. Indeed teachers and parents did not feel confident about handling sexuality matters which shows the need for specialized training, training grounded in strong knowledge of gendered dynamics and realities, as being fundamental in handling the subject matter effectively. Teacher training in this rather sensitive area has been recommended by many scholars (Vertinky, 1995; Hilton, 2001; Buston et al, 2001; SIECUS, 1996). Following from the recognition of the classroom as a political space in terms of gender dynamics, consideration of having both mixed and single sex classes would be valuable. Peer education is also another valuable strategy given that students find it easier to discuss sexuality issues with friends/peers. It is clear that sexuality is a complex area that seems to demand different styles of teaching than the conventional teaching methods used in other lessons hence needs for specialized training.

The study also suggests the need to focus on the broad knowledge about human sexuality and family living (SIECUS, 1996) to provide more relevant and applicable sexuality education to the young people. This requires a consideration of the gendered knowledge priorities and interests. The study reveals diverse and gendered constructions within the meaning of sexuality education, and points to the fact that sexuality education should encompass gender analysis within human development issues, relationships, personal skills, sexual behaviour, sexual health, and discussion of socio-cultural issues.

Overall, students provided a more comprehensive outline of what topics are essential to good sexuality education than parents and teachers. However, while none of the students and parents indicated interests in the so called 'controversial' issues such as sexual orientation, masturbation, sexual pleasure and abortion, teachers identified these as important 'vices' to be covered. This illustrates the homophobic attitude that pervades the Ugandan society and because such practices are illegal, not openly discussed, students may be reluctant to engage in such discourse and / or do not want to show interest. However, teenagers are always curious about such issues as reflected in chapter five regarding discourses on pulling of labia minora, sexual pleasure and abortion, which appeared to be central to their sexual lives. Such homophobic attitudes are significant in influencing the curriculum implementation. However, although SIECUS (1996) suggests consideration of religious
and other cultural perspectives, respect and acceptance of diverse values and beliefs about sexuality in the community, they also advise respect for people with 'different' sexual values. This poses a big challenge for Ugandan sexuality curriculum designers and implementers given the inherent conservative and homophobic stance about sexuality in the country.

The study indicates that within educational environments, there is acknowledgement of the importance of giving equal attention to both boys and girls sexuality although in practice parents and teachers place greater emphasis on girls’ sexuality. The need to target boys and girls arose out of the realization that both children are vulnerable to sexuality related problems and experience anxiety provoking body changes. To some extent, parents and teachers acknowledged that boys’ sexuality affects girls’ sexuality and vice versa and thus focus on one gender reinforces the inequalities. The study thus suggests that for gender equality and equity to be attained, the focus on the gendered constructions of boys and girls sexuality is fundamental particularly in addressing issues of power relations. According to Wolpe et al, (1997), it is essential that boys and girls understand the underlying meanings and the social constructions that characterize the normative notions of masculinity and femininity. With such an understanding, students’ sexuality problems would be resolved. Acknowledgement of the students gendered needs/concerns is therefore essential to provide relevant information.

Although it is suggested that sexuality be covered as an independent subject to allow comprehensive coverage of issues, I argue for a more holistic approach that involves mainstreaming of gender and sexuality issues in the overall curriculum. With such an approach sexuality issues could be addressed in all the subjects as deemed appropriate. Elia (2000) argues that sexuality is a ‘broad interdisciplinary enterprise’ that once lodged in any particular discipline limits the scope of inquiry and confines it to the disciplinary boundaries. She thus recommends integration of sexuality issues in the overall school curriculum.

7.8 Conclusion
While the HIV and AIDS education and school health policies advocate for the integration of sexuality education at all levels of schooling (MOES, 2003; MOH and MOES, 2003), they do not provide comprehensive coverage of the issues nor address the teaching strategies/the approach. The study reveals that the current sexuality education being conducted in schools is deficient in terms of content and approach and is based on gender biased materials (textbooks). Information is not only inadequate, exam oriented, prescriptive and restrictive but also feminized, stereotyped, generally divorced from students’ personal experiences, and sometimes contradictory. Control of knowledge
delivered through a gender biased curriculum serves to reinforce the gender stereotypes and the dominant forms of sexuality. Since students and parents regard school as a reliable source of sexuality information, the parameters of classroom discussion should be broadened to debunk myths and stereotypes about these topics (Trudell, 1993) and to complement, perhaps challenge, and augment the sexuality education received from parents. While the formal curriculum remains boundaried within unbalanced gendered sexuality discourse, the actual encounter with the curriculum can move beyond a narrow planning process into a dynamism in which teachers, students actively participate either to challenge or to reinforce the status quo. The cultural meanings of sexuality encoded in the curricular content and form are not neutral but, as articulated through the dynamism of classroom processes, embody the interests of certain groups – this entails that change in the interests of curriculum delivery is possible.

