

SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS: AN ETHICO-LEGAL ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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by

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DECLARATION

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I, **AHMED REESHAD SHAIK**, (Student Registration no. 8523689) do hereby declare that my M.A. thesis entitled:

***SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS: AN ETHICO-
LEGAL ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE***

is the result of my own investigation and research and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree or to any other University.

All work for this thesis was completed at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.



Signature

22 - 03 - 05
Date

**Dedicated to the loving memory of my mother,
Hawa Bibi,
for all the love she bestowed upon me.**

May *Allāh* ﷻ bless her soul with *Jannat al-Firdaws*, *āmīn*

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INTRODUCTION

The transition to democracy in South Africa was the greatest challenge which was achieved peacefully in 1994. However, South Africans are today yet again challenged to pull in their resources of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to ward off the most serious health, educational, and social challenge confronting them in the form of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This pandemic has spread at such an alarming rate that its effects have impacted on global markets and economies. The rate of infection amongst our youth is unacceptable and, if not checked, will have an enormous impact on the future development of the nation.

Children and adolescents are extremely vulnerable to infection as a result of rape, child prostitution, sex abuse, pornography, and consensual explorations of teenagers intending to take their relationships to the next level or through peer pressure. In South Africa the first consensual sexual experience occurs before age 18, and in some cases as early as 11 years. The young people engaging in sexual activities may not have the knowledge or experience to reduce their risk of exposure to HIV/AIDS. Adolescents lack knowledge about pregnancy and STI/HIV transmission and are less

likely to recognize potentially risky situations or negotiate safer sex behaviours. Thus it seems that imparting sexuality education in schools may be a means by which learners could be taught life skills to avoid the risks that would do them irreparable harm.

The first chapter defines sexuality education and examines the need for sexuality education from various perspectives. It also discusses the arguments presented by protagonists and antagonists to sexuality education.

The second chapter evaluates the Department of Education's Policy Document that endorses the teaching of sexuality education in the Life Orientation Learning Area, and the support material supplied by the Department to ensure the delivery of sexuality education in public schools which are in compliance with Curriculum 2005.

The third chapter covers guidelines and mechanisms that ought to be put in place in Muslim schools to introduce sexuality education from an Islamic perspective. It further suggests the incorporation of Islamic ethico-legal perspective on sensitive issues in matters related to sexuality.

Chapter One

RATIONALE FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

The raging AIDS pandemic is reaching crisis situation in South Africa, making it incumbent upon the state to take whatever steps necessary to prevent an outbreak that would result in the total annihilation of the citizens of this country. With the introduction of sexuality education as a learning programme in the life orientation learning area, the state wishes to address the crisis.

Other reasons that also necessitate the imparting of sexuality education in schools pertain to unwanted early teenage pregnancies, abortions, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), sexual abuse of innocent victims, sexual harassment, and sexual assault in the form of rape.

These are some of the problems that youngsters encounter and if they are given proper instruction may be empowered to make good decisions based on knowledge, skills, attitudes and values imparted.

Also by making sexuality education taboo, the young mind may perceive it to be wrong, evil and dirty. They may gain knowledge about sex from friends and dirty magazines, which could lead to many problems in their sexual relationships when they become adults. About 80-90% of all HIV infections occur through sexual intercourse and due to the unacceptable proportions the virus is spreading, it has become mandatory for the Department of education to take swift action. By empowering learners to be good decision makers and help fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS the Department wishes to ensure the promotion of safe, healthy and quality lifestyle for all.

In the past, in many cultures it was the responsibility of the older members of the family, for example, the grandmother would speak to children about sexual matters.¹ In some families it is the responsibility of the elder sister to help her younger sister understand the changes occurring in her body.

¹ Edwards, D. N. *Ubungani – A Parent Guide for Life Skills Sexuality and HIV/AIDS Education*. Pretoria. HIV/AIDS and STD Directorate, Department of Health. 2000, p. 1.

More often than not, the elder sister herself is not equipped to educate the younger sister on matters relating to sexuality education as she herself may have had to cope with limited, inadequate information being passed down to her from her mother who was probably busy ironing clothes at the time and who concentrated on folding the clothes as a means of avoiding eye contact with her daughter as she herself was uncomfortable talking about sexual matters.

Then there is the proverbial “birds and the bees” talk given by countless fathers to their sons, which in most cases does not crack open the surface of the inquiring minds of the teenagers.

In many cultures it is taboo to talk to children about sexual matters. As mentioned earlier these types of parents feel uncomfortable, embarrassed and do not possess the necessary skills to speak about sexual matters to their young ones.

Some are under the misconception that if they talk to their children about sexual matters they are giving them information about sex and inadvertently granting them permission to become involved in sexual activities.

It is exactly this kind of thinking that has resulted in the neglect and often the ignorance of our children in matters relating to sexuality. Organizations like the Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa (PPASA) contend by not talking to our children about sexual matters, our children are going to get the information from friends and magazines and these sources may provide incorrect information resulting in serious damage.

1.1 SEX AND SEXUALITY

Sex indicates whether a person is a male or a female, based on their physical and biological differences. Sex also implies the act of sexual intercourse.² Sexuality, on the other hand, is the total of a person's inherited characteristics, knowledge, attitudes, experience and behaviour as they relate to being a man or a woman. Sexuality affects all areas of human life. It includes the physical body, sexual intercourse, feelings and attitudes, one's beliefs and values, the way one walks, dress, behave, the decisions one makes, inherited characteristics, relationships between people, social

² AM Educational Consultants. *Life Skills and HIV/AIDS Education Programme, Teacher's Resource Guide, Grade 1-7*. Pretoria. HIV/AIDS and STD Directorate, Department of Health. 2000, p. 66.

and spiritual aspects of people's lives. All these aspects determine our sexuality, i.e. the way we perceive ourselves as men and women.

1.2 SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Sexuality education in essence is aimed at educating and guiding the learner to responsible adulthood and is always accompanied by values and norms. Education and moulding are the primary aims of this particular type of education.³ Sexuality education is thus different than what is termed as sex information. Sex information is transmitted for the sake of imparting information without having education and moulding of the learner as an aim and values and norms are totally absent during the course of imparting sex information. Sex information can be dangerous and can lead to permissiveness and promiscuity.

Sexuality Education is a lifelong process of acquiring information and forming attitudes, beliefs, and values about identity, relationships and intimacy. It encompasses sexual development, reproductive health,

³ Ibid, p. 69.

interpersonal relationships, affection, intimacy, body image, and gender roles.⁴

Hence, it is clear that sexuality education involves much more than teaching about sex. The aim of sexuality education is to help learners develop a positive view of sexuality and their bodies, provide them with the necessary information, assist them to clarify their values, teach them values and assist them to attain the skills needed to develop caring and considerate relationships, and also to make responsible, wise and informed choices.⁵

One has to concede that sexuality education takes place continuously in every person's life through verbal and non-verbal messages from everyone around him/her including relatives, friends and the media. Withholding factual information from children in an attempt to preserve innocence may prove harmful. It could force them to seek answers from friends who normally do not provide correct, factual answers. Children are inquisitive. Withholding information encourages them to want to know more anyway.

⁴ Ibid, p. 69.

⁵ Ibid, p. 70.

Thus, in essence, the function of sexuality education is to encourage the development of pride in every adolescent and his/her chosen lifestyle.”⁶

Those who advocate the introduction of sexuality education in schools are of the view that sexuality education aims to make young people like and respect themselves, i.e. to enhance their self-esteem and self-awareness. Moreover, it helps learners see sexuality as a natural and positive part of life, providing accurate information and teaching learners the skills needed to make informed and responsible decisions; including decisions regarding sexual relationships. Furthermore, it explores different values and attitudes in order to help each learner develop his/her own moral framework.

It ought to be pointed out here that during the course of imparting sexuality education, learners are taught to act in accordance with their values. Sexuality education teaches understanding, tolerance and respect for different sexual needs, orientations and values. It is meant to equip learners with skills that teaches them to behave responsibly and in a caring, respectful way in all relationships and how to protect themselves from exploitation and not to exploit others and how to communicate and express

⁶ Ibid, p. 70.

their needs and feelings and how to use health services and how to find the information they need.

1.3 ANTAGONISTS' CONCERNS

The strongest opposition to sexuality education in schools comes from some of the senior citizens who believe that there may be no limitations to the subject matter divulged to learners in the quest of empowering them with knowledge to make informed decisions.

The comments of one such opponent during an interview with Mr. Hans Jugmohan held on the 8th of October 2002 supports the above mentioned contention:⁷

By introducing sexuality education in schools children who potentially would not have been sexually active would want to try out whatever they have learnt. They would be enticed into putting into practice what they have learnt in terms of contraception. He believes that

⁷ Interview with Mr. Hans Jugmohan on 8 October 2002 at 8 Campile Crescent Avoca Hills, Durban.

children learn by doing. Although the intention of the state and the Department of education are good it is virtually impossible to change attitudes especially regarding risk taking in sexual intercourse. It is the responsibility of parents to empower children regarding matters relating to sexuality as they would know the extent to which the subject matter and information regarding sexuality be revealed to their young ones without granting unnecessary information which may entice youth to engage in premature sexual activities.

1.3.1 Educators may sexually abuse learners

Opposition to sexuality education stems from the fear of growing number of cases of sexual offences perpetrated by educators on defenceless learners and the so-called “openness” in classrooms may fuel the fire that is torching the lives of many young South Africans. The large number of reports in the media supports this contention.

1.3.2 Educators are ill-equipped in the field of sexuality education

There are people who strongly hold the view that that educators are not well equipped or trained in the field of sexuality education,⁸ and therefore sexuality education facilitated by untrained and unskilled facilitators is detrimental and ought to be abolished.

1.3.3 Risk of turning learners into promiscuous beings

In a survey conducted at the Jumu ah Masjid Primary School, Durban, in November 2002 and March 2003, 480 parents of children attending the school completed the questionnaire regarding sexuality education. Fifty percent of those opposing sexuality education in schools concurred with the statement that if you teach children about sex they will go out and do it.⁹

⁸ Grummon, Donald L. et. al. Editors. *Sexuality: A Search for Perspective*. New York. Van Nostrand Reinhold. 1971. p. 33.

⁹ The writer of this dissertation undertook this survey. The questionnaire was completed by both educators and parents of learners in Grades 6 and 7.

NEED FOR SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS		
	AGREE	DISAGREE
Do you think your child should receive sexuality education at school	408 out of 480 85%	72 out of 480 15%
Do you think if a child learns about sexuality issues “he/she will go out and do it?”	36 out of 72 50%	

1.3.4 Ploy to promote debased sexual values

A vociferous opposition to sexuality education comes from religious circles which believe that sexuality education is an effective tool of the west for the promotion of debased sexual values. For example, *Mufti* Zubayr Bayat, President of *Jam‘iyat al-‘Ulama’* – KZN remarked:

The West is making a vigorous effort to promote their libertine culture and values upon the nations of the world.

To this end, they are employing all the resources available at their disposal. One such powerful medium is education, via the Western, secular educational system. In order to promote its liberal culture on sex, the West introduced the concept of sex “education” (Corruption) as an important element of the educational curriculum. Through this, it hopes to imbue the coming generations with its corrupt values on sex from a very tender age. Corrupt and perverted values on sex are being foisted onto the minds of the unwary victims in the name of sex “education”. Young, impressionable minds are being slowly corrupted with debased Western sexual values at secular institutions under the guise of “education”. Tangible examples of such degenerate sexual values is encouragement towards sexual “experimentation” in the form of masturbation, dating, viewing pornographic material, premarital sex, depraved sexual acts and practices and casting aside modesty and natural inhibitions. These are the anti-thesis of all that which Islam stands for. The danger this poses to the Muslims,

especially the Muslim youth, is indescribable, as it shakes the very foundations of their faith, their morality and their value systems. Yet many parents and concerned citizens of society are blissfully unaware of the magnitude of the problem. If this trend continues unchecked, the tidal wave of depravity will certainly destroy the morality of the Islamic society. Every member of society has to play a meaningful role in stanching this rot and decay that is sure to devastate our present and coming generations. May *Allāh* ﷻ protect one and all from this avalanche of pollution, *āmīn*. ”¹⁰

The concerns, objections or oppositions of Muslims about the way in which sexuality education is imparted and the conflicts that these methods present to the morals and religious beliefs of Muslims have to be addressed before this particular subject is introduced in Muslim schools in South Africa. One has to concede that the type of sexuality education offered is based on the use of some of the visual material which show pictures of engagement in sexual intercourse, homosexual activity and close-ups of female and male

¹⁰ Bayat, Muftī Z. (2002). *Sex Education Islam vs the West*. [on line]. Available from: [http://www.centralmosque.com/fiqh/sex education. htm](http://www.centralmosque.com/fiqh/sex%20education.htm)[Accessed December 2003].

genitalia.¹¹ Parents have no redress if their children are exposed to these materials in school. This type of sexuality education in effect breaks down natural restraint in learners, and arouses their curiosity thus increasing the chances of promiscuous behaviour among teenagers. There is no doubt that if learners are taught about sex they will be tempted to go out and experiment! In other words, the religious circles' opposition to sexuality education is based on the fact that it would be free of any values and examples that are given may contradict religious values. Let us at this juncture consider what an educator in America included in the manual on sex education:

- i. Nudity in homes (in shower or bedroom) is a good and healthy way to introduce sexuality to smaller (under 5) children, giving them an opportunity to ask questions.
- ii. A child's playing with genitals of another child is permissible 'naïve exploration' and not a reason for scolding or punishment. He is also aware that boys as young as 12 have raped girls as young as 8. We don't know when this 'naïve exploration' becomes a sex act.

¹¹ Sheik, Allie Haroun. *Morality in Islam*. Durban. Qasmi Publications. 2000, p. 324.

- iii. Children caught reading dirty magazines should not be made to feel guilty, but parents should use it as a chance to get some useful points across to him or her about sexual attitudes, values and sex exploitation. Like charity, pornography should start at home.
- iv. If your daughter or son is already sexually active, instead of telling them to stop, the parent's moral duty is to protect their health and career by providing information and means for contraception and avoiding venereal disease.¹²

No one can deny the fact that the two primary aims for the introduction of sexuality education in South African schools is firstly, to safeguard learners from contracting HIV and secondly, to curtail teenage pregnancy. With the rise of HIV/AIDS, the focus is on safe sex which means making condoms available for learners who decide to have sex. It is pertinent to point out here that during a workshop on HIV/AIDS, educators were asked to take a batch of condoms and to place them strategically in their respective school toilets.¹³

¹² Athar, Shahid, *Sex Education: An Islamic Perspective*. South Elgin. Library of Islam. 1995, p. 7.

¹³ Reported to the writer of this dissertation by M. Jhetam, Deputy Principal of Jumu'ah Masjid Primary School who attended the Principals' Workshop in Acton Road District Office in Durban in March 2002.

