

# SEXUAL CULTURES AMONGST YOUNG INDIANS IN CHATSWORTH

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## **ABSTRACT**

In South Africa, HIV and AIDS is a crisis particularly for young women between the ages of 15-24. HIV and AIDS is gendered disease and its spread is heterosexual. The effects of the disease have led to an increasing examination of what sexual and gendered identities mean for young people. Using individual and focus-group interviews, this study explores young people's sexual cultures amidst the backdrop of HIV and AIDS. It focuses on the ways in which young Indian men and women (aged 16-17) in a low to middle income context in Chatsworth, Durban, construct heterosexual relationships. The study explores how this selected group of learners navigate themselves as sexual subjects in the context of sexual passions and sexual risk. The study focuses on relationship cultures, sexual risk and the ways in which gender is constructed in heterosexual relationships. Currently we know very little of young people's heterosexual relationships and in particular, we know very little of young Indian sexualities. In the context of sexual risk taking and broader concerns about sexual health, young people's perceptions about sex and sexuality are important. Insight into how the youth understand gender and sexuality is necessary for addressing educational strategies in sexuality education, Life Orientation and HIV/AIDS education in South Africa.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

### **CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

1. 1. Introduction	1
1.2. An overview of sexual risk	5
1.3. A brief Social History of Chatsworth	8
1.4. The context of the study	10
1.5. The research site	11
1.6. The management and teaching staff	11
1.7. The learners	12
1.8. The aim of the investigation	13
1.9. Objectives of the study	13
1.10. Key research questions	13
1.11. Conclusion	14

### **CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

2.1. Introduction	15
2.2. An overview of the development of sexualities	16
2.3. Theoretical and conceptual frameworks	18
2.4. The relationship between gender and sexual identities	20
2.5. Heterosexual identities	22
2.6. The influence of social and cultural practices on sexual identities	24
2.7. Power relations and sexual risk taking	28
2.8. Young people as sexual subjects	29
2.9. Conclusion	31

### **CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

3.1. Introduction	32
3.2. Qualitative methodology	33
3.3. Individual and focus group interviews	35
3.4. Locating the research: the interpretive paradigm	37
3.5. The research process	38
3.5.1. The research site	38
3.5.2. Selection of the participants	39

3.5.3. The data collection process	40
3.5.3.1. The interview process	42
3.5.4. Data analysis	43
3.5.5. Validity	44
3.5.6. Reliability	45
3.5.7. Trustworthiness	45
3.5.8. Ethical considerations	46
3.5.9. Limitations	48
3.6. Conclusion	48

## **CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

4.1. Introduction	49
4.2. Sexual debut at 16...	50
4.3. Parental regulation of sexuality	57
4.4. On love and trust...	64
4.5. Pregnancy, not HIV/AIDS, is a greater risk	70
4.6. The impact of race, class and gender on relationships amongst young Indian people	75
4.7. Conclusion	85

## **CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION**

5.1. An overview of the study	86
5.2. Synthesis of the argument	88
5.3. Implications of the study	88
5.3.1. Developing sexualities: a contradictory process	91
5.3.2. Do as I say, not as I do...	91
5.3.3. What can schools do?	93
5.4. Limitations of the study	94
5.5. Conclusion	94

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Turn-it-in Certificate

Appendix B: Letter of consent to the Principal

Appendix C: Letter of consent to parents

Appendix D: Letter of consent to students

Appendix E: Request for Departmental permission to conduct research

Appendix F: Request for District office permission and granting of permission

Appendix G: Permission from the Department of Education

Appendix H: Map of research area

Appendix I: Individual interview schedule

Appendix J: Focus group schedule

Appendix K: Ethical clearance

## **REFERENCES**

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### 1. 1. Introduction

In the context of sexual risk taking and broader concerns about sexual health, young people's perceptions about sex and sexuality are important. Insight into how young people understand gender and sexuality is necessary for "successful educational strategies in the protection against HIV/AIDS in South Africa" (Bhana & Pattman, 2009, p.68). This study explores heterosexual relationships amongst young South African Indians in Chatsworth, aged 16 to 17. It focuses on how boys and girls construct boyfriends and girlfriends, and provides rich information on how young South African Indians forge sexual cultures and relationships. Understanding the ways in which young people in varied social contexts give meaning to sexuality and gender are key to developing appropriate forms of educational interventions designed to address sexuality, HIV/ AIDS education and gender equality. In the South African context, young people's sexuality is under the spotlight particularly in terms of risk of unwanted pregnancy, vulnerability to sexual violence and rape, and HIV and AIDS. South Africa is a country with diverse race groups, however, the statistics that are available on HIV/AIDS prevalence seem to be far more and in greater depth for black African people than for other race groups. In 2002, a national household survey on HIV prevalence revealed that the rate for young black people (aged 15-24) was 10.2%. The prevalence rate for coloured youth was 6.4%; Indian youth 0.3% and for whites aged 15-49, 6.2% (Peltzer & Promtussananon, 2005, p.1). In this thesis, the words "youth" and "young people" are used interchangeably.

The important factor in addressing young people's sexuality is firstly to admit that young people do have sex, and if they are not, then at the least that they do talk about sex, express desires, are excited about sexual matters and have agency. According to Boler and Archer (2005, p.38), society prefers to believe that young people do not have sex and ought not to. For me, this type of denial exacerbates the problem and can possibly explain why AIDS incidence is not decreasing as expected. The AIDS pandemic, however, has left society with no choice but to address the issue. People are aware of this sexually transmitted disease even if they are not willing to talk about it openly.

In this study, four boys and four girls were interviewed individually and in a focus group. The interpretivist approach was to understand the individual experience of gendered identities by each student. The development of identities is influenced by personal experiences and social contexts. By studying the participants in a certain area in Chatsworth, there developed an understanding with regard to how their social context and experiences within that context shaped their sexual identities. The analysis showed that the participants while each person's development occurs under different circumstances, there are recurring themes and similarities. Eight participants is not fully representative of all 16-17 year olds in Chatsworth, but does enlighten us with regard to trends in the development of their identities especially with regard to AIDS, pregnancy and their sexual safety.

In South Africa, during President Thabo Mbeki's presidency, there was much controversy about the cause of HIV/AIDS. The president himself was not prepared to accept that there was a direct link between HIV and AIDS – primarily a sexually transmitted disease, although there are secondary methods for the spread of the disease. According to Mbeki, the AIDS problem was a poverty-related issue. The consequence of this denial was that by 2007, South Africa had the largest number of infected people in the world. Even worse was the fact that South Africa was considered to be a middle income country with a very good rate of literacy and therefore in a position to deal very capably with the epidemic (Boler and Archer, 2005, p. 57). Such a view from the highest level of government was both misleading and dangerous for the public in terms of sexual risk taking, and undermined AIDS awareness programmes. It could possibly be the reason why our AIDS incidence reached such high figures.

Boler and Archer (2005, p. 113) claim that life-skills programmes will not be able to achieve the desired results because there is still a reluctance to discuss sex even though most people contract AIDS through sex. According to Weeks (2003, p.1), sexuality presents itself in many different ways however it remains an individual experience for each person. It can be a source of love and affection for one person but a source of fear and disgust for another. Sexuality is subject to cultural influence and also a cause of social and political divisions (Weeks, 2003, p.2). It has led to conflict between traditionalists whose values are based on religion and morality and those who challenge orthodox views; between those who believe sexuality is a male domain and feminists who challenge this belief.

Schooling constantly engages with issues of a sexual nature, however, the formal culture and official curriculum of the school denies or evades this informal culture (Epstein and Johnson, 1998). Students joke about sex openly, make suggestive comments, and attach double meaning to subject matter itself (Kehily, 2002, p.5). The school is also the place where masculinities and femininities are produced and through which heterosexuality is enacted. Kehily (2002) refers to the normative gender identity of heterosexuality in schools and shows how schools are active sites for the perpetuation of heterosexual identities. With regard to relationships, students concentrate on making themselves physically attractive, desirable and focusing on status. However, the expression of sexualities is more than that. It is also establishing oneself as a responsible sexual being.

According to Trimble (2009, p.58), one of the hidden goals of sex education is to encourage young people to be 'good' sexual citizens. The reason for this is that, like public citizenship, to be a sexual citizen is to be aware of accompanying rights, privileges and responsibilities (Bell & Binnie, 2000). The point is that irresponsible sexual behaviour entails socio-economic and political consequences. For example, the refusal to practise safe sex through the use of condoms and having multiple partners has contributed to the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS. Because AIDS is a terminal disease, households eventually experience the loss of breadwinners. In South Africa, due to the AIDS pandemic, many households are run by children. Economically, poverty creeps in. Socially, families begin to disintegrate. Although extended families attempt to take care of AIDS victims or orphans, the coping systems become unmanageable and eventually these systems collapse (Boler & Archer, 2005, p. 24).

In the light of this situation, there is growing work on the accounts and experiences of young people's sexual and gendered identities in the context of AIDS. "Students enter school as sexual and gendered subjects" (Mac an Ghail, 1994, p.156), influenced by their families, the labour market, peer cultures and the media, however, sex education has been minimal. The focal point of sexual matters was usually based on aspects of biology. Furthermore, information was of a heterosexual nature with reference to male power. In the 1990s, however, there developed a "growing complexity in the ways in which young women are represented and their lives understood by both themselves and others" (Aapola, Gonick & Harris, 2005, p.18). The idea of "girl power" could be the response to dominant male

hegemonies or patriarchy. From the 1960s (in the West), women have been urged to exercise control in relationships. “Girl power” needs to be viewed from the manner in which it is conceptualised by the public; how it is navigated by girls from different and class backgrounds and “the ways in which gender is being re-coded and re-worked along familiar binaries” (Aapola, Gonick & Harris, 2005, p.19). For example, there are questions about what may be construed as acceptable or not acceptable; safe or risky behaviour and other such binaries. This can help to determine how girls express themselves sexually and to what extent.

Despite the growth of work around young people, gender and sexuality, Bhana and Pattman (2009, p.68), state that “we know very little about how youth in specific social contexts give meaning to gender and sexuality”. In this study, the focus is on young Indians in a specific social context, that is, Chatsworth, Durban. The study intends to explore the way in which a selected group of Indian youth lock into heterosexual relationships and how they give meanings to their passions and desires, and navigate themselves as sexual subjects. This understanding is both relevant and important for the shaping of the Life Orientation and the sex education curriculum.

It is important to know what young people think, talk about and do regarding sexual matters. Moreover, the AIDS pandemic has left government (not only in South Africa) and society with no choice but to respond immediately and as effectively as possible to curb the spread of the disease. Also, most studies have revealed that the group most affected by AIDS is that within the age range of 15-24 (Hoffman et al, 1990; Morrell et al, 2001; UNAIDS, 2007).

This study is an attempt to discover what constitutes boy-girl relationships and sexual identities amongst South African Indians aged between 16 and 17 because very little is known with regard to how Indian youth construct meanings around sexuality and themselves as sexual subjects. According to Boler and Archer (2008, p.31), a study in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu revealed that 85% of the parents supported HIV education in the classroom, however, the remaining parents were vociferously opposed to it. Teachers were said to be ‘obscene... and teaching dirty things in class to students’. Irrespective of this, the researchers found that in India, parents seldom addressed their children about HIV and sex therefore sex education at school relieved them of this task. The reason for reference to the

study in India is that Indians in South Africa share a cultural heritage with India whilst it must be acknowledged South African Indians are also influenced by Western culture.

## **1.2. An overview of sexual risk**

“One in 10 under-15s ‘have had sex’ ” (Daily News, 14/05/2010, p.5)

In a report compiled by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) based on data collected in 2008 for a national HIV prevalence survey, it was revealed that in the 12-14 age group, 10.8% of boys and 14.5% of girls are sexually active. Over 25% of the girls have had intercourse with boys who are at least 5 or more years older than themselves. In other words, the likelihood of girls contracting the HIV virus at an early age is high and this places females in a vulnerable position. However, these young people claim that they practise safe sex, with 92.1% of the boys using condoms. In the light of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa and the government’s civic responsibility towards its citizens, these statistics are important for national health planning services. The reality of what is happening paints a frightening picture and makes it clear that preventative measures need to be put in place. More importantly, an understanding of how such a scenario came into existence is necessary. According to Holly’s (1989, p.33) study on sexuality, girls understood the danger of casual heterosexual sex, however, they believed they were at low risk with regard to AIDS. They were unable to realise that by condomising, they were safeguarding themselves not only against AIDS but against other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) as well.

Furthermore, while HIV/AIDS seems to be the most devastating consequence of sexual risk taking, there are other factors in relationships that place boys and girls at risk as well as other forms of STDs. Therefore, I believe it is important, and a priority, in the light of increasing levels of AIDS amongst young people between the ages of 15-24, to understand the development of sexual cultures not only of communities that are at high risk, but those that seem to be at a lower risk level to prevent an escalation of the problem with the intervention of relevant sex education programmes. According to Bhana & Pattman (2009, p. 68), insight into how the youth understand gender and sexuality is necessary for “successful educational strategies in the protection against HIV/AIDS in South Africa”.

I would like to know what constitutes boy-girl relationships amongst South African Indians aged between 16 and 17 because very little is known with regard to how Indian youth

construct meanings around their sexual relationships and development of sexual identities. This means that it is difficult to plan Life Orientation and sex education programmes for teenagers within specific social contexts.

The study also explores young people in “specific social contexts” (Parker, 1999, p. 334) which suggests that the development of sexual cultures occur in relation to social situations and settings. Social situations and settings influence the manner in which sexual relations are shaped. This in turn, influences the type of programmes made available to adolescents with regard to sex education programmes. Social situations and settings can refer to family and cultural background, as well as the influence of school and society.

According to Durban sexologist, Dr. Prithy Ramlachan, Indian males and females who are now in their 30s, 40s and 50s had started sexual relations much later in life because of the cultural value attached to remaining a virgin until marriage (Attwood, 2010, p.1) and this situation still exists in the Indian community more than others, although attitudes are changing. Young girls are becoming sexually active while at school, which means that there will be a certain number of brides who will not enter marriage as virgins. Dr. Ramlachan also mentions that it is considered to be a social disgrace to conceive children prior to marriage and that in the Indian community, should there be such a situation, it is very likely that the couple would marry. This situation differs from other communities. The newspaper article *Best sex at home - expert* also revealed Dr. Ramlachan’s concern about children in Durban, who as young as 13 are having oral sex. These children believe they are safe from STDs because oral sex is not “real sex”.

Such misconceptions about STDs indicate how much young people need to learn, not only about STDs, but also that HIV/AIDS is a formidable disease that permeates all population groups, but with rates that vary according to race, class and gender. I believe that it is as important to study the perceptions of sex, sexuality and sexual cultures amongst groups that have a low prevalence of the disease just as it is to study groups that have a high prevalence rate. Therefore irrespective of race, class and gender and in the light of changing behaviour, safe sex concerns and disease prevention, all young South African adults should be a cause for concern in current social thought and education policy planning (Campbell & McPhail, 2002).

It seems that the responsibility for safe sex has been steered in the direction of females. This means that women are disempowered through the denial of male responsibility. According to Aapola, Gonick and Harris (2005, p.150), this is a practice of double standard where young women become solely responsible for both theirs and their partner's sexual safety. This situation presents boys as lacking control over their sexual behaviour. It creates a situation whereby boys seem to have sexual freedom while girls have to bear the burden of responsible sexual behaviour in heterosexual relationships. It is estimated that while, in South Africa, one in five adults has contracted AIDS, with prevalence rates in cities generally higher than in the rural areas (Boler & Archer, 2008, p.7), girls are more susceptible to HIV infections. Almost 75% of young people in Africa who are infected with AIDS are female (Boler & Archer, 2008, p.31). By 2007, 61% of adults living with AIDS were women. Their study reports that the women knew less than men about the transmission of the disease and how to avoid infection. This was a clear indication of gender inequity and it was hoped that education would bring about awareness.

There is always contention around how culture negotiates itself in the construction of sexual discourse (Bhattacharyya, 2002). Social settings and technological advancement play a role in influencing sex education. Bhattacharyya (2002, p. 125) refers to these influences as “an era of rapid change” which has destabilised interpersonal relationships. In the light of this statement, it is important to understand how the participants in my study experience their relationships according to aforementioned influences notwithstanding the notion that “the proper moral business of schooling is the containment of sexuality” (Bhattacharyya, 2002, p. 127).

An important aim of the study is to inform the development of effective learning programmes on sexualities for young people. In order to alleviate and eventually eradicate the consequences of sexual risk taking, the state has to undertake the provision of relevant Life Orientation skills and sex education that will guide the youth towards healthy, safe and responsible lifestyles. With regard to this, the government created a national policy on HIV/AIDS. The following paragraph is an excerpt from Notice 1926 of 1999 of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (No. 27 of 1996):

“Because the Ministry of Education acknowledges the seriousness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and international and local evidence suggests that there is a great deal that can be done to influence the course of the epidemic, the Ministry is committed to minimise the social, economic and developmental consequences of HIV/AIDS to the education system, all learners, students and educators, and to provide leadership to implement an HIV/AIDS policy. This policy seeks to contribute towards promoting effective prevention and care within the context of the public education system.”

Finally, the policy stated that many young people were sexually active and that each school should have a strategy to cope with HIV/AIDS. Although “sexuality education, morality and life skills education” were taught by teachers, the national policy advised parents “provide their children with healthy morals, sexuality education and guidance regarding sexual abstinence until marriage and faithfulness to their partners. Sexually active persons should be advised to practice [spelling as per policy] safe sex and to use condoms.” This policy was produced during the presidency of Thabo Mbeki. It is ironic because it was Mbeki’s attitude to AIDS that saw a significant increase in AIDS statistics at the time.

### **1.3. A brief social history of Chatsworth**

I was born and brought up in the suburb of Chatsworth. Chatsworth came into being in 1950 when the Group Areas Act was passed (Desai, 2002, p.15). It is now 2010 – with South Africa hosting the Soccer World Cup and Chatsworth in existence in its 50<sup>th</sup> year. It is home to 300 000 people – mostly Indians but with the demise of the Group Areas Act in 1990, and the introduction of low cost housing in Chatsworth, especially in Welbedacht, the path to a multiracial township was paved. In 1999, the late Professor Fathima Meer, prominent sociologist and anti-apartheid activist, arrived on a mission to Chatsworth to influence “Indian” voters not to vote for parties that were dominantly “white” (Desai, 2002, p.16). Here she found local politicians who had prospered financially; however, it was a different story with the poor flat dwellers who were simply not interested in Meer’s attempts to dissuade them from voting for white parties. According to Desai (2002, p.17), by 1999 unemployment levels amongst the flat dwellers stood at 70%; children of school going age were not at school because they could not afford school fees; there were many victims of diseases caused by poverty and a fortunate few families where all were receiving grants and pensions. Such were the living conditions as recently as 10 years ago.

Being a teacher in Chatsworth schools has made understanding the political and socio-economic change easier because teaching makes possible ongoing dialogue with students with regard to how the attitudes of the youth have changed over the years and why. Moreover, I believe that having lived in Chatsworth, been a seventeen year old in it and interacting with the community as a child, teenager, young adult and a mature adult places me in a reasonably informed position to be able to comment on how Chatsworth and its people have changed and continue to do so.

I recall my grandparents, parents and older relatives always bemoaning the fact that “these days’ teenagers do not listen and are too big for their boots!” Needless to say the democratic constitution post 1994 has enshrined children’s rights and children are now not afraid to be both seen and heard. In the “new” South Africa young people are an important focus of the government because they are its future citizens. All projects are undertaken in consultation with the youth and their opinions are not only heard, but given serious thought. According to Desai (2002), however, by 1999 the youth had shown a particular trend as to how they spent their time, especially those from poorer areas such as Bayview and Westcliff in Chatsworth. Poverty plays a major role in the way the youth think and behave.

Reasons for poverty include increases in rent and service charges, the reduction of social welfare benefits, and unemployment. The youth become despondent under such living conditions and seek solace elsewhere. “They have created a world where adults are absent” (Desai, 2002, p.59). They do not respect adults anymore or even treat older males with courtesy. This is because adults, especially men, have failed them. They are viewed as “drunks, fools, abusers, cheats. The police aren’t to be trusted, politicians sell out, teachers are in it ‘for the money’ and preachers care about the collection plate rather than the flock. And since most women are forced – or allow themselves – to be defined in relation to their men, there is a vague sense of disgust toward many ‘aunties’ particularly from young girls themselves” (Desai, 2002, p.59). It is against this type of background that the youth enter into relationships in this day and times in many areas of Chatsworth. There are also areas in Chatsworth that seem affluent where professional people live. However, Desai (2002, p.60) describes Chatsworth as mainly “poky; built on steep slopes” with very little gardening and living area. Such living conditions do not encourage healthy interaction. There are not

enough recreation spaces, which leave the youth with the feeling that there is nothing to look forward to.

As a result, youngsters roam around malls, gaming shops and clubs. One of Chatsworth's greatest tragedies occurred on the last day of the first term in the year 2000 – Friday, the 24<sup>th</sup> of March at the Throb nightclub. Many young people looking for a 'last day thrill' made their way to an over 18 nightclub where the release of teargas resulted in a stampede leaving 13 of them dead in its wake. The tragic incident highlighted the lack of social activities and recreation for the youth in Chatsworth. The city council responded by building the Chatsworth Youth Centre and various social activities were undertaken. I believe that the centre is not used to its maximum potential because many young people are not in a position to afford the taxi fare to get there even if activities are free. On the other hand, there are those students who do take advantage of the activities arranged to uplift themselves while a certain handful use these opportunities for other purposes. At a recent voluntary teaching stint for matriculants, I witnessed young girls using the winter classes as a platform for liaisons with their boyfriends and vice versa. Also, drug dependency amongst the youth is rife, making healthy, clean fun almost impossible. "Sugars" - a type of drug - seems to be annihilating young people in Chatsworth. It is extremely difficult to leave this drug. In addition to substance abuse, a senior management member at school was informed by a community elder about "HPs". It was then that the management member learned that "HP" was the 'abbreviation' for house parties! House parties are also a fad with scholars absconding class to indulge in alcohol, drugs and sex-related behaviour.