The study provides a new sense of direction for developing a comprehensive approach to sexuality education, an alternative to the current approach in school. Schools need to review the dominant reductionist type of education that primarily focuses on reproduction and develop a new framework that encapsulates all aspects of sexuality including emotional, sexual diversity, gender and power relations, the construction of gendered sexual experiences in schooling processes themselves, and student gendered sexual cultures. Putting these issues on the agenda and discussing the implications for implementation of new sexuality education models offers a big challenge to educational policy and curriculum developers and implementers in Uganda where conservative and homophobic beliefs are still pervasive. Nevertheless, this research indicates that there is need to re-examine the curriculum learning resources that are currently in use in Ugandan schools. Sexuality education should be designed around girls and boys needs, integrate the consideration of the gender dynamics through out the system, curriculum design, teacher training, textbook design and the overall school environment if sustainable and far reaching impact is to be realised.

Schools need to develop sexuality education in a framework that emphasizes students lived experiences and to be cognizant of the gender discourses and practices involved. Sexuality education lessons that are not cognizant of such discourses play a potent part in reinforcing and legitimating female subordination. Gender is very significant in influencing students' sexuality experiences as they negotiate their way through the school space both in and outside the classroom. The curriculum that takes gender into account would be able to address emotional, physical and social differences between boys and girls to ensure respectful and responsible living. Recognizing the weight that sex stereotyped materials have on students, it is important that sexuality education materials reflect commitment to gender equality. I believe the whole issue of gender inequality in our society revolves
around issues of gender and sexuality and therefore gender focused sexuality education could be an important intervention towards the attainment of gender equity and equality.

Public support and government commitment to sexuality education as well as increasing gender activism (internationally and nationally) present opportunities for gendered teaching of sexuality issues. The advent of HIV and AIDS as social, medical and gendered phenomena has necessitated more explicit and gendered discourse about sexuality. Hence there is need for comprehensive gendered sexuality education which involves consistent, open and frank discussions about the gendered construction of sexuality and encourages development of personal independence and responsibility. This will help to create an educational atmosphere in which boys and girls are able to recognize with confidence their developing sexuality and challenge the inequitable gender relations.

As seen in Chapter One, sexuality is implicated as one of the major factors responsible for the differential participation of boys and girls in schooling and the persistent gender inequalities in education of most SSA countries and Uganda in particular. It is clear that in spite of the multiple interventions to address the inequalities, gender disparities remain apparent in most countries and such disparities continue to entail increased vulnerability to sexual abuse, HIV transmission, unwanted pregnancy, sexual exploitation, and – overall – sexual silence, for those gendered as girls and women. Researchers attribute sexuality problems to lack of appropriate sexuality information and life skills for the adolescent boys and girls to address the challenges of their sexuality (Olsen, et al, 1992; Njau and Wamahiu, 1994; Wolpe et al, 1997; Kajawu, 2001). Although sexuality education in schools has been identified as a valuable site of intervention to address the gender inequalities and inequities in all spheres of life and education in particular (Larkin, 1994; Wolpe et al, 1997, Clarke, 1997; Stromquist, 1998), there has been an explicit lack of connection between gender, sexuality and education. Consequently, despite the efforts to give sexuality information to students, sexuality problems remain a major challenge and obstacles to the attainment of gender equality and equity in society.

Studying the discourse of gender dynamics in sexuality education in secondary schools in Uganda has revealed the complex ways in which gender; sexuality and education are intimately linked. Sexuality as a marker of social identity is a source of discrimination and interacts with gender to influence men/boys and women/girls lives in different ways. My study illuminates the complex gendered sexual experiences of boys and girls that position boys and girls differently often causing gender inequalities in schooling. It is clear from my study that sexuality affects the overall experiences of schooling for girls differently from boys. Experiences including male domination, female
marginalization, sexual abuse and harassment, pregnancy, lack of self-esteem are well documented. Sexuality seems to have particular strong effects on educational success of females beyond simply attending school (Clarke, 1997).

The study uncovers the potential power that resides in focusing on gender and sexuality through comprehensive sexuality education as a strategy for addressing factors that influence the educational experiences of girls and eliminating gender inequalities in education. Such an approach would build students’ self-esteem and confidence and other life skills that enable them to take control of their own bodies, resist abuse and exploitation as well as ability to manage their sexuality. With self-esteem and confidence, issues such as menstruation which are reportedly major concerns for girls would cease to be problems. The importance of a girls’ self confidence is crucial in her ability to insist on safer sex practices (Clarke, 1997). As girls in my study noted “girls are exploited because of ignorance”, education attentive to gender dynamics seems to be helpful in addressing such sexuality concerns. Through gendered sexuality education, all young people are helped to develop an understanding about relations of gender, power and non-violent forms of sexual behaviour and consequently ensure sustainable behavioural change.