The introduction of sexuality education in the Life Orientation learning area in South Africa has not been without controversy. In an article that appeared in *YOU Magazine*, January 2002, the following was reported:

Some 200 protesters marched to parliament late last year and handed over a memorandum. Reverend Kenneth Meshoe, leader of the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), accused the government of turning young children into “little fornicators”.¹⁴

Let us reflect upon the following article which appeared in the *Daily News*:

Love Life campaign divides Cape Town

Cape Town: It's blatant, in your face, pulls no punches about sex and it's polarising the religious community in Cape Town.

The national Love Life campaign, which promotes sexual health and aims to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS among young people, has been slated by one group of

¹⁴ Louw, Elretha. “Sex Education – What Your Kids Learn” in *YOU Magazine*. Cape Town. Media 24 Magazine Division. 17 January 2002. No. 744, p. 108.

religion leaders as anti family, devoid of morality and values and pushing a homosexual agenda.¹⁵

What ought to be noted here is that although Love Life campaign is geared towards promoting sexual health and aims to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS among young people, it is nevertheless perverting the minds of the youth. It is important for us to take cognizant of the fact that firstly, Love Life is a non-governmental organisation which receives funding from a host of foreign donors and government. Secondly, the South African government works in partnership with Love Life in an attempt to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS thereby protecting the future of this country – the youth. Thus, we may rightfully come to the conclusion that, although not directly, there is a link between sexuality education campaign launched by the Department of Education in Curriculum 2005 and non-governmental organisations like Love Life campaigns.

Religious leaders from the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa, the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC) and the Jewish Ecclesiastical Court, met

¹⁵ Bramford, Helen. "Love Life Campaign Divides Cape Town" in the *Daily News*. Durban. Independent Newspapers. Monday October 14, 2002, p. 4.

Love Life Chief Executive Officer, Mr David Harrison, in Cape Town in October 2002 to thrash out some concerns and find common ground.¹⁶

Mr Errol Naidoo, spokesman of His People Ministries, which hosted the meeting, mentioned that among his chief concerns was that *Love Life Magazine* was blatantly anti-family. He added that the articles often contained statements like ‘your parents don’t understand you, but we do’. That to him undermined and usurped the authority of parents, clergy and counsellors.¹⁷

Commenting on the pictures in *Love Life Magazine*, Mr Naidoo said that the pictures used were revolting, near pornographic and lewd. He further mentioned that it promoted oral sex as a safe form of sex and to him that was irresponsible given that recent studies have shown that the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases through that form of sex was on the increase. Mr Naidoo made the following concluding remarks:

They don’t need to tell children about oral sex, how to masturbate or have same sex relationships. They’re

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

giving lessons in sex education when it's morals and values children need. It is completely devoid of morality and values and not based on anything the faith community supports yet resources are thrown at it and it comes into our communities without our having any say. Faith community cannot support Love Life campaign because they were teaching the exact opposite. Confusing teenagers is a recipe for disaster. It's a free for all which includes the promotion of licentious and deviant behaviour as the norm. You can see the hand of the homosexual lobby group promoting its propaganda throughout.¹⁸

But Mr Harrison hit back, saying that the moral high ground might be a suitable position for the church, but not for Love Life which was trying to be pragmatic and realistic. He went on to say, "We know that young people whose parents talk to them about sex are twice as likely to make safe and

¹⁸ Ibid.

healthy choices but we also know that only 14% of fathers and 20% of mothers do talk to their children about sex.”¹⁹

With regard to their alleged homosexual agenda, Harrison said that one of the key tenets of Love Life was positive sexuality and that it did not promote one form of sexuality over another form. Mr Harrison retorted: “It would be wrong to ostracise those who are grappling with their sexuality. And for those who have made a choice for same sex relationships we need to work with them so they are comfortable with their choice.”

Mr Harrison said that choices most youngsters made were based on values instilled in them in the home. He went on to justify what they were actually involved in saying: “What we are doing is trying to be pragmatic and start where young people are at and where we would like them to be.”²⁰

In a letter published in *Business Day*, Ms Christine Qunta, a lawyer by profession, posed a number of hard-hitting questions: “Why is no effort made in the ads displayed on the billboards to offer an alternative to sex, namely abstention, until a more mature age? Why do the billboards ads

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

entrench the view that it is perfectly okay to engage in sex at 14 or 15 as long as condoms are worn?”²¹

Although the above outcries are directed against Love Life, a number of similarities can be drawn to sexuality education in schools with the absence of any form of religious ethos. For example, let us consider the issue of “anti-family” where learners would be tempted to seek solutions in magazines and literature churned out by NGOs and sexuality education manuals at schools where the religious communities do not have any say. The role of parents would be severely undermined. The materials would be devoid of morality and religious values, corrupt sexual orientations would certainly be allowed to flourish in the name of protection of rights of citizens.

Moreover, if some of the issues addressed in the *Love Life Magazines* like homosexuality, positive sexuality i.e. not promoting one form of sexuality over another, oral sex as a safe sex option, or the very acceptance of oral sex as a “normal” “acceptable” form of sexual fulfillment to avoid the

²¹ Ibid.

spread of HIV/AIDS or an unwanted pregnancy were to form part of classroom discussions, we would naturally have a recipe for disaster as these issues go against the religious principles of many learners.

1.4 PROTAGONISTS' STANCE

Protagonists of sexuality education in schools contend that if a learner learns about his or her sexuality from an early age, is given complete and accurate information regarding sex, he/she will be adequately empowered to make good decisions that would in turn eradicate potential problems, the likes of which teenagers today experience.

In other words, the learner in a secular sexuality education class will learn how to protect himself/herself from sexual abuse and potential sexual abuse, about rights and responsibilities and skills to enable himself/herself to make informed and responsible decisions. He/she will also learn how to find reliable accurate information on issues relating to sexuality and on prevention and transmission of sexually transmitted infections. Moreover, they will learn to seek help when the need arises.

Dr. Sol Gordon, Professor Emeritus, Syracuse University, and an expert on sex education concurs that:²²

Incredible as it may seem, most opposition to sex education in this country are based on the assumption that knowledge is harmful. But research in this area reveals that ignorance and unresolved curiosity, not knowledge, is harmful. Our failure to tell children what they want and need to know is one reason we have the highest rates of out-of-wedlock teens pregnancy and abortion of any highly developed country in the world.”²³

People living in other parts of the world as well and in South Africa in particular could equally reiterate Dr Gordon’s view.

A quick glance at the most recent statistics regarding the AIDS pandemic would be reason alone to convince anybody for the need for such education to be part of the school curriculum. The facts are chilling, yet those who

²² As quoted in *Sex Education: An Islamic Perspective*, op. cit., p. 1.

²³ Ibid.

oppose the introduction of sexuality education in schools choose to ignore them justifying their opposition to sexuality education on the premise that such education would corrupt and demoralize the youth and undermine their religious beliefs.

Clark E. Vincent in a paper on: “Sex Education and its Opponents” contends:²⁴

To argue that we should not provide youth with sex information assumes that we have a choice. We don't! We have not had such a choice for several decades. This notion that we still have a choice as to whether to provide our young people with sex education is one of the greatest myths being fostered by the opponents of such education. Our young people are inundated with sex education and information, daily if not hourly, through television, movies, books, magazines, and their peers. The only relevant debate is whether society – adult society in particular – is satisfied with the accuracy, the

²⁴ *Sexuality A Search For Perspective*, op. cit., p. 34.

comprehensiveness, the completeness, and the “value content” of the kind of sex information our youths are receiving outside of the school setting.

The former Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, in his support for sexuality, maintained that ignorance among young people about sexuality was life threatening to society.²⁵

The following alarming revelation was made in the *Daily News*:²⁶

By the age of 10, one out of every three South African school children have already had sex. In addition many misguidedly believe that condoms do not prevent pregnancy and, even more startlingly, many say they would have unprotected sex even if they were HIV-positive....”

²⁵ *YOU Magazine*, op. cit. 17 January 2002. No. 744 , p. 108.

²⁶ Sookha, Bhavana. “School Sex Shock” in the *Daily News*, Durban. Friday 22nd October 2004, p. 1.

Hence, education authorities rightly contend that since children wanted to know about sex, informing them about it would more likely assist them to make the right choices.²⁷

In 1999, Mr Thabo Mbeki, who was then the Deputy President of South Africa and currently the President, expressed the following sentiments:

HIV/AIDS is among us. it is real. It is spreading. We can only win against HIV/AIDS if we join hands to save our nation. For too long we have closed our eyes as a nation, hoping the truth was not so real. For many years, we have allowed HIV to spread, and at a rate in our country which is one of the fastest in the world. Every single day a further 1 500 people in South Africa get infected. More than three million people have been infected.

As partners against HIV/AIDS, together we pledge to pool our resources and to commit our brainpower! There is still no cure for HIV/AIDS. Nothing can prevent

²⁷ *Life Skills and HIV/AIDS Education Programme, Teacher's Resource Guide, Grade 1-7*, op. cit., p. 5.

infection except our own behaviour. We shall work together to support medical institutions to search for a vaccine and a cure. We shall mobilize all possible resources to spread the message of prevention, to offer support to those infected and affected, and to destigmatise HIV/AIDS and to continue our search for a medical solution. And so today we join hands in the partnership, fully aware that our unity is our strength.

The simple but practical action that we take today is tomorrow's insurance for our nation.²⁸

The partnership that President Thabo Mbeki talked about extended itself beyond the onus of the Department of Health or the Department of Education to every other government department with the aim of reaching every single citizen.

Prior to Curriculum 2005 some form of sexuality education, although limited in nature, existed in the subject called health education. With the

²⁸ *Life Skills and HIV/AIDS Education Programme, Teacher's Resource Guide, Grade 1-7*, op. cit., p. 3.

implementation of curriculum 2005 in the year 2000 sexuality education as a learning programme found a home in the Life Orientation learning area and the strongest defence for its inclusion was the rise in the HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa as is evident from this statement issued by the Department of Health:

The HIV/AIDS pandemic in our country compels us all to become involved. Research indicates that in order to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, it is crucial to reach children before they become sexually active. The increasing incidence of sexual abuse also stresses the urgency to work with children from a very young age. This initiative could not have been more timely.

Because HIV/AIDS is mainly spread through sexual contact, HIV/AIDS education should always be presented in the context of sexuality education. Presenting sexuality education at school has not been part of the teacher's task in all the schools of South Africa. Many teachers may

feel that it is not their responsibility, but that of the parents.

Some teachers may avoid sexuality education because it is such a sensitive topic and they do not really have the courage or training to present it. They may argue that talking about sex at school will make the parents angry, will cause the learners to become sexually active at an earlier age or will increase teenage pregnancies and HIV infection.

However, ignorance does not guarantee innocence and teachers are feeling a growing sense of responsibility regarding sexuality education, as problems like rape, sexual abuse, teenage pregnancies and AIDS escalate in the community. Teachers realise that sexuality education, if it is responsibly presented, is one of the most effective ways to prevent these problems.

Although children are exposed to sexual messages in their daily lives, their knowledge about human sexuality is incomplete and riddled with myths and superstitions. Their main source of knowledge is other children who talk about sex in vulgar and scary ways. The lack of positive adult role models and the influence of the media, have left children confused about moral and ethical issues surrounding sexual behaviour.”²⁹

The need for sexuality education to be included as part of the life skills programme by the Department of Education was strongly supported by a survey conducted by the Community Agency for Social Inquiry (February 1999). A total number of 18 095 learners from all provinces (600 schools in total) were interviewed, the report focussed on 15 455 learners and the results are alarming.³⁰ The following table examines the statistics relating to the age of learners in South Africa during their first sexual encounter.³¹

²⁹ *Life Skills and HIV/AIDS Education Programme, Teacher's Resource Guide, Grade 1-7*, op. cit., p. 5.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 179.

³¹ Ibid, p. 179.

AGE AT FIRST TIME – SEX EXPERIENCE	PERCENTAGE
11 years old	10%
12 years old	6%
13 years old	8%
14 years old	13%
15 years old	21%
16 years old	21%
17 years and older	22%

Let us consider the statistics in the table above. Children in South Africa are engaging in sexual intercourse before they are eleven years old. 10% of the eleven year olds interviewed have engaged in some form of sexual activity. This statistic alone is cause for concern. 6% of 12 year olds have had a sexual experience. 8% of the 13 year olds interviewed have had sexual intercourse. Generally the 11 and 12 year olds would still have been in primary schools in South Africa when they encountered their first sexual experience. The 13 to 17 year old category would be in the secondary

school phase. The table that follows depicts the reasons for the first-time sexual experience.³²

Reasons for first-time sex	%
Chose to have sex	67%
Was forced to have sex	17%
Don't know	15%

By examining the statistics at a glance it is clearly evident that children ought to be taught about matters relating to sexuality since children are engaging in sexual intercourse from such an early age that it is alarming considering the risk of them being:

- infected with sexually transmitted infections(STIs)
- infected with the HIV
- falling pregnant
- having abortions

In a survey commissioned by the Henry J Kaiser family foundation as part of a series of research reports to help inform public understanding of the HIV epidemic and the associated issues, one of the surveys conducted was

³² Ibid, p. 179.

to ascertain the use of contraceptive device or protection (condoms) by sexually experienced young (teenage) South Africans.

Their findings were as follows:³³

CONTRACEPTIVE USE BY SEXUALLY EXPERIENCED YOUTH			
	AGREE	DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW
Sex without a condom is more enjoyable.	61%	20%	19%
I always use a condom.	55%	41%	4%
I use contraception.	43%	50%	6%
I try and avoid having sex with a condom	35%	61%	5%

41% of experienced young people said that they did not always use a condom when they have sex. One reasons that young people may not be using condoms is that they are reluctant to purchase them. 70% of sexually experienced youth said that many young people found buying condoms very embarrassing.

Perhaps a more significant factor contributing to low rates of consistent condom use is young people's attitudes. 39% of sexually experienced boys said they tried and avoided having sex with a condom if they could, and 32% percent of sexually experienced boys said they did not wear a condom when they had sex with their partner because it was her responsibility to take care of precautions. 69% of sexually experienced respondents believe that it is reasonable to expect males to take the responsibility of using condoms. The majority of both sexually experienced boys (68%) and girls (54%) said that sex without a condom was more enjoyable.

By making it mandatory for educators to attend HIV/AIDS workshops for training and assessing the delivery of HIV/AIDS and sexuality education at school level the Department of education has been trying its utmost to bring to the attention of young South Africans the consequences of taking risks.

1.4.1 Comment of a parent in favour of sexuality education

Mrs Maria Mpungose, a mother of two teenagers, felt that ignorance and youngsters taking risks played a major role in the increase in unwanted pregnancies:

³³ Mbeki, Zanele (Chairperson National Advisory Board, Love Life Campaign). "Contraceptive Use" in *Hot Prospects Cold Facts – Portrait of Young South Africa*. Parklands. Henry J Kaiser Family Foundation. 2000, p. 16.