It is against this backdrop that the young people of Chatsworth negotiate their sexual selves and this study aims to explore how they do so, and why.

#### **1.4. The context of the study**

Fulham (pseudonym) secondary school is situated in a low to middle income area. The advent of democracy saw the school open its doors to all race groups in 1994. Students from a neighbouring black African township began to enrol and the school is now a public school open to anyone who resides in the area. The school is situated on the main road and students either walk or travel mostly by taxi to school. A lunch club is run at school by a couple of teachers and students. Teachers on the staff also contribute towards the lunch club. The

school experiences problems with the collection of school funds and various attempts are made towards encouraging parents to pay. The principal and members of staff together with the school governing body carry out various fundraising activities to facilitate various school projects. The school has also qualified for programmes run by private companies, e.g. computers and mathematics funding to enhance results amongst learners and AIDS awareness. Parents consider the school to be one of the better performing schools in Chatsworth and many are left disappointed due to late enrolments. Parents from outside the area also try to obtain place at the school. The school is well known in the education district for its high standards.

### **1.5. The research site**

Fulham Secondary is just over 40 years old. Over the years renovations and improvements have been made to the school buildings. These projects have been made possible by the Department of Education and the school's fundraising ventures. On stepping into the school, one immediately gets the impression of a school on the move. It is clear that work is happening. During the breaks, students congregate in the school grounds in groups. Boys play soccer and an assortment of other games. Security guards and teachers are on duty. The school has maintained a very good matric pass rate for many years – averaging at least 97% annually. Many students qualify for entrance to tertiary institutions. This is viewed as a significant achievement by the school. The school has produced students who have excelled academically at district level, as well as provincially and nationally. The school has also met with similar success in the sporting arena.

### **1.6. The management and teaching staff**

There are at least 40 members of staff including the governing body paid teachers. Governing body teachers are usually employed on a temporary basis. All the teachers are Indian except for one black teacher. The principal is assisted by two deputies. There are five Heads of Department. Despite the odd problem, every attempt is made by all personnel to run a disciplined school. Work is ongoing and teachers feel a sense of pride in belonging to a school that runs well. Teachers are meaningfully employed in various school clubs (with the students), committees for awards, fundraising, the selection of prefects, etc. as well as in projects instituted by private industries as part of their social responsibility initiatives.

### **1.7. The learners**

The roll of the school is 1232. There are 585 boys and 647 girls. The department of education requires statistics annually which must be presented as follows: the number of black Africans, Indians, Coloureds and other race groups at school. There are have 57 black African males, 74 black African females, 525 Indian males, 566 Indian females, 2 coloured boys, 5 coloured females, and 3 other pupils – 1 Zanzibari male and 2 Zanzibari females. (The Zanzibaris are descendants of slaves from the island of Zanzibar. The slaves were en route to Arab slave traders when they were intercepted by the British. About 500 slaves were brought to the Bluff in Durban in 1893 and remained there until 1961 when the Group Areas Act saw the community forcibly moved to Bayview in Chatsworth).

The students come from different socio-economic backgrounds ranging from low to middle income. Many students from the Indian areas live in previously council owned semi-detached cottages or flats. Those who could afford it were able to buy the houses from the council. Those who were unable to purchase these houses have no alternative but to continue to rent. The students who rent generally experience financial constraints due to high rentals. This situation impacts on the payment of school fees. Many parents apply for concessions regarding the payment of school fees. The living conditions are also not conducive to social enhancement or studies due to cramped living spaces and the lack of privacy as well as basic human needs such as food and proper shelter not being met. Those parents who studied or were somehow able to improve themselves financially tend to provide better living environments for their children. There are also students from neighbouring areas which are considered to be more affluent. These students have a better support system. Basic needs can be satisfied and extra support such as the individual purchase of study aids can be made. For those students who experience financial difficulties, attempts are made by the school to provide grocery hampers.

The students at school are from various religious denominations. These include Hinduism, Islam and Christianity – with Hinduism being followed by most.

During the breaks while other students are at play, couples can be seen standing in the far corners of the ground. Others can be seen walking close to each other. As soon as a teacher is spotted walking in their direction, they separate and walk away so that the teacher cannot reach them quickly enough.

### **1.8. The aim of the investigation**

The study explores the sexual cultures that emanate from boyfriend and girlfriend relationships amongst young South African Indians in Chatsworth, aged between 16-17 and the implications for working with young people in the context of Life Orientation, and the planning of sex education programmes.

### **1.9. Objectives of the study**

The research study will be directed by the following objectives:

1. To gain insight into the ways in which 16-17 year old Indian boys and girls construct their sexual identities.
2. To understand how 16-17 year old Indian girls give meaning to their sexuality.
3. To explore 16-17 year old Indian boys understand their sexuality.
4. To produce data which will facilitate appropriate and relevant guidelines in the structuring of Life Orientation programmes relating to the development of sexualities amongst young people

### **1.10. Key research questions**

The study investigates the way in which young people develop their sexual selves; the knowledge and practices entailed in this process and the implications of this research for Life Orientation and sex education programmes.

The major factor influencing HIV transmission in South Africa is heterosexual transmission (Hoffman et al, p.52, 2006). This situation instigated research into the fact that gender relations influence sexual risk taking in different cultural backgrounds. Research in South Africa on gender, relationship dynamics and sexual risk taking indicates that constructions of sexuality are dominated by the expectations of men. This places women at a disadvantage in sexual relations because they do not wield sufficient power to control risk. According to Harrison, Kunene and Xaba (2001, p.64) numerous studies have shown that women are disempowered in comparison to men with regard to risk prevention. The consequences are that matters such as the use of condoms or treatment for STDs cannot be accessed by women who are not in control of their own sexualities. This study seeks to understand the existence of such dynamics in the relationships of young people.

The study will be guided by the following questions:

1. How do 16-17 year old Indian boys and girls give meanings to their sexualities?
2. How do 16-17 year old Indian girls understand sexuality?
3. How do 16-17 year old Indian boys understand sexuality?
4. What are the implications of the understanding of sexualities for Life Orientation and sex education programmes?

### **1.11. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have described my motivation for undertaking this study and how it contributes towards effective Life Orientation and sexuality education programmes. The focus is on the ways in which young people in heterosexual relationships construct their sexual identities with specific reference to young people of Indian descent from low to middle income groups. It is hoped that the knowledge acquired will result in a more informed understanding of how Indian youth perceive themselves as sexual beings with the purpose of producing appropriate Life Orientation and sexuality education programmes.

### 2.1. Introduction

I believe that the exploration of the ways in which South African Indian youth experience relationships, will indicate what their sexual ideologies are and how these ideologies have been shaped. Thus far, little is known about South African Indian people and their sexual behaviour (see Bhana and Pattman, 2008; Kaufman and Stavrou, 2004 as exceptions). The AIDS epidemic has made clear the basic lack of knowledge with regard to human sexuality (Parker, 1999, p.334).

In this chapter, I look at which social and contextual factors are primarily responsible for the manner in which young Indian people develop their sexual identities. Firstly Indian culture itself has significance in this regard. I explore how gender role expectations actually reproduce gender inequalities. Secondly, I consider how young Indian people are affected by a patriarchal culture which results in sexualities being closeted. Thirdly, I explore the age of sexual debut amongst young Indian people. This is influenced by modernised global technology and cultural expectations of marriage. Fourthly, this review examines the impact of love and trust in relationships. Perhaps of most significance to this study is the ways in which young people consider risk factors such as HIV/AIDS and unplanned pregnancies. Finally, this study focuses on the influence of race, gender and class in relationships amongst young Indian people.

In this study, I have made extensive reference to media coverage on the Indian population by leading Durban sociologist, Dr. Devi Rajab, because of a limited number of scholarly works. Scholarly works on gender and sexualities amongst Indians include Bhana and Pattman (2008) and Kaufman and Stavrou (2004). Kaufman and Stavrou's work is used extensively in chapter four in the data analysis. The basis of this literature review includes the works of Weeks (2003), Allen (2005) and Bhattacharya (2002).

Because little data is available on "the social and cultural contexts that shape these (sexual) behaviours or the symbols and meanings they hold for their participants" (Parker, 1999, p.334), in this context it becomes necessary to access knowledge about how teenagers understand relationships, sex and their sexualities. Sexuality is subjected to a tremendous

amount of socio-cultural shaping despite the claim by others that biology determines our sexualities (Weeks, 2003, p.53). This means that sexual natures are “fluid” i.e. subject to change by social and cultural factors despite a person’s biological determinism.

Each society imposes certain ‘values’ or ‘teachings’ to ‘position’ its members according to societal demands (Weeks, 2003, p.60). These include the various social roles that members have to carry out which includes sex roles based on one’s biological sex. For example, boys and girls have clearly defined roles and expectations that are set out according to their gender. For example, separate masculine and feminine identities are encouraged and heterosexuality is the dominant hegemony in South African Indian culture. Relationships and sexual behaviour are generally under the gaze of the community elders. The boyfriend-girlfriend cultures of Indian girls are regulated as all sexualities are but they are also resisted. According to Bhana and Pattman (2008, p.103), Indian girls generally belong to families which have remained patriarchal in nature. Consequently the lives of girls and the ways in which girls present themselves as sexual beings are regulated. According to Jewkes & Morrell (2010, p.3), South Africa is a country with high levels of gender imbalance resulting in the exertion of hegemonic masculinity which condones the subordination of females by males. Because hegemonic masculinity is integral to patriarchal culture, it sanctions the control of women by men. In this study, we see how young Indian girls and boys regulate each other in relationships in specific settings and social contexts. In the context of HIV/AIDS however, there is little research because of the low prevalence rate and reluctance by Indian people to undergo testing.

## **2.2. An overview of the development of sexualities**

In this section, the focus is on how sexual identities are negotiated in general, with specific reference to young Indian people.

The prevalence rate for HIV amongst Indians is 0.3%. There can be various reasons to explain this low prevalence rate in the Indian community. Firstly, sex before marriage is definitely prohibited in the religious practices of all Indian groups; promiscuity is severely frowned on but mostly, sexuality is regulated and/or closeted. People do not speak openly about these matters, which make it difficult to gauge what their sexual ideologies are and to find ways of planning relevant sex education programmes. More importantly and much to

the detriment of the Indian community, the low prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS in the Indian community has rendered them as not worthy of attention. Consequently not much is known about Indian sexualities because the community is not viewed as problematic (Bhana & Pattman, 2008, p.104). The design of sex education programmes geared towards developing sexual health awareness may therefore not be appropriate for and culturally sensitive to the population group it is meant to serve.

In addition, recent statistics on HIV/AIDS are not presented in racial representations, i.e. a study conducted by UKZN with the provincial government and the UN Population Fund, shows that HIV prevalence in KwaZulu-Natal amongst people aged 15-49, increased from 15.7% (2002) to 21.9% (2005) and to 25.8% in 2008 (Mbanjwa, 2010, p.5). This has implications for the design of sex education programmes because the needs and views of different cultures are sidelined when the affected group is considered as a single unit.

Sexual activity usually occurs in the context of romantic relationships (Heidrich, Keller & Royer, 2009, p.395). An understanding of how the sexual self develops can improve sexual health and thereby reduce sexually transmitted diseases and unplanned pregnancies. Sexual health also includes the manner in which young people manage relationships with regard to how they communicate and negotiate their selves in relationships; how they manage conflict and control their emotions (Barber & Eccles, 2003).

Young people are actively involved in how they negotiate and understand their selves. Therefore the design and policy of sex education programmes should focus on these conceptualisations rather than dealing with the consequences of poor relationship management. I believe in examining a cause/s instead of treating a symptom. For example, the reasons why young people indulge in risk taking or find themselves saddled with unplanned pregnancies, despite the availability of Life Orientation programmes and contraception. I believe there is perhaps an obstacle or gap in young people's perceptions that needs to be addressed. Kehily (2002, p.2) argues that students receive the curriculum at school but remain completely uninvolved in its planning and teaching methods. Since there is no student input into the curriculum, we have no idea how they perceive the knowledge they receive. Because we do not know how they understand the education they receive, we cannot know whether or not the education is relevant for them. Therefore, the message for

those who design and those who implement the curriculum is that students' voices must be heard to fulfil their needs properly.

Governments are also interested in student sexual cultures because these issues, if not handled properly, may result in socio-economic problems which have political consequences and attract negative media attention to the state. Sexually transmitted diseases and teenage pregnancies affect the state's ability to look after its citizens in terms of issues such as medical care and related unemployment and subsequent poverty. Allen (2005, pp. 2-3) also makes references to other diseases resulting from STDs which impacts on the state economically and socially. To ensure political support, the state has to tread carefully and be viewed as pro-active towards and responsible for its younger citizens' safety. The lack of such an initiative by the government could lead to problems with regard to education, health and the general well being of its young people. Therefore the state's ministries of health and education partner together need to establish educational programmes that teach responsible sexual health to the youth. And to be able to do that, we need to know firsthand what young people's needs are, what knowledge they already possess and how this shapes their behaviour and what steps ought to be taken if there are gaps in their knowledge.

According to Bhana and Pattman (2009, p.72), the response to the AIDS syllabus in South Africa has been slow because of the need to create a balance between practice and theory. This is being done currently by studies around the knowledge and experiences of 16 to 17 year olds.

### **2.3. Theoretical and conceptual frameworks**

The topic of sex and sexualities has developed a particular discourse in academic work. The terminologies include terms and/or concepts such as masculinity, femininity, sexual orientation and diversity, socio-cultural influence, power, race, class and gender to list, at the least, the terms that appear in my research. Throughout my study I make reference to the fact that the development of sexual identities is influenced by social processes and culture as well as race, class and gender. My study is therefore exploratory research located in the interpretive paradigm.

Foucault's view on sexuality is that it is "culturally coded ways of being (which) are expressions and conduits of power" (Bhattacharyya, 2002, p. 6). Bhattacharyya speaks of "the considerable power and impact of dominant cultures and sexuality" and sums up sexuality as a product of "the networks of social power; sexual choices are constrained by economics, by social pressures from many directions, by habit, convention and expectation" (2002, p.10). In recent times sex has become a social and political issue because of concerns with regard to teenage pregnancy, AIDS, sex education and pornography (Gauntlett, 2002, p.122). Bhana & Pattman (2009) argue that very little is known about how young people experience themselves, understand themselves, their dreams and desires, how they construct their masculinities and femininities, whether they are positively or negatively affected by these constructions and how gender features in disease vulnerability. Understanding how young people establish their gender identities is important for the planning of protective strategies against sexually transmitted diseases.

More recently, the work of Jeffrey Weeks from 1986 onwards, explores sexualities from a socio-cultural and historical perspective. According to Weeks (2003, p.102), the blame for the emergence of the AIDS pandemic at the outset, was laid at the feet of those who became infected because of their "social attitudes or sexual practices". The study on human sexual behaviour was made urgent by the HIV/AIDS crisis. Allen (2005, p.8) also makes the claim that sexuality is the "consequence of social practices which are infused by power and mutable". Allen focuses on the fact that young people are creators of their own sexual identities and therefore have agency, however, language influences the way in which people perceive their sexual selves.

Hallman's (2005, p.37) study on the gendered socio-economic conditions of young people in South Africa reveals that while they possess knowledge about how to protect themselves against infection, they may not be in a position to apply this knowledge in a given situation because of socio-economic limitations. Violence against women, gender subordination and the restricted access to contraception (affordability) can be regarded as socio-economic limitations. According to feminist movements, there are various forms of female sexual subordination such as male violence on females, sexual harassment and sexually denigrating language (Weeks, 2003, p.9). These movements have also insisted on the recognition of women as people who have rights, powers and ownership over their own bodies. The

outcome of the challenge to normative heterosexuality has been the renegotiation of our understanding of sexuality (ibid.). More importantly, the dominant definitions of sexuality prevalent in the West do not apply to all other cultures because sexual cultures are culture specific and based on a broad spectrum of social factors. While there are usually different guidelines for men and women regarding sexual cultures, these guidelines tend to subordinate women's sexuality to men's (ibid. p.21).

#### **2.4. The relationship between gender and sexual identities**

According to Nayak and Kehily (2008, p.4) research on gender has focused on young men and women as separate groups rather than taking a 'holistic approach'. It is for this reason that this study is inclusive of young men and women – because young men and women define themselves in relation to each other.

Wharton (2005, p.17) contends that "...gender is reflected in who people are or how they behave... and may be understood in terms of masculinity or femininity". Wharton (2005, p.2) is concerned about the fact that most people construe gender to be 'unproblematic, self-evident and uncontested'. However, gender becomes a problem when "blurring" occurs as in the case of Castor Semenya – a South African athlete who represented South Africa at the Olympic Games in 2009. Castor participated as a female; however, medical tests indicated that internally, she had inverted male organs. This created confusion with regard to gender classification. The intention here is to show how gender is not a straightforward issue. Secondly, in modern times, there are people who are making their own choices regarding their sexual orientation regardless of their biological sex and/or how they have been socialised, i.e. sexual natures are fluid. Thirdly, gender influences the patterning of social life, e.g. through relationships.

The idea to study both boys and girls is based on the fact that men and women develop in relation to each other. It is inevitable then when female sexuality is discussed, reference will be made to male sexuality and vice versa. Wharton (2005, p.5) draws on the same concept that Weeks does, that gender is "relational" and that "understanding what women are or can be requires attention to what men are or can be". She (2005, p.9) also claims that "modern life enables people to have many identities (but that) gender identity may be among the most influential in shaping the standards people hold for themselves". It can be concluded that the

way young people perceive themselves in terms of their biological sex and gendered identities has repercussions for boyfriend and girlfriend cultures. This understanding is important because of the manner in which boys and girls in relationships relate to each other in terms of gender. Masculinities and femininities do not exist in isolation but in relation to each other (Pattman, 2006). Heterosexual roles amongst students and teachers are clearly defined at the site of this study. I would like to know what it means for the students to be heterosexual – e.g. how masculine and feminine roles are socially constructed and the implications for sexual behaviour and what follows should these roles not co-incide with normative behaviour.

The behaviour of men and women is structured in a way that ensures gender divisions. The implication is that males should be attracted to females and vice versa (Allen, 2005, p.11). This is classified as heteronormative behaviour for two reasons: hetero because of the masculine/feminine binary and normative because it is a social construct which is widely accepted and practised by society.

According to Kimmel (2004, p.52), almost every society indicates that gender differences between men and women exist to a certain degree with women being subjected to some form of male domination.

Paechter (2001, p.47) has tried to be specific in defining aspects of gender. Gender assignment occurs at birth and is usually based on the biological sex of the person. Gender identity refers to the way a person perceives their own gender (male; female; both or neither). Finally, gender role refers to prescribed behaviour for people based on their assigned gender. It must be remembered that prescribed behaviours differ from culture to culture. To be able to understand how males and females enact their gender roles, it is necessary to understand how “discourses of masculinity and femininity are constructed and maintained and how they support and are supported by power/knowledge relations” Paechter (2001, p.48). When young people are trying to establish themselves as adults, they require guidance especially if the masculine/feminine behaviour is determined by stereotypes (Paechter, 2001, p.50).

According to Wood and Jewkes (2001), the teenage years are an important time for the “exploration and development of gender identity”. It is a time when sexual relationships play

a key role in determining masculine success while females use relationships to assess their femininity and to explore their power and identity as women.

The problem for students is that schools place emphasis on rationality and the mind. However, the pursuit of rationality places them on a collision course with their sexualised and gendered bodies (Epstein, O'Flynn & Telford, 2003, p.71).

According to the Human Sciences Research Council (2009), research on HIV prevalence in South Africa has indicated that heterosexual sex is the main cause of HIV transmission. This occurrence necessitates further research into heterosexual behaviour with regard to AIDS and other forms of risk taking. The study also found that young adults, especially females, face the highest risk of HIV infection. In many Western and Eastern cultures, women remain subordinate to men with regard to sexualities (Weeks, 2003, p.21). However, the emergence of the AIDS epidemic has necessitated dialogue about sexual practices and risks, thereby giving women a sexual voice. It is now evident that the sexual oppression of women by men is largely responsible for AIDS prevalence amongst heterosexual people.

This knowledge is of paramount importance for the sexual education of young people. Girls must learn that it is unacceptable to submit to the desires of boys and young boys must learn that it is neither their place nor right to suppress the sexual voices and needs of girls. The suppression of women in South Africa is a major concern, with gender equity laws being introduced to address and rectify this dilemma. The greatest obstacle to women's emancipation in this country has been the patriarchal nature of South African society and the problem has been exacerbated since most women are in heterosexual relationships. This knowledge is also important for young Indian boys and girls in the way they develop their sexual identities, and whether they reproduce gender inequalities or become pioneers of change.

## **2.5. Heterosexual identities**

According to Kehily (2002, p. 34), "the assumed dominance of a heterosexual order in societies places heterosexual relationships at the centre as 'normal' and normalising". Even today, heterosexuality continues to dominate as the most recognisable form of sexual orientation (Epstein & Johnson, 1998, p.36). One of the reasons for this status quo is the role that political power plays in wielding control over its citizens. According to Epstein and

Johnson (1998, p.44), state policies embody dominant discourses in relation to which educational institutions have to deliver education. South Africans are a heterosexual nation in the main. Despite the country's widely hailed constitution which condemns any form of discrimination, especially with regard to sex and gender, homophobia is widely practised and schooling becomes a traumatic experience for non-conformists. The government, religious institutions, schools and parents have a vested interest in ensuring that the schooling process does not become a domain for controversy and deviance (especially with reference to sexual politics). A cycle of pressure is at work here with each party taking each other to task should there be a disruption to the 'acceptable norm'.

According to Mac an Ghail (1994, pp. 8-9), schools are active producers of sex and gender relations. The school as a social structure practises underlying dominant ideologies where "overt and covert moral values were transmitted within the context of normative/prescriptive accounts of the two-parent nuclear family lifestyle" (Mac an Ghail, 1994, p.31). Firstly, schools prepare young people for the sexual division of labour in the home and in the labour market. Secondly, schools reproduce the prevailing sexual hegemony of society at large thereby producing gender and heterosexual divisions, which are also a prerequisite for the capitalist marketplace. This is also in accordance with a capitalist state's economic policies. Since many boy-girl relationships are forged at school, it is important to understand how young Indian people develop their gendered and sexual identities in relation to the teachings of their school.

