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**VALUES, NORMS, AND PRACTICES THAT  
INFLUENCE ADOLESCENT SEXUAL  
BEHAVIOURS: A CASE STUDY OF LANG'ATA  
WARD; NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA**

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## **PRACTICES THAT INFLUENCE ADOLESCENT SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS: A CASE STUDY OF LANG'ATA WARD; NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA**

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** The main purpose of the study was to establish the values, norms, and practices that influence adolescent sexual behaviors.

**Methodology:** The study adopted a descriptive research design. The target population of the study comprised of 1500 youth attending private secondary schools in Langata. A sample size of 10% of the population was used. Therefore the sample was 150 youth attending private secondary schools in Langata which were selected through probability sampling technique. The key instruments for data collection were focus group discussions, interviews and questionnaires.

**Results:** There is a huge possibility of the adolescents engaging in risky sexual behaviour and having sexual relations with multiple partners whom they felt they were 'in love' with. There is also the aspect of wide knowledge of contraception yet very little use of the same as many youths stated that among them were those who would readily have sexual relations without condoms thus expose themselves to and are oblivious of the many dangers they are face.

The same youth seem very comfortable with the idea of having multiple sexual partners for as long as condoms were available to them or even just engage in one night stands with strangers to prove a point to their peers; findings that are very disturbing to say the least.

This is a clear indicator of the fact that despite the fact that there is community teaching and the presence of and practising of certain norms and values; there are definitely loopholes in the manner with which this teaching is taking place.

**Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy:** The study recommends that Sexuality is a sensitive subject and a lot must be done to ensure that the youth in Lang'ata Ward get the correct information

**Key words:** *Values, norms, practices, adolescent sexual behaviors*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sexual socialization in the world today is no longer in the domain of the family as formal education has since replaced the socialization function. In fact, it is accessible through a combination of multiple social institutions such as the state and school without systematic instruction from reliable adults, resulting into a void of information on relations with the opposite sex (Fuglesang 1997). Having both parents (family) and the church protesting against sex education, only leaves the youth with very little hope or opportunity of understanding sexuality (Kangara, 2004).

In the densely populated Lang'ata ward of Kenya's Nairobi County just like in many locations in other sub-Saharan African countries, the adolescent population have been reported to engage in various sexual practices including vaginal sex, masturbation, oral and anal sex and about 15% of sexually active adolescents reported having multiple sexual partners (Kazaura & Masatu, 2009).

Notably, cross-generational relationships between teenage girls and "sugar daddies" are also common as older men tend to give better gifts but these relationships expose girls to great risk of contracting HIV and AIDS (KDHS, 2003). Weiss et al. (1996), Komba-Malekela and Liljestrom (1994), also highlight on the recent surge in relationships between younger women and older men, which have become particularly pronounced in Africa characterised by large age differences and transactional exchanges.

Studies from Lang'ata ward where this study was carried out show that among unmarried adolescents, 31% of boys, and 24% of girls were sexually experienced and that the girls are more likely to engage in premarital sex especially with older partners (Mensch *et al.*, 2001). A further 43% of girls experience coerced or forced first sex, including their partner not taking 'no' for an answer, threats, money/gifts, or physical force. Findings also show that coerced girls experience sexual relations at significantly younger ages and with significantly older partners, compared to girls for whom sex was consensual (Erulkar & Matheka, 2007).

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Due to the dynamic nature of society, the traditional sexual activity (for the purpose of procreation) has been adversely eroded and replaced by sexual innuendos and articulations of the promotion of sex for pleasure or status quo. Additionally, due to the collapse of the traditional mechanisms of socialization that checked and controlled sexual behaviour as discussed herein, youths, and their peers now largely influence sexual attitudes during adolescence. Adults on the other hand believe that young people are by nature sexually promiscuous and giving them information about sex only makes them more sexually active (Friedman, 1993).

Previously in Africa for instance, most of the documented traditional ethnic communities instituted strict social and physical control measures especially for the sexual behavior of the young people. In this context, sexuality "...served as a source of relations of kinship and affinity thereby the basis of solidarity, reciprocity and co-operation" (Fuglesang, 1997: 1248). In East Africa for example, traditional rituals of initiation where the elderly actively took part in, prepared young people for their adult roles, educated them on consequences of sex, marital responsibilities, and child rearing.

These initiation ceremonies included the '*Jando and Unyago*' in Tanzania, '*Ng'ado Nyangi*' among the Luo of Tarime, Tanzania and Luo Nyanza in Kenya as well as the '*Khuminya and Khulitsa*' among the Abaluhya of Western Kenya. Similarly, communities such as the Atharaka, Abagusii, and Agikuyu, Miji Kenda, and Swahili people, firmly proscribed indiscriminate sexual behavior in adolescence.