They are aware of precautions to take as they have seen others suffer the consequences of not exercising caution. They are just lazy to take the initiative of protecting themselves, despite all the facilities and knowledge before them. They rely on us parents to sympathise with their predicament.”³⁴

1.4.2 Causes for “risky” sexual behaviour among the youth

One of the biggest challenges is trying to understand why the youth willfully with complete understanding of the consequences continue to engage in “risky” sexual behaviour. To address this challenge one has to try to find answers as to why young kids engage in sexual activity at such an early age? The writer of this dissertation carried out a random interview with a group of learners attending a youth programme which was held at Hartley Road Primary School, Overport, Durban on Saturday 8 March 2003. The answers were as follows:

³⁴ Zungu, Zanele. “Teenage Parenthood” in *Genuine Magazine*. Bishopsgate. Dover Publications Inc. May 2002. Vol. 1. Issue 7, p. 12.

- The youth wanted to experiment and push their relationships to the next level.
- There is so much of sex on TV that it was hard to focus on anything else.
- Boyfriends regarded them as being frigid if they did not engage in sexual activity.
- They were afraid of being dumped. “Everyone is doing it” so it’s cool, do it for fun, do it for gifts or money.
- Some youth naively relied on the advice of friends in the decision-making process and were thus coerced into engaging in sexual activities.
- Some youth could not handle the attention they got from the opposite sex which left them vulnerable for exploitation.

1.4.3 Verification of some of the responses

Let us now attempt to verify some of the above responses given by the learners.

1.4.3.1 Sex for money

In an article which appeared in *Genuine Magazine* entitled “Teenage Parenthood”, it was pointed out that in a survey that was carried out poverty was cited as a contributory factor for driving young women to fall pregnant so that they could compel the father of their children to assist them financially:

It goes back to financial support,” said a teenage parent. For example, kids from privileged homes get a monthly allowance, which they use to buy clothes or go to movies. These are things that poor parents cannot afford. Therefore the role that is supposed to be played by her parents gets taken over by the boyfriend who controls the girl emotionally and physically.³⁵

In a survey commissioned by the Henry J Kaiser Family Foundation on the issue of “sex for money” among South African youth, the findings were:³⁶

³⁵ *Genuine Magazine*, op. cit. May 2002. Vol. 1. Issue 7, p. 13.

³⁶ *Hot Prospects Cold Facts – Portrait of Young South Africa*, op. cit., p. 18.

SEX FOR MONEY OF SEXUALLY EXPERIENCED YOUTH OF SOUTH AFRICA			
	AGREE	DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW
I know of some young people my age who have had sex for money	43%	48%	10%
(Boys Only) I have given a girlfriend pocket money or bought her food or drinks in return for sex	20%	76%	4%
(Girls Only) I have had sex for money, drinks, food or other gifts	16%	80%	5%

In the same survey, the following statement appeared:

For some young people, sex is being used as a commodity in exchange for money, drinks, food or other gifts. Forty-three percent of sexually experienced young South Africans indicate they know some young people their age who have had sex for money, and sixteen percent of sexually experienced girls say they themselves have had sex for money, drinks, food or other gifts. While in some situations this exchange of sex for gifts may involve older men, young boys are also bartering for sex as one out of five (twenty percent) sexually

experienced boys say they have given a girlfriend pocket money, or bought her drinks or food in return for sex.³⁷

1.4.3.2 Sexual coercion

In another survey commissioned by the Henry J Kaiser Family Foundation concerning sexual coercion and force the findings were:

Not all young people are sexually active by choice as a number of young people deal with sexual coercion and a concerning number have experienced sex by force. Almost four in ten sexually experienced girls (39%) say that they have been forced to have sex when they did not want to; 7% of sexually experienced boys also report being forced to have sex.

³⁷ *Hot Prospects Cold Facts – Portrait of Young South Africa*, op. cit., p. 18.

SEXUAL COERCION AND FORCE: PERCENT OF SEXUALLY EXPERIENCED GIRLS WHO SAY			
	AGREE	DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW
I have been forced to have sex	39%	61%	1%
I am afraid of saying no to sex	33%	60%	7%
There are times I don't want to have sex but I do because my boyfriend insists on having sex	55%	39%	6%

In addition to force, coercion and fear are also part of many young people's sexual relationships. Thirty-three percent of sexually experienced girls and fifteen percent of sexually experienced boys say they are afraid of saying no to sex. Over half of sexually experienced girls (55%) agree with the statement "There are times when I don't want to have sex, but I do because my boyfriend insists on having sex." Young people are both the perpetrators and victims of sexual coercion. More than one in three sexually experienced boys (35%) disagree with the statement "If my girlfriend says no to sex, I do not insist on having sex with her." Many sexually experienced girls are also not taking no for an answer, as 16% indicate that they disagree with a similar statement

“If my boyfriend says no to sex, I accept it,” and another 12% say they “don’t know” whether or not they agree with this statement.³⁸

CONCLUSION

The debate on whether sexuality education should be included in the school curriculum must be brought to a close. Sexuality education has found a home in the Life Orientation Learning Area. Curriculum 2005 is a reality, thus it would be futile for the protagonists and antagonists of sexuality education to wage a war. They need to co-operate with each other to determine how best it could be implemented. They need to collectively assist in making the youth gain as wide an experience as possible and as great an insight as possible; so that they may be empowered to take over the cudgels of leadership in the future South Africa. After all, good sound judgements of the youth of today would ensure restraining themselves from indulging in high-risk behaviour which would then certainly arrest the spread of the AIDS pandemic. Differences of opinion on issues pertaining to sexual promiscuity, moral degeneration, conflict with religious views are

³⁸ Love *Hot Prospects Cold Facts – Portrait of Young South Africa*, op. cit., p. 19.

bound to exist, but none should lose sight of the fact that both the protagonists and antagonists to sexualily education have one common goal, namely, to save lives of the youth from being robbed by premature death as a result of the AIDS pandemic!

Chapter Two

EVALUATION OF THE EFFICACY OF CURRICULUM 2005

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on evaluating efficacy of Curriculum 2005. The writer of this dissertation is of the view that some of the outcomes related to sexuality education ought to be evaluated first and thereafter gauge whether the goals for the introduction of sexuality education in schools have been fully achieved.

It ought to be pointed out that at the very outset, the guidance materials provided by the Department of Education via the workshops held for HIV/AIDS and sexuality education were initially criticized on the basis that these documents were prepared by the Department of Health and handed out as resource materials for the sexuality education programmes.

Evaluation of the efficacy of Curriculum 2005 will be done on the basis of the comments made by NGOs and other stakeholders in the media as these

comments provide an introspective view of sexuality education at secular school levels. Some of the surveys conducted by these organizations determine whether the State was meeting its outcomes by including sexuality education in the school curriculum.

If we were to examine Curriculum 2005 and specifically the senior phase policy document, the Life Orientation learning area, it would become abundantly clear that there are no restrictions in the content that ought to be covered to satisfy the outcomes that relate to the learning programmes of sexuality education.

Therefore, educators are given the *carte blanche* in developing learning programmes according to the needs of their schools. Since the Department of Education does not specify the content of such learning programmes, different schools would address sexuality education according to their own specific needs. This may result in some learners, for example in a grade seven class in a particular district, learning how to use a condom as a life skill whilst other learners in the same grade at another district may only learn about changes that occur in males and females during adolescence.

However, there may be some over zealous schools that may go on to distribute condoms to learners who don't really need them and as a result initiate curiosity to such an extent that learners may become promiscuous. Then there may be another school that really needs to cover sexuality education in depth because the promiscuity level at that school is quite high.

Let us now take a closer look at some of the materials in curriculum 2005.

2.1 SPECIFIC OUTCOME 1: UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT THEMSELVES AS UNIQUE AND WORTHWHILE HUMAN BEINGS

Life Orientation is instrumental in promoting a meaningful lifestyle for each learner. This specific outcome aims to develop respect for self which includes;

- (a) a positive self-concept, and
- (b) self-actualisation.

This would be attained by promoting the individual's own worth, dignity and rights as a unique individual; examining how the physical and social environment affects personal development and growth; exploring the role of social, cultural and national perspectives in shaping personal attitudes and values; and understanding the integrated nature of the whole person.¹

Although the specific outcome has lofty and noble intentions but the implicit connotations of this outcome is cause for concern. The following discussion on sexual orientation may have to feature as an introduction to sexuality education since the educator would not wish to be judgemental and would want to afford his/her charges the opportunities to experiment and find himself /herself since everyone is a unique individual:

If a child shows tendencies of homosexuality encourage it as everyone is unique, special and a worthwhile human being. Accept masturbation as an alternative to sexual intercourse if learners are engaging in this activity, do not try stopping this behaviour lest learners in your care feel

¹ *Policy Document of Curriculum 2005, Life Orientation Learning Area Senior Phase* handed out to all educators at Outcomes Based Education (OBE) Workshops held in 2000 at the Teachers' Centre in Durban.

that you have judged them and therefore have not accepted them as unique and worthwhile human beings.

Moreover, with so much talk of freedom and rights a learner would have more options, now he would not have to perceive himself as a boy because he has a penis. He could choose whether he has feelings for a girl, or whether other boys attract him or maybe he is attracted to both boys and girls.

What ought to be noted here is that while some people are categorised as 100% gay or lesbian and are drawn sexually and emotionally only to partners of the same sex, others are completely heterosexual, bonding in sexual and intimate relationships only with people of another sex. However, a significant percentage of people do not fit neatly into either of these categories, because they experience sexual and emotional attractions and feelings for people of different genders at some point during their lives. For lack of a better term, they are called bisexuals, although, many people

prefer to call themselves “pansexual”, “non – preferential”, “sexually fluid”, “ambisexual” or “omni– sexual”.²

Hence, if a learner has not yet found himself/herself yet, educators are encouraged to let them explore their feelings and be non-judgemental. Educators are also required to arrange one-to-one counselling or therapy which could be helpful in sorting out the learners’ feelings and allowing them to gain clarity and self–confidence to find themselves. Educators are cautioned that they ought to be careful to seek out a non–judgmental therapist for their learners who would be supportive of bisexuality, homosexuality and has expertise in bisexual and homosexual issues. And last, but certainly not least, educators are expected to direct their learners towards reading books on bisexuality and homosexuality, which would help them to understand and fully embrace their sexual orientation.³

The State seems to patronize homosexuality, by arguing that every citizen of South Africa has equal rights and freedom of choice and expression

² McIntosh, Elna. (2002) *Straight, gay or bi*. [on line]. Available from: <http://www.msn.com/straight.htm> [Accessed March 2003].

³ Ibid.

which is noble when viewed from the secular man-made laws perspective, however, it comes into conflict with all major religious values.

The motivation for the acceptance of bisexual or homosexual identity would result in the motivation for the transvestism identity or the hermaphrodite identity as our fledgling democracy protects the rights of these individuals, implicitly if you have learners exposed to any of these tendencies, it could be seen as a legitimate right of the learner.

What ought to be noted here is that in the absence of specified content as the flesh on the framework of the policy document of Curriculum 2005 and the flexibility of its implementation, over zealous practitioners would have a field day relating specific outcome one of Life Orientation with information on sexual orientation! Naturally this could lead to disastrous results. Again this could be debated as disastrous from whose point of view, as protagonists of allowing learners to determine their own sexual identity could argue that if a learner was not given the opportunity to experiment and determine his/her sexual orientation then according to their libertine values they would have subjected that learner to accept an identity he/she was not comfortable with.

When one removes God from the classroom, everything is possible. After all, it is often argued that a public school has to present a secular curriculum. Steering clear from any particular religious thought would best serve its interest. However, it is important to point out here that the concept of every learner being unique individual and has the right to determining his/her own sexual orientation do pose a problem for such learners who have been brought up with certain strict religious values and norms. The challenge for parents of such learners who are in public schools would be how would it be possible for them to remove their children from such a Life Orientation lesson?

2.1.1 SPECIFIC OUTCOME 4: DEMONSTRATE VALUE AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AS REFLECTED IN UBUNTU AND OTHER SIMILAR PHILOSOPHIES⁴

PHASE	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	RANGE STATEMENT
Senior Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of human rights values and practices is displayed • The history and struggle for human rights is analysed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal Human Rights Code • South Africa and other countries • Different human rights issues

⁴ Policy Document of Curriculum 2005, Life Orientation Learning Area Senior Phase handed out to all educators at Outcomes Based Education (OBE) Workshops held in 2000 at the Teachers' Centre in Durban.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of the relationships between rights and responsibilities is displayed and practised • The practice of Ubuntu, within the South African diversity, is analysed • Work of individuals, groups, private and public institutions with regard to human rights is appraised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of political and social responsibilities • A range of aspects of Ubuntu <p>EXAMPLE: respect, social justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical information gathering and interpretation • A range of Child Protection Agencies
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Once again, an outcome is presented in such a manner as to show that it is in line with the South African Constitution and educators are expected to instill in learners a sense of patriotism, national pride and qualities of respect for law and rights of people. The assessment criteria no. 4 in the above table, namely, “The practice of Ubuntu within the South African diversity” is meant to be analysed. This exercise is totally unrestrictive and is geared to prepare learners who are naturally South African citizens for the diversity that exists within the South African framework. This is a good exercise, however, it presents moral and ethical dilemmas to both educators and learners who hold deep religious convictions, especially when the rights of homosexuals are entrenched and presented as part of the diversity of

South African citizenry. The writer of this dissertation is of the view that learners ought to be afforded the opportunity of being presented with a religious point of view on homosexual behaviour from the religious scriptures.

In a survey conducted at an Association of Muslim Schools (AMS) workshop by the writer of this dissertation at Orient Islamic School on Saturday 20 April 2002,⁵ 66.6 % of the educators felt that this assessment criteria was unrestrictive and raised ethical and moral dilemmas from an Islamic perspective. Thus, it becomes clearly evident that learners need to understand our diversity and respect our Constitution, but at the same time be conscientised about their Islamic responsibility.