A heterosexual ethos prevails at the school where my study was conducted. Heterosexual couples are clearly visible. For the government, schooling authorities and parents, this would be the ideal environment because it exemplifies the accepted norm. Yet the irony lies therein that in South Africa, the single most contributing factor to the spread of HIV/AIDS is heterosexual sex (HSRC, 2009, p.xvi). Weeks (2003, p. 65) describes 'compulsory heterosexuality' as a state where human beings are aware of its 'uncertainties' but cannot resist its appeal.

This could be the reason why the social institutions of society attempt to regulate the sexual behaviour of young people. One of the findings of the HSRC study on AIDS prevalence (2009) is that HIV prevalence in the age group 15-24, decreased from 10.3% in 2005 to 8.6%

in 2008. This was part of the state's AIDS awareness and education programmes (during the leadership of President Zuma) to deal with the epidemic. While this process has been slow and the drop in prevalence not as marked as expected by the state, the indication is that young people are taking cognisance of sexually appropriate behaviour.

In the Indian community, it is evident that young people do engage in forms of sexual experimentation covertly, and in other instances overtly. The socialisation processes of this community places restrictions on the sexual behaviour of young people, not because of health consequences but because of stigma. Pre-marital sexual relations and pregnancy outside marriage are a cause for shame and embarrassment to the family; especially for the girl's parents. The girl will be construed to be a 'fast' girl – one with loose morals. The boy usually escapes with: "You know how boys are." A sense of pride may be detected in this statement with regard to the boy establishing his manhood because Indian society is patriarchal in nature. However, young people of Indian descent in South Africa in this day and age are developing their own sexual identities not only against the backdrop of patriarchy, parental pressure and traditional beliefs, but also under Western influence and democratic citizenship.

## **2.6. The influence of social and cultural practices on sexual identities**

At the research site and within the living context of the pupils, two things are clear to me. Firstly, any issue related to sex and its related matters is taboo and should not be talked about or should be completely avoided. According to (Allen, 2005) sexuality "carries a social stigma that renders talk about sexuality and its pleasures often uncomfortable and sometimes perverse". The idea that young people may be sexually active is an issue of contention emanating from the belief that young people should be innocent regarding sex. Should parents or authorities find out otherwise, their sexual activities will be curtailed and their movement restricted. Yet human beings are sexual subjects even if only for the sake of procreation! The refusal to acknowledge that human beings are also sexual beings and therefore a source of emotional and sexual pleasure is a transgression of young people's basic human rights (Allen, 2005, p.62). With this thought in mind, it became my intention to explore specifically the sexual cultures of young Indian people in South Africa. And it was not an easy task given that the gatekeepers of the students were Indian and would prefer to believe that children attended school purely for academic purposes. Indian people usually

deny sexual activity (Nair, 2010, p.1) and choose to keep 'things under wraps' because it is considered to be shameful behaviour to be sexually active and for others to know about it. It is this very attitude of attempting to keep young people innocent and ignorant which prevent young people from making responsible, knowledgeable choices.

In her article *Time to rethink role of our women*, prominent Durban sociologist and writer, Dr. Devi Rajab (2010, p.4) states that the traditional role of an Indian woman was to take care of her husband and his family. Much of the ensuing discussion on Indian people is based on Dr. Rajab's findings as a sociologist. The point of this discussion is to show the background against which young Indian people in 2010 are negotiating their sexual identities. Marriages were arranged and unlike the Western notion of love and romance. Growing westernisation and economic needs resulted in Indian women entering the workplace. This has changed the expectations of traditional Indian women. These changes have created dissension between Indian men and Indian women because they go against traditionally defined masculine and feminine roles.

According to Rajab (2010, p.4), the cause of this dissension is the refusal by Indian men to accept women's liberation. The reason for this is that Indian society is patriarchal in nature. The male role was to provide and the female to cook and take care of the family. The parents in the traditional Indian family are often domineering and unapproachable. As a result young people have no access to open discussion on personal matters. In Indian culture, hiding one's shame is more important than dealing with guilt. Consulting with members outside the family about problematic issues is considered a matter of disloyalty to one's family which results in shame and disgrace for the family. Indian women especially are advised to keep their counsel rather than expose their shame. In fact women are viewed as being responsible for extra-marital affairs or physical abuse because they have not taken care of their husbands as they should have.

As a result of this strict socialisation process, young people tend to behave in sexually inappropriate ways (for example, at university) because their parents have failed to discuss personal issues, especially those of a sexual nature. In her studies of Indian people looking for psychological counselling, Rajab has found that because Indian students were not allowed to date as openly as their African and white counterparts, they tend to use the time and space

available at university for romantic liaisons. In addition, young people are restricted by parents from having heterosexual relationships therefore they tend to be immature and incapable of coping in relationships.

Another important point to consider is that South African Indians also follow western values and materialism with regard to education and lifestyle. Rajab (2010, p.4) refers to this as biculturalism. The merging of two cultures can cause problems. Young people are trying to live within the constraints of their culture but the freedom of Western culture beckons to them.

The reason for this is that young people, who have been socialised into traditional roles, find themselves in a quandary because they believe that their parents are too old-fashioned and this clashes with the appeal of western style relationships. South African Indians are predominantly urbanised, displaying urban characteristics in keeping with Western norms (ibid.). However, because they are third and fourth generation Indians removed from India, the mother country, their value systems have undergone considerable change. Other researchers refer to this phenomenon as a dysfunctional situation because of the demands of two dominant cultures.

In terms of the relationship between gender and sexual identities, Indian culture remains traditional in terms of male and female roles in the family, however, economic needs meant that women were able to gain financial independence but not freedom from feminine roles. The youth who are now more exposed to Western culture find themselves juggling between two cultures and are neither here or there. This factor impacts on the way in which young people develop their heterosexual identities. The reason why Indian youth are said to display inappropriate sexual behaviour stems from cultural expectations. Parents constantly restrict their movement and behaviour, so when opportunity presents itself for them to be together, young people tend to abandon reason in favour of such an opportunity.

Secondly, most children enact heterosexual roles. This enactment begins with the assumption of parental roles in the home (Weeks, 2003, p.55). Religious texts also provide guidelines as to what man and women are expected to do, based on their gender differences (Weeks, 2003, p.55). In addition, masculinity and femininity mean different things in different class, geographical and racial settings (Weeks, 2003, p.59). For example, both traditional African

and Indian cultures are patriarchal in nature; however, urbanisation influences their sexual ideologies because distance separates them from the stricter elders of the community. According to Chancer and Watkins (2006, p.4), sex and sexuality have been discussed in other debates as secondary issues, however, “serious analytic omissions can arise from approaches that prioritise gender, race, or class rather than treating their separate contributions more synthetically”. It is the reason why I opted to study Indian boys and girls in a working to middle income area. This should ensure a broader understanding of how sexual ideologies develop. Allen’s (2005) main reason for researching sexuality has been to obtain a greater understanding of “young people’s (hetero)sexual subjectivities, knowledge and practices and to think about how such understandings might inform sexuality education”.

Cultural norms determine what male sexuality constitutes, which creates problems for the definition of female sexuality – because males, in becoming men, occupy positions of power which enables them to define women (Weeks, 2003, p.59). This definition of sexuality based on social and cultural dictates has reference to how males are seen as having power and females as being subordinate. Rajab (2010, p.4) states that the attitude of Indian men has worsened since Indian women joined the workplace. Although women have also become financial providers, they are expected to slip into the role of housewife and mother immediately on entering the home after work. Men want to remain providers only and resent having to assist in the home. This leads to confrontation amongst couples. Indian men want to reap the benefits of financial assistance but still subscribe to a patriarchal system. My study seeks to find what 16-17 year olds experience and feel in relationships with regard to gender and power, love, sex and related issues such as sexually transmitted diseases and contraception. It explores the impact of the family, school and peers as socialisation groups on the development of sexualities and sexual ideologies. These sexual ideologies in turn impact on social relations such as boy-girl relationships and how they perceive their own sexual identities and the sexual identity of one another.

Rajab’s findings on young people are that they are getting married younger, are not very tolerant, have impractical expectations of love and romance, and do not possess the necessary interpersonal skills to deal with relationship problems. The reason for the lack in interpersonal skills is due to a very rigid, restrictive socialisation process typical of Indian society.

## **2.7. Power relations and sexual risk taking**

HIV/AIDS training programmes are usually directed at women and sexually active young people because they are considered to be groups that are vulnerable to HIV infection. According to Adams and Marshall (1998, p.88), it is difficult to achieve and control behavioural change towards HIV/AIDS infections because it is directly related to people's behaviour and choices. They state further that HIV/AIDS interventions are influenced by gender, poverty and power imbalances.

According to Campbell, Mzaidume, and Williams (1998, p.51), people's sexual behaviour is based on their enlightened sexual health knowledge, their socially negotiated social and sexual identities; whether they are in control of their lives in general and therefore also in control of their sexual health and how their living and working conditions support the use of condoms. Gender pervades all three of the above factors. About 64% of all people living with AIDS are in sub-Saharan Africa and about 76% of them are women (Whiteside, 2005, p.1).

Govender (2005, p.23) states that gender constructions are closely linked to the question of power. Of importance is who wields the power and how it is exercised in different contexts and relationships. According to Govender (ibid.), HIV/AIDS reflects gender inequality at its most intimate levels. Power and sexual relations need to be understood in terms of gender perceptions within relationships. A study on the use of condoms and HIV prevention, conducted by Campbell and McPhail (2001, p.1614) in the South African township of Khutsong, revealed that adolescents and young people were placed at risk by the following factors: personal interpretations of health; peer and parental pressure; the social construction of male and female sexuality; gendered power relations and financial constraints. Unfortunately, the lack of understanding about the influences that are resulting in adolescents and young people being placed at the risk of HIV/AIDS can obstruct the success of HIV programmes (Campbell & McPhail, 2001, p.1614).

“Masculine sexuality is manifest in society's classification of ‘normal’ men as being associated with multiple partners and power over women” (Campbell & McPhail, 2001, p.1615). The reason for this is that boys subscribe more to peer beliefs and the social definitions of masculinity and femininity (2001, p.1624). In this study while boys did not

speak of multiple partners, they did express the desire to have more than one girlfriend but not simultaneously.

According to UNAIDS (2007) it has become necessary to understand how young people between the ages of 15 and 24 perceive sexualities, especially so, in the light of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The reason for this understanding is to ensure the effectiveness of HIV/AIDS and sexuality education programmes. Bhana and Pattman (2008, p.103) contend that not many studies have been carried out on how South African Indian girls shape their sexual ideologies in our 15 year old democracy. The reason for this situation is that there is a relatively low existence of HIV/AIDS in the Indian community (Bhana & Pattman, 2008, p.103). My study explores both boys and girls as they construct their sexual identities. The reason for this is that, while Bhana and Pattman have initiated studies on Indian girls, there is no information on the sexualities of Indian boys. Therefore this study seeks to understand both boys and girls.

## **2.8. Young people as sexual subjects**

“To view young people as sexual subjects who might legitimately seek sexual pleasure and express sexual desire is controversial. Such contention stems from the fact that this idea conflicts with notions of ‘good’ youth as sexually innocent. Young people know only too well the negative consequences which threaten if they are identified as sexually active by adult others. These can range from unwelcome warnings about the dangers of sexual activity to closer surveillance and regulation of their activities”, (Allen, 2005, p.62).

The key issue with young people expressing themselves as sexual subjects are the fear and guilt inducing mechanisms designed to curtail and contain their sexuality. While this may be justifiable given the context of AIDS, STDs, other forms of risk taking and cultural influences, it results in ‘secret, guilty pleasures.’ There are young people who claim very close ties with their parents; however, when asked if their parents are aware that they are sexually active, they are quick to dispel the notion that being close to their parents includes discussions around sexual matters. There are various reasons for this. At least one reason is that in the Indian community, young people are expected to maintain an air of sexual innocence, and sexual intercourse and sexual relations are considered to be the domain of marriage. Should it be discovered that young people are engaging in pre-marital sexual

relations, it will bring shame to the family and the 'culprit' may be subjected to some type of punishment such as having the relationship severed and/or experiencing a restriction in freedom of movement.

According to a study by Panday et al (2009) on teenage pregnancy, it was concluded that younger people spend a lengthy duration on education, part of which is sexual experimentation (especially in high school). It is important to accept that sexual development is integral to and a feature of the natural course of human development. One of the recommendations of the study regarding the sexual health of young people is to address community perceptions and stigma.

There seems to be unreasonable pressure on young people to regulate their sexual nature. The reason for this situation is that adult discourses consider youthful sexualities as a domain requiring strict control (Allen, 2005, p.64). On the other hand, young people probably see the expression of their sexual persons as 'just being themselves'. While there is justification in monitoring the sexual behaviour of young people as a result of HIV/AIDS, STDs and other forms of risk taking; control should not be based on fear and guilt. This leads to young people 'hiding and doing things' which leads to further trouble. According to Allen (ibid.), one of the discourses regarding sexual activity "is that it is most satisfying in marriage (or a stable relationship) with someone of the opposite gender". Therefore young people are encouraged to wait until marriage to be sexually active. Secondly, it should not be assumed that young people's sexual activities are the same as those of adults. The males in my study indicated that the first sexual experience for boys is around 16 to 17 years of age. Their partners are around the same age or younger. It is therefore unfair for adults to assume that the youth are functioning at the same level as adults and to judge them as adults with regard to the way they negotiate their sexual selves. Also young people do not give much thought to their sexual identities because of being taught that it is a personal issue and public discussion of it becomes a moral contravention. One of the female participants stated to me: "Mam, I can't believe I said this" after reading her transcript." The thought that she is a sexual being who actually thought about sexual issues and gave voice to it surprised her. The point is that schools attempt to deny sexual relations and try to desexualise schools as a space where gendered identities are being negotiated. The irony is that schools are the most highly

sexualised spaces for young people. Here the boys can express their masculinities while the girls test their femininities.

Most schools resist the idea of their students as sexually aware and/or sexually active. They persist with the belief that young people are sexually innocent and need to be protected. To assume otherwise would be to trouble the issue of students as active sexual subjects. There also seems to be some type of perverse hand at work with adults who attempt to deny that teenagers are developing into young adults. I believe that they want to latch on to a false sense of security in order to avoid parenting responsibilities with regard to matters of a sexual nature, much to the detriment of these young people.

## **2.9. Conclusion**

Pervasive to most literature is the fact that sexual identity is a social construct. Sexual identity is also subject to cultural influence. Race, class and gender feature as common discourses that shape sexual ideologies. However, in South Africa, programmes on sex education and HIV/AIDS seem to focus mainly on blacks. Perhaps this situation exists because of the low prevalence rate of AIDS within the Indian community. Nevertheless it is important to be constantly updated as to how sexualities develop within each race group to plan effective sex education and appropriate Life Orientation programmes.

**3.1. Introduction**

This study explores the way in which four boys and four girls of Indian descent in a low to middle income suburb in South Africa construct their sexual identities. The study is significant because it was embarked on by the researcher in an attempt not only to address the lack of research on sexual cultures amongst young Indian people, but also to study the development of gendered and sexual identities of young Indians against the backdrop of the AIDS pandemic in South Africa and sexual risk. It may also be regarded as exploratory research because it attempts to understand how people behave in situations, how they can explain their actions and what their concerns are – in other words, “What is going on here?” (Schutt, 2006, p.14).

This study aims to explore and interpret how young Indian people navigate their sexual selves according to their gendered identities and in relation to each other in heterosexual relationships. Allen states that (2005, p. 8), “although sexuality is experienced by subjects as personal and emanating from within, it is not individually produced”. By understanding how 16 to 17 year olds position themselves in developing their sexual cultures, a platform is created to provide appropriate education programmes and Life Orientation skills to deal with the sexual cultures of young people, promote healthy sexuality and address risk taking.

“There is no single blueprint for planning research” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 78). Research design depends on the purpose the study is intended for. This chapter presents the research design and methodology selected in answering the following questions:

1. How do 16-17 year old Indian boys and girls give meanings to their sexualities?
2. How do 16-17 year old Indian girls understand sexuality?
3. How do 16-17 year old Indian boys understand sexuality?
4. What are the implications of their understanding of sexualities for Life Orientation and sex education programmes?

In answering these questions, the following sub-questions will be answered:

- How do young Indian people aged 16 to 17 develop their gendered identities?
- What are the implications of their gendered identities for sexual risk taking?

To achieve the goals of this study, individual interviews and focus group interviews were conducted to give voice to students who receive the curriculum but have no access to the structuring of the curriculum (Kehily, 2002, p. 2).

### **3.2. Qualitative methodology**

Qualitative research includes the study of people and systems through interaction and the observation of participants in their natural setting and how they give meaning and understanding to their situations. Of special significance to me is the fact that life itself is transitory, therefore people find themselves in situations that are constantly changing and have to adapt or change their behaviour patterns. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.167) refer to this as “the attribution of meaning (which is) continuous and evolving over time”. The sexual cultures of people have also evolved over time and to understand this occurrence, we need to ask questions and listen to the reasoning behind these situations.

My experience as an educator for the last 22 years has taught me some invaluable lessons. One of them is that students have a voice, and are eager for opportunities to talk about personal issues, provided that someone is willing to listen without judging them. Another is that students in relationships are generally advised by parents, teachers and other elders to ‘behave themselves’ – where the word ‘behave’ usually refers to refraining from sexual activity. One of my philosophies regarding life is that where young people are concerned, we have to be aware of what they are saying and to read between the lines. The second is that I am well aware that young people are involved in various kinds of sexual activity which I would like to know about, because given the disturbing AIDS statistics in South Africa amongst 15 to 24 year olds, denial is not of any use to young people, and the social, economic, and political consequences affects all taxpayers. So as parents, educators and adults, we have the responsibility to educate young people with regard to their sexual wellbeing. However, this is not possible if as adults we fail to educate ourselves in a way that should ensure and promote the wellbeing of young people. The qualitative approach was therefore the most appropriate method to find out how young people in relationships behave; what they do, say and think.

According to Nieuwenhuis, (2007, p.51) qualitative research methodology attempts to understand how behavioural patterns are influenced by social and cultural contexts and other

processes. It is a naturalistic approach whereby the researcher attempts to understand behavioural patterns and thought in real life situations (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, p.79). The researcher becomes the 'research instrument' in the collection of data. Since the aim of my study is to understand how 16 to 17 year old young people give meaning to their (hetero) sexualities at a school in Chatsworth, the ideal method for me to understand what was being said, was to listen to what was being said. Young people like older people have voices too. They inhabit spaces and try to make sense of the world they inhabit. They also try to make sense of their bodies through their minds. To discover what goes on in people's minds, means having to give them voice, or rather to accept that young people especially, do have voices, but voices that need to be given a hearing. This hearing includes the expression of thoughts through the use of language; hence the decision to conduct interviews with the participants. "The stories, experiences and voices of the respondents are the mediums through which we explore and understand reality" (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, p.55).

In addition, it would not have been practical to observe the participants in their relationships for various reasons. Firstly, people tend to become self conscious when they know they are being observed. Secondly, if I had to observe couples in school, other students would be curious and question what was going on. This would interfere with what was supposed to be a natural setting and pose ethical problems. Thirdly, some participants had partners outside school so the observation process would be difficult to conduct. Finally I believe it would have been voyeuristic to observe young people act out their sexual cultures although I needed to find out about it! According to Schutt (2006, p.31), voluntary participation for interviews and focus group research is not a contentious matter, as opposed to participant observation research. Therefore the most appropriate choice of inquiry was to listen to the participants.

The methodology that has been used to collect data is a qualitative one. The principle behind qualitative research is not to count opinions or people, but instead to explore a range of opinions and different representations of the topic (Gaskell, 2000, p.41). The methods employed to elicit data included eight individual semi-structured interviews and one focus group interview. For me, the interview allowed the participants to speak as long as wanted to, in a way that suited them and allowed them time to think about what they were saying. This research has been conducted in the interpretive paradigm – it is explorative in nature, to bring about understanding. Seeing that AIDS statistics on Indians as a population group in South

Africa is limited, this study aims to close that gap by exploring how Indians develop their sexual identities and all aspects of life that shape these identities and show that there is a need to understand young Indian sexualities. The most appropriate way to do this would be to engage in dialogue because the subtle nuances that can be seen and heard with the use of this method are lost for example, through the use of questionnaires or written narratives. The interview results in an exchange of ideas and meanings which culminates in the production of knowledge (Gaskell, 2000, p.45) which in my case is about young Indian people's sexualities.

My experience with students is that where personal matters are concerned, they need someone to listen to them. It is considered a cathartic experience to speak of sensitive or private matters to someone who is willing to listen and to someone who will not judge their thoughts and behaviour. My intuition on this matter was not unfounded.

Finally, I opted to conduct the interviews at school because I made constant reference to other 16 to 17 year old young people and it was my belief that by remaining in that environment for the interviews would enable easy recall. Being surrounded by their peers would make it easier to remember what they and their friends discuss and do.

### **3.3. Individual and focus group interviews**

According to Gaskell (2000, pp.38-39), qualitative interviewing is a widely used methodology for data collection which allows the interviewer "to map and understand the respondents' life world". The research then uses interpretive frameworks to understand the participants' accounts of their experiences. Qualitative interviewing includes the use of semi-structured interviews with a single respondent in an in-depth interview or with a group of participants in a focus group. The objective of qualitative interviewing is to obtain data that provides an understanding of the participants' beliefs, attitudes, values and reasons for particular responses in relation to social contexts.

The difference between the depth interview and the focus group is that the interviewer becomes a catalyst for communication amongst the respondents in the focus interview whereas in the depth interview it is a one on one process (Gaskell, 2000, p. 46). The purpose of the focus group is to provide a platform for the participants to hear each other and to

respond to each other to determine whether there are significant differences or correlation with regard to a topic. It allows for social interaction (Gaskell, 2000, p. 46) and includes participants' responses such as "No way" which immediately leads to heated discussion. I found this to be the case for certain statements made during the focus group interview. Many researchers have met with success by using focus group interviews when exploring sexual behaviour (Gaskell, 2000, p.47). I opted for the use of semi-structured interviews because it allowed the participants to digress and provide additional information which I may not have thought of. Nieuwenhuis (2007, p. 87) makes reference to 'new emerging lines of inquiry' that could be explored. On the other hand, the semi-structured interview permitted me to redirect the participant should he/she completely have lost focus of the study at hand. Fortunately, this situation did not arise.

