



PERCEPTIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ON THE NEED FOR SEX EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS, ELDORET MUNICIPALITY, KENYA

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Abstract:

It is estimated that 23% of the girls in secondary schools in Kenya drop out of school each year as a result of teenage pregnancy. Findings of the Kenya Aids Indicator Survey of 2007 indicate that the HIV and STI prevalence rate is 7 for Rift Valley province, that is, 7 out of every 1000 people have HIV and STI. The drop-out rate for girls in Uasin Gishu district is 2.1% while that of boys' stands at 2.4%, according to Uasin Gishu development plan 2002 -2007. This is attributed to factors such as HIV, STIs and teenage pregnancies among others. In response to the rising number of HIV, STIs and teenage pregnancies and the resultant dropout rates in schools, the Ministry of Education intended to introduce sex education in secondary schools in Kenya to create awareness on the consequences of sex abuse in order to reduce school dropout rate on teenage pregnancies and STIs related infections. Debates on introduction of Sex Education in schools rages on and a lot of studies have been done on the pros and cons of this. But the opinion of children has not been sought. However, the intentions of the ministry were not realized because religious groups opposed it. In African indigenous culture, children are not consulted in decision making, but according to the United Nations Convention of 1989, children have a right to access information, participate and take responsibility in the society. Hence, need to seek their views. Therefore, this study sought to find out the perception of secondary school students on the need for sex education in secondary schools in Eldoret municipality, Kenya. Perceptions are vital since they shape students behaviour and attitudes towards their sexuality as well as morality. The research design for this study was a cross sectional descriptive survey aimed at collecting qualitative and quantitative primary data from students on their

perceptions on the need for sex education. This was done through structured questionnaires and focus group discussions. A sample of 325 students was obtained through stratified and simple random sampling. The findings of the study showed that 53% of the students perceived the need to introduce of Sex Education in schools and so the idea is perhaps worth revisiting. The researcher therefore concludes that many students' perceptions' towards introduction of sex education in secondary schools is positive.

Keywords: perceptions, students, secondary schools, sex education

1. Introduction

According to a recent Kenya Demographic and Health Survey from 2008-2009, about 12 percent female and 20 percent of male youth respondents said they had sexual intercourse by age 15. Nearly all the respondents surveyed knew of more than one method of contraception (KNHDR, 2009). A report by the Forum for African Women Educationists (FAWE, 1993) indicates that more than 13,000 girls drop out of school each year. Pregnancy alone accounts for 31 percent of all dropout rates among girls in Kenya.

According to UNICEF (2002), 50 percent of the youths in Kenya have comprehensive knowledge of HIV. While sex remains a taboo topic in Kenyan and African society as a whole, the high rates of HIV and AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and teenage pregnancies have prompted teachers to call for formal Sex Education in schools. A report by Global Press Institute (2011) indicate that in September 2011, about 150 secondary students from a high school in Kenya's Coastal region were forced to go home after contracting an STI that spread like bushfire within the school. The same report gives an account of a teenage girl aged 16 who became sexually active, consequently conceived and dropped out of school, attributing all these to lack of sex education in school. To counteract the problem of HIV, STIs and pregnancies and the resultant dropout rates in schools, the Ministry of Education proposed a strategy to introduce Sex Education. It can be remembered that plans to introduce Sex Education in schools were among the main items discussed during the World Population and Development conference in 1994 in Cairo Egypt (Kavivya, 2003).