While it is important to expand education access, what happens to girls after they get to school affects decisions to attend school and stay in school. Creation of an environment in which females are acknowledged as equals with males is essential. Lack of safety is one of the major barriers discouraging school participation for females in many SSA countries (Larkin, 1994; Wolpe et al, 1997; Lee and Lockheed 1998; Kwesiga, 2002; Colclough et al, 2003). Such a threat is minimized in schools by providing sexuality education where boys are taught about such values as respect for others and are encouraged to develop non-abusive, respectful and equal relationships. As argued by Clarke (1997) it is only when male and female students learn how to relate to each other as friends, team members, supporters and as equal negotiators, that we can have a generation of respectful men and women in society. This will help to challenge the power imbalance that exist between males and females as well as challenging the patriarchal ideologies that encourage males to use violence to express sexual domination over females (Larkin, 1994). While it is essential to develop and implement sexual harassment policies in education institutions as some researchers suggest (Larkin, 1994), such interventions need to be backed by a change in attitudes to effectively address the problem. Teaching students to understand and critique the narrow conceptualization of what it means to be male or female will help in broadening attitudes towards girls’ and boys’ sexuality, challenging those that perpetuate sexual harassment and those that remain silent about such abuse out of gendered fear.
Students' sexual experiences and attitudes revealed in this study suggest that programs that do not discuss gender power relations and exclusively emphasize abstinence and the dangers of premarital sex such as those commonly conducted in schools cannot adequately address students' realities. Students, especially girls constantly questioned the efficacy of the teacher strategy of surveillance and control which had no visible effect on male students' behaviours, nor indeed on the broader social norms in which sexual vulnerability for girls is a reality. Gendered sexuality education provides an ideal opportunity to dispel the myths, stereotypical images, rigid constructions about gendered sexual roles and deconstruct the negative attitudes of boys towards girls' sexuality. Students can be taught to become members of a society in which gender roles have changed and continuing to change in ways that demand equal and respectful relationship between men and women in all spheres of life. While schools cannot be charged with the sole responsibility of transforming patriarchal societies, they are in a position to tackle the power imbalances that maintain such systems (Larkin, 1994). Comprehensive sexuality education is a potential area for addressing sexuality issues that interfere with female participation in education and eventual attainment of gender equality and equity. Introducing sexuality education in schools without considering the gender implications, as is currently the case with most school sexuality education programmes, does not necessary ensure equitable participation as this research shows. It is therefore important to reanalyze the approaches to sexuality education and ensure that gender is fully integrated.

It seems clear that in order to respond effectively to the problems of gender inequality in education, an understanding of gender and sexuality must begin to occur at all levels of the discourse. Strategies must cover issues of access, inclusion (addressing gender bias in teaching and learning materials and the general school environment), climate (create safe and secure environment) and empowerment. This involves an understanding of the students gendered needs and concerns and working with teachers, parents and students to challenge the dominant heterosexual norms that are responsible for the persistent inequalities in society. The study reveals that gender dynamics in the classroom are not adhoc arrangements, but a result of a number of different forces including the ethos of the school as a whole and the values and practices of society experienced by students throughout their daily lives. Consequently, involvement of all community members including parents, teachers and policy makers is fundamental in ensuring effective sexuality education in schools.

7.8.1 Implications for further research
This research raises pertinent issues related to curriculum design and implementation but given the limited coverage, there is need for a larger study to come up with representative findings to form a strong base for advocacy for curricula reform. The study draws attention for further research into
peoples’ views about sexuality education in contemporary Uganda in order to develop appropriate programmes that respond to the needs and concerns of young people. There is need to explore ways through which the constraints and possibilities for the multiple pedagogies and a framework based on young peoples’ lived realities could be established in schools to meet their needs. There is little work in this area in Uganda and hence future research will make a significant contribution.