2.1.2 SPECIFIC OUTCOME 7: DEMONSTRATE THE VALUES AND ATTITUDES NECESSARY FOR A HEALTHY AND BALANCED LIFESTYLE

PHASE	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	RANGE STATEMENT
Senior Phase	Various lifestyles in terms of a healthy and balance approach are appraised Knowledge and prevention of	Various lifestyles Various sexually transmitted diseases

⁵ Ironically, the Key Note Address was by Dr T. Isaac who was a member of the National Review Committee put in place to evaluate Curriculum 2005.

	sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS is demonstrated Goal-setting for a healthy and balanced lifestyle is demonstrated	and AIDS Choices related to balanced and healthy lifestyle
Intermediate Phase	The physical, emotional and social changes associated with puberty are demonstrated Knowledge of the physical, mental and social effects as well as the consequences of substance abuse on themselves, their family, others and community is demonstrated An understanding of the influences of social dynamics on their attitudes and values regarding healthy living is demonstrated Participation in environment protection and rehabilitation is demonstrated Knowledge of the nature of available health services is expressed Acquisition of basic first aid skills is demonstrated The relationship between nutrition and stages of growth and development and the food practices associated with the different stages of life is examined	Changes associated with puberty A range of substances Their impact/effect on people In family, media, peers, community and culture Local and global environmentally related health issues Primary and secondary health services First Aid procedures Patterns of food consumption

Due to the absence of the content to support the Policy Document's requirements, the Department of Education together with the Department of Health provided schools with life skills manuals that are age appropriate and in which the content are specified.

The following are excerpts of content specified manuals that are in line with Curriculum 2005 provided by the department of education in 5-day Life Skills and HIV/AIDS Workshops held on the 22 August 2002 at the DLI Hall, Greyville, Durban. Although the content is age-appropriate it does present ethical dilemmas from the perspective of different religions.

THE 9 TO 12 YEAR OLD AGE GROUP

The first changes of adolescence or puberty usually start taking place by the age of 12. Children of between 9 and 12 learn to be more independent than they have ever been, and friends become very important. At the same time they may behave like younger children emotionally. They need to be prepared for the often quite drastic changes of puberty. The physical changes may start before they are emotionally ready, and they need to understand what to expect so they will have positive feelings about their development.

The physical changes that take place at puberty open up a new world of feeling and emotions. Learners must be prepared for these changes, so they can take on the responsibilities that accompany their developing sexuality

and awareness of the world. Taking on responsibility is an important idea to get across to learners at this stage. As people develop their self-esteem. Without positive self-esteem, people cannot take responsibility for themselves; if people do not take responsibility for their own actions, they will not consider the effect that their actions have on others.

Some educators may feel that their learners are too young to be given the information in this chapter. It is imperative, therefore, to consider the following statistics:

- Countrywide, two out of every three learners (60 %) are 12 or older when they enter Grade 6 and most others will turn 12 during their Grade 6 year.
- The average age that most girls start to menstruate is 12-14, so lot of the girls in grade 6 would have already started menstruating, and need to have the information before they start.
- The average age for first sexual intercourse is 14 years for boys and 15 years for girls, which means some of the learners in the Intermediate phase will already be engaged in sexual activity. They

need to have information so that they can attempt to prevent pregnancy and transmission of sexually transmitted diseases. (STDs).⁶

These statistics should not be regarded as the only reasons for introducing sexuality education at that early stage, but also as a means of promoting abstinence and a holistic approach to sexuality education. The aim for the introduction of sexuality education ought also to inculcate good morals and a strong sense of religious belonging that ought to control the psyche of our youth in the decision-making processes. In other words, educators should be given the leeway to satisfy the expectations of the Department of Education's Curriculum 2005 with religious overtones.

The following statement appears in the manual on sexuality education:

Some learners will not have had any experience of labelling a diagram of the internal parts of the body, although many will know the names of the large organs

⁶ Norton, Judy and Dawson, Colleen. *Life Skills & HIV/AIDS Education*. South Africa. Planned Parenthood Association Of South Africa . Heinemann Publishers. 1999, p. 44.

such as the brain, lungs, and intestines. Lessons 2 and 3 in grade 4 will help learners see the reproductive organs as part of the body, in the same way that the other organs are part of the body. This may be your learners' first experience of learning about the internal body parts, and where they are situated.

As with other lessons, you may feel you want to leave out some of the labels or descriptions, or add others, depending on what your learners are interested in and cope with. You know your learners best and should use your own judgement about what to include.⁷

What is interesting to note is the Department's flexibility on the delivery of these lessons as ultimately the educator interacting with his/her learners will decide how far a topic ought to be covered. This flexibility also depicts the unrestrictive nature of Curriculum 2005 and proves that not all learners in a grade six class in every school in South Africa would cover the same

⁷ *Life Skills & HIV/AIDS Education*, op. cit., p. 44.

content. The content covered in a specific school in a specific locality, for example, in KwaZulu-Natal would largely be dictated by the needs of that class in that school in that locality. So if learners are already sexually active or cases of teenage pregnancies or abortions surface then information regarding prevention and protection would be emphasised. In the same way if a school has an overwhelming majority of any particular religious grouping for example, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus, etc., then that particular religious ethos ought to be imparted with sexuality education.

The manual on sexuality education, while touching on external female reproductive organs, states the following:

The female sex organs are particularly difficult to understand because they are hidden away inside the body and between the legs. This information will help you and your learners understand female sexual response better.

Learner sheet 3.6 illustrates the positions of the parts described here. You may not feel comfortable giving this diagram to your learners. If not you can describe the parts using learner sheet 3.3 to show where they are. It is

essential for your older learners to have the following information here:

The clitoris is a bundle of nerve endings that provide pleasurable feelings during sex. The vagina has very few nerve endings inside it. For a woman to feel a lot of pleasure and have an orgasm, the clitoris has to be stimulated, either by the pressure of the partners body, or using his or her fingers or tongue.”⁸

The first statement that has been highlighted in the above paragraph of this guidance material once again suggests that if the educator is not comfortable, he/she should use his/her discretion to give the learners the diagram sheet. This in itself proves that some of the information being shared is not necessary as the learner may not necessarily be ready for that particular information. This directs caregivers to give age-appropriate information, thereby restricting the chances of promiscuity due to curiosity.

⁸ *Life Skills & HIV/AIDS Education*, op. cit., p. 45.

However, one ought to note here that if the information in the above paragraph were to be presented verbatim to learners it presents an ethical dilemma for both the educators who have strong religious convictions. The stimulation of the clitoris with the tongue would constitute (having oral sex) and may pose a problem to the religious educators in imparting this information to innocent learners which could well be in conflict to their religious beliefs and that of their learners.

On the section on masturbation, the manual states the following:

Masturbation is when people touch their own sexual parts or organs for the purpose of arousal or sexual pleasure. Most people, male and female, masturbate at some time in their lives. Very small children will touch their genitals as part of learning about their bodies and because it feels good. Like many of the topics that we are dealing with, this is difficult to discuss with learners. **There are many cultural and religious beliefs about masturbation being harmful. We have to try to**

separate facts from masturbation from incorrect ideas, while respecting religious and cultural beliefs.⁹

The writer of this dissertation has highlighted the last two sentences for the following reasons:

- i. The authors of this guidance material for learners are aware that masturbation poses ethical dilemmas from a religious perspective in some of the religions and cultures of the world.
- ii. They further justify their promotion of masturbation by appealing to service providers to separate facts from incorrect ideas. It is precisely this kind of undermining of religious values that incite our youth to question religious practice and ultimately condemn it.

Masturbation in most religions, if not all, is considered to be sinful, being prohibitively disliked, because of its many personal and societal ill effects that are known and recognised in sane traditional societies and by balanced people the world over.¹⁰

⁹ *Life Skills & HIV/AIDS Education*, op. cit., p. 46.

¹⁰ Furber, Sidi Musa 2001. *Masturbation*. [on line]. Available from: http://www.themodernreligion.com/misc/s_mast.htm. [Accessed April 2003].

As for modern 'expert' opinions that there is 'nothing wrong with it,' these are the opinions of the same people who see nothing wrong with fornication, nudity, and most other personal and social depravity.¹¹

The following statement appears in the manual in the section that deals with homosexuality:

The word homosexual means a person who is sexually attracted to a person of the same sex. 'Homos' is a Greek word that means 'the same'. Heterosexual means a person who is sexually attracted to the opposite sex. 'Heteros' is a Greek word that means 'different'. The word gay is often used to mean a man who has sexual feelings for other men, while lesbian means a woman who has sexual feelings for other woman.

Homosexuals often get a very strong and negative response from heterosexuals. **This is based on deep-rooted prejudice. Learners need to understand that**

¹¹ Ibid.

their feelings about homosexuals are based on irrational prejudice rather than fact. The prejudice is not surprising when you consider that homosexual sex between men over the age of 19 became legal in 1998. Heterosexual sex is legal between people over the age of 16. This means that the law of South Africa discriminates against homosexual men.¹²

If the educators were to present this information verbatim, then they would be involved in furthering the implicit homosexual agenda and subjecting their learners to believing that homosexuals are victims of the state's "prejudice" by making it legal for sex between homosexual men at age 19 whilst sex between heterosexuals is legal at age 16!

Moreover, the manual also cautions the educators:

Teachers need to examine their own attitudes so that they do not transmit a prejudice attitude to their learners.¹³

¹² *Life Skills & HIV/AIDS Education*, op. cit., p. 46.

¹³ Ibid.

In the interest of protecting the rights of homosexuals which is entrenched in the Constitution, the authors of this guidance material tear at the very fabric of religious beliefs and this naturally presents a conflict of views or perspectives (one that is totally secular and open and the other value based and religious).

Let us examine the next excerpt from the guidance material:

Start the lesson by asking the learners some questions, such as: how do teenagers and adults show each other that they like each other a lot? The learners will give suggestions like kissing, hugging, having sex, or other ways of describing sexual behaviour. You can describe how people are attracted to each other, and that being attracted to a person and wanting to kiss them and hug them is a very special feeling.

It is important to talk about sexual attraction as something that can happen between any two people. They do not have to be married and they do not have to

be of the opposite sex. Homosexuals are attracted to people of the same sex. Many people and religions teach that sex should only happen between married people of the opposite sex. However, sexual attraction and activity does take place between people of the same sex and outside of marriage. What is important is that people who are involved in sexual activity are making the right choices about the consequences, and that both people involved are happy with the situation. You may however, want to deal with homosexuality when your learners are in grade 5 or 6.¹⁴

The information presented in the above paragraphs is problematic from a religious perspective. Firstly, by making the statement that two people do not have to be married although this position may be true in many cases, the educator would be undermining the sanctity of marriage and the union of two individuals in the sanctity of marriage. As much as two individuals do not have to be married to have feelings for each other, it is essential to constantly reinforce the institution of marriage to avoid learners from

¹⁴ *Life Skills & HIV/AIDS Education*, op. cit., p. 51.

constantly having thoughts of loved ones outside marriage. This constant reminder will ensure that the youth do not indulge in relationships outside marriage and would not see a relationship outside marriage as normal. Secondly, by constantly reminding learners that people could be attracted to the same sex and that was normal, is in effect furthering the covert homosexual agenda. Here we may remark, “Normal” according to man-made laws not according to Divine injunctions.

The manual also contains an excerpt in the form of a question and answer:

Can you get pregnant if you have sex during your period?

Ovulation can happen very soon after the bleeding stops.

Sperm can live up to 3 days, so you can get pregnant if

you have sex during your period.”¹⁵

Although the authors answer the question clearly and precisely, the response to the question above also poses problems to the adherents of Judaism and Islam in view of the fact that sexual intercourse during

¹⁵ *Life Skills & HIV/AIDS Education*, op. cit., p. 57.

menstrual period is censured. Moreover, the authors have omitted to discuss the harmful medical effects of sexual intercourse during menstruation.

At this juncture, it is important to assess whether the introduction of sexuality education in schools have had positive results or not.

2.2 EVALUATION

The following report appeared in *Genuine Magazine*:

More than half of Durban's teenager's were pregnant in 1999, some of them for the second or third time. The sharp increase in unwanted pregnancies, from 43% in 1998/1999, to 56% in 2000, has been described as alarming, in view of the devastating AIDS epidemic that is rampantly spreading amongst young people, and the ongoing contraception education campaigns at schools and clinics.”¹⁶

¹⁶ *Genuine Magazine*, op. cit. May 2002. Vol. 1. Issue 7, p. 12.

The statistics mentioned above is alarming and begs to question the success of the Departments of Education and Health's campaigns at schools and clinics to curb unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections.

In a research conducted by the Phoenix Child and Welfare Society, the following were cited as the major causes of teenage pregnancies:¹⁷

- parental disapproval of relationships
- chances during intercourse
- inappropriate role models
- a lack of emotional bonding between teenagers and their immediate families
- early maturity
- ignorance

We are compelled once again to ask whether the Department of education is succeeding in giving complete and accurate information to learners at school level? The findings of the above mentioned survey points us to a serious flaw in the information giving process and that is the challenge that confronts all of us, whether we may represent the Departments of Education

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 13.

or Health or ourselves as parents. The challenge is manifest: How can we influence the attitudes of our youth?

During the Second Annual School Governance Conference held in Durban on the 27th of February 2003, senior provincial officials of the Department of Education recognised the crisis that gripped the schools in KwaZulu-Natal alone. They are as follows:¹⁸

- More than 400 000 children attending KwaZulu-Natal schools are believed to be AIDS orphans living from hand to mouth.
- At one school, the principal believes as many as 75% of his pupils may themselves be infected with HIV.

Zama Msomi, recently appointed head the HIV/AIDS programmes in the school governance component, remarked that the pandemic was prevalent in places like Mtubatuba, Nongoma, and around Durban. Day-in and day-out people were being buried because of that disease.¹⁹

¹⁸ Bisetti, Krisendra. "400 000 AIDS Orphans in Provinces' Schools" in the *Natal Mercury*. Durban. Independent Newspapers. Friday 28 February 2003, p. 1.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Moreover, a former KwaZulu-Natal Education Minister, Mr. Gabriel Ndabandaba, addressing the conference lashed out at the youth, who he said:

- Despite the “everyday evidence” of lethal outcome of AIDS, still engaged in “immoral sexual relations as though they were having breakfast”.
- Almost all attempts to educate and warn people fell on deaf ears
- There seemed to be a spirit of defiance and nonchalance permeating the youth of our country.
- And again we seem to have relied on condoms as the only panacea against the pandemic.
- Are we saying that our youth and our people have lost all sense of humanity that the only remedy for them now is to condomise?
- Are we saying that our youth have lost self control... If so, then there is something wrong with our society.²⁰

Although Ndabandaba highlighted the failure of attempts made to empower the youth with the necessary information regarding the risks of HIV infections and STIs due to the *laissez faire* attitude of the youth, he was still

²⁰ *The Mercury*. Friday, February 28, 2003, p. 1.

confident that the Department of Education would meet the challenge by strengthening teacher training and awareness campaigns. The Department of Education via the Life Orientation learning area seeks to address these problems via its intensive programmes in HIV/AIDS and sexuality education, however, the effects of these programmes are yet to be assessed, evaluated and the findings together with support programmes to be effected.

The following article appeared in the *Sunday Tribune* in April 2004:

More SA children playing sex games²¹

Children as young as six years are playing sex games while teenagers engage in sexual orgies without protection.