The issue of sex education has been an exceptionally controversial one. Sex is considered a taboo topic in Kenyan and African society in general. According to the religious teachings administered during Christian Religious Education, a subject taught within the curriculum (GPI, 2011), it is not talked about openly because it is seen as an "Immoral topic". The mere mention of the term Sex Education raises many questions. The questions arise because of lack of common understanding between the proponents

and the opponents of sex education. The debate draws various perspectives from different groups of people ranging from teachers, religious leaders, parents, high school students and the civil society. Teachers on their part say that changes in societal norms and increased access to information through advanced technology demand that both parents and teachers take responsibility for talking to children about sexual matters from early stages of development to help them make informed choices. Teachers argue that it is no longer a matter of silence because of moral degradation in the society and the fact that youths have access to information through different media and in most cases parents have no control over what they view (Global Press Institute 2011.) In addition, children have a right to know and learn about sex, especially with the high rates of rape cases and HIV infections. Teachers maintain that approaching the issue of sex education from a Biblical stand point could work for children below 10 years of age, who might not grasp all the concepts yet. For those above 10 years, high levels of gonadal steroid hormones as the child approaches puberty activates their sexual potential and impacts on their sexuality. Sex education should therefore not only focus on abstinence, but also on the dangers of pre-marital sex.

The views of parents tend to agree with those of teachers. Some parents say that teachers should be involved in Sex Education but also caution against parents abandoning their responsibilities when it comes to educating their children about sex and leaving the task entirely to teachers. A good proportion of parents say that the teachers' role is only complementary to that of parents. The parents insist that there might be little that a school curriculum can do without the support of parents in modelling their children. Parents also add that religious and cultural authorities may not approve of openly discussing sex, but that it is high time to demystify the subject in school because of the way it has pervaded society.

Religious leaders, especially from the Roman Catholic Church hold a divergent opinion. Their argument is that if sex education is to be taught in schools, then it should be done with the value, respect and the dignity it deserves. They also say the information must have a good Christian foundation. On the other hand, leaders from some protestant churches seem to hold a slightly different opinion. Protestants say it is the right of the children to know and learn about sex and to understand that sex is God-given and should not be abused. Both seem to advocate for Sex Education with a Christian foundation.

The civil society's take on the debate is that even though sex education has been and is still a taboo subject, perhaps teaching it openly in school in this era of so many sexually related problems, will help the youth know how to cope with such problems. A suggestion from the civil society is that sex education should start with what is relevant to the child's age and proceed on into more serious issues that can affect them before they start getting sexually active.

Review of related literature reveals that various stakeholders in the education sector have aired their views and opinions. However, what the Kenyan youths think of sex education had not been studied. It is therefore important for the views and opinions of secondary school students to be sought with regard to sex education. The study was crucial because secondary school students constitute the target group for the introduction of the sex education curriculum in Kenya.

2. Statement of the Problem

Studies carried out in Kenya indicate that 23% of girls in secondary schools in Kenya drop out of school each year as a result of teenage pregnancy (Bartilol, 1995). Adolescent pregnancy rates in Rift Valley region is 17.9% (KDHR, 2009) and dropout rate for girls in Uasin-Gishu District is 2.1% while that of boys stand at 2.4 % (Uasin-Gishu Development Plan 2002- 2007). This is attributed to the accompanying serious health risks of early sexual activity and child bearing which underlie the need for addressing sexual health. The move by the Ministry of Education to introduce sex education in school in response to the high number of HIV, STIs, teenage pregnancy and the resultant dropout rates was opposed by religious groups. Despite the opposition to the introduction of sex education in secondary schools, little had been done to analyse the perceptions that the secondary school students have regarding sex education. If the sex-related school dropout issue among secondary school students is not treated with the seriousness it deserves and its increase curbed, opportunities that would have been available for the students to advance academically will be lost due to effects of sexual activities. This in the long run will make it difficult for Kenya to achieve vision 2030 and the Millennium Development Goals.

3. Objective of the Study

The aim of this study was to establish the perceptions of secondary school students in Eldoret municipality on the need for sex education. The study sought to answer the research question: What are the perceptions of secondary school students on sex education?

4. Theoretical Framework

The study was based on the theory of constructivism that was beefed up by the Broadbent's Filter model and supported by Hans theory. The constructivist theory is credited to Jean Piaget (Fosnot, 1996). The theory advances that learners construct their own understanding rather than having it interpreted in the context of current

understanding. The teacher play the role of “*a midwife in the birthing of understanding*” as opposed to being mechanics of knowledge transfers their role therefore not to dispense knowledge but to provide pupils with opportunities and incentives to build up (Von Glasersfeld, 1996).