The irony with regard to my study is that the gatekeepers are always concerned about the 'sensitivity' of a topic like sexual cultures with young people, yet young people's sexual activities have been highlighted by AIDS statistics. Young people are sexually active irrespective of whether they are knowledgeable about risk taking or not. Adults on the other hand, especially in the Indian community, share much in common with ex-President Thabo Mbeki and his denialist attitude (Archer & Boler, 2008, p.57). The president's attitude created a crisis in the handling of AIDS in South Africa (Archer & Boler, 2008, p.115). Any form of denial will result in the Indian community being at high risk with regard to STDs, but they would rather have it that way than admit that their children are active sexual beings who are in need of education with regard to sexual risk taking. A point to note at this juncture is that in an attempt to increase awareness on breast cancer amongst female students, a speaker was called in to address the girls at an assembly. One of the questions the speaker asked was if the girls would like to test for HIV/AIDS. A number of them indicated that they would like to. This suggested that young girls could be active and if given the opportunity, probably on anonymity only, they would undergo tests.

According to Leclerc-Madlala (2002, p.27), inasmuch as there are AIDS research studies that are conducted on a larger scale, research studies conducted on a smaller scale in specific locations also reveal important information about sexualities and risky behaviour. One of the findings was that there is no adult-youth discussion on sexual matters. Therefore this study attempts to explore the causes and effects of the contexts young people find themselves in.

The researcher tries to develop a detailed explanation “to account for human and social behaviour” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p.23).

While the focus interview allows the participants to interact with one another and the information elicited here could bring out information that may be omitted in the individual interviews, my main concern here was whether the participants would understand how delicate the information was that was provided, and respect one another’s right to privacy.

### **3.4. Locating the study: a combination of exploratory research and the interpretive paradigm**

The aim of the interpretive paradigm is to understand how each person experiences his personal development (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p.21). The intention is “to understand the subjective world of human experience” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p.21). The researcher tries to understand why the participants think and behave in particular ways – in this study it is about understanding how young Indian people develop their sexualities. However, because studies on the sexualities of young Indians in South Africa are so limited, there is a need firstly to explore the ways in which they develop their sexualities. According to Schutt (2006, p. 14), exploratory research “investigates social phenomena without explicit expectations”.

The interpretive paradigm has its origins in hermeneutics – the study of the theory and practice of interpretation (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, p.58). The interpretivist approach is based on the following assumptions: human life can only be understood from a person’s subjective experiences; by studying people in their social contexts, it becomes possible to understand and interpret the construction of social life; the richness, depth and complexities of phenomena facilitate an understanding of how human beings assign meaning to phenomena and various social contexts; social contexts affect the way people behave; finally, the social world does not exist as an entity by itself – it is influenced by human knowledge (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, pp. 59-60). According to Nieuwenhuis, (2007, p.60), one of the main strengths of qualitative research is that it produces rich, in-depth data. Interpretive research is “guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p.33).

According to Berger and Luckmann (1966, pp. 201-211), “the sociology of knowledge understands human reality as socially constructed reality”. This implies that knowledge is constantly constructed and re-constructed because the history of man is an ongoing process and that society and culture which is ever changing affects the way in which human beings assign meaning to their experiences. Gergen (2003, p.15) refers to the process of understanding the world as social constructionism. Social constructionism is also juxtaposed with social constructivism.

### **3.5. The research process**

#### **3.5.1. The research site**

My research was conducted in a state high school which is situated in a low to middle income area which is bordered by a high income area. Students from the high income area also attend this school which has a large Indian population.

The decision to conduct my study at this site was fourfold. Firstly it is a co-educational school. My study included both boys and girls. So access to both the sexes would not pose a problem. Secondly, the school had a large Indian population; therefore if any participant chose to opt out of the research, I could approach other students. Thirdly, gaining access to the students in or out of school was easy because we did not live far from one another. Finally, it was feasible to conduct research at the school because the students and I were familiar with one another and they had consented to participating in the study.

Since the interviews would only see me interacting with the participants, it was not necessary to inform other staff members about the research because interviews were conducted outside lesson time and at the participants’ convenience. Also there was the matter of confidentiality. The interviews were of a highly personal nature and the participants needed the assurance that I would not violate their trust. Therefore the study was conducted as unobtrusively as possible.

According to Allen (2005, p.20), “gaining access to schools for research is often challenging due to a highly regulatory environment”. The principal of the school was the only person who was informed of the research. Unfortunately this is the point at which the first stumbling block to the research presented itself. I presented a written request to the principal at the end

of June 2010 that I wished to conduct research at the school with a group of boys and girls, however, the principal was reluctant to do so and stated that it was best to obtain permission from the manager of the Umlazi district because researching school-going children was a sensitive issue. Parents and pupils could have issues with the research. This was a case of 'gatekeeping' – (Cohen & Manion, 2007, p. 109) where the researcher is denied access to the people who are being selected for the study. I explained to the principal that I had already addressed the pupils and that they were keen on the research, and that all I needed to do was to obtain written consent from the parents and the participants, however, the principal continued to express reservation. Due to the five week holiday due to the World Cup and the subsequent teachers' strike, permission was only granted in the first week of September. By then nine weeks had passed and it was time for the September tests and conducting the interviews became a balancing act because I did not want to interfere with their learning schedules. Despite this unfortunate delay, the interviews got under way successfully and with no detriment to the participants' schedules.

### **3.5.2. Selection of the participants**

Since my study is about the sexual cultures of 16 to 17 year olds, purposeful sampling was the most suitable technique to employ in selecting the participants. Purposive sampling in qualitative research involves the selection of participants on the basis of certain characteristics, needs or purpose (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p.115). Firstly, participation was voluntary. Secondly the participants had to be in the above mentioned age group. Thirdly, they had to be involved in relationships. Consequently the participants "fit the criteria of desirable participants" (Henning, 2004, p. 122). I did not specify that relationships had to be heterosexual. Inasmuch as my study focuses on heterosexual relationships, I was interested in finding out if the participants engaged in alternative forms of sexualities. As it happened, all the participants were in relationships with someone of the opposite gender.

The participants were of South African Indian descent. Six of the participants were Hindu with either a Tamil or Telegu vernacular or a combination of both, if the parents were from different language groups. Kevin followed the Christian faith while Sohail was Muslim. The interviews indicated that religious beliefs did play an important role in the choice of partners for some of the participants.

Three of the pupils lived in Havenside (Unit 1), two in Bayview (Unit 2), one in Westcliff (Unit 3), one in Kharwastan, and one in Silverglen. These areas are considered to be smaller residential units in Chatsworth. Silverglen and Kharwastan are considered to be middle income to high income suburbs. As the participants indicated in the interviews, certain parts of Bayview and Westcliff can be regard as low income areas while other parts indicate middle class status. Certain types of cars and houses were indicators of the level of wealth that exists in those areas.

Six of the eight participants responded promptly by returning the consent forms timeously. I had to call the other two boys and remind them at least four times prior to them bringing in the forms. I did not want any of the participants to discuss the study with one another to avoid collaboration which could have influenced the study negatively. I preferred that they remain true to their own experiences. I spoke to each participant individually about the study and assured them that their contribution to it would be based on anonymity. They understood that they were at liberty to withdraw from the study if they so wished to. This could have happened if the participants felt that the information required would be too personal. To ensure that this did not occur, whenever I met them individually, I kept highlighting the fact about personal information being required and queried if that was acceptable to them. They did not seem to mind although I had concerns about them having cold feet at the eleventh hour. Their main concern was confidentiality – they did not want anyone to know their identities.

According to Stake, ‘qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world’ (2005, p.459). They should practise good manners and a strict code of ethics.

### 3.5.3. The data collection process

The following table is the plan for data collection which helped to maintain focus for the interview. The questions used for developing the data plan has been sourced from Vithal and Jansen (1997, p.22).

Questions for developing a data collection plan	Responses and justification for the data collection plan
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<p>1. Why is the data being collected?</p>	<p>a) To explore how 16-17 year old Indian boys and girls give meanings to their sexualities.</p> <p>b) To explore how 16-17 old Indian girls perceive their sexuality</p> <p>c) To determine how 16-17 year old Indian boys understand themselves as sexual subjects</p> <p>d) To explore the understandings of sexualities for Life Orientation and sex education programmes</p>
<p>2. What is the research strategy?</p>	<p>a) Semi-structured interviews with individual learners</p> <p>b) Focus group interview</p>
<p>3. Who will be the sources of data?</p>	<p>a) 16-17 year old South African girls and boys of Indian descent who are involved in relationships. This choice is informed by the literature that suggests a scarcity of information on the subject.</p>
<p>4. How many of the data sources will be accessed?</p>	<p>a) Four girls and four boys from the same school. This choice of four each is informed by the purposeful sampling that privileges duration and the number of relationships the participants has been involved in relationships. The use of eight students is necessary- should any participant withdraw, there will still be sufficient participants to complete the study.</p>
<p>5. Where is the data to be collected?</p>	<p>a) At a secondary school in the lower to middle income group in the Chatsworth township because attitudes towards sex and sexualities are influenced by race, class, gender, social situations and settings (Weeks, 2003, p.53).</p>
<p>6. How often will data be collected?</p>	<p>a) 1 semi-structured interview with each participant</p> <p>b) one focus interview with all eight participants</p>
<p>7. How will the data be collected?</p>	<p>a) 8 tape-recorded semi-structured individual interviews</p> <p>b) one tape-recorded focus interview</p>
<p>8. Why is the instrument appropriate?</p>	<p>a) In the semi-structured interview, there will be evidence of how each participant develops sexual ideologies in relation to social situations and settings</p> <p>b) The focus interview allows building on data gathered in the</p>

	<p>structured interview; brings together varied opinions as well as similarities in a collective interview (Cohen &amp; Manion, 2007, p.376).</p> <p>c) The researcher will be able to determine the validity of information provided in the semi-structured interview by comparing it against information provided in the focus interview and vice versa. It will show whether participants tend to agree or disagree on certain issues and whether peers influence change of views in the focus interview.</p>
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### 3.5.3.1. The interview process

Eight individual interviews and one focus group interview were conducted to elicit data. The reason for using these two methods was for the purpose of triangulation. The duration of the interviews ranged from twelve minutes to thirty-four minutes. The focus group interview was twenty minutes long. Bringing the participants together proved to be a major task. On the one day when we had all agreed to meet and had sufficient time for the focus group interview, one of the boys simply went home without informing us. The others were peeved that he did that because they had made transport arrangements. Fortunately, prior to conducting the interviews, I had informed all participants that I would take them home after the interviews and that they had the use of my cell phone to call their parents at any point in time for any reason at all, however more especially if there was a delay. The second time one of the boys had to undertake stock delivery for his father's business. The third time proved lucky, however, time was the issue because the participants were writing the next day.

All the interviews were conducted in school in my classroom or another available room. Five of the individual interviews were conducted on the last day of the term after the final test. It seemed the best and only time available time for the interviews. Any later would result in further delay with the research and encroach on the participants' study schedules. Prior to the interview I asked each interviewee to read the questions to have an idea as to what would be asked in the interview. The reason for this was to ensure transparency regarding the study and that there was no invasion of privacy. Some of the participants spoke at length while the others spoke for shorter periods. Some were nervous because they did not know what to

expect or aware of the dictaphone. I advised them to relax and ‘just chat’. Once the interview began, the participants settled into it and what followed can best be described as a world and wealth of information. There were serious moments and funny moments. However, mainly, they seemed to be fascinated that they were actually talking about relationships, gender identities and their thoughts on sexualities. That an adult was interested in what young people think and do and was willing to listen was also “like what’s going on here?”

The interviews were semi-structured, and this structure allowed the participants to query or elaborate on other issues that were unwittingly presented or misunderstood. A description and discussion on interviews followed earlier. The focus group interview showed mixed reactions. At least one girl remained very quiet. Although I asked for contributions a couple of times, she was not too forthcoming. According to Allen (2005, p. 86), the focus group provides a forum for the participants to shape their own sexual identities by disclosing or concealing about their sexual selves. On the other hand, one boy dominated the discussion; however, I made the attempt to redirect questions to the others in the group. It was quite difficult because they were interrupting each other or talking at once and I was not quite sure how to deal with that. The focus group interview highlighted my novice status as an interviewer. I was however keen on the focus group because I wanted to establish the extent to which the data from that correlated with the individual interview.

#### **3.5.4. Data analysis**

The most important aspect in qualitative data analysis is the focus on the text (Schutt, 2006, p. 326); which in this study was the transcripts of the interviews. The purpose of data analysis is to make sense of the data from the perspective of the participants (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p.461). In analysing data, the researcher looked for recurring patterns, themes and similarities. One of the difficulties I experienced in presenting the data findings was to compartmentalise the themes because they were inextricably related and often it felt as if there was a repetition of certain points.

The first step was to listen and re-listen to the interviews that had been taped on a dictaphone. The purpose of this was to transcribe the data as accurately as possible. This was a difficult task because clarity of the recordings was not always guaranteed. Secondly, being a novice researcher meant that I was nervous about whether or not the interviews were being recorded.

Being of Indian descent myself, meant that I was able to follow the manner of speech of the interviewees quite well. I asked for immediate explanation of new terminology or certain types of behaviour mentioned by the participants of which I was unaware or did not fully understand.

The second step was to listen again to the interviews and compare them again to the typed transcripts and to fill in or correct information. The transcripts were then handed to the participants to conduct a member check, and to sign and return the transcripts. The participants were advised to check carefully; make additions, deletions or corrections. The transcripts had to be signed and returned as soon as the participants were able to.

I used different colours to demarcate recurring themes. I made note of the changes to the transcripts.

Some of the following themes emerged:

- 1) Young people and age of first sexual experience
- 2) Closeting sexualities
- 3) Love, trust and sexual relationships
- 4) Pregnancy, not HIV/AIDS
- 5) The impact of race, class and gender in relationships amongst young Indian people

### **3.5.5. Validity**

One of the purposes of validating data is to ensure it is dependable, confirmable and can be generalised (Shaw, 1999, p.64). However, my focus is to create a well informed database on my chosen topic, therefore the data has to be honest, deep and rich (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p.133). In this way I can measure whether it is dependable and reliable. It is not the aim of this study to provide generalisations. It is to provide knowledge that facilitates an understanding of sexualities amongst teenagers in the Indian community. The personal experiences, beliefs and value systems of the participants lends bias and subjectivity to the data, however, qualitative research accepts the data as the truth because they are the expression of lived experiences (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, p.57), therefore the data becomes valid. Secondly, member checking was used to verify the participants' data. Participants had to read

the transcripts to correct errors and add further information if they so wished to (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p.137).

To validate my data, I used combined levels of triangulation. “Triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p.141). This includes more than one level of analysis, i.e. the individual level and the interactive level (groups) (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p.142). I was also interested in finding out whether the participants’ responses in the focus interview differed from responses in the individual interview. Different scenarios present themselves in group discussions. For example, an outspoken, vociferous person may retreat into the role of observer in the group discussion or provide basic information which is not at all controversial. On the other hand, some participants have recourse to reflect on what they have said and may have to reconsider their responses. Furthermore, information that may have been omitted might present itself at the focus interview.

Perhaps the most important part of the data collection process would be when the information is matched, contrasted, aggregated and compared (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p.462). Once the transcripts of the interviews were prepared, I went back to the respondents with an appeal to them to read and ensure that the transcripts were in order. They had to read and sign the transcript to validate its authenticity.

### **3.5.6. Reliability**

Many terms are used to describe reliability in qualitative research - some of which include credibility, confirmability, dependability and consistency (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Replication of data is a more workable strategy in quantitative research; however, Denzin and Lincoln (1994) have devised at least three ways in which reliability can be replicated for qualitative research. Unfortunately these methods are more suited to observations rather than the interview process. Silverman (1993) suggests the use of “highly structured” interviews with the identical format and “sequence of words and questions” for each participant. However, the processes of probing and explanation are restricted hence the need for semi-structured interviews (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, p.87). Qualitative interview research usually involves small samples and the reliability of the interview schedule and representativeness of

the sample is an important methodological issue, however, the authentic understanding of the participants' experiences takes precedence to sample size (Silverman, 2006, p. 20).

### **3.5.7. Trustworthiness**

An important concern for me is whether the participants will be honest in providing data or simply telling me what they believe I may want to hear. Trustworthiness is of paramount importance to me for the research to be an honest reflection of what 16-17 year olds really think and experience with regard to their relationships and sexualities. I believe the same will be expected of me by the participants with regard to how I interpret and present the data they have provided. My task will be to present transcripts and data analysis to them to ensure that there are no inconsistencies. According to Flick (2006, p. 248), "credibility refers to the accurateness of the documentation, the reliability of the producer of the document, the freedom of errors."

### **3.5.8. Ethical considerations**

My main concern regarding the issue of gender, sex and sexualities is that most people consider it to be a sensitive topic and at my workplace and within the community, sex and sexualities remain closeted. While the pupils had indicated verbally that they were willing to participate, they could have chosen to withdraw had they considered the information required as too personal. Secondly, the parents could have taken offence to the fact that the study deals with sex, gendered identities and sexualities and could have withdrawn the participants from a study of that nature. Finally and more importantly, I was also the participants' teacher. The students could question my integrity with regard to confidentiality and the ability to separate their identities as my participants and my students. Unfortunately, I had no control over the participants and/or the parents' right to withdraw; however, I was completely capable of separating the student and participant identities. Under normal circumstances, I have always respected the students' confidentiality so I did not foresee any problem other than the choice of topic. According to Flick (2006, p. 46), participants in a research study participate on the basis of informed consent. Research should not harm participants, invade their privacy or withhold the aim of the study. In this regard I informed the participants of the study and its aim prior to obtaining written consent to give them time to make a decision. I sought the principal's permission in writing first. This was not granted but redirected to the district office which granted permission nine weeks later. This was a hurdle to my study in

terms of time management and was too near the term tests. Getting some of the participants together was a problem. The parents were co-operative and sent in their forms. However one participant lost one of the forms and had to complete another.

The topic was presented in a way that those granting consent could understand because people are not usually interested in 'technical and theoretical research questions' (Silverman, 2006, p. 325). To ensure that the participants and their information remain unidentifiable, names have been changed when excerpts from the interviews were used (Flick, 2006, p. 50). The school name was changed.

Another important consideration was the way in which questions were asked in the focus group interview. The questions allowed the participants to voice their opinions without having to reveal their personal thoughts yet their answers correlated (see transcripts) with the discussions in the individual interviews. The participants also understood the information was of a highly personal nature and did not speak to each other about it. Each of the eight transcripts clearly indicates the individual nature of responses to the interview questions which makes it clear that there was no discussion amongst them about what the individual interviews were about.

Finally, the discussion on gendered identities is a sensitive one because it delves into the construction of one's sexual self. Therefore I constantly reminded the students in personal discussions that the information required was of an intensely personal nature and that honesty was the thing that would lend validity to the study. I do not believe that it would have been possible to ask students from other schools to share this type of information with me because they would have to have known me well enough to trust me. A welfare organisation I approached to merely provide AIDS statistics refused on the grounds of a breach of confidentiality. Therefore it did not make sense to ask students from other schools to participate in the study. They would not have trusted me on such personal matters. The issue of my position as teacher-researcher is also discussed in the paragraph on limitations.

### **3.5.9. Limitations**

A cause for concern was my position of power seeing that I was the participants' teacher and researcher. I hoped to be able to convince the learners that my role as researcher would not influence the manner in which I teach and treat them knowing the type of knowledge they would divulge to me. The pupils were somewhat shy to mention, for example, certain types of sexual behaviour which I would then refer to in the proper term and they would confirm. It was not a key issue but it deserves mention because it indicates reservation on the part of the participants to speak of certain explicit matters. This could be because I was an educator and they would have thought it disrespectful to be explicit with terminologies. However, I did explain to them prior to each interview and the focus group that it was best to speak freely and say things exactly as they wanted to, to be true to the research.

Secondly, the eight participants do not represent the entire population of 16-17 year old Indians in Chatsworth. However, their contributions provide information with regard to what they think and do as well as how their peers behave which help us to understand young Indian sexualities.

### **3.6. Conclusion**

The focus of Chapter 3 was on research methodology, methods, data collection, the analysis of data and the process of triangulation to ensure validity, reliability and trustworthiness. It also focused on the limitations of the study particularly with regard to 'gate keeping' and how this affected setting up and completing the interviews.

## CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

### 4.1. Introduction

In this study, the sexual cultures of young Indians located in a middle income former Indian township in Durban are explored. As noted in this study, research on Indian sexual behaviour and the development of gendered identities amongst Indians, especially young Indians are negligible (see as exceptions Kaufman & Stavrou, 2004 and Bhana & Pattman, 2008). It is imperative that we have a comprehensive understanding of sexuality to provide relevant guidelines for safe sexual practices and to ensure that Life Orientation programmes are culturally sensitive. Sexuality is socially and culturally constructed. Therefore it is important to understand the development of young Indians against their social and cultural background. One aspect of sexuality as it is understood amongst South African Indians is the degree of conservatism. Open discussions of sexuality are often taboo, particularly as parents are seen to regulate the sexual lives of young adults. As Bhana and Pattman (2008, p. 104) note, Indian girls are under social and cultural pressure to behave in way “which legitimises sexual shame and places great prestige upon the maintenance and performance of respectability and reputation”. As a result of this type of regulation, Indian girls may be hesitant about expressing their sexualities because of shame and guilt attached to sexual behaviour.

As will be shown in this chapter, sexual inequalities are reproduced with boys maintaining that Indian girls must maintain a sense of respect by remaining faithful to ‘one’ husband while the same is not expected of males as suggested by a female learner in the study. In other words, it is ‘understood’ that males are not expected to be faithful.