According to this study, intimate relationships between students ("friendships") emerged as recurrent theme particularly in the students’ narratives, suggesting that this is an important aspect of their sexuality. However, my study did not undertake a detailed analysis of these friendships and given the apparent adult policing and sexualising of such friendships revealed by the study, there is need for follow-up research.
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Annex I

Uganda's government initiatives for addressing gender disparities in education

i) Universal Primary Education (UPE)

In 1997, the government introduced UPE for four children per family, half of who are female (2) in situations where the family has boys and girls. This strategy is aimed at increasing access and making education equitable. Subsequently the government accorded all the children free primary education (2003) and an automatic promotion policy was introduced in order to avoid high repetition rates and wastage. UPE led to a double increase in enrolment for both boys and girls leading to a GER of over 100% and a reduction in the gender gap (absolute gender gap ranging from 12% to 4% existed between 1998 – 2003) (MOES statistical abstracts, 1998-2003). The MOES has also established a bursary scheme for two students (a girl and a boy) per district who excel in the PLE.

ii) Basic Education policy and costed framework for educationally disadvantaged children

This is a policy aimed at widening access to basic education in the EFA framework for the disadvantaged children between the age of 6 and 18 years who are experiencing barriers to learning and either directly or indirectly excluded from or denied the chance to optimally participate in the learning activities in both the formal and non formal school system (MOES, 2002). This policy reinforces UPE because it recognises the challenges faced by the vast majority of children and is aimed at ensuring equitable access to quality education for all children. It addresses the linkage between formal and non formal education and focuses on increasing community participation in the provision of basic education. It also focuses on elimination of disparities including gender, regional and social inequities within the education sector. This policy covers programs/projects such as COPE, ABEK, BEUPA and CHANCE. COPE, ABEK and BEUPA are supported under the Child Friendly Basic Education programme under the GOU/UNICEF country programme. The programme offers a 'rights based approach' whose overall goal is to ensure boys and girls in selected communities and districts are able to learn in a rights based, child friendly and gender sensitive environment in families, sites, centres and schools. Other components of the programme include children with special needs, early childhood care and development, life skills and school sanitation, water and hygiene.

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95 Disadvantaged children include children of are both physically and mentally challenged, orphans, children affected by HIV and AIDS, those who cannot attend school because of poverty, social conditions, geographical location, parental and health status.

96 An environment that promotes the rights of all children, offers effective teaching and learning, provides safety and protection of children and involves parents/communities.

269
Complementary Opportunities for Primary Education (COPE)

This programme started in 1995 aimed at improving the basic literacy situation in the country especially among girls and the disadvantaged children aged 8-16 years who either have dropped out of school or have never enrolled in school. It was developed in response to governments pledge to the world declaration on Education For All (Jomtien, 1990). According to MOES (not dated), it complements formal primary education by providing schooling opportunity to those children who have either never attended school or dropped out of school before acquiring reading, writing and numeracy skills. Some of the major strategies of the programme include community mobilization and sensitization, establishing learning centres in various places in the country, training of supervisors and instructors, development and production of teaching/instructional materials. It operates a flexible time table (3 hours per day as determined by the communities) in the given communities to give opportunities to children who are unable to attend school under the formal school system. The communities are engaged in the choice of teaching times, school year and the selection of instructors, while government, with the support of UNICEF provides the basic education inputs.

The programme targets both boys and girls but with a special emphasis on girls and female instructors (half of the instructors are female and married) (MOES, 1998). The programme offers a skills oriented curriculum and covers subjects including English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science and Health Education and mother tongue and classes are conducted in the mother tongue. According to the MOES (2003c), COPE is noted to have registered success because of the flexible and child centred approach and participatory involvement of communities. In the 187 COPE centres currently in place in 8 districts97, there are 8,047 children benefiting from the programme of which more than half (53%) are females. About 30% of the learners have been able to continue schooling through the formal channels. In addition, communities have been sensitized about the importance of education particularly girls education which has led to positive change in attitudes towards education.

Alternative Basic Education, Karamoja (ABEK)

ABEK programme was introduced in January 1998 to incorporate the needs of nomadic students in Karamoja region98 (north-eastern part of the country) into the education system because their pastoralist and semi-nomadic way of life could not fit into the general formal school system. Its main aim is to improve children’s access to schooling (basic education) especially girls (MOES, 1998b). The programme offers flexible study times to enable children perform their domestic chores and also provides life skills education supported by indigenous knowledge and community involvement and classes are conducted in

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97 Bushenyi, Kamuli, Masaka, Arua, Kisoro, Nebbi, Arua, Mubende, Sembabule, Kalangala and Mbarara districts
98 Moroto and Kojido districts
the homesteads. The curriculum involves learning English, mathematics, social studies, reading and writing. According to MOES (2003b), the programme is currently operating 187 centres with a total enrolment of 29,332 of which 61% are female. In addition, there is reported increased demand for expansion of the programme to other parishes in the region, which reflects a positive change in people’s attitude towards education and peoples’ acceptance of the programme. The adults also take keen interest in supervising the facilitators as well as what their children learn. However, the biggest challenge as reported by one of the officers in charge on the programme is financial sustainability particularly regarding payment of instructors who are currently being paid by the project/donor funds.