According to Mayer (1996) teachers are “*guides*” who provide “*raw materials*” and students are “*sense makers*”. Oldfather (1992) notes that teachers are facilitators, coordinators, tutors, coaches or resource advisors. Understanding the role of the teacher therefore, in giving sex education provides ourselves vantage point from which to group how the theory impacts on acquisition of knowledge, perceptions as well as behaviour. For instance Karanja (2004) survey found out that married teachers of 30 to 40 years of age were ranked highest in the list of the preferred sex educators in comparison to parents and church. Although peers and media were identified as the most popular sources of sex education, it was also established that school based sex education was perceived suitable by majority of the students.

Applied to the current study, the theory indicates that the role of teachers as the authority figure has two important component. The first is to introduce new ideas where necessary and to provide support and guidance for students to make sense of sex information for themselves. The other role is to listen and diagnose the way in which the sex education from this perspective is also a learning and training process for the teacher. Considering findings from recent survey done in Kenya Makira (2008) and Karanja (2004) that the most popular sources of sex information to adolescents is the peer group and media, there is need to beef up support to the constructivist theory by incorporating models of attention such as the Broadbent filter model.

The attention theory is therefore concerned with how information is selected from incoming stimuli for further processing in the system. In the light of the current study, the theory implies that despite too much sex information from numerous sources, students can selectively attend to the most important, that is also genuine and accurate while at the same time ignore the irrelevant and harmful which can corrupt their minds as software. Teachers have the capacity to arrest and sustain students’ attention for effective sex education programmes. The aforementioned two theories and model are reinforced by the biological theory of human sexuality as described in the texts that follow

According to this theory by Eysenck Hans, the capacity for sexual response and the experience of sexual pleasure as well as potential for orgasm exists, at least in a proportion of children during childhood. This means that not all children have sexual instincts. The gonadal steroid hormones are little in evidence, but from the ages of 9 or 10 years they begin to increase as the child approaches puberty. From then on, these hormones play activating role and have impact on human sexuality.

In the male, the onset of puberty has a major organizing effect on the emergence of sexual responsiveness and interest. Shortly before or after puberty the large majority of boys start to masturbate (Bancroft, 1988), and for most of their teen years they remain at their maximum capacity for sexual arousability and response. This is to a considerable extent, a result of the activating effect of the major increase in testosterone and other androgens that accompany and follow puberty. However puberty is a complex process. There are both hormonal and physical changes as well as psychological and social reactions to such changes, and it is likely that during these early years of increasing testosterone the body is adapting to higher levels and at the same time developing and activating inhibitory mechanisms to allow control of these newly activated excitatory responses. This may explain why studies of the relationship between testosterone and the unfolding sexuality of the adolescent boy have produced complex and somewhat contradictory results (Halperu, Udry, Campbell & Suchindran, 1993; Udry, Billy, Morris, Groff & Raj, 1985). The evidence is relatively consistent, however, in showing that boys with an earlier onset of puberty also tend to show higher levels of sexual interest and activity when they are older (Halpen et al, 1993), (Kunsey et al 1993) suggests that human male depends on having a normal level of circulating testosterone. If otherwise normal male has his testosterone lowered by testicular suppressive drugs, he experiences a decline in sexual interest, which returns when the process is reversed (Bagatell, Heiman, River & Bremmer, 1994).

In the female, we find the relevance of hormones, particularly testosterone, to sexuality less clear. First, there is not the same organizing effect of puberty on sexual interest and response as is found in boys. Interest in masturbation does not peak around puberty as it does in boys (Bancroft et al, 1988) and age of onset of masturbation is much more widely distributed among females than males, suggesting a more variable constitutional propensity for sexual responsiveness and interest in females. Girls are unlikely to engage in sexual intercourse before they reach puberty (Rowe, Rodges, & Meseck-Bushey, 1989). With the menstrual cycle the most predictable pattern is for women to feel least interested sexually when menstruating. There are a number of possible explanations for this which do not involve hormonal effects. A proportion of women experience a predictable peak in sexual interest around ovulation, which would suggest hormonal determinants. But these women are a minority, and peaks premenstrual and postmenstrual are reported by some, while other women say that they are not aware of any consistent pattern (Hedricks, 1994). Therefore compared to men, women vary in the impact that reproductive hormones have on their sexual interest and responsiveness. Women also vary in their sexual responsiveness to other hormonal mechanisms as well.