It is against this backdrop that this study reflects how young people establish their sexualities. Young people have sexual agency. This chapter will show that they are active in producing their gendered and sexual identities. They are aware of AIDS, sexual risk taking, the need to condomise and to practise safe sex. The awareness of HIV/AIDS doubled amongst young people aged between 15-24 years from 2005 to 2008 (HSRC, 2009, p. xvii). A study conducted by Peltzer and Promtussananon (2005, p.3) shows that young white people had the most knowledge about HIV/AIDS, followed by Indians. However, this awareness (for young Indian people) is not on the basis of health concerns. Safe sex is directly related to a

community concern – that of unplanned and/or unwanted pregnancies. Shame and stigma are attached to pre-marital sexual relations and pregnancy outside marriage as well as ‘other’ types of sexuality, especially by the elders in the family. This chapter will focus on the following themes:

- 1) Young people and age of first sexual experience
- 2) Closeting sexualities
- 3) Love, trust and sexual relationships
- 4) Pregnancy, not HIV/AIDS
- 5) The impact of race, class and gender in relationships amongst young Indian people

The chapter will show that young Indians are sexual subjects, who negotiate forms of sexuality through which gender inequalities are produced. Despite the sexual regulation experienced amongst South African Indians within cultural and social contexts, young Indian people are actively exploring sex and sexuality. However they do so against the cultural constraints which attempts to construct young sexualities as taboo. The chapter will also show that the major concern for young people is not AIDS, but pregnancy. Being pregnant is far more serious because the sexual shame associated with pregnancy is a visible confirmation of young people’s sexual lives. Being pregnant is also regarded as an obstacle to educational success – a key marker of young people’s aspirations. Finally the chapter will focus on race, gender and class through which Indian sexualities are regulated, hierarchies created and cultural values placed on virginity and gender insubordination.

#### **4.2. Sexual debut at 16...**

Young people are aware of themselves as sexual beings and sexual experimentation including first sexual intercourse begins at sixteen, in particular for boys. Their partners are usually a year younger or the same age. According to a study by Peltzer and Promtussananon (2005, p.3) the age of sexual debut for students was 23.6% at 16 years , 22.1% at 17 years and 26.7% at 18 years and above. The percentage rate for students who were sexually active at 15 years and younger was lower. The percentage rates for 16-17 year olds are not too far apart regarding sexual debut. Of the eight participants, five indicated that sexual debut occurred at around 16 years of age. Sometimes the girls were at least a year younger than the boys. Girls usually had boyfriends their age or 3-4 years older. One participant indicated that it would be better to wait until 18 years of age; to undergo medical tests, consider

contraception to avoid pregnancy and other risks prior to engaging in sexual relations. The other two (girls) discussed their views on sex against a religious background, however, the element of curiosity and sexual awareness is a reality. Consider this:

*1) Researcher: Leave aside vital force. What about just your physical self and how you feel about your boyfriend? I mean there comes a time when you can't control.*

*Shanice: Um well. There have been a few times when I thought you know what – I'm young. I'm not gonna do this again but then I also thought of the consequences and the problems thereof. It probably told me that you know what? What if this ends badly? Then how is this gonna affect your life? Like once a person has been in a sexual relationship and it ends badly. It emotionally – it damages them. So I've used other examples and I've combined with my religion and thought: you know what, this is something that can wait. It has to wait for a while because I'm in school. There's ambitions that you have to pursue and my parents as well.*

The participant has considered the idea of a sexual relationship; however, religious values, the possibility of the relationship coming to an end, emotional pain, future ambitions and values inculcated by her parents present a deterrent to acting out the sexual desire. The significant point here is that desire is present amongst the youth irrespective of social and cultural values and that young people are constantly negotiating their sexual selves around this system of values. At times, these values act as the voice of reason; however desire is locked into this. In fact, sex for young girls is often seen as a way of demonstrating their love and trust for someone (Holland et al. 1990, p.336). On the other hand, she is concerned about her career and her parents' reaction.

Amongst the girls there were mixed views about whether they ought to be sexually active while at school or not. Firstly, there was concern about the continuity of a relationship especially after matric. The following excerpts bears reference:

*1) Sheena: I know like a lot of different people and some of the people I know, go like from just talking to actually sleeping with the person and others well, they hold out like.*

The participant shows that there are differing viewpoints amongst young females. Some choose to be sexually involved from the inception of a relationship while other girls prefer to wait.

2) Sheena: *Might get pregnant. That's my biggest fear. I won't want to do like something. That would be like. I've only been going out with him 5 or 6 months so if he decided to up and go, I think I would be shattered cos especially if I do that you know. I really like him.*

Pregnancy is a very real fear. Young girls found this very frightening because they were too young for motherhood. It was construed as a stumbling block in the career path that they had planned for themselves. There was also concern that it would have been too soon to begin sexual relations – the participant stated that she had not been too long in the relationship; however, it would have been devastating if the relationship ended for some reason. The possibility of pregnancy combined with a severed relationship was an unbearable thought. The participant felt incapable of dealing with emotional turmoil.

3) Researcher: *Some of these people who are already sexually active?*

Sheena: *Yah I think so. Not too often but whenever they can yuh. So I was like shocked...*

Researcher: *Why? Why were you shocked? Isn't that what they do?*

Sheena: *Yeh like they sleeping with each other knowing that they might break up next year. So it doesn't make sense to you.*

Researcher: *Doesn't make sense to you. What doesn't make sense? Why? What is telling you...?*

Sheena: *I think that when you know when you have sex with someone, it's someone that you want to be with, someone you plan on being with for a long time because it's supposed to be something special so.*

Finally, the participant found it incomprehensible that young people were involved in sexual relationships with the full knowledge that they would part ways after the matric year. Her belief was that sex was for a long term relationship like marriage. Sex was not to be construed as a random pleasure. This participant was also speaking from a religious point of view:

Researcher: *Alright. You think your culture influences what you thinking?*

Sheena: *Yeh, because what I've heard and what I've read, well it's supposed to be for procreation. Not after you have children, I think Swami Sivananda said you supposed to be celibate.*

Researcher: *You think you gonna do that?*

Sheena: *I don't think so but we try to follow as much as we can.*

What this also indicates is that young people find themselves in a dilemma in trying to negotiate themselves as sexual beings and religious beings. The young female knows what she has been taught according to His Holiness Swami Sivananda's teachings in terms of celibacy, however, sexual pleasure is a very real temptation. One of the teachings of Hinduism is the practice of celibacy until one marries. Even then, the purpose of intercourse is for procreation, not for pleasure. His Holiness Swami Sivananda (1887-1963) is regarded as the founder of the Divine Life society and the inspiration behind the formation of Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centres (<http://www.sivananda.org>). Swami Sivananda was born in South India and began life known as Kuppuswami. He qualified as a doctor and served the profession until 1922. When he realised that man's problems ran deeper than the physical body, he turned to religious practices for spiritual growth and enlightenment. His teachings can be summarised in six words: serve, love, give, purify, meditate and realise. Negotiating one's sexual identity against such spiritual teachings can therefore present numerous dilemmas to young people whose religious identity is held in tension with sexuality.

Another view was that if a girl was certain that she was in a long term relationship, it was acceptable to engage in sexual relationships while in school. Yet, despite all the reasoning, the possibility of relationships coming to an end was always at the back of all the participants' minds, not only those of the girls, although it seemed to be a greater concern for them.

The male participants were also concerned about betrayal or the relationship ending for any other reason. However, they spoke freely about the sexual pleasures of boys. They claimed that boys discuss with each other what they do with girls and that boys' talk in toilets was rife with this type of conversation. Consider the following excerpts:

1) Kevin: *Boys, say if you got a girlfriend in school right; all of us got like girlfriends so one boy will say I did this with a girl. I slept with her. This day she did this for me. It's not like right to talk about a girl. It's like degrading a girl.*

2) Kevin: *Yeh. That's how it is – that's how boys talk. In the toilet that's how it is – that's how they talk.*

Kevin believed that it was completely unacceptable that young boys discussed their sexual activities with each other because it was 'degrading'. It was clear that he believed that such talk was immoral because it brought disrepute to the girl. It also indicates that not all young boys are insensitive to girls as mere sexual objects. As Connell (1995) notes, sexualities are intimately linked to male power. However what is clear here are the ways in which masculinities are sexualised, the ways through which girls are objectified, but also the ways in which resistance to such objectification takes place.

Because there are certain expectations of Indian girls regarding the way they present themselves as sexual beings, I was interested in finding out about this so I asked about it in both in the individual interview and focus group interviews. In the focus interview, I asked whose idea it was to initiate physical intimacy. Sohail's reply was: "*How, we seduce girls, girls seduce us, it happens*" while Shanice replied: "*It works both ways*".

It is evident that girls experience desire and act on it in the same ways as boys. The girls are not waiting for advances. They are agentic in expressing their desires, however, when they express their agency, they are seen as wild girls and therefore not good Indian girls. In the individual interviews, the following are some of the comments that were made:

1) Researcher : *And you think girls speak about things like that?*

Kevin: *I'm not sure about girls but... girls are more like - they keep it to themselves but you get the wild ones; they tell it as it is.*

Researcher: *You know any of the wild ones like that?*

Kevin: *I know some.*

Researcher: *Hmm, what do they say?*

Kevin: *They say I slept with this boy and this fellow here. It's very stupid.*

2) Kevin: *It's really like – what can I say? It's not nice to hear a thing like that from a girl.*

Researcher: *But the boys talk about it in the toilets...*

Kevin: *Boys, it's normal for boys but for a girl now it's like not right because girls are seen to be you know like... I don't know how to explain this...*

Researcher: *You say it whichever way want to...*

Kevin: *Girls are like... perfect. Boys are like you know – must like jol. Must do this, must do that. That's why it is like that.*

Researcher: *So in other words girls are expected to be like this. So boys can talk openly about sex and things but girls mustn't.*

Kevin: *Girls can talk but not like how they doing now. Now it's like terrible. They're gone worse than the boys.*

3) Researcher: *And girls? Other girls you communicate with? What are they saying about boys?*

Yugen: *I know one group of girls, not all of them but one group of girls like they really open about it. They can speak in front of boys.*

Researcher: *Tell me what they say.*

Yugen: *They say "oh uh, I wouldn't mind him doing this - certain things to me and like if he did certain things to me, I'll – I wouldn't mind being with him because of this.*

4) Natasha: *Mainly it's about one thing and one thing only when it comes to boys and girls.*

Researcher: *How you mean?*

Natasha: *Like you know sex.*

Researcher: *So even the girls are the same? They want sex?*

Natasha: *Some girls are like that. Some girls are really like that, Some girls just wanna have... look for a boyfriend just for the fun of it. You know, to say you have a boyfriend?*

Researcher: *And that's without the sex?*

Natasha: *Yah. But some of them are interested in only that.*

Researcher: *In just sex?*

Natasha: *It gets so risky sometimes that some people I know; they actually fell pregnant.*

The above excerpts show that changes are taking place with reference to the sexualities of young Indian girls. While there are girls who do not give voice to their sexual selves or are

more guarded about what they say and do, there are other girls who are taking control of their sexual identities which has repercussions for the gendered experiences in relationships. According to Allen (2005, p.123), young girls who are sexually active prefer to keep it a private matter because maintaining an image of sexual innocence has certain advantages. 'Sexually innocent' girls are considered to be intelligent and highly regarded by parents. One of the important findings was the use of condoms at first sex. The girls were very clear about avoiding pregnancy at all costs. The boys on the other hand normalise male sexual power by stating that boys can speak as they wish to but girls should not do the same. This clearly indicates gender inequalities and also that girls should not reproduce gender inequalities by speaking in the same way that boys do. According to Dr. Rajab (Sunday Tribune, 05/09/2010, p. 4), the role of an Indian woman in the past had been clearly defined and women and the community knew what was expected of each other. However, exposure to Western culture and the workplace has resulted in changing perceptions with regard to the way in which women see themselves and the way in which the community sees them. Now that employment has empowered women financially, they are able to negotiate certain aspects of their lives on their own terms and this upsets patriarchal control and causes conflict. Therefore when young girls present themselves as agentic sexual beings, boys tend to believe that they are now entering the masculine domain. It is expected that that girls should be prim and proper in their speech and mannerisms. It can be concluded that the heterosexual terrain where boys use masculine entitlement to use language that subordinate girls is sometimes disregarded. On the other hand, the heteronormative matrix is applied regarding what is socially expected and accepted from girls and boys. This shows the fluidity of the heterosexual matrix and the construction of sexual identity of contemporary Indian youth in Chatsworth.

Another important point that emerged in the focus group interview was that, despite boys saying that it did not take a long time to have sex with a girl, they contradicted themselves by saying that they had to "throw it up" (to sweet talk the girl) first and that took a little while. For most Indian boys around 16-17, sex at this age is usually their first time so they do not seem to have the kind of experience that adults do. Both the boys and girls also mentioned that sex occurred usually when the girls' parents were away from home. Condoms were kept in readiness for these opportune moments. The boys usually took care of the purchases of condoms.

It is clearly evident that young Indian peoples' lives and relationships are complex, filled with contradictions; fraught with fears, difficulties and uncertainties yet there is the desire to make the correct decisions for themselves. The participants share common views and also express differences of opinion. However, ultimately the development of sexual identities is an individual experience which is shaped by the culture and the value system of the individual family unit, the person himself/herself and the broader social context of Chatsworth, Durban.

It is appropriate to sum up this section by stating that "In short, all participants expressed an interest in sexual experimentation before marriage even while the parameters of acceptability of 'experimentation' varied considerably across groups" Kaufman and Stavrou (2004, p. 383).

### **4.3. Parental regulation of sexuality**

Despite the openness in discussion around sexualities amongst young people as described above, such discussion in relation to parents and families remain closeted. According to Bhana and Pattman (2008, p. 103), the sexuality of Indian girls is strongly regulated despite the girls' strong sexual agency. In Indian culture, the family unit is the foundation of the Indian way of life (Crompton, 1971, p. 35). Marriages for boys and girls were arranged by the parents and these unions were influenced by the caste system. In recent times, the emphasis on marriage within the caste has lessened to a degree. Marriage in traditional Indian society was based on factors other than love. Historically, many Indian marriages have been based on factors such as the suitability of the boy or girl's family in relation to ethnicity, caste and financial security.

According to Voiels (1998, p. 95), "in the past the partners were always chosen by the parents, but now the couple have more of a say in the matter and so marriages are 'guided' rather than 'arranged', especially in Britain". For young Muslim people, marriage proposals are arranged by the elders once interest is shown by a boy in a particular girl (Kuppusami, 1983, p. 127). The important factor here is that parents were always instrumental in arranging, if not guiding young people with regard to marriage. However, change is imminent in that young people are now making their own choice of marriage partners and from time to time, this may not co-incide with the expectations of the parents, culture or religion. Amongst Hindus, parents believe it is their duty to provide their children with a

sound educational background, see them properly employed and eventually ‘settling down’ – getting married (Kuppusami, 1983, p. 23). In South Africa, changing notions of love and marriage have resulted in the erosion of arranged marriages. Although this is still practised, the arranging of marriages is viewed as a conservative, outdated practice and against the ideals of love which many young Indian people believe is an expression of their agency against the regulatory environment of culture and parents. The following excerpt bears testimony to this:

*Shanice: I think a lot of them have declined arranged marriages because they have fallen in love and this whole aspect of falling in love – it probably gives them this state of mind that says you know what – I’m responsible. It’s my life. Young girls now – I know in America when they are 18 – they leave the house. 18 in Unit 1 – you stay at home and you help your granny, that is it and I think you only leave your house when you get married... I think arranged marriages, from experience – my cousin – she was in love with somebody at high school but my uncle being the tyrant he is, he refused to let her go out with this man... It happened when she was 18. She’s married somebody else now. He’s financially secure but she’s also independent so now there’s a mutual understanding but she’s always told me that an arranged marriage is not exactly the answer but if you have parents that are so persistent that you can’t disobey them, then you forced into it.*

While many young people these days are in a position to make personal choices regarding boyfriends and girlfriends, there are others who cannot do so. It depends on the control parents wield over their children as well as the extended family system which was inscribed in Indian families, although this is changing. Shanice refers to the tension between love and arranged marriages and the ways in which an uncle was able to wield power to dissuade his daughter from a love marriage. These practices date back to Indian cultural environments. It also depends on how parents interact with their children. In a traditional Hindu family for example, an important role of the parents was to select marriage partners for their sons and daughters (Bahree, 1992, p. 22).

Generally though, boys are at liberty to go out with friends and have girlfriends. According to Reddy (2005, p. 15), “boys did not experience this kind of strong message of abstinence from sexual activity” as girls did. Not only were boys given free rein, there were subtle

covert messages to use condoms. The type of control exerted over girls did not extend towards boys. Girls' agency is constrained in relation to that of boys (see Bhana & Pattman, 2008, p.103). The idea of their daughters having boyfriends is not a palatable idea with many parents. The participants in the study indicated that young people will tell those parents who are approachable about relationships as in having a girlfriend or boyfriend; however, their sexual relationships remain completely closeted. For example, Shanice states that an Indian girl will not have the type of independence that an American (white) girl will have. Evident here is the idealisation of the freedom of the white girls in the North as opposed to that of the South. The position and claim here is that American women are free in contrast to the conservative life of Indian girls in South Africa. The extended family system with the presence of a grandmother, who is dependant but also exerts her authority, is unavoidable. The main concern with parents is not about AIDS, STDs, or abusive relationships. The underlying concern is pregnancy outside marriage. Consider the following excerpt:

Sheena: *Talk about that. My mother will butcher me if I have to go home pregnant or that. For now that's out.*

Researcher: *So you worried about what your mum has to say. If you had an opportunity to, would you?*

Sheena: *At the moment I think I'm too afraid of what might happen.*

Researcher: *Meaning?*

Sheena: *Might get pregnant. That's my biggest fear. I won't want to do like something. That would be like. I've only been going out with him 5 or 6 months so if he decided to up and go, I think I would be shattered cos especially if I do that you know. I really like him.*

As far as Indian parents are concerned in general, their children are not having sex, so if the problem of pregnancy arises, then the parents are going to be very angry. According to Rajab (Sunday Tribune, 05/09/2010, p. 4), "Indian culture is a shame-oriented culture rather than a guilt-oriented culture". "Saving face" is an important part of the Indian way of life. The following two excerpts indicate the type of restrictive behaviour and lack of communication that exists between young Indian people and their parents or grandparents as authority figures:

1) Shanice: *I remember my gran telling me when I was in Grade 9: “Dare you get a boyfriend, I’m gonna throw you out onto the street with your bin bags.” That was one of my biggest fears. To tell my parents because my mum and I have a very close relationship. There’s no secrets, there’s no boundaries.*

2) Deshnee: *I told my mum I really liked this guy and she says who’s this guy now cos my mother and I now have a very close relationship. I tell her everything, just everything.*

Researcher: *Oh ok. You think lots of other girls have this relationship with...*

Deshnee: *Not really because some of these parents, they don’t give their daughters this chance to have this relationship. It’s like they don’t ask their daughters questions or look at their views...*

Researcher: *Would you say this is common amongst Indian parents?*

Deshnee: *It’s very common because they rely more on traditions to bring their daughters up.*

Researcher: *What traditions?*

Deshnee: *Like you only allowed to have sex after marriage. You only allowed to date the guy if your parents arranged the guy for you and stuff like that. That they bring their daughters up like that. So if a child wants to have a relationship, they can’t be open about it. They can’t talk to their parents about that.*

Being a young Indian person in love, especially for girls, can be quite daunting, given the cultural scripts which position girls in subordinate roles in relation to sexuality and gender. According to Reddy (2005, p.14), (Indian) girls between the ages of 15-19 felt tremendously pressured by their families to present themselves as innocent and sexually uninformed despite their being sexually knowledgeable. “The girls felt that it was not possible to discuss personal and intimate issues with adults “because the parents would think that they were ‘loose’ and only ‘interested in sex’ ”(Reddy, 2005, p.14). What we see above, however, is the extent to which some girls do in fact communicate with their mothers. The participants focused only on their mothers and not their fathers in relation to open communication regarding sexuality. The mother was favoured amongst both boys and girls with regard to the disclosure of relationships. This is particularly interesting because the Indian father wields much power in the patriarchal home, however talk about love and sex with the father is not a point of consideration.

Open discussion around sexuality requires a minimisation of power relationships and it is the mother that is most able to fulfil this in relation to the participants' ability to communicate about sex. The absence of focus around the father thus confirms the power embedded in his role and thus the inability of young people to share such confidentialities with the father. The following excerpt is of a male participant who felt he could talk to his mother about his relationship, but excluding anything to do with sex:

Researcher: *Huh! So you have like an easygoing relationship with your mum?*

Sohail: *Yep.*

Researcher: *Do you think that all Indian children have an easygoing relationship with their parents?*

Sohail: *That depends.*

Researcher: *Why?*

Sohail: *Parents are like uh, how can I tell you?*

Researcher: *Why?*

Sohail: *Because the parents are strict. Indian parents are strict. They concerned about our well being. And teenagers want to be free. They do not really understand about lifestyles now as life was back then.*

Sohail illustrates the generational and cultural tensions between younger and older Indians. Sohail is critical of the strictness and the lifestyles of the past and of an older generation of Indian life and juxtaposes this against the freedoms that young Indians now desire.

The participants presented their mothers as very approachable people; however, there appeared to be issues with the father figures. Firstly, Indian society is patriarchal in nature. Although many women are breadwinners either professionally or in industry, their status remains subordinate. This is not to say that women are completely subservient but in certain instances, any female attempting to exercise her independence has been subjected to violence or even ridicule by men. According to the President of Child Welfare Chatsworth, Logan Naidoo, incidents of violent behaviour against women and children are on the increase, with women being subjected to emotional and physical abuse (Nair, 2010, p.1). Also, the participants indicated that there were young people who grow against a backdrop of social problems such as divorce, alcoholism and physical abuse by fathers on mothers. These issues

contributed toward the way they shaped their gendered identities. It determined their choice of partner and type of relationship they wished to pursue.