Experts on teenage sexuality said they are seeing an increase in sexually transmitted infections due to these activities.

Johannesburg Teddy Bear Clinic's therapeutic manager, Shaheda Omar, said pre-pubescent (6 to 9 year – olds)

²¹ Badat, Noorjehan Yoro and Van Rooyen, Lindi. "More South African Children playing Sex Games" in *Sunday Tribune*. Durban. Independent Newspapers. April 4, 2004, p. 3.

and pubescent (10 years and above) play nkukhu (chicken) and “stuck in the mud” .

The former is similar to hide and seek and whoever gets caught first is a victim of fondling and must co-operate in sexual activities. In stuck in the mud the children play at grabbing each other’s genitalia.”

The Teddy Bear Clinic counsels abused children.

“This is not purely social curiosity, it goes beyond that.

They do it in secrecy, because they know it is inappropriate and it is done behind closed doors and behind parents’ backs,” Omar said.

Teenagers and younger children also played “hide and go and suck”, which is a form of oral sex.

Sexologist and author, Tanya Marie Robinson, said that teenagers were “mostly having unprotected oral sex” and were “unaware of the risk of sexually transmitted infections and HIV”. She was shocked about what she heard from the teen patients that she saw at the Intercare Health Centre at Fourways in Johannesburg, The Square Medical Centre Umhlanga in Kwazulu-Natal, and the schools she visited to talk about safer sex. “They

are having anal sex. (They say) I am still a virgin, if I have anal sex, (there is) no risk of pregnancy!” Oral sex, she said, was misunderstood. Teens partook in oral sex, but did not protect themselves, because they were not aware that they would still be at risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections and HIV – a low risk for HIV transmission, but still a risk.²²

An increase in gonorrhea infections in recent years, particularly among 15 to 29 year olds, is a disturbing sign that the prevalence of unsafe sex is increasing, said Robinson.

A survey on youth risk behaviour found that despite 72% of schoolchildren receiving sex education, 41% of them engaged in risky sexual behaviour.

The First South African National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey 2002 also found that 41.1% of South African pupils in Grades 8 to 11 have had sex and 14.4 % had their first sexual contact at 13 or younger.²³

The prevalence of abortion among pupils 13 or under (29.7%) was significantly higher than for pupils 19 or over (9.2%).²⁴

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

The following incident suggests that with all the steps taken by the stakeholders to avoid risky behaviour, some youngsters would not heed the advice:²⁵

Upon admission to Pietermaritzburg's Townhill Mental Hospital, I was suicidal and depressed. I felt that nothing mattered and I couldn't see the point to anything. For me, the only way to rid myself of the pain inside was to die. I didn't care that I had two degrees to my name and a number of achievements worthy of pride. It wasn't important anymore. Dying was.

I sat in the superintendent's office, trying to familiarise myself with the new surroundings. Everything seemed strange. I was in a psychiatric institution where I was meant to heal. This was the place where I would try to make sense of what had happened to me.

²⁵ Petzer Anneke. "Over the Edge" in *True Love*. Cape Town. Media 24 Magazine Division. January 2002. No. 275, pp. 90-92.

I didn't know how I was expected to share what I'd been through. Even to me, the events were jumbled and chaotic, with only disjointed pieces of events remembered, as if in a dream. But I knew that if I wanted to survive the despair welling up in me, I'd have to force myself to reconstruct them, and my mind went back to January 2, 2001.

I was six month pregnant, with no husband or boyfriend – my baby's father had abandoned me. I was unemployed and emotionally broken. I'd become totally dependant on my parents and had to live with the stigma of being a single, pregnant woman. Every time I looked into my parents' eyes all I saw was disappointment.²⁶

This sure does look like a scene from a favourite soapie or the pages from the latest bestseller romance novels, but the truth is horrific. This is an extract of Anneke Petzer's account of an experience that almost pushed her

²⁶ *True love*, op. cit. January 2002. No. 275, pp. 90-92

over the edge. What caused Anneke to become suicidal? It certainly was not being a single, pregnant woman. But the most unimaginative, inhumane torture, torment and trauma that she underwent when her mother's friend and accomplices performed an abortion on her in a crude and dangerous manner. That was not all. Anneke experienced the most cruel and brutal form of murder.

Her mother's friend had tricked her into visiting another single, pregnant woman. On entering the dimly lit room, two women grabbed her and her mother's friend held her from behind. After a short scuffle she felt the prick of a needle. Her body started convulsing and she finally passed out. When she regained consciousness her immediate concern was the safety of her child but upon feeling the baby kick she returned home, only to find that she was experiencing severe cramps and weakness. A short while later, without any warning she felt something exit her body and out came her baby. She picked up her baby and placed her on her chest. The baby was turning blue. She screamed for help and naturally her mother's friend was there to take care of the situation. She bent down and in Anneke's words "picked up my baby as if she were a used tissue." Then she did the most terrible thing imaginable. She threw my baby into the toilet pan and flushed it. "My mind

exploded.... I threw my hand into the pan and managed to grab onto my baby's little leg..... My baby lay there, submerged and kicking weakly, trying to escape from the rush of water. Suddenly my baby vanished.”²⁷

By examining Anneke's account it can be established that Anneke was an intelligent woman. By the time this event had taken place the state and various non-governmental organisations had spent millions of rands in AIDS awareness programmes and life skills programmes encouraging citizens to negotiate safer sexual behaviour. Why did Anneke find herself in that predicament? Did she not have knowledge about contraceptives? Did she not insist on: “I told James to wrap it up or zip it up” as thousands of these billboards appear across our country. Were her parents not informed about legality of abortions in South Africa?

The rate of teenage pregnancy has risen to alarmingly high levels in South Africa, despite numerous government initiatives aimed at reducing it. What is truly disturbing in this report is that although learners are receiving sexuality education at schools they continue to engage in risky behaviour. Almost 29 out of 72 learners receiving sexuality education in South African

²⁷ Ibid.

schools engage in risky behaviour without once considering the consequences.²⁸ What begs to be answered by these startling statistics are the following pertinent questions:

- Is the Department's sexuality education programme failing?
- Are there on-going updates, workshops to keep educators informed on the startling statistics of risky behaviour among the youth?
- Do care-givers, teachers, parents, guardians, have no control over our youth in instilling values that will encourage abstinence from sexual activities before marriage?
- Is the role of the media TV, Movies, Magazines, etc., responsible and what can one and all as responsible citizens do to impose some form of restrictions on the media?

In an article on teen sex in *Fair Lady* Magazine, some very disturbing facts are revealed:

²⁸ "More South African Children playing Sex Games" in *Sunday Tribune*, op. cit., p. 3.

FROM THE MOUTHS OF BABES²⁹

South African teens are having sexual experiences of every description and it's often with multiple partners. The findings of recent surveys are enough to leave even the most confident parents reeling in shock. What's changed? Why? And what does it all mean for parents and teachers?

A recent investigation by M-Net's *Carte Blanche* into teen sex (based on a survey by Community Information for Empowerment and Transparency) featured one teen talking about a game called 'rainbow cardings':

What happens is that every girl wears different lipstick and they go to this party and they have oral sex with each boy with each of these different lipsticks,' the teen revealed.³⁰

Allesandra Newton, co-ordinator of the Education For Living programme at the Family Life Centre in Parkview, Johannesburg, said that, along with the

²⁹ Coetzer, Diane. "From the Mouths of Babes" in *Fair Lady*. Cape Town. Media 24 Magazine Division. April 2004. No. 807, p. 28.

³⁰ Ibid.

fact that teens were having sex much younger, that was a new feature of teenage sexuality in the 21st century.³¹

There are girls who will give half-a-dozen blow-jobs at a party, and what guy is going to say no? We've asked boys about this in our sessions, and some may say they would feel bad the next day but they certainly would not turn down a blow-job. We get girls asking us if they should spit or swallow in the courses we run.³²

Newton said that she found that trend disturbing:

Where is the girls' self-esteem? And what does it say about gender relationships that it's the girls who are giving and not receiving – because I can tell you now, the boys do not reciprocate.³³

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

But she pointed out that, like 10 or even 20 years ago, when it came to teen sex, it was the kids who were emotionally needy who were most at risk. She concluded with the following remarks: “All children need to belong and be nurtured, and it’s the ones short on these who are vulnerable.”³⁴

Mr Walter Essex-Clark, Principal of Northcliff High School in Johannesburg (which has about 1500 pupils of both genders), said that he felt strongly that alcohol and drug use was the most serious problem facing teenagers at his school – and that that had a direct relationship to sex:³⁵

We know children go to clubs and drink on the weekends, and it does affect their school and social life. There is no doubt that, especially among teens, alcohol lowers inhibitions and leads to promiscuous behaviour.

The school takes sex education very seriously and has Life orientation firmly on the curriculum – in line with requirements by the Gauteng Departement of Education. From what we see at this school, our children have a very

³⁴ Ibid, p. 28.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 29.

respectful approach to each other and a very mature approach to sexuality,' says Essex-Clark. 'they have come through co-educational primary schools where they have dealt with many issues already – extensively.

I am generalizing, but we are getting kids who are mature in terms of their sexuality and knowledge. From our experience it's those teens who put themselves at risk by drinking or those involved in long-term relationships that lead to experimentation who are most likely to have sex. They can have knowledge but still engage in risky behaviour.

Interestingly, one aspect that (along with far more integrated approach to sex education) has changed in schools is that pregnant learners are not shipped off to a special 'home' as in the past. At Northcliff High School, three teens who became pregnant in the last five years had remained at school, again according to Department of Education regulations. 'It's amazing how accepting and helpful the other pupils are,' says Mr Essex-Clark.

At Johannesburg's DISA Clinic, Dr. Elna McKintosh and sexologist Tanya Robinson³⁶, deal extensively with teens and issues of sexuality. Says Robinson:

It's shocking how many young people are having sex.

And when I am referring to sex I am including the practices penal-vaginal penetration, oral sex and anal sex.

I often go to schools to talk to teenagers about safer sex and it is shocking to hear what they say. There is definitely a lack of sexual knowledge when it comes to safer sex. Most teachers still treat sex as something you do for the purposes of reproduction and work it into the biology class. Teachers and parents will need to wake up and get the information for themselves. If they don't know the facts about sexual practices and safer sex – how can they teach the children?

The clinic sees a big shift towards oral and anal sex because they cannot fall pregnant. What they forget is that this practice is the highest risk for HIV transmission.

³⁶ Author of the book for young girls *When Sex Turns Sour and Seventeen* .

Teens also engage in oral sex but don't protect themselves because they don't know they're at risk for sexually transmitted infections and HIV. Although the risk for HIV transmission is low, it is still at risk.³⁷

One of the main reasons for the introduction of sexuality education at schools was to teach learners who are infected to avoid high risk behaviours, to understand the disease and its effects on the nation and to make responsible decisions in relation to future sexual encounters. However, the shocking findings in all the above accounts demands an evaluation of the delivery of sexuality education together with specialized skill training for educators imparting sexuality education. The skills training ought to specialize in "changing attitudes".

According to a report in the *Mercury*:³⁸

HIGH percentage of school pupils who took part in a major survey indicated they would deliberately spread

³⁷ Ibid, p. 29.

³⁸ Leeman, Patrick. "We Would Deliberately Spread AIDS" in the *Mercury*. Friday 21 May 2004.

Aids if they had the virus, and believed that sex with a virgin would cure them of the disease.

This was one of the shock findings of a survey conducted by research company Ceitafrica.

The research involved 283 000 pupils from high schools in all nine South African provinces. The results were made public yesterday by the national co-ordinator of Childline, Joan van Niekerk. She was speaking at the 9th international conference of the South African Association of Marital and Family Therapy at the International Convention Centre. She said 10% of all school pupils who took part in the survey on sexual violence believed that sex with a virgin would cure them of HIV/Aids. She said that in the past year, two out of every 10 pupils had experienced sexual violence.

Growing concern about teenage pregnancy, which has forced many school-girls to cut short their education, has prompted the Department of Education to rethink its life-skills programme and introduce a bold new initiative.

More than one third of teenage girls in South Africa become mothers by their 19th birthday, a national survey has found. The Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa reported that from a survey of about 800 teenagers, 35% of all teenage girls gave birth by the age of 19 and that the average age of African teenage mothers was 18.³⁹

2.3 CHALLENGES FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

In order to monitor the implementation of sexuality education programmes at school level and provide the necessary assistance where needed. The Department of Education needs to inform parents of the content of the sexuality education programme in each grade at school level and make parents part of developing the sexuality education programme at school level. The writer of this dissertation is of the view that sexuality education in schools could be made more effective if the following are put into place:

³⁹ Bolowana, Angela. "Teen Sexuality on the Curriculum" in the *Natal Mercury*, Thursday, 24 June 2004, p. 4.

1. Facilitators in the Life Orientation learning area who are entrusted for the delivery of sexuality education ought to be screened and trained.
2. In the absence of certification, no criteria or standards have been established by the respective Departments of Education for teachers of sexuality education. Sexuality education which is included in the Life Orientation Learning Area requires to be developed to such an extent that it is offered as a teaching major or minor for students enrolled in teacher training colleges and universities so that they could receive appropriate certification. Moreover, the teaching and support materials ought to be developed, constantly assessed, analysed and evaluated.
3. The Department would have to create awareness programmes and activities that could influence attitude change of young South Africans who willfully engage in risky behaviour (sex without condom) and preferably promote abstinence from sexual intercourse as the best protection from STIs, teenage pregnancies, abortions and HIV/AIDS. Moreover, support and assistance ought to be provided to infected and affected learners. More and more information on life

skills should be given to teenagers in order for them to make responsible and informed decisions.

4. Educators should encourage learners to understand the consequences of their actions, by teaching them about rights and responsibilities. To encourage learners to have “open” talks with their parents so as to ensure that healthy choices are made.
5. Recreational facilities in schools and communities need to be established for young people and participation in sport be encouraged to alleviate boredom.
6. Specialised training classes for parents ought to be instituted within the school framework to empower parents with latest factual and accurate information in life skills and sexuality education so that parents can feel comfortable when talking about relationships and sex with their children.

CONCLUSION

The effective delivery of sexuality education in schools depends upon a concerted effort being undertaken by all stakeholders to restrict learners from engaging in risky sexual behaviour. The role of religious organizations, the community and the family ought not to be undermined.

The Department of Education ought to take cognizance of the fact that guidance materials on sexuality education are in conflict with religious values and thus schools which have a religious ethos ought to be given the leeway to prepare their own manuals that would promote abstinence and put God above everything else.

Chapter Three

SEXUALITY EDUCATION FROM AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

INTRODUCTION

A number of Muslim schools in the UK and the USA have introduced sexuality education as part of the curriculum. Some form of guidance materials on this highly contentious topic have been developed by these schools. The introduction of sexuality education in South African schools has not come without controversy. Many religious organizations registered their disapproval and accused the State of pushing forth a homosexual agenda and on the basis of other reasons as discussed in chapter one of this dissertation.