The biological theory provides this study with the understanding that secondary students already have innate and capacity for sexual arousal and response. At

secondary level most students are on a continuum of going through the adolescence stage. The hormonal and physical changes make most of them to be at peak for sexual arousability and response. On the other hand, physical and social reactions to such changes affect their perceptions towards sex. The biological theory holds that an individual has inbuilt capacity for sex. This capacity unfolds in the process of physical development and maturation and is attained at the stage of puberty. This could affect an individual perception towards sex therefore curiosity and sexual exploration need to be guided since the individual is expected to conform to the norms of the society. This theory suggests that there is need for sex education at this adolescence stage. During this stage students need to know and understand what is going on in their bodies so that they exercise self-control. Perhaps sex education could be introduced but students need to have positive perceptions about it if it is going to work for them. Since sex education teaches them about being assertive, how to communicate, make decisions and withstand peer pressure.

5. Research Methodology

The research design used in study was descriptive survey. The study aimed at collecting information from a sample of students on their perception and knowledge in relation to sex education. This design is appropriate for fact finding as it captures varied views and opinions held by people at a given time. It also allows for generalization of research findings from the sample to the target of total population (Kothari, 2008).

According to Borg and Gall (1996), the descriptive survey is employed to collect data, analyse it into information, summarize, present, interpret and utilize information to describe the nature of prevailing conditions. The design was thus suitable for this study as it assisted to get data and information from students on their knowledge and perceptions on the need for sex education. The findings can therefore be generalized to the target population and enable policy makers to make informed choices and decisions on issue related to the introduction of structured and formal teaching of sex education in secondary schools. The research mainly used primary data. Primary data was obtained using questionnaires and focus group discussions. The design facilitated collection of both qualitative and quantitative data in an attempt to answer research questions. The dependant variable for the study was need for sex education in secondary schools. Independent variables on the other hand were knowledge and perception of the students toward sex education.

5.1 Sampling procedure and sample size

Kothari (2008) defines a sample as a subset of the target population to which the researcher intends to generalize the study results. According to Singleton (1988),

sampling is defined as seeking of information about a population by observing a part of this population in order to extrapolate the findings to the entire population.

The sampling frame comprised adolescents aged 15 – 19 years old. The Municipality has thirty (30) secondary schools public or Private, boarding or day, single sex or mixed schools. The study employed both stratified and simple random sampling procedures. Stratified sampling was used to get a representative sample of schools, taking into account diversity of school categories, gender, classes which in turn affect perceptions and knowledge of the topic under investigations. The schools were put in strata according to their categories namely: boys boarding, girls boarding and mixed day. A sample of six schools was selected for the study. Finally random sampling was used to obtain two (2) out of four (4) girls boarding schools which were selected by picking yes or no labels. In the same way, two (2) out of the three (3) boy boarding schools were selected. Lastly two mixed day secondary school were selected using the same method. In simple random sampling, all units have equal chance of selection. This serves to reduce bias and simplifies analysis of results. Furthermore, it was also reasonable to generalize the findings back to the study. The six schools represented 20% of the total population of schools. Ary et al (1972) points out that in a descriptive survey a sample of 10-20% would be acceptable. This was a representative sample and thus suitable for the study.

5.2 Research Instruments

Research data was collected using questionnaires and Focus Group Discussions as described in the text that follow.