Young people also resented the constant surveillance by adults, especially family. This is probably the reason why sexual relationships remain secret. In this way they do not have to answer to parents and the community. The following excerpt from the focus group bears testimony to this:

Natasha: *I feel that neighbours and family should just butt out.*

Researcher: *Alright, and what you feel? (to male learner)*

Avesh: *People in the community they just talk, they just too close and they just talk too much about other people, they just wanna gossip.*

It was interesting to note that the participants did not refer to teachers as another source of surveillance. Teachers were referred to in the light of HIV/AIDS education and Life Orientation. It was a general feeling among the participants that the teachers were competent in informing them about HIV and risk taking. The following excerpts bear reference:

1) Researcher: *Tell me at school, the teachers, we spoke about parents and all that. You find in terms of the way you growing as a young boy 16, 17. What do teachers think like in terms of Life Orientation? Do they have enough discussion about sexual relationships and all that that you think can help you?*

Avesh: *Well I feel now at this level, my last year of school, I don't feel that's very necessary. I feel it should be done at a lower grade. Grade 8 and 9 and that's what I think is being done. They should learn about all these things. I mean we can't tell them to abstain from sex because they gonna want to experiment, they going to want to...*

2) Sohail: *Ok well you can't really blame the teacher – how they conducting the lesson because people are different ages in the classroom. You get about 17 to 18. Our legal age is at 18 (by law 16 years) for having full sexual intercourse. You can't really blame the teacher – the way they conduct the lessons. They do it in a moderate way so that everyone can understand about not too much disease being spread about but we do get a full understanding about everything that's going on.*

3) Shanice: *I think it's personal because a girl should be able to, from what I've learnt, is if you do it with somebody, you're gonna remember that person. It's supposed to be a moment you're supposed to remember but that is why I always say that marriage is the best option. After that you can engage in whatever you have to and the teachers at school – you have a lot of educators who are spiritually inclined and they don't really engage in this sexual activity basis, but what they tell us is that: this is your life – it's what you need to do. What you believe is right, is gonna determine your future.*

The Life Orientation teachers as well as other subject teachers are guided by the syllabus and the Department of Education as to what can be taught and what can be said. Life Orientation was introduced as a subject in 2004. Previously it was known as Life Skills. According to the National Curriculum Statement (2008, p.7) for grades ten to twelve, the purpose of Life Orientation was to create a “balanced and confident learner who can contribute to a just and democratic society, a productive economy and an improved quality of life for all”. Learning outcome 1 (assessment standard 3) of the syllabus focuses specifically on making “responsible decisions regarding sexuality and lifestyle choices in order to optimise personal potential (ibid.). Since sexual issues are considered taboo amongst Indian people as well as people of other cultures, teachers aim to present subject matter in a way that is as non-controversial as possible. The words *moderate* and *they don't really engage in this sexual activity basis* are indicative of the fact that teachers are restricted with regard to how much and what type of sexual knowledge they can impart. Teachers are also from different cultures and combined with their personal beliefs, may actually find it difficult to teach sex education and other related subject matter. The solution to this dilemma would be to teach the theory as indicated by the curriculum, in order to prevent a backlash from the parents, school authorities and other interested parties. Therefore, young people are encouraged to ‘do the right thing’ – in other words, to refrain from sexual activity that can be an obstacle to their future ambitions.

Young people however, have their own agendas which include exploring their sexual selves and developing their sexual identities. Young people and their parents find that they are not on the same page regarding the development of sexual identities therefore young people choose to be ‘secretive’ about their sexual relationships, which does not augur well for their sexual health and safety. According to Reddy (2005, p.16), young people expressed the view

that adult discussions on safe sex was not about love and romance. Instead it concentrated on taking precautions against pregnancy and disease.

The participants in my study, however, were quite willing to speak freely about their thoughts on sex, what their peers thought and what the adults' views were, except for the one girl who indicated that she was somewhat nervous. They appreciated the fact that they could speak to an adult who had neither the interest nor desire to judge their behaviour. They understood that it was my time to learn and that they were responsible for educating me. In a way, this situation gave them a sense of power because I was completely reliant on them to be honest and as forthcoming as possible with all that they knew. Young people are sensitive to the expectations of adults, therefore they are able to hide information so well and divulge it only when they know that they are not under threat in any way.

The girls in my study spoke mainly about love and trust and exuded happiness when doing so. Simultaneously they spoke about not being able to trust boys completely. According to Bhana and Pattman (2008, p. 110) on the construction of Indian girls' sexualities, Indian girls were "angry with Indian boys (as they contradictorily asserted their desire)" and sex was viewed as a trade off for 'love and emotional intimacy' which left them feeling 'vulnerable' and subject to unequal treatment. The boys in my research spoke about honesty and trust and about the fact that it was possible to be with one girl and want to also be with someone else. It was evident that sexual desire mattered more to young men, although they spoke about trust. The girls were aware of this, but seemed unable to walk away from a relationship, which explains why girls felt vulnerable.

#### **4.4. On love and trust...**

According to Bhana and Pattman (2008, p. 108), girls experienced emotional ties with boys, however, this type of love was also painful and uneasy. In my study the girls often mentioned that young boys were untrustworthy despite being in relationships with them. The boys stated that being deceived was very painful, yet ironically, there was always the possibility of them (the boys) liking someone else whilst already being in the relationship. This double standard was evident and the girls were therefore unsettled even if they thought of their relationships as steady. The participants also provided reasons with regard to why distrust surfaced and what the consequences were.

Consider the following excerpts:

1) Shanice: *I spoke about the pressures and I think from my personal experience and from the friends I know and even in my own class, there are times when they think, you know what: some girls – they have this thing about them; they are in a relationship but their mind focuses on other females around them.*

Researcher: *The guys you talking about?*

Shanice: *The guys! So, the girls as well. I mean it's human nature to maybe feel accustomed to somebody else. Their aura attracts you and you ARE drawn by that. So it happens like that and some of them just think: "oh no. I love these people but I love her too...". What do I do? I just don't walk away and nod my head. I just basically say, you know what – it's human nature. You bound to feel like this at some time in your life.*

Researcher: *What do the boys do about that and what do the girls do about that?*

Shanice: *Well, I think the girls – they soft hearted. Some of them are really not. They would probably look at this guy and compare them to the guy they're fantasising about and if that guy – the guy that they are with, doesn't really do it for them anymore, they'll leave him and go to the next one. Some girls DO THAT. But guys, what they'll do is: they look at this girl. They have a form that we'll call player. So they... PURSUE HER.*

2) Researcher: *And you what, when you say trust, what do expect of him in terms of trust?*

Deshnee: *Trust I mean that, if he wants to have another girlfriend or something, he should tell me cos I don't want to be seen as a cheap girl and sharing a boy or something like that.*

Researcher: *Why? Is that common amongst young Indian girls aged 16-17?*

Deshnee: *Yes. It is common.*

Researcher: *Just tell me a little about that.*

Deshnee: *They call them players as they say. So it's like if a girl has a boyfriend here at school and then she has another boyfriend in Johannesburg.*

3) Researcher: *Ok. And if the girl you've been seeing now- if you find out she's dishonest or... what would you do?*

Kevin: *If she's playing me right now then; always before I go out with a girl, I always tell them: if you're play me, I will not talk to you and I will leave you on the spot. That's all. Do not – it's like I was never; it's like you never knew me. That's how it is.*

Researcher: *Alright and do you find that very painful?*

Kevin: *Yeh, it is uh. It will be very painful. Imagine someone you love is going out with someone else behind your back. That's very hurtful.*

4)Researcher: *What about uh, how many, would you say young people would have like more than one boyfriend, girlfriend at a time?*

*(Group mumbles – 'ya, ya' but Natasha protests loudly 'No, no, no....')*

Researcher: *What do you feel about that?*

Sohail: *It's wrong, mam.*

Natasha: *Yes.*

Researcher: *Ok, right, each one.*

Sohail: *Because if someone had to have an affair on you, then you won't like the feeling, the pain inside you will be too much. (Natasha: Ya.)*

Kevin : *What pain you having?*

Researcher: *What pain, what pain?*

Sohail: *So why inflict pain on someone else?*

Yugen: *You feel bad.*

Yugen: *You feel like you're a stupid.*

The boys were also concerned as much as the girls about being hurt, however, there was always the underlying feeling that boys prefer to have more than one girlfriend, not necessarily as multiple partners but as a way to widen their sexual experience (refer to excerpt 1 above with Shanice). This desire to have other girlfriends feeds into the idea of hegemonic masculine identities, where boys feel a sense of power and 'macho-ness', however, the boys did not mention this directly. It presented itself as a case of sexual curiosity. The participants, especially the boys, stated that peers discussed their sexual experiences with each other, about which boy or girl was 'better' and who was not. In the individual interviews, both the males and females referred to peers who had boyfriends/girlfriends in school and outside school. They also mentioned that certain relationships were of a sexual nature, some were online relationships and others were just for 'the fun of it' – not necessarily sexual relationships. In many studies, the participants speak of peer pressure as a significant factor in feeling compelled to have sex early or have many sexual partners; however, the participants in my study did not refer to being pressured in that

way. They spoke of their personal experiences as well as what their peers were doing, however, each seemed to have made their own choice regarding their relationships.

One of the male participants stated that it felt *bad* and *stupid* when they were cheated on, suggesting that, though not directly, it made make them look like ‘losers’ when it came to girlfriends. It seemed as if there was concern here as to how his peers would respond to him being cheated on and not knowing about it. I think the reference here was to the humiliation such a situation resulted in. It made young people feel foolish perhaps that other people knew about the two-timing of their partners but that they did not.

Deshnee spoke of distrust not on the grounds that she would be hurt or angry that she was betrayed, instead it was about how peers or the community would perceive her behaviour. It was about self-image in the eyes of the community. She did not want to be portrayed as a *cheap* or ‘loose’ girl. On the other hand, it could be that Deshnee also did not want to be seen in that light by other potential suitors. ‘Loose’ in Chatsworth is a standard response with regard to one’s reputation, especially amongst the females. The two-timing male culprit ‘gets away’ with his reputation intact while the female’s reputation is subject to scrutiny.

According to Kaufman and Stavrou (2004, p. 382), Indian boys were of the opinion that an Indian girl who consented to intercourse before at least ten dates meant that she was ‘loose’ and they were not prepared for even their friends to meet with the girl. They felt that it was easier to have sex with white girls because Indian girls would only consider a sexual relation if a long term arrangement was involved. Also as indicated in the following excerpt:

*Avesh: Oh I was talking about the marriage and Indian girls. I feel as though that some of them are more religious in their ways and I feel as though that they brought up in a decent way so they don't want to do things like that. They only want to do it after they're married.*

Indian girls argued that according to Indian culture, sex before marriage was unacceptable. However, they also believed that it was not acceptable that boys were able to have their fun while it was expected of them to remain virgins until marriage. My study indicated that Indian girls in 2010 were not averse to a sexual relationship so long as the relationship was a

long term one (likely to end in marriage) and that the boy was trustworthy, although the element of doubt prevailed.

The following excerpt from my study is about boys' desire to be with as many girls as possible and was the most direct response I received about the ways boys think and feel. Avesh expressed concern about how current relationships could be jeopardised by not only desiring, but definitely wanting to be with other girls, however, he attributed this to 'male DNA coding' and felt that this was a situation beyond his control. This feeling is similar to the one expressed by the boys in Kaufman and Stavrou (2004, p. 383) who believed that they needed to 'move around' seeing that the ages 14-22 'were the best years of our lives' and that having a steady girlfriend limited them from 'playing the field' even if they were already sexually involved with somebody. The Indian boys in the Kaufman and Stavrou (ibid.) study also indicated that Indian girls were more likely to tolerate two-timing than white girls who insisted on exclusivity.

*1) Researcher: So you actually looking forward to the experience of being with a lot of girls?*

*Avesh: I am looking forward to seeing them...*

*Researcher: You mean like sexually you want to be with a whole lot of more girls or you just want to be with girls to find out about girls or what?*

*Avesh: I do want to eh, well I feel as though that like I should go and do everything when I'm single now. Than when I get married, you know how it is, you just with one person.*

*Researcher: How you mean like? You want?*

*Avesh: To be with them sexually.*

*Researcher: To be with a lot of girls?*

*Avesh: Yah.*

*Researcher: Why with a lot of girls? What's the reasoning behind it?*

*Avesh: There's no... I feel like it's just a code in a guy's DNA for it because I mean which guy you really know, I mean except for the guys that are mad, that want to be with one person only.*

Earlier in the chapter I discussed how two girls constructed their sexual identities against religious teachings. Subsequently one of the girls who spoke in depth about trust and also about it being *just human nature* if a person in a relationship found himself/herself attracted

to the *aura* of another person, found herself thinking about a relationship that began and ended all in one breath five years ago but resurfaced in October 2010 – at least a month after the interviews were conducted. Her reaction to this situation is best summed up in her own words:

*1) Shanice: Being a teenager in a relationship whilst having feelings for someone else is regarded as cheating in teenage language, but I have this urge to be honest with my boyfriend and thus the trust between us strengthens. Ultimately your partner is your shadow as you are theirs, so I believe it is vital for one to have a solid trust element.*

While it is obvious that Indian boys prefer to have many girlfriends while they are young, the girls are also not immune to meeting other boys; however, Indian girls generally prefer steady, long term relationships with a view to marriage. As a rule, they are averse to cheating and betrayal, however, they acknowledge that such a scenario can occur. Boys are likelier to cheat on girls first. Both the male and female participants were aware of this but seemed as if they lacked control over this phenomenon. This also did not prevent them from taking their chances in relationships. It is much like the Lotto – ‘tata ma chance’ where gambling is risky business but can be highly irresistible!

The findings regarding love and trust in relationships are clear. Both young Indian males and females are concerned about cheating, deception and betrayal, however, for differing reasons. Indian girls commit to sexual relationships because they love and trust their partners and believe that they are in a steady relationship that will end in marriage. Consequently, they consent to sex. The boys on the other hand, while claiming to love their girlfriends, made it obvious from the manner in which they expressed themselves, that they would prefer to have sexual relations with other girls. At the same time, they were concerned about their girlfriends deceiving them. For Indian girls, losing their virginity was supposed to be ‘something special’ or something that happened after marriage. The deciding factor here was the promise of a long term relationship and that they would not want to be seen as girls who ‘slept around’.

#### **4.5. Pregnancy, not HIV/AIDS, is a greater risk**

I believe that my interest in this study lies not only in the fact that knowledge about Indian sexualities is so limited but that the Indian community is in denial about AIDS affecting them and that the disease seems to ‘have bypassed us’. According to the HSRC report on HIV prevalence (2009, p. 26), the refusal for HIV testing was higher among males (31.0%) than females (26.8%). Coloureds (75.3%) and black Africans (68.7%) were more agreeable to HIV testing compared to only 47.9% of Indians and 52.8% of whites “despite a massive community and communication mobilisation campaign to reach these two groups”. Consider the following excerpts:

*1) Sheena: Well especially the Indian children, I think they don't really take AIDS into consideration because they have this thing that you know, thing that they Indian. I think that if they were talking about Blacks, then they'll worry about condoms and stuff but I think most of them do use protection, well the ones I've spoken to.*

*Researcher: They use condoms?*

*Sheena: Not for risk but for the pregnancy.*

*Researcher: So it's not about AIDS?*

*Sheena: It's not about risk.*

*2) Researcher: And tell me now earlier you mentioned AIDS and you said they are aware of it – we hear so much about black people and AIDS. But what about Indians?*

*Shanice: It's common.*

*Researcher: Why do you say this?*

*Shanice: I think Black people – they just think that black people are naive because of their response to Black guys. The fact is that not everybody is as naive as them because if they are naive, then we're equally naive to them because we have I think, now as you said, kids know about HIV and AIDS. As I said earlier, it's not basically for procreation anymore. It's for recreation. They're doing it because it's fun. They're doing it because they get some kind of pleasure and satisfaction out of it and what happens is that with the heat of the moment; they forget about the responsibilities or the diseases they could pick up, like HIV and AIDS is common amongst Indian people. You just don't see it because they have a tendency not to disclose their status. That is why it is important to get to know a person before embarking on a relationship with them because you need to know that should you decide to have sexual*

*relationship, you have to know their status to protect yourself, and to protect them obviously. And you have to know your own status because you can't walk into that irresponsibly.*

Researcher: *Not disclose their status you said.*

Shanice: *They do that because they know that if they disclose their status – I'm not gonna be sexually active. Some of them are really sick. They have this mind that I'm infected. It's not fair. The person who infected me was heartless. So let me do it to somebody else.*

Indian people believe that HIV/AIDS is a disease that is predominant amongst black Africans and is therefore unlikely to affect them in the way that it has affected the African population. The use of condoms is motivated by the possibility of unwanted pregnancy rather than the possibility of contracting sexual diseases. Even when Indian people (in general) confirm that they have contracted AIDS, they refuse to disclose their status. One of the reasons could be that it could curtail their sexual lives and that these people are totally opposed to such a situation. More importantly though, it is about the shame and stigma attached to being a victim of a sexual disease just as shame is attached to unwanted pregnancies because it is a sex related outcome. Sex related activities outside marriage are culturally unacceptable for Indian people. It is taboo. Public declarations of one's HIV positive status would therefore be an indication of one's 'shameful' private behaviour.

Not wanting to disclose this type of 'shameful behaviour' could be the possible explanation for the fact that compared to black Africans and coloureds, Indian people, especially males are far less likely to undergo AIDS testing. According to the HSRC (2009, p. 71) it was not the first time that it was observed that the Indian and white population groups in South Africa were not agreeable to being part of HIV surveys. These population groups believed that AIDS was not a problem in their communities therefore it was not necessary for them to participate in AIDS surveys. They also believed that they were not at risk to HIV. Seeing as the HIV infection statistics for Indians are extremely low, there is a danger of 'feeling safe', thereby negating the swiftness at which the disease can spread and its devastating consequences. This is exactly what happened within the black population in the 1990's which resulted in South Africa having one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world. The Indian population will deny itself much needed AIDS intervention should they persist in behaving as if AIDS cannot affect them as it has with other population groups.

The stigma and shame attached to being HIV positive surpass the urgency to admit and resolve the situation. According to Nair (01/12/2010 p.1), women prefer to remain silent regarding the sexual activities of their husbands because of embarrassment and humiliation. The question is about what message the Indian population is sending out to its young people and what this message signifies for them and future generations in the light of the AIDS epidemic. The Indian population in South Africa amounts to three percent of the entire population. However, the Indian community has either underestimated or refuses to understand the impact that the AIDS pandemic can have on such a small population. Consequently, this ought to be an important cause of concern for the community, however, a veil of silence and secrecy shrouds this dreaded disease.

Actually amongst Indian people, the most dreaded consequence of sexual risk taking is pregnancy outside the bonds of 'holy matrimony'. According to Kaufman and Stavrou (2004, p. 388), "Indian participants of both genders argued that the use of condoms was important, not necessarily because of AIDS, but in order to avoid unwanted pregnancies. Indian boys argued that they would be 'mad' to engage in sex with anybody without condoms". It was also argued that in the Indian community, if a girl became pregnant outside marriage, the couple had no choice but to marry. Indian boys were not prepared to engage in sexual relations without a condom if the girl was not using any form of contraception.

The participants in my study were quite clear about the use of condoms. Neither the boys nor the girls in this day and age are prepared to subject themselves to the risk of pregnancy. The participants cited various reasons for this in the focus group interview, some of which have already been discussed:

Researcher: *Ok, so do people use condoms because they're worried about AIDS, they're worried about sexually transmitted diseases or is there any other reason for it? (group mumbles – inaudible)*

Natasha: *Pregnancy. (Kevin and Sohail also say 'pregnancy')*

Researcher: *Pregnancy?*

Deshnee: *Yes.*

Researcher: *Ok, so the youngsters that we know and where we are at this point in time are worried about getting pregnant? (group mutters 'yes'.) Ok, why is pregnancy such an issue?*

Sohail: *Education, it's the rest of your life that's at stake.*

Natasha: *Many of the boys are not mature enough to look after their kids.*

Deshnee: *Traditionally, uh, your family feels embarrassed.*

Researcher: *Ya, who feels embarrassed?*

Shanice: *Family. (Me: Right.) And that pressure adds onto you because you feel insecure, you feel like you've disappointed them.*

Researcher: *Alright.*

Yugen: *You need to be more responsible.*

Natasha: *Ya, you don't have the time for a job cause you're still in school, to look after that baby.*

Researcher: *(to another female learner) And you were saying? (group mutters – male learner says 'Life is over') Alright, so it's more about, then what you were saying, what the family would say, it also jeopardises your future job prospects.*

Natasha: *Maturity.*

Researcher: *Maturity levels.*

Sohail: *Your own body is not even mature to clean up, to carry the baby to term.*

Unplanned pregnancies were clearly undesirable amongst young Indian people for various reasons. Their education and their future were very important to them. For girls of middle class origin, the focus was on educational success, securing a career in the professional field where the likelihood of pregnancy is not permitted (Nayak & Kehily, 2008, p. 61). For the participants in the study, unwanted pregnancies was clearly a case of financial stability being cut short and the participants felt strongly about that. According to Panday et al (2009), "over two thirds of young women report their pregnancies as unwanted because it interferes with educational aspirations and imposes greater financial hardships in a context of high levels of poverty and unemployment". Natasha stated that the boys are not mature enough to look after children; however, I believe this lack of maturity actually refers to the fact that boys are more interested in playing the field than being tied down by fatherhood. The words 'life is over' by one of the boys bears testimony to this. Boys are also concerned about their

future and, like Indian girls, would not want sexual relationships to impact on their educational aspirations. Refer to the following statement:

*Sohail: Education, it's the rest of your life that's at stake.*

The pregnancy rate amongst young Indian people is generally low as compared to black Africans and Coloureds. The teenage fertility rate is 71 per 1000 for blacks, 60 per 1000 for coloureds, 22 per 1000 for Indians with the lowest rate being 14 per 1000 for whites (Panday et al, 2009). While the difference can be attributed to the social conditions under which these young people grow up, international studies indicate that cultural views on pregnancy also play a key role. Young people in Chatsworth know that pre-marital conception is unacceptable and a threat to financial security; however, they also have no intention of self deprivation regarding the enjoyment of life, hence the use of condoms.