Sexuality education in schools is part of the curriculum, and is considered a right afforded to learners in the classrooms.

3.1 LEARNERS' RIGHT TO SEXUALITY EDUCATION

In 1995, South Africa ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the child. In Article 18 it is stated that a child should have access to information that will help the child to promote his/her physical and emotional well-being. It was thought that sexuality education and information on HIV/AIDS would certainly help a child in that regard. So South Africa has agreed to ensure that children have access to that type of education and the various Education Departments in the country have indicated their support for the introduction of sexuality education in schools. The Children's charter of South Africa contains an Article that states that children have the right to education on issues such as sexuality and AIDS. South African children therefore have a right to sexuality education.¹

Although this right is entrenched, Muslim principals, educators, board of governors and other Muslim institutions felt that it was necessary to present the Islamic perspective on sexuality education to their learners. After all, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was open, kind and honest. He ﷺ was cognizant of the needs of men and women and showed understanding of the nature of

¹ *Life Skills And HIV/AIDS Education Programme, Teacher's Resource Guide, Grade 1-7*, op. cit., p. 106.

their creation. He ﷺ was not prudish or bigoted, and he ﷺ obviously enjoyed his marriages very much himself (despite the opinions of people that his marriages were only undertaken for charity or politics). This was certainly not the view of *Sayyidatunā Umm al-Mu'minīn* 'Ā'ishah (r.a.), who undeniably knew the Prophet ﷺ, more intimately than many others.²

3.2 THE PROBLEM WITH SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Some Muslim scholars contend that it is only the responsibility of parents to impart sexuality education. Various reasons are cited for this and some of them are that parents will know when, and how much of information would be sufficient to satisfy their children's enquiry. Strictly from an Islamic legal perspective, a non-*mahram*³ educator is not permitted to address matters relating to sexuality with learners of the opposite sex. This means that a male educator must address male learners on sexuality education and vice versa a female educator must address female learners on the issue in question.

² Maqsood, Ruqaiyyah Waris. *Survival Tips for Parents of Muslim Teenagers – A Guide for Muslim Parents*. Delhi. Rightway Publications. 2001, p. 91.

³ In this context here it would mean the male educator who can legally marry the female learner.

Insofar, as the choice of educators who would be entrusted to teach sexuality education is concerned, it would be advisable to choose such educators who are morally upright, have a counseling background, are heterosexual, and are married.

Another important point is that the correct approach to sexuality education ought to involve very little use of graphic materials. In other words, only such materials that are necessary to teach parts of reproductive organs should be used. Moreover, educators must include in every lesson on sexuality education a lesson on morality. Furthermore, age appropriate curriculum has to be evaluated before implementation by all stakeholders, namely, the '*Ulamā*', parents, Muslim doctors and community leaders and organizations, to ensure the delivery of responsible information.

3.3 PRESSURES UPON THE YOUTH

Many young Muslims often complain that their parents set unrealistic expectations regarding sexual pressure or anxiety, and that they also feel abandoned by parents who simply tell them: "just say no to sex." This leaves them with no choice but to recourse to their equally confused peers

for sources of information on sex, which would most certainly be unreliable.⁴

The topic of sexuality provokes fear, mystery, curiosity, desire and all of these very powerful emotions can be easily manipulated into sexual behaviour. One Muslim learner remarked:⁵

Basically, a lot of people become curious about sex because of a combination of their peers telling them that they are weird if they don't and their parents telling them they will go to hell if they do.

Sexuality is such a complex subject that ought not to be dismissed altogether. The sexual urge is undoubtedly a natural urge, which many find difficult to suppress, and thus the need for the introduction of sexuality education from an Islamic perspective in Muslim schools.

Another Muslims learner remarked, “My parents go so far as to tell me what I’m feeling is unnatural, and that I’m being wrong just thinking about

⁴ *Sex Education: An Islamic Perspective*, op. cit., p. 75.

⁵ Ibid, p. 76.

the opposite sex in that way. I don't plan to act out on what I'm feeling, but I have to at least talk about it, but not to my parents, I guess.” It is, therefore, evident that Muslim teenagers too are constantly under pressure and if not given the correct guidance will indulge in sexual activities out of curiosity or ignorance. Their raging hormones, together with pressures from promiscuous friends who share their naïve escapades with exaggerations will most certainly have disastrous consequences for the Muslim youth. Muslim parents need to address their children’s desire of curiosity at a time when they are most vulnerable. They should try as best as they can to answer all their concerns regarding “where do babies come from?”, etc. Our youth need to be taught from the very beginning the importance of marriage and being in a loving, harmonious, marital relationship.

3.4 ROLE OF EDUCATORS

Although children are exposed to sexual messages in their daily lives, their knowledge about human sexuality is incomplete and riddled with myths and superstitions. Their main source of knowledge is other children who talk about sex in a vulgar and scary way. The lack of positive adult role- models

and the influence of the mass media, have left children confused about moral ethical issues surrounding sexual behaviour.

In order to guide children responsibly, consideration should be given to:

- The teacher who should teach sexuality education
- Which age- group of pupils should be taught
- Timetable issues and organisation
- The kind of atmosphere in the sexuality education classroom
- The way in which one speaks to learners about sex

According to Wahid Bakhsh Shaikh, the issue that challenges every concerned educationist is not how to create for the child opportunities for self-learning, but how to equip them with all the necessary implements which he requires in self-defence against the social ills and how to train him in the art of living so that he can live his life in accordance with the laws of nature so as to realize the ultimate truth. It is here that the educationists are perplexed. The true aim of education according to the teachings of the *Holy Qur'ān* is to instill in the young children love and fear of *Allāh* ﷻ. These

are the two complementary forces that tend to produce in them a balanced behaviour. This seemingly remote and purely spiritual aim may puzzle some who may think that love and fear of *Allāh* ﷻ leaves no scope whatever for the development of the physical and intellectual faculties which together with the spiritual powers have made man complete. In reality, this love and fear of *Allāh* ﷻ is not detached from our physical life. All human activities, individual or social, remain under the direct influence of these two forces that should, as a matter of natural need, regulate human behaviour.⁶

Therefore, any education that is devoid of the love of *Allāh* ﷻ and the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is bound to mar the personality of man, disrupt the social order and sunder the human fraternity. Sexuality education that has no perspective, as some western scholars contend, is bound to provoke this type of anti-social and anti-human tendencies inciting forbidden passion and profligacy and eventually cause complete chaos. Good education is that which is so founded and graded that it implants in the young learners the seeds of divine love, human affection and universal brotherhood with the

⁶Shaik Wahid Bakhsh. *Education Based On The Teachings Of Holy Quran*, Delhi. Adam Publishers and Distributors. 1999, pp. 18-19.

aim that they would develop and grow to become exemplary models in society.

Modern sex education has two main purposes. One is to simply provide biological facts as necessary information to prevent teenage fears that arise when youngsters have not been properly prepared by their parents. For example, about the facts of menstruation, wet dreams, masturbation, spontaneous erections etc. Secondly, to give young people who are prone to become sexually active enough information so that they can safeguard themselves from contracting STIs, HIV and AIDS and protect themselves from falling pregnant and thus avoid opting for abortions.⁷

As Muslims we need to present sensitive materials on sexuality education responsibly which would be in conformity with the teachings of Islam. Therefore, responsible information sharing from an Islamic point of view is not to condone the use of contraceptives as a means of supporting licentious behaviour amongst teenagers but to encourage abstinence and promote Islamic values in Muslim youth.

⁷ See Maqsood Waris, Ruqaiyyah. *Survival Tips for Parents of Muslim Teenagers - A guide for Muslim Parents*. Delhi. Rightway Publications. 2001, p. 91.

3.5 CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING EDUCATORS OF SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Professor Malik Badri, a prominent Muslim psychologist, as far back as 1972 expressed the view that sex education should be given in early grades of the school curricula, long before the learners reach the age of puberty. Insofar as the educators who should be entrusted to impart sexuality education is concerned, he suggests that it ought to be the responsibility of educators of Islamic religious subjects who should solicit the assistance of educators of biology and general science in the fulfillment of this task.⁸ Professor Badri who hails from Sudan, which is a Muslim country, depicts the scenario in the Muslim world on the teaching of sexuality education as follows:

For one thing, the very great majority of Muslim children continue to get their first lessons on sex at the respected hands of the schoolmasters of Islamic religion. Most Muslim parents are too shy to clearly answer the curious, embarrassing questions of their young children. They leave this to older children and to their Islamic education

⁸ Badri, Malik. *AIDS Prevention Role of Governments, The Media and Organizations*. Durban. Islamic Medical Association of South Africa. 2000, p. 20.

teachers. Older children may at times give distorted information and may associate it with street vulgarity, but Islamic religious classes would soon correct this information and relate it to the spiritual guidance of the *Holy Qur'ān* and the Prophetic *Sunnah*.

In these classes, Islamic religion teachers are generally good role models for the children, and furthermore they are quite open and greatly amused in answering the curious sex questions shyly expressed with toothless smiles. They stress to the children the fact that sexual pleasure is one of the greatest gifts of God and that a Muslim should enjoy it in the proper sanctioned manner as their parents do. If they don't, by indulging in promiscuity and homosexuality, they must expect God's punishment by sexual diseases in this world and His displeasure and sanctions in the Hereafter. The teacher, I suggest, should enhance emotions by showing pictures of persons with different ghastly or disgusting sexually transmitted diseases and dying AIDS patients. It is in

these classes that attitudes are formed and beliefs are fixed. More and more detailed information is presented along the educational ladder until the child reaches puberty.

It is with the need for more detailed material that the teacher of religion would need help from the biology and science teacher in order to integrate new scientific discoveries with spiritual Islamic motivation. With the proper curriculum and able teachers, children and adolescents may grow up to view homosexuality and rampant promiscuity in the way they are brought up to detest incestuous sexual relations.”⁹

In today’s schools’ context, the educators who would be entrusted to teach sexuality education must be in a position to mould the character of their learners to uphold sexual morality. It is thus imperative that such educators have firm and unshakable faith in *Allāh* ﷻ and that they show complete

⁹ *Prevention Role of Governments, The Media and Organizations*, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

reliance and trust in Him ﷻ. Their character should be beyond reproach. Moreover, since the whole issue of sexuality education is so sensitive and controversial, such educators who are convinced that there is a need to teach learners about sexuality issues and possess the necessary knowledge to present sexuality education should handle it. Furthermore, they should be comfortable with their own sexuality and hence educators with homosexual tendencies must not be allowed to teach sexuality education. They should be married and have healthy heterosexual orientation. Likewise they should be trusted and respected by learners and parents alike. Finally, they ought to be willing to read and learn more about sexuality, and even prepared to be trained for the delivery of the task of imparting sexuality education. Any educator who is lacking in these abovementioned qualities may not be assigned the sublime task of teaching sexuality education for they could misdirect the minds of the learners to wrong and unapproved channels.¹⁰

¹⁰ *Education Based On The Teachings Of Holy Quran*, op. cit., p. 81.

3.6 INCLUSION OF ISLAMIC VIEWPOINTS ON CERTAIN SENSITIVE ISSUES

In secular schools, the list of topics covered in sexuality education deal with safer sexual practice to avoid STIs, HIV/AIDS, contraception (use of condoms and other contraceptive devices), abortion, personal hygiene, menstruation, wet dreams, adolescence/puberty, teenage pregnancies, sexual abuse, rape and homosexuality. The list is endless many of these topics if presented from a secular point of view comes into conflict with Islamic values and practices. Children have a right to sexuality education, however, the type and content must be reviewed and as concerned Muslims it is our duty to present an Islamic curriculum on sexuality education.

Moreover, the interpretation of Specific Outcomes of Curriculum 2005 that deal with rights of citizens and our roles as responsible citizens present problems to Muslims in general and Muslim learners in particular. Muslim learners are daily being bombarded with mixed messages and are constantly trying to strike a balance between western thought and Islamic injunctions. This balance is often difficult to be struck and thus on many occasions, Muslim youth are forced to compromise their Islamic values.

In what follows an attempt is made to address some of the sensitive issues from an Islamic perspective that ought to be included in the curriculum on sexuality education.

3.6.1 Sexual Orientation

The primary sources of Islam, namely, the *Holy Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*, deal with human creation and human responsibility in the process of procreation. However, Muslim youth who are being brought up in a non-Islamic environment may sometimes be influenced to choose and accept a lifestyle that conflicts with the dictates of their religion. For example, it is entrenched in the South African Bill of Rights that none ought to be discriminated on the grounds of their sexual orientation and gender.¹¹ In other words, no one has a right to, for example, deny a person the right to be employed for a particular job on the basis of his or her being a homosexual or lesbian.

¹¹ Swart, K., et. al. *Life Orientation for the New Nation Grade 7 Learner's Book*. Cape Town. Afros Publishers. 2002, p. 105.

The learners should thus be taught of what *Allāh* ﷻ tells us about creation:

“Glory to Allāh, Who created in pairs all things that the earth produces, as well as their own (human) kind and (other) things of which they have no knowledge.” (Yāsīn, 36:36)

In yet another *āyah*, *Allāh* ﷻ states:

“And of everything We have created pairs.” (Al-Dhāriyāt, 51:49)

In other words, all living things, namely, animals, plants and humans have been created in pairs. Creating living things in pairs do have a purpose and that is the perpetuation of the species. The purpose of creating males and females is essentially for the procreation of the human race:

“And Allāh has made for you mates (and companions) of your own nature, and made for you, out of them, sons and daughters and grandchildren and provided for you

sustenance of the best, Will they then believe in vain things and be ungrateful for Allāh's favours.” (Ibrāhim, 15:72)

Islam, like all other religions, promotes marriage as the only means whereby one can lawfully fulfil one's sexual needs and desire. Islam strongly censures any form of sexual activity outside marriage. Addressing the youth, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said:

O young people! Whoever can assume the responsibility let him get married as it helps him cast down his gaze and protects his private organs; and whoever cannot (i.e. has no means to get married), should fast as it is a protection for him.¹²

Adultery and fornication are considered to be major sins in Islam and the punishments of engaging in such activities are severe.¹³ Thus, Islam also condemns those males and females who live together without being

¹² As quoted in Sakr, Ahmad H. *Matrimonial Education in Islam*. New Delhi. Islamic Book Service. 2000, p. 11.

¹³ Ibid, p. 12.

married. Marriage is considered a blessing and fulfilment of the sexual urge with one's lawful spouse is considered to be an act of *'ibādah* (worship).

If spouses uphold the rules and regulations of matrimonial life which are stipulated in the *Holy Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* (sayings and practice) of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, they will most certainly not contract sexually transmitted diseases.