Questionnaires were preferred because they are suitable for collecting reliable data from respondents quickly. Filling of questionnaires enhanced respondents' honesty due to anonymity conditions given. Consistent with the observation by Kothari (2008), the questionnaires also allowed respondents adequate time to provide answers to the questions. This helped to avoid hasty and inaccurate responses. The students' questionnaire (SQ) was used to obtain data from students on their knowledge and perception on the need for sex education. The SQ had three parts. Part one contained items on general background information of the respondents. Part two had items related to students' knowledge of sex education while part three contained items concerning students' perception on the need for sex education. Both part two and three therefore, had items that were developed on the basis of the research questions. *Focus Group Discussion* were found to appropriate in data collection since the allowed for respondent - respondent interaction. Semi structured FGD guide was prepared and used for the study. It served to broaden and deepen dialogue so as to access the deepest feelings of the respondents concerning sex – related matters as they relate to sex

education. Patton (2002) notes that this is a reliable source of data that also provides for triangulation.

The analytical technique appropriate for the study was pragmatic analysis. This included selection of the data source to be studied then followed by development of classification system to record the information. Pragmatic analysis was preferred since it could help the researcher to understand students' perceptions on the need for sex education. The result was descriptive and indicated issues of students' interest. Qualitative data was presented by respondent's voices on their perception on the need for sex education. This data was thus analysed by a quick impressionist summary. This involved summarizing key findings from Focus Group Discussions, explanation, interpretation and conclusion. Out of this a narrative report is written enriched with quotations from key informants and other respondents.

Quantitative data was organized and analysed with the help of SPSS version 17. Data is presented using statistical techniques involving using means, frequencies and percentages of the responses given for each variable. It also involved making conclusions from numerical values through the process of quantification this allowed for reliability and comparability. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for analysis of data obtained. In particular, descriptive statistics used included frequencies, percentages and means, while inferential statistic used was t-test.

6. Results and Discussions

Respondents were given a set of statements for which they were required to respond by stating whether they agreed (A), were Undecided (UD) or Disagreed (D). In terms of perceptions on the need for sex education, 258(79.4%) disagreed that Sex education if taught in schools can expose students to engage in premarital sex. 209(64.3%) disagreed that Sex education only teaches about how secondary school students can learn about sexual intercourse and 253(93.7%) disagreed that sex education increases students' involvement in sexual activities. The responses were represented in Table 3.

Table 3: Perceptions on the need for sex education

Perceptions on the need for sex education	1	2	3	Mean±SD
	A	UD	D	
Sex education taught in schools expose students to engage in premarital sex	65(20)	2(0.6)	258(79.4)	4.4±1.2
Sex education teaches only about sexual intercourse	115(35.4)	1(0.3)	209(64.3)	3.7±1.2
Sex education should be taught to girls only	238(73.2)	11(3.4)	76(23.4)	2.0±0.4
Sex education increases students' involvement in sexual activities	65(20)	0	260(80)	3.6±0.8
Sex education teaches students to avoid abuse of sex	17(6.3)	0	253(93.7)	3.0±0.6
Sex education should be taught in schools	251(77.2)	0	74(22.8)	1.7±1.2

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Sex education should not be taught by parents	243(74.8)	0	82(25.2)	
Sex education helps students to be certain that they have the right knowledge concerning sex matters	150(47.9)	59(18.8)	104(33.3)	3.3±1.1
Sex education enables students to avoid influence of peer pressure to engage in pre-marital sex	143(44)	56(17.2)	126(38.8)	3.3±1.1
Sex education helps learners to behave responsibly with regard to sex matters	228(70.2)	0	58(17.8)	3.3±1.2
Sex education cause most students to engage in irresponsible sexual behaviour because they have wrong information on sex related matters	150(47.9)	59(18.8)	104(33.2)	3.2±1.2
Sex Education is important subject that teaches life skills	180(55.4)	32(9.8)	113(34.8)	2.3±1.0
Average	53.3%	3.6%	43.1%	