The following comments were made by some of the participants:

*1) Yes, I don't wanna be a father at school.*

*2) It was prepared. I don't want to have children so early. (laughs)*

*3) I don't wanna risk pregnancy cos I don't wanna even go there. That's a difficult line to go. No, it's not for me.*

*4) You don't need to show your manliness to a female in a relationship if she loves you already. So there's no point in actually expressing those feelings. So if you're a man, fine you're a man but you don't then need not to use a condom, because then you're an irresponsible man.*

In almost all of the interviews, the participants indicated that they were well aware of the consequences of AIDS; however, the issue of pregnancy and its consequences took precedence. Until 1998, the AIDS epidemic seemed almost relentless; however there is evidence that HIV prevalence has reached a level of stability and may actually be on the decline (South Africa HIV & AIDS statistics, 2010, p.1). This is particularly noticeable for girls in the teenage phase. The Department of Health attributes this to younger women making the effort to engage in safer sexual practices. The use of condoms had increased noticeably. This study shows that Indian girls are not as powerless in the face of masculinity (pressure to have unprotected sex) as was the case previously. Preventative measures are in place even if not for the sake of HIV/AIDS, STDs, or other forms of risk taking. This is

reassuring news for all stakeholders interested in the sexual health and well being of young South Africans.

“Risk aversion ranked highest amongst the Indian participants and lowest amongst Africans, although all three groups saw this differently: Indians in terms of ‘forced marriages’, Africans in terms of AIDS and Whites, because of all the ‘hassles’ with partners” (Kaufman and Stavrou, 2004, p.388). It clearly evident in my study that risk aversion amongst young Indian people is directly linked to the avoidance of pregnancy rather than AIDS, STDs or even sexual coercion and violence. In fact the participants did not speak of sexual violence amongst their peers. There was a suggestion of sexual coercion though with the older boys pressuring Grade 8 girls. Consider the following extract:

*Shanice: In grade 8, you find grade 8 going out with grade 11’s and then you’ll have age gaps extending and what you find is that, the girls actually feel pressured by the older boys because they in a younger age.*

It is clear that Life Orientation and sex education programmes, whilst having been successful with their condomisation awareness, is not fully inclusive of the Indian, coloured and white minority race groups in South Africa in terms of its cultural approach. Concerns regarding the sexual identities of young black people have been prioritised at the expense of other groups. This does not augur well for the sexual safety of the minority race groups and cultures. However insignificant it may seem, ignoring the sexual cultures of other race denominations in a democratic South Africa, will have social, economic and political repercussions.

#### **4.6. The impact of race, class and gender in relationships amongst young Indian people**

Chapter 1 and 3 provided a description of Chatsworth as a predominantly Indian township. Although people of different races are moving into Chatsworth, e.g. Africans from the neighbouring Umlazi and Lamontville townships to the adjoining previously designated ‘Indian area’ of Mobeni Heights, and with the introduction of low cost housing, people remain separated according to race and class lines. According to Kaufman and Stavrou (2004, p. 380), “for young people, this implies that the very separate cultures of behaviour, which had been present in the past, continue to prevail, although young men and women now

have greater opportunity to mix socially and economically”. This opportunity to mix usually begins with schooling. Most relationships at the research site comprised couples of the same race group however, students and participants were aware of two inter-race couples at the school at the time of the interviews.

The participants in my study had only ever had relationships with other young Indian people. Most of their partners were from Chatsworth itself. Because Chatsworth could be regarded as a low to middle income township with certain areas becoming high income areas, I asked the participants both individually and in the focus group if financial status mattered in relationships. The entire group were vociferous with their “Nos”, however, they admitted that money was necessary for financial independence. In the individual interviews, some of the boys argued that girls preferred older boys or ‘boys with cars’ because they liked to be treated well and were able to go places. ‘Boys with cars’ symbolised money and were therefore able to give the girls a ‘good time’. ‘Boys with cars’ symbolised different things for the male and female participants. The following excerpts bear reference:

*1) Deshnee: I think, well the girls that I join; they look forward to their future, being independent but some that I see, they just rely on guys and they’d want to go, like if they see a boy walking on the street, they’d choose the one with the car over the one walking on the street. Not knowing that the one on the street would be better.*

*Researcher: How you mean?*

*Deshnee: They would treat you better. They would respect you. The one in the car, he’d have a good job. He’ll probably give you all the money you want but he’ll have no respect for you. He’ll have another girlfriend somewhere else.*

Young Indian girls tended to place value on boys with cars because they believed that these young men were financially secure and could provide them with material things such as gifts perhaps. According to Hunter (2009, p. 147), love is part of a set of mutual obligations which are inclusive of gifts of money, love, emotional support, domestic help and sex. Amongst Indian girls, the possession of cars allows for mobility but it is also cause for concern because boys with cars can also have other girlfriends. In other words, girls were putting themselves at risk because these young men could be playing them. Boys without

cars at that point would be a safer bet because they do not have the car or the money to 'play around'.

2) Sheena: *They wanna be able to go out so then if the guy doesn't have a car, they can't go out. They have to like get a taxi or something. So they just prefer cars, money...*

Researcher: *So if they like someone in school, they just don't bother if this guy doesn't have money or a car?*

Sheena: *No, I think school relationships are different but you often get – like, if they have someone in school, they also have someone out of school.*

In this case, if girls at school had boyfriends in school, this meant that they would have to use public transport to go out and this did not appeal to them at all. So the girls 'played' the boys at school by also having 'boyfriends with cars' outside school who could even pick them after school. It was a type of status symbol for the girls to be seen by their friends with an older boy with a car. It also brought in material benefits.

3) Kevin: *Nowadays girls – you only get wild girls because girls only like look for money, boys with good looks and cars, especially cars. I don't know why girls like boys with cars.*

Researcher: *Tell me what do you think? If you talk to the boys or you talk to the girls, why would they tell you that cars are so important?*

Kevin: *I really don't know... They feel like they so grown up to sit in a car and they always go out with boys that are like twice their age. If they are 18, they go out with a boy that's 25 or 28 or something like that.*

Researcher: *Why is that?*

Kevin: *They feel like they mature in a way. Men like that only want one thing- that's sex.*

Whilst the female participants believed that young Indian girls preferred boys with cars because of it being a type of 'status symbol' and providing material gain in terms of going out and receiving gifts, one of the male participants was adamant that 'boys with cars' were after sex only. In other words, young Indian girls were 'wined and dined' because young Indian boys in cars expected sexual favours or some type of gratitude in return.

Clearly, young Indian girls are interested in the financial stability of young Indian boys and this is signified by the possession of a car and the ability to treat the girls well by taking them out (on dates). Although they may claim to love boys without cars and money, they find young men who are financially independent far more appealing. The young men, especially boys at school who have girlfriends, feel ‘bad’ about the fact that they cannot treat the girls as well as boys with cars and money. The following excerpt bears reference:

*Yugen: Not really. But most girls do prefer men, boys that have cars, no like who can take them out and treat them well. Ok we at school now. We don't have, can't afford like certain things but when we do have the money, we can give it to them. Like buy things and certain then boys that have jobs and have cars and things, they like uh. They get a upper hand on us. (Good laugh).*

The male participants believe that young men with earning capacity have the upper hand over them because they can provide better for the girls. They also believe that boys with cars are likelier to take sexual advantage of girls. Young Indian girls are therefore at risk with older financially stable boys; however, their own desire for financial security places them in this “catch 22” situation. The following excerpt bears reference:

*Sheena: I want someone caring, someone that will appreciate me mostly and I think that's what most girls want as much as now it may seem about money but girls just wanna be loved.*

*Researcher: You think that's with all the girls? If you look at the girls around you, would you say that's what all of them want or generally want? You tell me...*

*Sheena: A lot of them want that but I think that money is a big factor for most girls.*

*Researcher: Why is that?*

*Sheena: It's just, when I hear people talking, they speak about the gifts they get; you know like things like that makes, me think that money is important to them.*

From the excerpt above, the inference can be made that young Indian girls look for two things in a relationship: both love and financial stability. The need for financial stability ties in with the earlier discussion on how unwanted pregnancies can encumber a good education, with a view to financial independence. While girls seek to establish their own financial independence, it seems that a financially stable young man is an added bonus for a better

quality material existence. The pleasures and enjoyment of being in a relationship is based on being able to indulge in such things as meals, gifts, outings and entertainment. One has to be in a position to afford these costs. This is why one of the male participants suggested that *they get a upper hand on us* – ‘they’ being boys with cars and money.

On the issue of interracial relationships, there were varying opinions. There were some boys and girls who would consider relationships with Whites mainly but not with black African people. The others in the group seemed to be content with their Indian partners. The participants who would consider interracial relationships cited differing reasons for their choices. The following excerpts bear testimony:

1) Avesh: *Financially more appealing and physically more appealing as well. There’s a stereotype about white girls that they do anything.*

Researcher: *Indian girls you mean in terms of sex, what they do? They reserved or what you talking about now?*

Avesh: *Actually Indian girls are more decent and more reserved.*

This male participant was of the opinion that white girls would ‘do anything’ sexually. The thought of sexual freedom was the attraction for having a relationship with a white girl. Avesh believed that Indian girls were ‘decent’ and therefore more conservative in what they would consent to doing sexually. He also argued that white girls were physically more appealing than black girls. The assumption that white girls were ‘sexually liberated’ was the underlying factor in this instance for considering a relationship across the colour line. Indian girls were *more decent and more reserved*, reproducing the idea of cultural and gender expectations that Indian girls should be pure and remain virgins until marriage.

2) Researcher: *Is there anything else you want to ask? Let me see what else I can ask you? What about earlier you mentioned something about in a different race group? You said it’s only for sex. Would you not consider a relationship with somebody else- like a permanent relationship from...*

Kevin: *A different race?*

Researcher: *Ja.*

Kevin: *There’s no problem.*

Researcher: *You think so?*

Kevin: *Everyone is equal. Just by the colour of the skin doesn't mean they like different now.*

Researcher: *what about your parents, culture. Won't that affect your...*

Kevin: *No. If you love someone – you can't say no – just because of your culture and all this and your parents and all. Parents must understand that you love this person.*

For this young man, love was the main motivating factor to be in a relationship. He did not consider race or culture to be of importance. It felt more like youthful defiance when he stated that parents had to understand that you loved this person and that they had no choice in their children's choice of partners.

3) Yugen: *Different people have different views like about my friends, we don't like discriminate. Even if we see like a black girl that's pretty, we'll say that she's pretty.*

Researcher: *But would anyone of them go out with a black girl?*

Yugen: *I wouldn't know that. Maybe if it's like uh, but I don't know. My friends say that South African black women, they wouldn't like to go out with.*

Researcher: *Why is that?*

Yugen: *Mostly they say because of the way they behave but I think everyone else has their own opinion about how people behave. Everyone behaves differently but we do get black people and even Indian people that are the same. Anyway, in school, we also have people like that.*

The above participant presented himself and his friends as boys without prejudice with regard to considering relationships across the colour line. However, when asked if anyone of them would actually go out dates with black girls, he was specific with the fact that young Indian boys would not go out with black women of South African descent. This decision was influenced by the 'behaviour' of black girls. The participant did argue though, that there were Indian girls who 'behaved' in the same way as black girls did. I sought clarification on this comment. The participant argued that black girls were very loud and wanted to be 'noticed'. They are not dignified. He felt that girls should be 'like' quiet and dignified. Indians girls were like this but there were exceptions. So in as much as young Indian people may present themselves as being open to having relationships with other race groups, they may not necessarily act upon it reproducing race hierarchies through gender and sexuality.

In this study the matter about how Indian girls should behave show regulation by Indian boys (Bhana & Pattman, 2008, p.103). Indian girls are expected to be 'quiet and dignified'. Loud behaviour is unacceptable and unappealing (see excerpt 3 above with Yugen). Indian girls are not expected to drink, smoke, use drugs and to go out late at night.

5) Kevin: *Honest; trustworthy; caring; she mustn't be wild. I don't like wild girls.*

Researcher: *What you mean by wild, sweetie?*

Kevin: *Smoking, drinking, going out clubbing every night, every like weekend. I like decent girls.*

Researcher: *Alright. You don't like clubbing, smoking, drinking- Have you not like tried it?*

Kevin: *I've tried all that but there's a time for everything. You can't do it like every time now. Once in a while it's ok to drink or something. It's like normal.*

Researcher: *Would you say that this idea of drinking, etc.... Is it your culture that tells you, you shouldn't be doing that all the time or is it your personal feeling or what?*

Kevin: *Drinking is against every culture but it's like a luxury for everyone now. People do it to relax, just to enjoy themselves.*

Researcher: *So if you do meet a girl – she mustn't do that at all?*

Kevin: *If I'm doing it now, I can't tell her not to do it. But if I stop, then it's not right for her do it. Say if I don't smoke, imagine if we go out with friends and she's smoking. How stupid that will look?*

From the above excerpt it is clear that what 'wild' girls do and how Indian boys may find this unacceptable. Whilst there may be boys who would go out with 'wild' girls, it will be because Indian boys assume they will be 'freer' with sexual favours. Girls who are considered to be long term partners are expected to conduct themselves with reserve and dignity in public. The manner in which Indian girls 'do gender' is important to Indian boys especially in steady relationships. Indian boys "felt that white girls were easier to have sex with, and that generally, Indian females held out longer and only after 'promises of some sort of future'" (Kaufman and Stavrou, 2004, p. 382). Also, the manner in which girls referred to sexual matters seemed to have been more carefully considered than with the boys. I cannot say that the boys were not careful about what they said, however, they were likelier to speak freely as compared to the girls.

5) Researcher: *So that's what. All right. And do you think ah, like that their relationship? What do you think about someone having a relationship with someone of a different race in this age group – 16 to 17? At school, the community. Is it working? What's it like?*

Natasha: *Well it seems it's working in school particularly. We've seen them for quite some time now. About say 8 months now.*

Researcher: *Alright, Any idea what the parents will think of it?*

Natasha: *No, I don't think their parents will approve because it's like a 'bye' in school and outside the gate, they totally different people.*

Researcher: *Oh ok. Would you consider having a relationship with someone from a different race group?*

Natasha: *I would but I would want to see that person's personality first. I wouldn't wanna become physical or anything first. I would like to get to know the person.*

Researcher: *What race group would you consider?*

Natasha: *Mm. White definitely.*

Researcher: *White? Why?*

Natasha: *I don't know. I just feel they different so to experiment with another race group, it would be White.*

Researcher: *What's different about them? What makes them?*

Natasha: *I'm not racist but...*

Researcher: *No. That's fine. But why?*

Natasha: *It's like my first choice would be that because you they, they handsome, blue eyes, blonde...*

Researcher: *Good looks?*

**Natasha:** *Yeh.*

Researcher: *Your boyfriend – his looks attracted you?*

Natasha: *He's dark.*

Researcher: *He's dark?*

Natasha: *Yes.*

Researcher: *So what was attractive about him?*

Natasha: *I don't know. He's naughty. He has this like naughty look but I don't know. I just have this thing for dark boys.*

In the above excerpt, when Natasha was asked if she would consider a relationship with someone from another race, she stated that it would depend on the personality. When asked about her preference to any particular race group, she was quick to argue that it would have to be a white boy because she believes that they are very attractive with their 'blonde hair and blue eyes'. Then on being asked to describe her boyfriend, she stated that he was 'very dark' because she had 'this thing for dark boys'. The contradiction here is difficult to grasp but that's the way it is. To quote one of the participants – Shanice – who always explained anything inexplicable as "It's just human nature". Natasha also argued that the one cross colour couple at school had a relationship that worked at school, but 'ended after school at the school gate' because outside the school they were 'totally different people'. In other words, boys and girls in mixed race relationships may have a 'relationship' at school, but it is not a 'proper' relationship that continues outside the school, probably because of how the parents and community (elders) may react. Sexual regulation also occurs through the lens of race, thus reinventing segregation. What may be acceptable amongst young people at school may not be acceptable by the adults outside school. It seems that relationships or marriage with other race groups is not an option because of cultural and religious differences.

With regard to religious differences, two of the male participants had the following to say:

1) Researcher: *But she is from a different religion you said?*

Sohail: *Yeh but her cousin converted. She's Muslim now so it wasn't that bad. Her mother is very understanding. Her father is hot headed but he's alright. He's cool.*

Researcher: *So you expect this girl to convert as well?*

Sohail: *You know what? It's up to her. I'm not forcing her.*

Researcher: *So what if you, she has sons?*

Sohail: *Yeh that will be a issue but she might convert so that really put a smile on my mother's face.*

2) Avesh: *Yah obviously, of course and when you start speaking about that, they say no, you have to change your religion or I have to change my religion for them and I feel that's not the case because they getting my surname and I feel they should get my religion at the same time. And I mean it's, if you really do love the person, religion should not play a part in anything, in any of the like situations so those people that asked me to change religion like, if I had to*

*get married to them; I did shy away from them after that because I felt that they didn't love you.*

*Researcher: So let's say if you meet this girl now, she's Tamil speaking and you are let's say Christian. OK, what are you at this point?*

*Avesh: Tamil*

*Researcher: and then there's this Christian girl or may be a Muslim girl and you find that you both really love each other, how you going to work around something like that?*

*Avesh: Well um you see now you can have, sometimes they can practise both religions which I feel, is not such a bad thing because it's nice to have if let's say, I have children with this girl; and it's nice to have the children exposed to both the religions and maybe if they would like to find their own path. They can decide for themselves. But I feel that if she wants to stay like let's say for example, a Moslem, she should practise the religion. She should practise all the things that are important to the religion. Like as a Tamil now, I feel that I should practise the Tamil religion.*

*Researcher: Then what happens to the children?*

*Avesh: I feel if they want to go and practise whichever religion, it's fine. But then again you get the case where some of them are confused so that would also end up in disaster but well I feel that, well that's how I feel.*

The issue of interreligious marriages is an important concern in the Indian culture. Traditions, practices and religious beliefs differ from culture to culture. Parents prefer it if young people marry within their religion and culture to avoid converting to another religion and the impact it may have on raising children with parents from two different religious backgrounds. For example, anyone marrying into the Muslim culture is compelled to marry according to Muslim rites and this is only possible if the person accepts Islam. In this situation a person has no choice other than to convert or end the relationship. With regard to Hindus and Christians, there is generally no compulsion and the couples work it between themselves. There are the occasional differences however.

#### **4.7. Conclusion**

Clearly what we have here is a case of contradictions amongst young Indian people in trying to negotiate their sexual selves and shape their sexual identities. Heterosexual relationships present young people with various dilemmas with regard to gender expectations. Gender expectations are linked to cultural backgrounds. Young people enter relationships with certain ideas about how relationships should be but do not bank on how culture, religion, gender, race and class impact on the development of their sexual identities within those relationships. Parents in the Indian culture also influence the way in which these identities are shaped. Young people around the ages 16-17 are discouraged from having relationships at school, especially sexual relationships prior to marriage because it is a cause of great shame. Consequently, young people who are sexually active keep such activities under wraps while maintaining a picture of innocence. This is actually detrimental because young people need to be aware of the repercussions of sexual risks and diseases, especially with regard to the spread of HIV/AIDS. I believe that sexual safety should be part of one's lifestyle as all other health issues are. Young people are prone to throwing caution to the wind regarding sexual safety because of the 'love and trust' that exists amongst partners. However, this study has clearly indicated how vulnerable and susceptible young people are to being hurt by other young people even while having a 'long term commitment'. In conclusion, young Indian people and the Indian community need to admit that they are just as vulnerable to all forms of risk including AIDS like any other community and must take the necessary precautions to protect themselves. Pregnancy should not be the only cause of concern. HIV/AIDS should also be viewed as a major reason for personal health awareness.

## CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

### 5.1. An overview of the study

This study focuses on the ways in which a select group of young Indian boys and girls aged sixteen to seventeen construct their sexual identities in a low to middle income area in the formerly Indian township of Chatsworth. The study is important, because it is specifically about young Indian people – a much neglected group in research on sexual cultures, sexual risk taking and HIV/AIDS.

Secondly, South African Indians are quite nonchalant about the consequences of AIDS because they believe that the Indian community is not as prone to the disease as black groups (see Morrell et al, 2001; Peltzer & Promtussananon, 2005, for supporting evidence).

Thirdly, girls base their relationships on love and trust. Boys, however, show that relationships are more sex driven, despite also referring to love and trust.

Fourthly, it is not only culture that shapes young Indian sexualities. Factors such as race, class and gender also influence the way in which they negotiate their sexual identities.

Penultimately, unwanted pregnancies are considered to be the greatest form of sexual risk by young Indians, despite it being public knowledge that South Africa is one of the countries worst hit by the AIDS pandemic in the world. This study shows how imperative it is for South Africans Indians to change their mindset regarding pregnancy only as high risk.

Finally and most importantly, this study reveals that despite the Indian community labouring under the false belief that young Indian people are sexually innocent, it is evident that young Indian boys and girls are agentic and are actively involved in sexual relations as part of the development of their sexual identities. However, being under the constant gaze of parents, young people feel compelled to ‘hide’ the sexual facet of being human. Young people generally become sexually active around the age of 16 (Peltzer and Promtussananon, 2005, p.3). All these findings have an impact on how the gendered identities of 16 to 17 year olds are taken into consideration in the Life Orientation syllabus to make it more effective. There is no point in bombarding young people with knowledge that is not relevant to their social

location or context. AIDS, however, is a universal problem, but the ways in which different cultures and race groups develop sexual identities differ from each other, and this must be respected and considered in the planning of risk awareness programmes.

As indicated throughout this study, my motivation for embarking on this course of research was to address the lack of studies the development of South African Indian sexual identities.

Why 16-17 year old young Indian people? Because:

- this age is generally a critical point of sexual relations
- schools are highly sexualised sites and being an educator afforded me the opportunity to work with young people in this age group
- educating young people is not only about teaching the prescribed syllabus; it is about learning what constitutes the hidden curriculum at school
- young people are actively involved in constructing their sexual identities and this is based on their gendered roles which influences the way they shape their gendered identities
- I wanted to know what the response of young Indian people is to the state's HIV education programmes and its degree of success, if at all it was successful
- I am concerned about sexual safety and risk taking among young people
- I wanted to enhance my personal understanding of young people

This chapter presents a synopsis of the ways in which these young Indians navigate their sexual identities. This is based on qualitative research in the interpretive paradigm. Answers are provided to the following questions:

1. How do 16-17 year old Indian boys and girls give meanings to their sexualities?
2. How do 16-17 year old Indian girls understand sexuality?
3. How do 16-17 year old Indian boys understand sexuality
4. What are the implications of the understanding of sexualities for Life Orientation and sex education programmes?