The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ prohibited males to behave as females and females as men (in their manners, dress, etc.). In *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* it is mentioned that the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ cursed effeminate men (those men who are in the similitude (assume the manners) of women and those women who assume the manners of men) and he said, "Turn them out of your houses." The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ turned out such and such a man, and 'Umar ؓ turned out such and such a woman."¹⁴

From an Islamic legal perspective it can be deduced that the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was very harsh regarding the imitating of the behaviour,

¹⁴ Khan, Muhammad Muhsin. *The Translation of the Meanings of the Summarized Ṣaḥīḥ Al- Bukhārī Arabic-English*. Riyadh. Maktaba Dar-us-Salam. 1996. p. 949.

dress and manners of the opposite sex and therefore leaves no room for transvestites and cross dressers in any way. It can be further deduced that these types of behaviour will not be condoned and that Muslims would be accountable for indulging in such abhorrent acts.

It is thus not acceptable from an Islamic perspective for men and women to change their masculine or feminine characteristics which *Allāh* ﷻ had determined for them at the time of their being created.

Their biological functions have been divinely ordained for the fulfillment of specific functions. The complementary shape of the reproductive organs of the male and female have been created for mutual interaction resulting in the birth of a child with characteristics from both parents (male and female), this is part of the Divine plan.

3.6.2 Anal sex censured

According to Islamic ethics and morals and divine injunctions, engagement in anal sex is prohibited. Sexual morality (*ḥayā'*) features prominently in

Islam. Any excesses results in contravening the laws prescribed by *Allāh* ﷻ.

Anal intercourse with one's lawful wife too is censured.

The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said that person is cursed who has sex with his wife in her anus.¹⁵

Allāh ﷻ states in the *Holy Qur'ān*:

“Your wives are as a tilth unto you; so approach your
tilth when or how you will; but do some good act for
your souls beforehand....” (*Al-Baqarah*, 2:223)

Sexual intercourse and its approach is beautifully expounded using imagery in the verse mentioned above. By describing the vagina of the women as a tilth (garden), important rules pertaining to gardening are applied to sexual intercourse. For example a cultivator will not sow his seed out of season as this would have disastrous results, likewise a husband approaching his wife for sexual intercourse will not enter her vagina while she is menstruating, it

¹⁵ As quoted in Siddiqi, Mawlana Shah Muhammad Abd al-Alim al-Qadiri. *The Blossom of Youth Moral and Socio-Religious Solutions to the Global Aids Pandemic (STI)*, English translation ,commentary, research and appendix by Shaykh Abd al-Hadi al- Qadiri Radawi. Durban. Barkatur-Rida Publication. 2004, p. 41.

is clearly evident that the vagina is the created ground for planting the seed of life and therefore penetration of the anus and the resultant deposit of sperm in the anus is forbidden as this is not the fertile ground for the planting of the seed of life.

The curse is due to the destruction of the seed of life in an inappropriate place contrary to what has been prescribed for mankind. Therefore it is not ethically and legally acceptable to penetrate the anus for sexual gratification.

Furthermore, *Imām* al-Ghazālī in his famous work *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* condemns anal sex and regards anal sex with more contempt than sex during menstruation because this filthy act causes undue pain and suffering and is a source of disease and sickness. Many other illnesses are alluded to when people engage in anal sex and both parties suffer these illnesses.¹⁶

¹⁶ Bayat , Zubair Ismail. *Etiquettes of Sexual Relations Important Islamic Guidance for Husband and Wife*. Stanger, South Africa. Mahmodiyya Publications. 1996. p. 49.

3.6.3 Homosexuality

As mentioned in the discussion on anal sex, the vagina is identified as the only place where the male should deposit the seed of life bearing his half of the genetic material. Any other area is regarded as an exercise in futility causing undue harm and injury to the perpetrators. Anal sex has been prohibited. Also as mentioned under the discussion on sexual orientation the honourable scholars of Islam show disgust and contempt and the Prophet of Islam goes to the extent of commanding the believers to throw out the male who imitates the manners and ways of the female and the female that imitates the ways and manners of the male. Furthermore, the Prophet of Islam gives clear guidance on the type of dress that are inappropriate for Muslim males, example the use of silk and gold. All of these guidelines complement the restriction of imitating the opposite sex. The restriction of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ of two people of the same gender under one cover (blanket, duvet) also depicts the length that he went to protect Muslims from being tempted into engaging in the unnatural behaviour of homosexuality or lesbianism. The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said the following in this regard:

No male is allowed to look at the private parts of another male, and no female is allowed to look at the private parts of another female. And two males are not allowed to sleep together with a single sheet covering both, and two females are not allowed to sleep together with a single sheet covering both of them.¹⁷

This prohibition clearly protects and safeguards Muslims from engaging in the disgraceful and sinful acts of the men during the time of Prophet Lūṭ (عليه السلام) who engaged openly in homosexuality. The prohibition is extended to include women and also protects them from this illicit and illegitimate sexual practice.

Almost every channel of national television has more than one sitcom promoting homosexuality. In almost all these programmes the prejudice and bias of society is depicted and the covert message of the rights, feelings, emotions of gays and lesbians are projected. Modern youth are given the

¹⁷ As quoted in *The Blossom of Youth Moral and Socio-Religious Solutions to the Global Aids Pandemic (STI)*, op. cit., p. 98.

impression that these people suffer in our democracies and that their plight ought to be taken up with the relevant authorities.

As discussed in chapter two the Department of Education, via the Life Orientation learning Area and through the Specific Outcome that deals with Human Rights also promotes the concept that homosexuals are individuals that possess rights under the laws of our country and wish to instil in learners the idea of accepting and promoting the rights of people to possess their own sexual orientation. In so doing learners are constantly asked to examine their own views regarding homosexuality and sexual orientation so that any undue bias be removed. This constant introspection due to our libertine values or our idea of democracy is similar to the brain washing being done through the national television programmes making all of us sympathisers for the cause of homosexuality.

Muslim learners while understanding the rights of individuals to possess their own sexual orientation ought to be made to understand both how Islam views homosexuality.

Islam condemns this act and the punishment for indulging in such an act is death. The *Holy Qur'ān* refers to homosexuality as an act of abomination (21:74), an act of wickedness (29:29), and as a transgression of the limit laid down by *Allāh* ﷻ for mankind (7:81). The *Holy Qur'ān* further describes the people who engage in homosexuality as a people given to evil and a rebellious lot of people (21:74).

Although this vile deed is becoming an acceptable norm in modern democracies and its proponents are protected under the law of these democracies it is essential to point out that Islam prescribes severe punishment for people engaging in this sordid behaviour. *Allāh* ﷻ says in the *Holy Qur'ān* in reference to the people of Prophet Lūṭ ﷺ:¹⁸

“We also (sent) Lūṭ: He said to the people: “Do you commit lewdness, Such as no people in creation (ever) committed before you? For you practise your lust on men in preference to women: You are indeed a people transgressing beyond bounds.” (Al-A‘rāf, 7: 80-81)

¹⁸ Ali, Abdullah Yusuf. *The Holy Qur'an Text, Translation and Commentary*. Qatar. Presidency of Islamic Courts and Affairs. State of Qatar. 1946. p 383.

Their punishment for indulging in this abominable act is described as follows:

*“And We rained down on them a shower of (brimstone):
Then see what was the end of those who indulged in sin
and crime.” (Al-A‘rāf, 7:84)*¹⁹

The act of homosexuality is despised to such an extent that the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said, “Whoever does the acts of the nation of Prophet Lūṭ عليه السلام is cursed”.²⁰

Learners must be made aware of the fact that no mercy or compassion is shown to those who indulge in this unnatural behaviour although the modern democracies have come to accept this unnatural beastly act as normal. Muslim learners are duty bound to be cognizant of the Commands of *Allāh* and to uphold these commandments. The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ pronounces the death sentence for the perpetrators of this crime:²¹

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ As quoted in *The Blossom of Youth Moral and Socio-Religious Solutions to the Global Aids Pandemic (STI)*, op. cit., p. 76.

²¹ Ibid, p. 78.

Stone to death all those who imitate the immoral acts of the nation of Lūṭ عليه السلام. Stone both to death: the one above and the one below.

Both the active and passive participants of this evil deed are regarded as blameworthy and punishment has to be meted out to both parties. Therefore, no mercy or compassion is considered for homosexuals from an Islamic perspective as these individuals are transgressing the limits set out by *Allāh* ﷻ.

Imām Ahmad Ibn Ḥanbal and *Imām* Shāfiʿī as well as many scholars approve of the death penalty for both the active and passive participants of homosexual activities. *Imām* Abū Ḥanīfah suggested that the offenders be hurled down from a high mountain and huge boulders rolled after them, in the same manner as *Allāh* ﷻ had punished the people of Lūṭ عليه السلام.²²

²² Najaar, Sheikh A. *77 Selected Stories From the Qur'an*. Athlone. Al-Khaleel Publications. 1992, p. 49.

3.6.4 Wet dreams

At the onset of puberty, males experience erections and nocturnal emissions (wet dreams). Erections are caused by changing hormones and can therefore happen unexpectedly, and not just when boys are thinking of something sexual. Wet dreams happen when boys ejaculate sperm while they are sleeping. They are normal for adolescent boys. This experience may evoke fear and guilt in adolescent boys if they do not understand the biological changes that are taking place within their bodies.

The educator should in a subtle manner explain to them that the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ mentioned that it was natural for both men and women to have these (experiences), and that they could not be held responsible for the content of one's dreams and that there was no fault in them – but they would fault if they were to concentrate their minds on that which was forbidden. The procedure for purification was simply to make sure that they took a full *ghusl* or washing of the entire body after such a nocturnal emission, as they would do after full sexual intercourse.²³

²³ *Survival Tips for Parents of Muslim Teenagers, A guide for Muslim Parents*, op. cit., 95.

3.6.5 Masturbation

In the guidance material for learners, masturbation is explained as follows:

Masturbation is when people touch their own sexual parts or organs for the purpose of arousal or sexual pleasure. Most people, male and female, masturbate at some time in their lives. Very small children will touch their genitals as part of learning about their bodies and because it feels good. Like many of the topics that we are dealing with, this is difficult to discuss with learners. **There are many cultural and religious beliefs about masturbation being harmful. We have to try to separate facts from masturbation from incorrect ideas, while respecting religious and cultural beliefs.**²⁴

²⁴ *Life Skills & HIV/AIDS Education*, op. cit., p. 46.

In the above paragraph, the writer of this dissertation has deliberately highlighted the last two sentences in view of the fact that while the authors of this guidance material for learners are aware that masturbation poses ethical dilemmas from a religious perspective in some of the religions and cultures of the world, they justify promotion of masturbation by appealing to service providers to separate facts from incorrect ideas.

It is precisely this kind of undermining of religious values that incite our youth to question religious practice and ultimately condemn it. The notion that masturbation is a normal activity practiced by almost all adolescents cannot be encouraged since it is in conflict with Islamic ethics and morality. Furthermore to allay the feelings of guilt of adolescents engaging in the practice of masturbation as suggested by the guidance material contradicts Islamic ethos. The promotion of masturbation as an alternative to having sexual intercourse in order to curb teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS also conflicts with the Islamic value system. The theory that masturbation does not cause any real harm is debatable.

Many adolescents who practice masturbation take this practice into their adult lives. The idea of freeing the masturbator from feelings of guilt as this could have a psychological impact on him/her in his/her adult life as proposed by authors of the guidance material on sexuality education is in effect encouraging the youth to continue with this practice.

It is common knowledge that the one who engages in masturbation has to be stimulated and therefore, he/she conjures up this fantasy sexual partner in the mind and manipulates ideas of sexual scenarios with this fictitious sexual partner he/she has conjured up to reach sexual fulfillment. Naturally when the deed is done feelings of guilt and remorse overtake the perpetrator of this action. Learners should be made aware of the fact that *Allāh* ﷻ commands us to uphold sexual morality at all times:

“And do go not near unto zinā (adultery/fornication).” (Banī Isrā’īl, 17:32)

Conjuring up this fictitious dream partner is in effect the indulgence in *zinā* of the mind. Hence, learners ought to be told of the Islamic legal ruling on

masturbation. According to *Shaykh* Dr Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, the majority of Muslim scholars consider masturbation *ḥarām* (unlawful).²⁵ *Imām* Mālik bases his judgement on the following *āyah* of the *Holy Qur'ān*:

“Those who guard their sexual organs except with their spouses or those whom their right hands possess, for (with regard to them) they are without blame. But those who crave something beyond that are the transgressors.”
(*Al-Mu'minūn*, 23:5-7)

Imām Mālik thus argues that the masturbator is one of those who “crave something beyond that” which makes him/her a transgressor beyond the limits set by *Allāh* ﷻ. However, the Ḥanbalī jurists permit masturbation only under two conditions: firstly, the fear of committing fornication or adultery, and secondly, not having the means to marry. *Shaykh* al-Qaradāwī concludes the discussion on the topic of masturbation by stating that although it would be permitted for Muslims to relieve sexual tension through masturbation if they are in an environment in which there is sexual excitation and danger of committing what is explicitly forbidden, i.e.

²⁵ For a more detailed discussion on this subject see al-Qaradāwī Yūsuf, *The Lawful and the Prohibited in*

committing adultery/fornication, provided they do not indulge in it excessively or turn it into a habit. *Shaykh al-Qaradāwī* also advises Muslim youth who are unable to marry to resort to frequent fasting, for fasting nurtures will-power, teaches control of desires and strengthens the fear of *Allāh* ﷻ.²⁶

3.6.6 Oral sex

In the manual on sexuality education, as mentioned in chapter two of this dissertation, the following statement appears:

The clitoris is a bundle of nerve endings that provide pleasurable feelings during sex. The vagina has very few nerve endings inside it. For a woman to feel a lot of pleasure and have an orgasm, the clitoris has to be stimulated, either by the pressure of the partners body, or using his or her fingers or tongue.”²⁷

Islam. Indianapolis. American Trust Publications. N.D., p. 170.

²⁶ *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*, op. cit., p. 171.

²⁷ *Life Skills & HIV/AIDS Education*, op. cit., p. 45.

In other words, the learners are being taught that there is another form of sexual stimulation which does not involve a man penetrating the vagina of a woman, and that form of sex is known as oral sex. Learners ought to be cautioned that it is *ḥarām* for them to indulge in both premarital oral sex and premarital sex. Again, it ought to be pointed out to them that oral sex in general pertains to both fellatio (oral stimulation of a man's penis) and cunnilingus (stimulation of the female genitals using the tongue or lips).