v) Basic Education for Urban Poor Areas (BEUPA)
BEUPA programme was established to offer basic education to the urban poor children. The programme complements UPE by offering a second chance to children and adolescents aged between 9-18 years in the urban areas to access basic education and priority is given to girls. It targets out of school young people who are either employed or unemployed and missed the chance of gaining access to education at the right age particularly those who dropped out before primary 5. Its overall goal is to improve the life perspectives of children and adolescents in the urban poor areas. The programme is currently operating 72 centres around Kampala City with student population of 5,601 of which more than half are males (55.9%). The curriculum includes the Luganda Language, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and English. BEUPA has a peer educator’s programme for its learners to sensitise each other on issues of sexuality (especially sexual growth and development) and HIV and AIDS. Community involvement in the process is emphasised to ensure ownership of the programme. However, a number of challenges have been reported including irregular attendance of learners, ensuring continuous community participation and government (Kampala City Council) support for sustenance of the project when the current German support expires.

vi) Promotion of girls' education programme (The Incentives Grant Scheme)
This programme was initiated in 1994 as a component of the primary education reform programme. It aims at increasing enrolment and persistence among girls in primary schooling. The scheme offers grants to schools that register successful attempts in encouraging girls’ enrolment, performance and persistence. In 1997, the programme was reviewed to focus more on persistence and performance through improving the learning environment in primary schools and it involves parents and communities in the efforts to improve girls’ education. It also encourages districts to support increased female participation in primary and secondary school education. The beneficiary districts must be among districts with the highest dropout rates and lowest enrolment rates for girls as well as districts registering poor performance of girls. It includes a component of community mobilisation and sensitisation of the
various stakeholders namely; district officials, co-ordinating centre tutors, Local council members, core PTCs administrators, head teachers and community leaders. About 480 schools in 15 districts\(^99\) have so far benefited from the scheme.

vii) **The Girls’ Education Movement (GEM)**

Girls’ Education Movement is an Africa-wide popular movement launched on the 18\(^{th}\) of August 2001 in Uganda and later by the United Nations General Assembly on the 8\(^{th}\) May 2003 (MOES, 2003b). It aims at promoting quality education for girls and their rights in education as well as developing their leadership and technical skills. In Uganda, movement is spearheaded by the Ministry of Education and Sports in collaboration with FAWE (U) where the secretariat is housed. GEM reinforces the other female education schemes such as the National Strategy for Girls’ Education in Uganda using Girls Education Networks as the main strategy. The target group of this programme includes Senior Women Teachers, head teachers and their deputies and students. The ultimate goal is to improve girls’ access, retention and achievement in education and ensuring active community support for the girls’ education. This is a recent initiative and its impact has not yet been established.

viii) **In-Service Secondary Teacher Education Project (INSSTEP)**

The main objective of this project is to raise the quality of teaching in Mathematics, Science and English and to motivate teachers to use gender sensitive teaching methodologies. Through the nation-wide gender awareness, this projects aims at eliminating gender bias in teacher resource centres and in-service secondary teacher education [INSET] activities. It is noted (MOES, 2003b) that INSSTEP focuses on the constraints faced by female teachers and students in schooling and the curriculum in order to devise adequate strategies that can optimise gender sensitive teaching and promote equal access to education. INSSTEP has established 27 Teacher Resource Centres (with various training programmes) in 36 districts. However, due to a decline in donor support, the programme has not progressed well (Kwesiga, 2003).

ix) **Affirmative Action initiatives to enhance females’ access to post primary and higher education**

Affirmative action initiatives mainly involve lowering of admission points for girls joining secondary education and the 1.5 points scheme in public tertiary institutions. The MOES has introduced a policy of ensuring that at least a third of the students admitted in government secondary schools are

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girls with a target of gradually increasing the quota to 50% (MOES, 2003c). To achieve this target, girls are admitted to secondary schools with lower PLE scores than boys.

The government also introduced the 1.5 Points Scheme in public universities and other tertiary institutions. This scheme was initially established in 1989/90 academic year as a strategy for increasing female access to higher education in the various education programmes at Makerere University. The scheme was later extended to other public universities and tertiary institutions. Under this scheme, 1.5 points are added to the score of every qualified female student/applicant for admission to increase their chances of admission. The rationale for the scheme was based on the fact that female participation in higher education was considerably low compared to the males. However, the Scheme was received with a lot of protest, ridicule, and many condescending remarks and labelling of the beneficiaries of the programme as inferior and incapable.