In answering these questions, the following sub-questions will be answered:

- How young Indian people aged 16 to 17 develop their gendered identities?

- What the implications of their gendered identities are for sexual risk taking?

Various findings emerged from my study. This study continues with a discussion based on the themes that emerged in the course of the research. It is followed by a brief discussion on the limitations of the study.

## **5.2. Synthesis of the argument**

In this dissertation, I have made it clear that young Indian people are actively involved in the construction of their sexual identities despite the Indian community preferring to believe that young Indian people are sexually innocent. Race, class, gender roles and culture have a significant influence on the ways in which these identities are shaped. This study argues that boys and girls do subscribe to gender roles which determine how they navigate their gendered identities. Cultural expectations play an important role especially with regard to sexual risk. Young Indian people are not expected to be sexually active because unwanted pregnancies are the cause of shame and social stigma. As a result, young people 'duck and dive' in order not to disappoint and shame their parents. Consequently, young people subject themselves to risk because their parents are in the dark about their sexual activities and may not be in a position to help them if the need arises. I argue further that sexual risk in this context is exacerbated by the threat HIV/AIDS, even though supporting figures indicate that the Indian community is not as seriously at risk as Africans. I also argue that it is this non perception of risk and denial of the existence of AIDS in the Indian community that presents a greater danger than is realised.

This problem can be addressed through education, especially through the Life Orientation syllabus at school. Young people are still in the process of producing their sexual identities and this would be the most appropriate way to direct their thoughts and action in the right direction.

## **5.3. Implications of the study**

This study shows how young people think and behave with regard to the development of their sexual identities. In this section the implications of the study are discussed.

Firstly, sexual experimentation for a number of young people begins at sixteen. According to national law, the age of consent is sixteen. The findings of the study indicated that despite

young people being active sexual agents, sexualities remain closeted in the home and at school. As a researcher however, I found that young people indicate a desire to share their experiences with someone who is non judgemental. The study found that teachers were clinical in their approach to the presentation on HIV/AIDS and abstinence. The students were reminded by teachers that 'at the end of the day, it was their life'.

Parents on the other hand were highly regulatory. Of interest was the fact that reference to fathers was inconspicuous in the interviews with regard to the participants' choice of who they shared certain confidences with, in the home. The participants were able to articulate their concerns with their mums while remaining 'mum' about the sexual aspects of their relationships. The relevant factor seems to be that there was reduced imbalance of power between mother and children than between father and children, given the male-female power relations. The mothers would at least listen to young people. The absence of the father indicates that the male figure in the home is not even considered as someone who would listen to young people.

Thirdly, young Indian girls are continually basing their relationships on love and trust without considering emotional consequences and HIV/AIDS as risks. The study found that boys were also affected if their girlfriends left them for someone else; however, it did not seem much about the kind of emotional pain that girls experienced, but about masculine power being at risk. By continuing to place themselves at emotional and sexual risk through relationships based on love and trust, young Indian girls are inevitably reproducing and sustaining gender inequalities.

Fourthly and of tremendous value to this study is the finding that young Indian people believe that sexual risk is about unwanted pregnancy, not HIV/AIDS. This is extremely important because in terms of sexual risk, HIV/AIDS is a terminal disease and ought to take precedence over unwanted pregnancy however this is not a major cause of concern amongst young people. Pregnancy, unlike AIDS, is a visible indication of one's shame. AIDS on the other hand can remain closeted by passing it off as another disease such as cancer or tuberculosis. Maintaining one's dignity in society is of higher value to people than contracting a sexual disease because this can be hidden.

Finally the development of sexualities is linked to race, class and gender in relationships. From the interviews it emerged that most of the participants consider the areas they live in and the school they attend to be mainly middle class environs. There are poorer sections in Bayview and Westcliff, however, there are residents who fared well over the years- both professionally and financially. Havenside and Mobeni Heights are more affluent areas with middle to high income learners. Learners in these areas have access to knowledge about risk taking and their personal aspirations have motivated them to a degree to be careful with regard to risk taking.

Some of the learners indicated that certain roads in Bayview and Westcliff were infamous for being drug zones. These were described as the poor areas where girls prostituted themselves for 'drug money'. The participants in the study expressed their desire to be independent, especially the girls, and both boys and girls felt very strongly about unwanted pregnancies. An unwanted pregnancy would be an obstacle to their dreams of career opportunities and financial independence. It is clear that these participants understand education as their gateway to a better future for themselves.

The implication is that young Indian people of 16 to 17 in a middle class area with access to education are showing greater awareness and knowledge as they develop their gendered identities. The issue of unprotected sex is taken seriously. Both boys and girls are saying that they are having their sexual pleasures and being responsible with regard to their experimentation. The Life Orientation curriculum at school provides education about sexual diseases such as AIDS and the importance of the use of condoms is understood to be of paramount importance amongst young people in general.

Unfortunately, the participants' perception of the need for condomisation is based less on issues of disease and sexual health. Instead it focuses on unwanted pregnancies. This has serious implications for young Indian people. Most young people are heterosexual and heterosexual sex is the main transmitter of the HIV virus. While the use of condoms amongst young South Africans has increased, for Indians it is mostly about avoiding pregnancy and hasty marriages. According to Kaufman and Stavrou (2004, p. 388), the avoidance of sexual risk rated the highest amongst Indian participants and amongst African people, risk aversion

was at its lowest. Condoms were used by this race group to avoid AIDS as opposed to Indians.

Both Indian boys and girls viewed the use of condoms as very important. Indian boys especially considered condoms as an important form of contraception (Kaufman & Stavrou, 2004, p. 388). In terms of the gendered approach towards condomisation, both genders amongst these participants understand the necessity of using condoms. It is a possible explanation as to why young Indian people have a very low HIV prevalence rate. It also implies that the government might therefore not view the Indian community as being at risk. This is a highly desired situation, however, young people and the Indian community need to understand that AIDS, unlike pregnancy, is a terminal disease. This is the reason why the danger of risk taking should also focus on the use of condoms to counter contraction of the disease, not only pregnancy. However this is only possible if the South African government invests the same type of concern in the development of sexual cultures amongst Indian people that it invested for black African people.

### **5.3.1. Developing sexualities: a contradictory process**

In this study it is evident that young Indian people are faced with various dilemmas in negotiating their sexual selves. Sexual desire is compounded by issues pertaining to moral dilemmas, social stigma, regulatory processes, and the AIDS pandemic. The President of Child Welfare Chatsworth argues that parents refuse to acknowledge that children as young as ten years of age are engaging in certain sexual acts (Nair, 2010, p.1). Compounding this problem is the fact that parents view sex as a taboo subject. Young people have to ensure that their parents are kept ignorant of their sexual escapades because public knowledge of such behaviour incurs shame and embarrassment. However, it is the adults who are in need of help, especially men engaging in clandestine relations with prostitutes. Of concern here is the type of message adult males are sending to young people regarding risk taking.

### **5.3.2. Do as I say not as I do...**

At the inception of my study, the participants and my readings indicated that Indian parents police young people all the time to ensure that young people refrain from sexual relationships to avoid stigma and shame for the entire family. Parents were also reluctant to discuss these matters with young people because it was taboo. Towards the end of my study, on World

AIDS DAY 2010, an article appeared in the POST that expressed a contradictory view to the way in which Indian parents and their attitude towards sex are perceived. The irony is that AIDS is being spread by adult Indian men engaging the services of prostitutes in unprotected sex (Nair, 2010, p. 1). The race groups of the prostitutes are not mentioned in the article nor are the reasons why these females engage in prostitution. In this study however, it is clear that young boys and girls are far more responsible than the adult Indian men as reported in the POST – their statements consistently advocate the use of condoms and none of the participants mentioned the use of prostitutes by their 16-17 year old peers. The danger here is the message that adult Indian men from a patriarchal society, whom children do not confide in about their sexual curiosity and concerns, are engaged in irresponsible behaviour. The fact that the women remain silent either because of shame or abuse adds to the problem.

My study shows that young school going people are being responsible, however, the report in the POST – a community newspaper widely read by Indians – is telling us that Indian adult men and women can destabilise this entire process by the way they enact their gender roles. The report on violence, physical and emotional abuse, unprotected sex and extra-marital sexual activities is bound to send conflicting messages to young Indian boys and girls who are attempting to be safe. Up until this point, I have searched for this type of information and data to support my knowledge and understanding of Indian people. I am particularly interested in the responses of adults and young people to this article because it suggests a contradiction where adults regulate and restrict their children's behaviour yet themselves indulge in risky behaviour.

The perpetuation of gender inequities and risky behaviour by adults does not augur well for young people trying to understand themselves as sexual beings and negotiating around behaviour related to risk. In this study, the participants believed that the Life Orientation curriculum and the teachers at school have been successful at conscientising them regarding safe behaviour. However, the same adults in the community who try to shape their behaviour indulge in a hypocritical agenda.

One of the policy decisions by the South African government regarding the HIV education programmes in schools was that “parents of learners and students must be informed about all life-skill and HIV education offered at the school and institution, the learning content and

methodology to be used, as well as values that will be imparted. They should be invited to participate in parental guidance sessions and should be made aware of their role as sexuality educators and imparters of values at home” (Department of Education, 1999).

With the type of situation prevailing amongst South African Indians, it is difficult to say whether the adults (parents especially) are worth consulting as possible sexuality educators. Attempts will be made by the community to downplay this debacle by claiming that only a small percentage (under one percent) is infected and that the situation is being blown out of proportion. Yet at all times Indian adults have to be aware of sending conflicting signals to developing young minds and bodies. It is the irresponsible behaviour of adults that creates a situation where young people believe that unwanted pregnancy is greater risk behaviour than contracting the AIDS virus hereby undoing concerted school efforts to educate young people on being safe.

### **5.3.3. What can schools do?**

In this study the participants were articulate about the opportunity to speak freely as a young adult with an older adult about the ways in which young people develop as heterosexual beings. The most important step that a school has to take is to create a space for young people to speak about their sexual identities. The socialisation process of young males and females suggests that they have to behave in certain ways. The presentation of the self as a gendered being begins at home, continues in school and is a lifelong process subject to various influences from family, peers and society. However, as school is the space for the most formative years of young adults, ideally it should be the environment where behaviour can be discussed, shaped and guided.

Teachers should be trained to listen and act non-judgementally. Adults should not be concerned about whether young people are having sex. The focus should be on inculcating in young people how to behave responsibly. It is important to understand that young people are entering what can be perceived as the adult world of sexual relations. Therefore, older adults should desist from policing young adults as if they are children and denying their sexuality instead of affirming it (Reddy, 2005, p. 18). This attitude towards young adults makes it difficult for them to voice their concerns and makes them resistant “to the messages about sex and disease that come from the adult world” (ibid.). Consequently community perceptions

and stigma should be addressed while teachers should be encouraged and prepared to present sex education programmes (Panday et al, 2009).

Schools have the power to reshape young minds and in consultation with parents, should restructure the curriculum to bring about gender equity and safer sexual behaviour. This study shows that preaching the abstinence only approach is not possible when young people are increasingly involved in sexual experimentation at sixteen to seventeen years of age. A comprehensive approach that includes both abstinence and safe sex practices is a more viable option (Panday et al, 2009).

#### **5.4. Limitations of the study**

- Firstly, ‘gate keeping’ delayed getting the interviews conducted sooner. This meant that I was under pressure to work fast but to remain careful and systematic.
- The geographic focus was limited to one suburb only. It is difficult to figure out what other young people in other suburbs and in the outlying areas would have to say about their lives.
- Thirdly, some of the girls in the study were particular about the way in which they referred to sexual activities. I would have preferred it if they ‘said it like it is’ instead of minding their p’s and q’s. Fortunately, the boys added depth to this study by ‘saying it like it is’.
- Fourthly, this study focuses completely on young people only. Neither parents nor educators contributed toward the ways in which they observed the development of sexual identities amongst 16-17 year olds.
- Fifthly, eight participants are not fully representative of all 16-17 year old Indians in Chatsworth, but it does provide the study with an understanding of how contemporary youth are developing their sexual identities.
- Finally, at least one girl claimed to be nervous at the individual interview. She did speak during the individual interview; however, her participation in the focus group interview was limited.

## **5.5. Conclusion**

This study explored the ways in which young Indian people in Chatsworth aged sixteen to seventeen develop their sexual identities. The study explored the ways in which young Indian boys and girls understood their sexualities in relation to each other. The focus of the study was on young South African Indians because very little research is available on this race group (See Bhana & Pattman, 2008 and Kaufman & Stavrou, 2004).

The study dispelled the notion that young Indian people are sexually unknowing despite the attempts made by Indian adults to police young adults and to portray them as 'innocent'. Neither children nor young adults can be construed as non-sexual beings.

Being born a male or female has implications for gender development. The family, school, culture and society contribute toward the shaping of sexual identities amongst young people. To understand how young Indian boys and girls give meaning to their sexualities is to give voice to their thoughts. This was done through individual interviews and a focus group.

The study revealed that young Indian people are aware of the AIDS pandemic in South African which resulted in AIDS awareness and safe sex education programmes across the country. It is highly commendable that young people who are engaging in sexual relations are using condoms. The study revealed that although condomisation was introduced to combat the spread of AIDS, the Indian community in its entirety does not consider AIDS to be a significant risk factor. Pregnancy outside marriage is considered to be the greatest risk by Indian people. Young Indian people were under parental pressure to ensure that this risk is avoided while young people themselves were averse to the idea of unwanted pregnancies because it was an obstacle to 'enjoying life' and forging their careers.

The development of gendered identities is also influenced by race, class, gender and social contexts. Most Indian people live in urbanised areas and have greater access to education and educational institutions. The location in which the study was conducted is considered to be more of a low to middle class area. Gender itself was crucial to the way the participants perceived themselves and perceived each other in relation to their own experiences of masculinity and femininity. Heterosexual relationships are sites for the development of

gender inequities which will continue to be reproduced if young Indian men and women are not taught to think critically about sexuality and gendered behaviour.

This study revealed that young Indian people are behaving responsibly and that the Life Orientation programmes with regard to condomisation has been successful. On the other hand, it also showed that young Indian people are agentic in negotiating their sexual identities. However, the gendered role expectations are problematic. For example, young girls who speak freely about sex or who smokes and drinks, is considered to be a 'fast' or 'loose' girl. Some of the boys in the study mentioned how girls were expected to be quiet, dignified and 'perfect'.

It is clear that the face of the Indian community is undergoing transformation. Such evolution calls for the reconsidering of the type of education provided to young people regarding their sexual health and general well being.

## **Appendix A: Turn-it-in Certificate**

## **Appendix B**

### **The Principal**

**Fulham Secondary**

**Chatsworth**

**4030**

**2010**

**Madam**

### **Re: Consent for learners' participation in a research study**

I am currently engaged in reading for my Masters Degree in Gender Studies at the University of KwaZulu Natal (Edgewood campus).

My research is based on a select group of Indian youth (16-17 years old) in a specific context with reference to the ways in which they develop their gendered identities and its impact on the various relationships they develop as teenagers, e.g. with peers, parents and other adults; and the implications of this for the development of Life Orientation programmes.

I have selected a group of learners who have shown interest in participating in the research. At this point there are 4 boys and 4 girls.

Of importance is the fact that all data collected in the study, the names of the participants and the school will be treated with utmost confidentiality. The names of the participants and school will be changed.

Secondly, participants will be informed that they may withdraw from the study should they feel the need to do so.

Thirdly, research will be conducted at the participants' convenience and with their and their parents' consent.

Finally, I request permission to conduct this research at this school because the pupils have indicated a willingness to participate. The success of my study will depend on the students' contributions.

Yours faithfully

---

R. Ramadhin

Reg.no. 85 23485

Proposed Qualification: M.Ed (Gender Studies)

UKZN (Edgewood campus)

Supervisor: Professor Deevia Bhana

Deputy Dean: School of Education

031-260 2603

Bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za

## Appendix C

### LETTER OF CONSENT TO PARENTS OF PARTICIPANTS

Dear parent

Re: consent for learners to participate in research study

I am currently engaged in reading for my Masters Degree in Gender Studies at the University of KwaZulu Natal (Edgewood campus).

My research is based on a select group of Indian youth (16-17 years old) in a specific context with reference to the ways in which they develop their gendered identities and its impact on the various relationships they develop as teenagers, e.g. with peers, parents and other adults; and the implications of this for Life Orientation programmes.

Your child has indicated a willingness to be part of the study. However, he/she may withdraw any stage of the interview.

All information will be treated as confidential. Neither the name of the child nor the school will be used to ensure anonymity.

I look forward to your co-operation. The success of my study will depend on the contribution of your child whom I have taught for the last 3 years and whom I know will add value to the research.

With thanks

Mrs.R. Ramadhin

Cell: 084 602 5973

Professor Deevia Bhana

E-mail: [Bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za)

Work: 031 260 2603

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### CONSENT FORM REPLY

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (parent/guardian) of

\_\_\_\_\_ (name of child/ward) grant / do not grant consent to his/her participation in the M. Ed research being carried out by Mrs. R. Ramadhin and for the use of evidence from the semi-structured and focus group interview in any subsequent presentation or publication on condition of anonymity.

Parent's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/ \_\_\_\_/ 2010

## **Appendix D**

### **LETTER OF CONSENT TO STUDENTS**

Dear Student

You are aware that I am currently engaged in reading for my Masters Degree in Gender Studies at the University of KwaZulu Natal (Edgewood campus).

My research is based on a select group of Indian youth (16-17 years old) in a specific context with reference to the ways in which they develop their gendered identities and its impact on the various relationships they develop as teenagers, e.g. with peers, parents and other adults; and the implications of this for Life Orientation programmes.

You have indicated a willingness to be part of the study for which I am deeply indebted to you. This type of contribution works on mutual trust and you know how grateful I am for your time and information. However much your contribution will be invaluable to the research, please know that you are at liberty to withdraw at any stage of the interviews.

All information will be treated as confidential. Neither your name nor the name of the school will be used to ensure anonymity. Who you are and what you have to say has always been and will always be treated with deep respect because you are individuals in your own right and have your own story to tell; and I want to hear it.

I look forward to your co-operation. The tables are turned. The success of my study will depend your contribution.

With many thanks

Mrs.R. Ramadhin

Cell: 084 602 5973

Professor Deevia Bhana

E-mail: [Bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za)

Work: 031 260 2603

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### **CONSENT FORM REPLY**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name of child/) agree / do not agree to participating in the M. Ed research being carried out by Mrs. R. Ramadhin and for the use of evidence from the semi-structured interview and focus group interview in any subsequent presentation or publication on condition of anonymity.

Student's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/ \_\_\_\_/ 2010

## **Appendix E**

86 LINNET ROAD

WOODHAVEN

4004

01 JULY 2010

REQUEST FOR DEPARTMENTAL PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT A CHATSWORTH SCHOOL

FOR ATTENTION: Mr. S.R. Alwar

Department of Research, Strategy, Policy development & ECMIS

Private Bag X9137

Pietermaritzburg

3200

### **PERMISSION SOUGHT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT FULHAM SECONDARY SCHOOL**

**TOPIC:** The development of gendered identities amongst young South African Indians in Chatsworth, aged between 16-17 and the implications for working with young people in the context of Life Orientation programmes.

The research will be conducted by me under the guidance and supervision of Professor Deevia Bhana of the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu Natal.

Research methodology: 1) Semi-structured individual interviews

2) Focus group interview

**Thank you.**

**MRS. R. RAMADHIN**

**MASTERS IN EDUCATION (GENDER STUDIES)**

**STUDENT NUMBER: 85 23485**

**EDGEWOOD CAMPUS: UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU NATAL**

**CELL: 0846025973**

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Work: 031 260 2603

## **Appendix F**



## Appendix G





## **Appendix H: Research area**

## Appendix I

### QUESTIONS: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

1. Living in Chatsworth is mostly about living with Indian cultural beliefs and values. What do your parents, teachers, religious leaders and other older people have to say about the behaviour of 16-17 year olds?
2. Do your views about how young people behave differ from those of your parents? Explain.
3. What type of behaviour is expected of Indian girls in terms of careers, relationships and marriage?
4. What type of behaviour is expected of Indian boys in terms of careers, relationships and marriage?
5. What is your own view of how 16-17 year old boys and girls should behave in all aspects of their lives?
6. What type of behaviour is expected of Indian girls as a gendered (female) being?
7. What type of behaviour is expected of Indian boys as a gendered (male) being?
8. What has school, the teaching staff and Life Orientation programmes taught you about gendered identities, AIDS, etc.?
9. Are Indian boys under pressure to behave in a particular way in terms of masculinity?
10. Are Indian girls under pressure to behave in a particular way in terms of femininity?
11. Are 16-17 year old Indian boys at any risk in relation to their physical and emotional safety?
12. Are 16-17 year old Indian girls at any risk in relation to their physical and emotional safety?
13. Do you think that the way in which young people in Chatsworth develop their gendered identities differ from young people in areas such as Westville or Umhlanga? Explain.
14. Do socio - economic conditions influence the development of gendered identities?
15. How would parents react to young people being in relationships? Why?
16. What are the fears of young people, parents, the school and the community regarding young people being involved in relationships?
17. What do young people think about interracial relationships?

## **Appendix J: Focus group schedule**

1. What do 16-17 year old boys and girls talk about?
2. Are relationships with the opposite gender important to them?
3. How do 16-17 year olds navigate themselves as gendered/sexual beings in relationships?
4. Are young people aware of AIDS, pregnancy, etc.? What are their views on these issues?
5. What does Life Orientation teach you about the sexual identities of young people, AIDS, relationships, etc.?
6. Do young people engage in relationships including physical intimacy because it is what they want or is it because of peer pressure and other reasons?
7. What do young Indian people consider to be a stable or long term relationship?
8. Are young Indian people looking for love, physical intimacy or other things in relationships?
9. Do young people go out with people younger or older than themselves?
10. Does financial status play an important role in relationships?
11. What do Indian parents and the Indian community have to say about young people engaging in physical intimacy at 16 and 17?
12. Do you think that sexually active young people are practising safe sex or the skills taught in Life Orientation?

## Appendix K

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