In a focus group discussion, respondents perceived sex education in varied perspectives. One respondent in form three defined sex education as: *“program that teaches what is good and bad about sex.”* Another said: *“...it teaches us to control our lives at teenage”* and yet another respondent said: *“it is a subject that teaches on side effects and consequences of misuse of sex. “Other definitions were: “it is a subject that teaches about how teenagers should relate to one another at adolescence stage...sex education is all inclusive as it teaches about morals, relationships at home and communication.”* This indicates that students perceive the role of sex education positively as it teaches them about self-control, relating to one another positively and moral relationships. They don't see sex education as a programme that will expose them to experiences that will aggravate their indulgence in sexual activity. They instead see it as a subject that will help them learn life skills. Consequently, schools could be a potentially important contextual factor affecting teenagers' sexual behaviour because they typically represent the most important setting of socialization outside the family (Mensch et al, 2001). They may for instance function as a medium through which societal norms on gender roles are enforced through the instructional process

Respondents agreed on different perceptions as presented in table three. Some said that: only girls should be taught sex education 238(73.2%). When the FGD respondents were requested to give views why they perceived girls to be the ones to be taught sex education, one form two respondent said: *“...it is not very possible for a girl to control emotional feelings without fulfilling sexual demands. Sometimes boys are so demanding that girls end up giving in.”* From the discussion, the researcher observed that perhaps girls give in to boys' demands because of gender dictated roles demands that they meet boys' needs therefore girls should be exposed to knowledge that teaches them not to give in to pressure from boys. Co-educational schools parse may provide student with chances to engage in sexual activity. Conversely, schools may also provide students vigilant supervision to discourage high risk behaviour.

Majority of the respondents, 251 (77.2%), appreciated learning sex education if taught in school. Several students in a FGD who agreed on introduction of sex education in secondary schools had varied views. One respondent in form three said "... yes, the subject saves lives. It will help us prevent HIV." Another emphasized: "...it should be included in the timetable like any other subject."... It will prevent STIs and reduce cases of unwanted pregnancies. It will give us more information about sex." Another respondent suggested... teaching about sex should not be examined and given once a week. It will help students control themselves sexually. One respondent agreed strongly and said...I appreciate if sex education was taught in school because it can benefit orphaned students who may not have parents to guide them on matters of sexuality. It is worth noting that parents providing sex education also have attitude and believe of their own about sex and sexuality, and it is important not to allow this to negatively influence the sex education that they provide.

Concerning the issue that sex education helps students to ascertain that they have the right knowledge concerning sex matters, 150(47.9%) agreed. Furthermore 143(44%) agreed that sex education enabled students to avoid influence of peer pressure to engage in pre-marital sex. On whether sex education can help learners behave responsibly with regard to sexual matters, 228(70.2%) agreed. It is in giving such education that the teenagers become aware of the vital role of sex in society. Some FGD respondents were indifferent whether sex education is an appropriate subject in secondary schools. One said.....teachers are better placed to teach students about sex education. Another respondent said... yes especially when students are in form one and two. They are usually naïve and that's the time sex education should be taught. That's why teachers are blamed for not helping students, especially the girls.... In addition, most respondents agreed that, most students engage in irresponsible sexual behaviour because they have wrong information on sex matters and that Sex Education is an important subject that teach life skills by 150(47.9%) and 180(55.4%) respectively.

On average the respondents disagreed that sex education if taught in schools can expose students to engage in premarital sex 258(79.4%), sex education teaches only about how secondary school students can learn about sexual intercourse 209(64.3%) and sex education makes students to involve themselves more in sexual activities 260(80%). FGD sessions with the respondents revealed that they have strong perceptions as regard to students' emotional control. One respondent saidit is possible for secondary school students to control themselves until marriage without engaging in sexual activities....On the other hand, another respondent differed by saying: it is difficult to abstain. A structured sex education program can help learners clarify their own needs and feeling so that the right attitudes are formed on their minds.