These affirmative action initiatives have led to improvements in access although gender disparities still exist. For instance, since the 1.5 scheme was introduced, there has been increased enrolment of female students to higher institutions of learning especially at Makerere University where the scheme initially started and female enrolment has increased from 20–25% before the scheme was introduced to about 41.9% in 2002/2003 academic year (MOES, 2004). However, science courses such as mechanical engineering, physical sciences, and mathematics have not improved significantly. For instance in 2000 only 12% of the total female students were taking science courses. Given this challenge, the scheme needs to be reviewed to consider the issue of low female participation in certain disciplines especially the science and mathematics based ones.

x) Female Scholarship Initiative (FSI) at Makerere University

In the 2001/2002 academic year, Makerere University with the support of the Carnegie Corporation of New York established a scholarship scheme for female undergraduate students known as the Female Scholarship Initiative [FSI] as another way of increasing female participation in higher education especially for children from poor and disadvantaged families and regions. The scheme targets fresh A' level graduate female students who are not funded by government particularly those from financially disadvantaged backgrounds and 70% of the funds are awarded to females admitted for science disciplines. The selection criteria is based on the programme of study, parents' status (orphans), district of origin (disadvantage districts especially those from war torn areas), status of the A' level school attended, sources of fees at secondary level and family’s socio-economic status. The initiative is in the second year of implementation and has so far benefited 240 female students.
xi) **Provision of gender sensitive curricular and textbooks**

The MOES has set up a textbook vetting committee which ensures that gender sensitivity and balance are taken account of before recommending textbooks for use in schools. This initiative aims at eliminating all gender stereotypes from the school curricular. The primary school curriculum has been revised to ensure that the instructional materials and methodologies are gender sensitive. However, despite the efforts, gender sensitivity is still missing in the curriculum review and in the production education materials. A recent review and evaluation of sample of 4 textbooks (primary and secondary) for gender sensitivity by Kwesiga (2003) clearly reveals that the materials are written in a gender neutral form but using gender biased language and illustrations.

xii) **Gender sensitisation**

Under the Teacher Development and Management System [TDMS] of MOES, there has been an ongoing country-wide capacity building programme for teachers to mobilise and sensitise communities including parents and teachers about the importance of girls’ education.

xiii) **The National Strategy for Girls’ Education (NSGE)**

The National Strategy for Girls Education in Uganda was developed in 1999 out government’s realization of the need for well coordinated efforts of all the key players in the field of promoting female education. The strategy aims at addressing the gender inequalities inherent in Uganda’s education system. The National Strategy for Girls’ Education provides an operational framework for co-ordination of the government’s and its partners’ roles and activities in educating the girl child. It outlines the key barriers to equitable female participation in education in Uganda and lays out a plan of action for addressing these constraints. The strategies underlined in the strategy are expected to be integrated in the overall education policy framework - Education Strategic Investment Plan (ESIP).
### Annex 2

**List of sex specific and gender specific topics and illustrations covered in the individual textbooks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textbook</th>
<th>Sex specific Topics</th>
<th>Gender specific topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS100</td>
<td>Male reproductive organs</td>
<td>Female reproductive organs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sperm production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hormones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC101</td>
<td>Male reproductive organs</td>
<td>Female reproductive organs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sperm production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hormones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD102</td>
<td>Male reproductive organs</td>
<td>Female reproductive organs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sperm production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hormones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB103</td>
<td>Male reproductive organs</td>
<td>Female reproductive organs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sperm production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hormones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The placenta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: The selected Biology textbooks*

### Percentage number of male, female and generic sexuality illustrations in each of the selected four biology textbooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textbook</th>
<th>% Males</th>
<th>% Females</th>
<th>%Generic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SS104</td>
<td>29.4 (10)</td>
<td>67.6 (23)</td>
<td>3.0 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC105</td>
<td>15.4 (2)</td>
<td>84.6 (11)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD106</td>
<td>31.3 (10)</td>
<td>65.6 (21)</td>
<td>3.1 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB107</td>
<td>35.1 (13)</td>
<td>64.9 (24)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30.2 (35)</td>
<td>68.1 (79)</td>
<td>1.7 (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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100 Soper and Smith  
101 Stone and Cozens  
102 Mackean  
103 Beckett  
104 Soper and Smith  
105 Stone and Cozens  
106 Mackean  
107 Beckett
Source: In all the four selected textbooks
Figures in brackets are the actual numbers of illustrations in the text.