Commenting on oral sex within the ambit of marriage, Sidi Musa Furber of the *Ḥanbalī Fiqh*²⁸ points out that the term "oral sex" covers a wide range of activities, and there are differences between the various schools of *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) regarding the purity and filth of bodily fluids, namely: sperm and vaginal secretions and concedes that there seems to be agreement among the *Ḥanafis*, *Shāfi'īs*, and *Ḥanbalīs* that pre-ejaculatory fluid is filthy. Sidi Musa Furber summaries the Islamic stance on fellatio and cunnilingus as follows:

Regarding pre-ejaculatory fluid, the only opinion I have ever seen is that it is *ḥarām*. Additionally, even though

²⁸ See <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/hanbali>

the Shāfiʿis and Ḥanbalī schools both consider sperm to be pure, they both agree that it is unlawful to swallow. This makes fellatio very highly likely to be unlawful. As for cunnilingus: there are differences of opinion regarding whether or not vaginal secretions are pure or filthy, before and after penetration, and depending on where they are secreted from. Because of this, it is best avoided.²⁹

3.6.7 Menstruation

Menstruation is a major change, which starts in girls between the ages of 9 and 17. Most girls will start menstruating between the ages of 12 and 14. Girls need to have information about menstruation before their first period so they are prepared for what is a normal and regular event. It is important that they are prepared both emotionally and practically for the beginning of their periods, as it can be a frightening experience if they are not they need to understand that many emotions and feelings accompany the physical side of menstruation and that this is normal. Boys need to understand the

²⁹ Ibid.

menstrual cycle so that they understand how pregnancy occurs, and the regular cycles of a woman's body.

The manual on sexuality education makes cursory reference to menstruation, as mentioned in chapter two of this dissertation, by posing the question as to whether one could fall pregnant if one were to have sex during one's period? The answer given to that question is that ovulation could occur very soon after the bleeding had stopped and that sperm could live up to 3 days, and hence one could fall pregnant if one would engage in sex during one's menstruation period.³⁰

When dealing with the subject of menstruation, educators ought to explain to the learners the definition of menstruation from the *Shari'ah* perspective. Dr Fauzan Saleh al-Fauzan aptly points out the following:

In the *Shari'ah* menstruation is defined as the blood that comes out of the lower part of the womb of a woman at regular intervals naturally, and without any sickness or

³⁰ *Life Skills & HIV/AIDS Education*, op. cit., p. 57.

injury. It is a natural occurrence that *Allāh* ﷻ has created the daughters of Adam ﷺ to experience. *Allāh* ﷻ created it for the benefit of the child while it is in the womb, and made it turn into milk in its mother after its birth. Thus, if the woman is not pregnant or nursing a child, this blood remains without use, and so it is discharged at regular intervals. These periods are normally referred to as ‘the custom’ or the ‘monthly cycle’.³¹

Again, when touching upon menstruation, the educator ought to reinforce the fact that indulgence in premarital sex is *ḥarām* and that even having sex with one’s wife during her menstrual cycle is also *ḥarām* *Allāh* ﷻ states in the *Holy Qur’ān*:

“They ask you concerning menstruation. Say it is filth so keep away from women during their menses, and do not go unto them until they are clean (from menses). And when they have purified themselves, then approach as

³¹Fauzan Al-Fauzan, Saleh. *Rules pertaining to Muslim Women*. Riyadh. Ministry of Islamic Affairs. 2000, p. 29.

Allāh has ordained for you (approach them in any manner as long as it is in the vagina). Allāh loves those who turn unto Him in repentance, and loves those who purify and clean themselves.” (Al-Baqarah, 2: 222)

This prohibition continues until the blood of the menstruation stops and sexual gratification can take place after she has taken the ritual bath. In this regard, *Allāh ﷻ* states:

“And do not go unto them until they are clean (from menses). And when they have purified themselves, then approach them as Allāh has ordained for you.” (Al-Baqarah, 2:222)

It is permissible for her husband to have sexual pleasure with her as long as he does not have sex with her. This is because Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ categorically stated: “Do everything except have sex with her.”³²

³² *Rules pertaining to Muslim Women*, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

3.7 SEXUALITY EDUCATION – ROLE OF THE STAKEHOLDERS

Muslims must look for ways to ensure that their children receive responsible sexuality education based on the values of family life and morality. It is pertinent for them to combine their efforts to devise a curriculum for sexuality education which would include, among other topics discussed above, the importance to engage in sexual relations only within marriage, the value of family life, morality and decency, the dangers of extramarital sexual relationships devoid of any responsibility and accountability.³³

In order to achieve this goal a shared responsibility and attitude needs to be adopted. Currently, Muslims have abdicated their responsibility as caregivers regarding sexuality education. “You don’t teach a tadpole to swim” mentality has to be eradicated. For this type of mentality alone relinquishes one’s responsibility to society. Muslim children interact with non-Muslims on a daily basis. While the tadpole has a natural inclination to swim, and hence the raging hormones of Muslim teenagers, together with

³³ See Ghulam Sarwar, *Sex Education The Muslim Perspective*. London. The Muslim Educational Trust, 1996, p. 30.

explicit movies, promiscuous friends, drugs, night clubbing, computer dating via chat rooms, intermingling of youth in social functions, free reign of youth at shopping malls without parental supervision will inevitably lead to our youth being caught up in the abyss of doom through their naïve explorations in the world of sexual exploits.

3.7.1 Role of Muslim Schools

For Muslims, marriage is the only basis for any sexual relationships. In a non-Muslim environment, extramarital sex, fornication, and promiscuity amongst teenagers are not only tolerated, but have become the norm. Muslims Schools ought to ensure that sexuality education they provide is given with due regard to moral considerations. It is thus imperative that Muslim Schools embark upon a dialogue with each other so that the curriculum that is presented is well-researched and replete with examples from Islamic sources. All the necessary stakeholders, namely, the '*Ulamā*', Muslim doctors, Muslim educators, Muslim community organizations, parents and learners, etc., ought to be consulted when drawing up the curriculum. After this is accomplished each school must prepare a separate written statement of their policy with regard to the provision of sexuality

education from an Islamic perspective, and copies ought to be made available free of charge to parents of any child registered at the school. Moreover, all Muslim Schools must discuss a summary of the content of sexuality education they provide in their annual Orientation programmes.

3.7.2 Role of Muslim parents

Muslim parents whose children attend public schools in South Africa ought to empower themselves with the rights afforded to them by the State. They ought to find out from the schools the content of the sexuality education programme. Parents do have a right to request for the withdrawal of their children from some of the sexuality education programmes. However, their request may not necessarily be acceded to since most public schools are understaffed and school principals would not like to have Muslim learners left unattended. Muslim parents can still take up this issue with school governing bodies and the Department of Education.

Again, Muslim parents who have children in co-ed schools should request for single sex lessons on sex education to be arranged, especially on matters dealing with contraception, as this will ensure the confident participation of

all learners, something that may not always be forthcoming in mixed (males and females) classes.

Muslim parents must also bring to the notice of the school principals that in a primary school setting, great care should be taken to match any sexuality education provided to the maturity of the pupils involved, which may not always correspond to their physical age. This is very important since those responsible for sexuality education often make no allowances for the fact that children develop physically and psychologically at different ages. Children should only be given potentially disturbing information when they and their parents feel they are ready to receive it. Provisions of information on sex and growth, etc. to children at a very early age (say, at 7 years old) can be counterproductive.

Furthermore, Muslim parents should take note of the fact that the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ gave many guidelines on human sexuality, so they should not shy away from discussing these matters with their own children, whose welfare is of such importance to them. If parents do shy away from their responsibilities, children may learn the wrong things from peers, from the

media, from inappropriate sex education materials, or from sexually explicit magazines and videos.

3.7.3 Role of the '*Ulamā*'

The '*Ulamā*' also have a very significant role to play by working closely with Muslim schools in developing the curriculum on sexuality education. This would ensure that the content would be in conformity with the *Shari'ah*.

3.7.4 Role of Muslim physicians

The role of Muslim doctors, gynaecologists and psychiatrists necessarily arises because some of the issues addressed in the sexuality education curriculum pertain to abortion, contraception, sexual orientation, and of course learners need to know the dangers of contracting sexually transmitted diseases.³⁴ The Muslim psychiatrist may be best suited to talk to the learners about deviant sexual behaviour. A female gynaecologist may

³⁴ See *Sex Education: An Islamic Perspective*, op. cit., pp. 30-31

also be best suited to address many of the issues that the young female learners experience during the onset of puberty.

3.7.5 Role of Muslim Organisations

Muslim organisations also have a responsibility to help young Muslims grow with a healthy Islamic identity. Combined efforts from parents and organisations are essential to achieve the desired educational objectives for the benefit of Muslim learners in public schools. The Muslim organisations must act in a concerted and coordinated way to persuade and impress upon those responsible for imparting sexuality education to take cognizance of religious background of their learners. Individual parents may find it difficult to affect change in their schools. But when local *Masājid* and Muslim organisations work in a concerted way, schools could be persuaded to devise a sexuality education programme which would be acceptable to Muslim learners and parents.

Moreover, local Muslim community newspapers such as *al-Qalam*, *al-Ummah*, Muslim Views and others, ought to include a special column on

sexuality education which would also address the learners' concerns on this rather sensitive issue.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious that sexuality education being imparted at the public schools is in conflict with the ethico-legal perspectives of Muslim learners and hence these concerns ought to be addressed by the Muslim community at large.

While it is true that every educator has the responsibility in the delivery of sexuality education, the choice of educators to impart this delicate subject ought to be made on the basis of their being morally upright, etc. Moreover, a specific guideline for presenting sexuality education has to be adhered to; for example, a male educator ought to be entrusted to impart sexuality education to male learners, and a female educator to female learners.

The content of the curriculum on sexuality education too must be monitored so that only appropriate issues would be presented according to the appropriate age of the learners.

CONCLUSION

Sexuality education in South Africa has found a home in the Life Orientation Learning Area. Curriculum 2005 is now a reality. The Department of Education's aim in implementing sexuality education in schools has indeed been a noble one, judging from the fact that the HIV/AIDS pandemic has been claiming the lives of its most important asset, namely, its citizens. But, judging from the surveys that have been carried out to measure the success of the delivery of Curriculum 2005, it became apparent that what learners learnt about sexuality in the classrooms did not dissuade them from engaging in sexually risky behaviour, resulting in them acquiring sexual gratification at the early of age of 10! This is indeed alarming and a cause for concern because the Department of Education's goal of curbing the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic through the introduction of sexuality education may never be achieved. Although the Department of Education has revised Curriculum 2005 and replaced it with the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), the contextual themes relating to sexuality education in the Life Orientation Learning Area remain the same and continue to pose a challenge to all stakeholders. Therefore, the effective delivery of sexuality education in schools would

largely depend upon a concerted effort being undertaken by all stakeholders, including parents, community and religious leaders and educators, etc., to apply their minds to find ways and means of restricting and dissuading learners from engaging in risky sexual behaviour.

Moreover, while evaluating Curriculum 2005 and the Learning Outcomes in the Revised National Curriculum Statement, it became apparent that many of the issues addressed go against the beliefs of learners who come from different religious backgrounds. The former President of South Africa, namely, Mr Nelson Mandela, described South Africa as the Rainbow Nation, hence, the Department of Education ought to take cognizance of the fact that guidance materials on sexuality education are in conflict with religious values of many of its citizens and thus afford schools which have a religious ethos the flexibility to prepare their own manuals on sexuality education that would promote abstinence based on religious imperatives.

Sex in the mind of some Muslim parents is considered to be taboo and they are uncomfortable discussing it with their teenagers just as their own

parents never discussed it with them¹ with the result that Muslim learners in public schools in South Africa are getting mixed messages. They are torn between what they are being taught in the *madrassah* (Islamic evening school) and what is actually being imparted to them as sexuality education. There is a total contradiction between the two. The idea of abstaining from sexual activities for the love or fear of *Allah* ﷻ is being compromised by their being shown how to take necessary precautions when engaging in premarital sex to prevent them from contracting HIV/AIDS.

Muslim learners cannot rely totally on the resource materials in the form of books or manuals churned out by the Department of Education as reliable source of information since the various life skills resource materials for schools advocate that it is okay to be gay (homosexual). After all, the rights of homosexuals are protected in the South African Constitution. Therefore, this makes it imperative for Muslim learners to be imparted with sexuality education from an Islamic perspective.

In this 21st century, it has become necessary for Muslim youth to be guided on matters relating to sex. It is not enough for them to be told that they

¹ *Sex Education – An Islamic Perspective*, op. cit., p. vii.

should not engage in sex before marriage on the grounds that Islam forbids it. They also need to be advised about the hazards of early sex encounters, sexually transmitted diseases, teenage pregnancies, HIV/AIDS, and sex within the context of marriage. Likewise, they ought to be made aware of the hormonal changes that take place at the onset of puberty. Their frank questions about sex should neither be avoided nor be shunned, but every attempt must be made to answer them from an Islamic perspective.

Mufti Z. Bayat aptly sums up the need for the offering of sexuality education from an Islamic perspective:²

The west, having just emerged from the darkness of the Middle Ages, has suddenly realized the importance of sex “education”. Yet this is something which was part and parcel of Islamic teachings since its inception fourteen hundred years ago. It should however be borne in mind that Islamic sex education is poles apart from the Western concept of sex ‘education’, which should rather be termed as

² Bayat, *Mufti Z.* (2002). *Sex Education Islam vs the West*. [on line]. Available from: [http://www.centralmosque.com/fiqh/sex education. htm](http://www.centralmosque.com/fiqh/sex%20education.htm)[Accessed December 2003].

sex 'corruption'. There is a vast difference between the crude attitude of the west to this subject in comparison with Islam's refined approach. The west has thoroughly degraded the real (Islamic) concept of sex education by adulterating this important branch of learning, with its depraved values and outlook on sex.

The west has committed great excesses in its approach and attitude towards sex and sex education. Instead of benefiting its followers and guiding them correctly, the west has created more complications for its followers and corrupted their values. The west, through its depraved outlook on sex, is responsible for untold human suffering and misery. The consequences of 'free', uninhibited sexual indulgence that the West so brazenly promotes, is terrible; The ever-increasing spiral in the incidence of AIDS and HIV infection can be directly attributed to the west's liberal attitude towards sexual indulgence. AIDS ought to have forced a change in their outlook on sexual "freedom". It has not, in fact, the west unashamedly continues in its promotion of

corrupt sexual values under the guise of so-called “safe sex”.

(A leopard apparently doesn’t change its spots).

3.7.2 Muslim educators, parents, ‘*Ulamā*’ cannot sit back anymore and leave it to the discretion of schools to decide what type of sexuality education our children are going to receive.

The writer of this dissertation made an attempt in chapter three to suggest some of the sensitive issues that could be incorporated from an Islamic perspective in the current Department of Education’s curriculum on sexuality education. The onus now is upon the principals of Muslim schools, the ‘*Ulamā*’, Muslim physicians, parents and community organisations to take up the cudgels to develop its own curriculum on sexuality education based on the teachings of the *Holy Qur’ān* and the *Sunnah*.

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