Boys break their virginity at 15 years because of sweet dreams experienced during adolescence.... However, there was a significant number of students who were

undecided on the perception that students abuse sex because they have not been taught sex education, not certain that they have the right knowledge concerning sex matters, peer pressure influenced them to engage in pre marital sex, blaming teachers for not teaching them how to conduct themselves responsibly as far as sex matters are concerned and that most students engage in irresponsible sexual behaviour because they have wrong information on sex matters. Previous researches reveal that young people are hungry for accurate information about sex and would like to talk about it openly and honestly. In general, the students' perceptions were very clear either agreeing or disagreeing on the responses. They agreed that only girls should be taught sex education, that they can appreciate learning sex education if taught in their school and that sex Education is important subject that teach life skills and thus help to avoid abuse of sex. In the same view, sex education could seem to increase students' understanding of values and inculcate into them proper communication skills to enable them even talk the sex aspect of life without feeling embarrassed.

7. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Majority of the respondents, 258 (79.4%) perceived the need for sex-education in schools and 209 (64.3%) disagreed with the notion that if taught in schools it could expose the students to engage in pre-marital sex. These findings are similar to those of Kirby (2001) that reported that sexual health education delayed the onset of sexual activity, reduced the number of sexual partners and unplanned pregnancies and STI rates. From the way the definition of sex education is given, the respondents hold positive views and indication of their readiness to embrace sex education in schools. In an earlier research by Karanja (2004), peers and media were identified as the most popular source of information on sex in comparison to parents, church and teachers. Moreover, married teachers aged 30-40 years were most preferred on the list of possible sex educators. Majority of the respondents held that girls needed sex education most because of their physical and emotional uniqueness. The respondents said teachers were better placed to teach sex education. It was therefore established that school-based sex education was seen as appropriate by a majority of the students. This could be because of interactions between the teachers and students take different forms and often provided in organized blocks of lessons. The respondents suggested that sex education should be included in the timetable. However, the students were uncertain if the teachers were adequately prepared to teach sex education.

It could perhaps beneficial to borrow a leaf from the United States of America where a lot of debate has been raging on which form of sex education should be taught in schools. Whereas the USA is asking which form, we in Kenya ask whether we should allow it to be taught or not. Almost all USA students receive some form of sex

education at least between grades seven and twelve (Monbiot, 2004). However, the content that is given to learners varies widely since curriculum decisions are decentralized. Consequently, several states have lost governing what is taught in sex education lessons or simply allowing parents to opt out. Similarly, Kenya can have by-laws within counties to govern what is taught. However, since education sector remains under control of the central government except for early childhood education, the only bet option to implement the national sex education curriculum that is agreed upon by all stakeholders. The starting point could be for MoE to bring the contents of the shelved sex education curriculum to public domain, and then an informed decision can be made.

8. Conclusion

From the findings, it can be concluded that secondary school students in Eldoret Municipality were not adequately exposed to an organized school-based sex education. Though some aspects of sex education were being taught in career subjects like biology, CRE and Home science, the students got the bulk of sex information from other sources apart from the school.

Similarly, students felt that sex education should be provided through the school curriculum. The current study is consistent with earlier researches where student felt that teachers should be the main source of information for adolescents. It is true that the Kenya primary and secondary CRE, home science, biology and recently introduced life skill syllabi does try to address some issues of sex education but this is not actually sex education as per curriculum requirements. The nervousness of most religious groups about sex education could be addressed by sensitization programs for example Ministry of Education- Religious groups meetings as well as radio and TV programs. The way forward is therefore presented in the recommendations that follow.

9. Recommendations

In view of the objective of the study and the findings that emerged from the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Since students have a positive attitude towards the teaching and learning of sex education and peer groups were identified as one of the main source of sex information, students should be encouraged to use Peer Youth Educators (PYE)
2. With regard to the opposition fronted by the religious groups the ministry of education should engage in public campaigns and advocacy on the importance of mainstreaming sex education in secondary schools. Efforts to be made to involve the wider community in appreciating the significance of following a

structured and formal curriculum. The ministry should also identify interventions to promote communication on sexuality since religion and culture are seen as main barriers to communication.

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