Religious Education
List of sex specific and gender specific topics covered in the individual CRE textbooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textbook</th>
<th>Sex specific Topics</th>
<th>Gender specific topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian Living Today Book 2</td>
<td>Stages of human sexual development (age 2 to 11 years)</td>
<td>Value of person irrespective of sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Puberty and adolescence/growing up</td>
<td>Family life and parenting/child care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The search for identity/gender identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gender roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gender discrimination and equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>relationships and interaction between boys and girls,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>dating,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>choosing partners,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>premarital sex,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bride wealth (bride price),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sex education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>divorce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>abortion and miscarriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>expected behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>prostitution and concubine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>masturbation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>homosexuality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>STDs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Birth control or planned parenthood</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Chapman (1975) Christian Living Today Book Two
Percentage number of male, female and generic sexuality illustrations in each of the selected CRE textbooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex of the figures</th>
<th>% Number of figures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>44.8 (47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>51.4 (54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generic</td>
<td>3.8 (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Figures in brackets are the actual numbers of illustrations in the text.
Source: Christian Living Today Book Two
Islamic religious education

List of sex specific and gender specific topics covered in the individual IRE textbooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textbook</th>
<th>Sex specific Topics</th>
<th>Gender specific topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwesigye 2001</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwesigye 1998</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total        | 0                   | 11                                         |

Source: IRE selected text books
Annex 3

IN-DEPTH/FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

1. Background information
Name of school
Sex
Number

Name  Age  religion  occupation of parents  Father  Mother

2. Content and format of information presented in class
What have you learnt from the teacher's class? Biology, CRE, IRE, Social Etiquette, Moral Education
How useful is the information obtained from the teachers lessons?
What are the other sources of sexuality information?
Which one do you find most useful and why? Probe for peers, siblings etc
Which one has provided the most information on matters relating to sexuality?
How do you compare information obtained from class to that obtained from other sources? (Probe the
degree to which classroom information reinforces or contradicts with other sources of information) note the similarities and
differences between information presented in and outside the classroom.
What is your opinion on the time spent on each topic?
What is your opinion on the method or form of teachers' presentation of the material?
What is your view about teaching sex related issues in single sex classes (boys and girls alone)
Would you have any preference for a male or female teacher in a sexuality education class? Give
reasons for your answer.
What are your views about the educational materials? Probe for adequacy, relevance, clarity
Classroom dynamics and nature of gender relations
What is your opinion about boys and girls participation in sexuality education classes?
Which of the students get asked questions most often by the teacher? Probe for gender differences.
Which of the students join discussions or make comments most often? Probe for gender differences.

3. Gender dynamics in the school day to day activities
What activities do boys and girls engage in and at what level/the different roles?
What activities do most male teachers engage in? What activities do most female teachers engage in?
who takes the leadership roles (males or females), why?
How do you interact with boys/girls in these activities? How do the opposite sex behave towards
each during the school activities?

4. Sexual issues in schools
What sexual issues arise for boys and girls in your school? Probe for sexual abuse/harassment,
bisexuality, sugar mam...
jokes related to ones sex, nicknaming, obscene comments on personality, body image, clothing, sexual innuendoes (implication, intimidation etc), rape, reference to menstrual period, whistles directed to each other etc
How do you feel about it?
Does it affect you performance, freedom of association?
Do have any problems with boys/girls accessing your dormitories) – only for mixed schools)
Are there cases of teachers (male /female) harassing students – how? And under what circumstances, teachers sending students to their houses (probe for more information)
How does the school deal with such issues?

5. Family gender influences that shape boys and girls sexuality
When did you first learn about sex? From whom or what have you learned the most about sex?
How useful do you find your parents in helping you cope with sexual issues? Probe for the sexual messages given?
How do you find discussing sexual issues with your parents, teachers, friends etc?
How do you compare information from parents to that obtained from class? Which one has been most helpful and how?
How do parents influence your decisions about sexuality?

6. Relevance of the sexuality education to students lived experiences
As a boy/girl, do you think you should engage in relationships? Probe if in any relationship?
Do you think girls and boys are engaging in sex or getting into relationships? Probe for the type of relationships.
What factors affect the way you have or make decisions about your sexuality? Rate them from most to the least important?
What information do you consider to be essential? Is this fully covered in the class?

7. Perceptions of teaching sexuality
What is your opinion about teaching sexuality in school? probe for Topics, method of teaching, and appropriate age
Why is sexuality often a difficult topic for people to talk about openly about? Is it important to talk openly about it? What would make it easier to talk about sexuality?
At what age and in what social context do you think sexuality education should begin?
Which people in your life can you talk about sexuality and other sensitive issues?

8. School culture
What is the dressing code in the school?
Any complaints about the way people dress up (teachers, students – male female)
Is there any use of pornographic materials in the school – which sex owns it/owned it
How you feel about it?
Did the school authority know about it? What was the reaction?

Any questions, comments, suggestions and recommendations! 

279
Annex 4

TEACHERS IN-DEPTH/FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Background information
   Name of school
   Sex
   Number
   Name of Respondent(s)

2. Teachers perceptions about students' sexuality
   What are your views boy/girl relationships, sexual activity, gender relations in these discourses?

3. The Role of the Teacher/SWT/guidance and counsellor
   What is your role in helping these girls and boys through this stage of adolescence? (Teachers’ support to students (boys and girls) regarding their sexuality?)
   What kind of assistance do most boys and girls seek?
   Are teachers adequately prepared to help students?
   How are sexuality issues important in the participation of boys and girls in secondary education?

4. Teaching of sexual development in schools (Content and format)
   Would you say that your school teaches sexuality issues to students?
   What are some of the broad issues addressed for girls and boys and in what subjects are they covered?
   Factors that influence content and method selection – for the topics taught
   How do you find talking/discussions/teaching about sexuality related issues
   How does the curriculum respond to student lived experiences? (Boys/girls)
   What are your views about student reactions to the material presented?(boys/girls)
   How do students participate and interact in sexuality education lessons – probe for gender differences (for teachers who teach these sexuality lessons)
   Other meetings apart from the official curriculum – where they get sexual knowledge, probe for differences for girls and boys

5. Gender dynamics in the school day to day activities
   What are some of the activities boys and girls engage in at school and the role of each in these activities – nature of interactions and gender power relations
   What sexual issues arise for students – boys/girls?
   Strategies employed by the school to deal with these issues
   Does the school have a policy of pregnancy related issues?

6. Gender influences at home that shape boys and girls sexuality
   What are your opinions about family’s influence on girls and boys sexual behaviours? (sexuality)

7. Perceptions of teaching sexuality
   What is your view about teaching sexuality in schools? Is the one currently given sufficient?
   What are some of the topics you suggest that should be covered, method and appropriate age to give this education?
   Do you think girls and boys need different information?
   What are your views about teaching sexuality in either single sex or mixed sex classes?
   What is you view about the sex of the teacher

280
Annex 5

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE PARENTS

2. Background information
Name of school.
Sex
Number
Name
Religion
occupation of parents

2. Parents' conceptualisation of sexuality
What changes do you expect to see or have seen in your children resulting from sexual development?
- What are your views, perceptions of girls' and boys' sexuality (expectations, attitudes and the roles)

3. Sexuality education at home
Do you talk to your children about the sexual development? *probe for information given to boys and girls*
How do you approach the topic and when?
How do the children respond to you messages? – *probe for any gender differences*
What do you think about giving sexual knowledge to the young boys and girl at home?
Who should do this? Mother or father or uncle and aunt?
Apart from teaching them, what other support do you give to your children to grow into healthy sexual beings (girls/boys) – how do you help your children to cope with the changes in their bodies (girls/boys)

4. Perceptions of teaching sexuality issues at school
Do you think schools handle issues of children sexual development adequately? (Boys and girls)
What do you think about the content of sexuality education
What is your view about the way or approach?
What specific information do you think should be taught at to the young boys and girls?
What some of the challenges faced in giving this information to children
What are some of the opportunities?

5. General comments, suggestions and recommendations
What recommendations would you make regarding how the problems associated boy/girl sexual development among students should be handled in schools and at home?
Annex 6

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

IDENTIFICATION

DISTRICT:
LOCATION:
SCHOOL NAME:
Number of students present in class: Boys --------- Girls ---------

Subject:

Date of observation:

Time of observation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBSERVATION ITEMS</th>
<th>REMARKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CURRICULUM CONTENT</td>
<td>How is gender covered in the curriculum?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topics covered (biologic function and mutual interest topics)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORMAT</td>
<td>How does the method cater for the needs of both boys and girls? Note sexism if any?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture method, discussion (group or class), question answer etc. language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact or detail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mention of current event for illustration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using abstract terminology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language used</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDENT RESPONSE TO THE INFORMATION PRESENTED IN CLASS.</td>
<td>Note gender differences in responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance – expressions of agreement (verbal and non verbal)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguous acquiescence – silence or neutral conformity to classroom procedures and information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contestation – attempts to counteract or oppose or control including such behaviours such as writing notes, tapping pencils, being late, using humour, talking back.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejection – direct verbal or non verbal disagreement with teacher presented information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom interaction &amp; nature of gender relations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students give comments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demand for help or attention- student ask questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher offers help</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher ask questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher reacts negatively (criticize) or positively (praise)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School activities
The system of social relations – how boys treat girls and how girls respond to boys in the playground and in the classroom

282
Annex 7

Permission form

I ___________________________ (participant’s full names) give permission to Florence Kyoheirwe Muhanguzi to interview me for her research project on “Exploring Gender Dynamics in Sexuality Education in Uganda’s Secondary Schools” and to quote what we shall discuss when she is writing about her research or when she is talking about her research.

I ___________________________ (participant’s full names) do/do not (cross out whichever is not applicable) give Florence Kyoheirwe Muhanguzi permission to use my real names when she quotes what I have said in the interview in her research work.

Date: ____________________________

Signature: ____________________________