With such institutionalized systems of punishment for sexual offenders, these controls safeguarded the sexual behavior of youth until when they entered into marriage (Kenyatta, 1965; Hilgard et al., 1975; Gyepi & Garbrah, 1985; Akong'a, 1988). For example among the Kalenjin people of Kenya, a man who had carnal knowledge of a girl before either of them were married was considered as a moral weakling and could never be appointed to a leadership position throughout his lifetime. Similarly, girls who safeguarded their virginity until marriage received high status in society and mothers got gifts in addition to the negotiated bride wealth payment (Akong'a, 1988: 4) and a girl on whom clitoridectomy was performed when she was a virgin was highly honored, respected and her parents praised.

It was therefore in the best interest of girls to keep themselves pure until the day of marriage, in order to protect their own honor and integrity and that of their families. Boys in turn underwent periods of learning about respect for girls and how to control their sexuality until marriage (Akong'a, 1986).

Further, the Abagusii community, of Western Kenya, had very well organized yet informal institutions of disseminating sex education and controlling the sexual behavior of the young people. Consequently, the effects that accompany early and irresponsible sex involvement were minimal (Kenyatta, 1965; Kalule, 1987; Akong'a, 1988).

According to Kioli et al (2011), "Makogoro" (grandmothers) provided a good avenue for young girls' induction into sexuality matters. Boys also visited and sometimes slept in their grandfathers' huts (Esaiga) where they received coaching on virtues pertaining to relationships, responsibilities, and sexual behavior. The author points out that during novitiate and girlhood, young women were warned that it was a curse to lose one's virginity, their greatest honor, and pride before marrying. Boys were equally inducted into respect for self and others in regards to sexual morality and the Abagusii culture never permitted pre-marital sex, even during courtship.

Unfortunately, there are scholars who have found out that the same ceremonies seem to promote negative adolescent sexual behaviors. For example Maggie Bangser, 2010 in her article '*Falling through the Cracks, Adolescent Girls in Tanzania Insights from Mtwara*', states that '*...While unyago is a time of social 'permission-giving' for adolescents to have sex this presents serious threats to their health...*'.

Further, she notes that; '*Forms of unyago are also practiced in Mtwara region of Tanzania, is often singled-out as a key cause of early pregnancy...It is perceived to be a highly sexualized social event which contributes to sexuality in as much as they are the teaching tool within a larger model of sexuality and gender roles...*'

## **1.2 Study Objectives**

The study objective was to establish the values, norms, and practices that influence adolescent sexual behaviors.

## 2.0 THEORETICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 The Structuration Theory (Anthony Giddens 1984)

The Giddensian theory holds that all human action is performed within the context of a pre-existing social structure, governed by a set of norms, and/or laws, which are distinct from those of other social structures.

The basic principles of the Structuration Theory affirm that within the agent structures, social actors are inadvertently present. Thus the belief that human agency and social structures without much doubt are in a relationship and with repetitive nature of human activities as agents; the structures are the end processes. According to Giddens, 1989:93, the theory's basic tenets are,

- Social systems consist of regularized practices, which are the determining power practices among various actors.
- Dialect of control constitutes agent-structure relations; meaning that the less powerful members of the society often influence the social system.
- Interaction between actors directly generates power resulting in acts within boundaries of what is familiar or workable within their contextual boundaries and comfort.
- Social actions often have unintended consequences yet occur within a given changing timeframe and space whereby the possibility of social transformation is inevitable.
- Consciousness: An actor's conscientious feelings are the benchmark for the explanation of one's action.
- Knowledgability: All human beings as social actors are knowledgeable and are in a position to give descriptive accounts of & reasons for their daily activities.
- Willpower: Every actor is fully aware of the actions they choose to undertake except, they are performed unconsciously based largely on indoctrinations from within.
- Knowledge synthesis: Over time, actors often change their perceptions; values and knowledge of the social system and with these changes comes the complete transformation of the available knowledge.
- Intentional acts with unintended consequences: Giddens articulates that intentional actions of agents often end up being different from the intended.

Giddens links behavior to power in terms of one's ability to use their power to transform a situation and make a difference in a world that is full of constraints; nevertheless the actor ceases to be an actor when and if this capability is lost. The constitution of agents and structures are dependent on one another as the properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices of actors, and those system properties recursively organize the practice of actors (Ritzier, 1998).

Traditional structures on the other hand comprise of traditions, belief systems, moral standings, and the total way of life of a community's life form. The structures often start to change when not followed, are overlooked, replaced, or even reproduced in a different manner. However, the theory is often critiqued for its formalization of a concept of rules and resources that are rather abstract, the lack of gender sensitivity, reduction of structure to actions.

### **3.0 Empirical Review**

According to KDHS (1998), 44 per cent of girls, aged 15-19 years have had sexual intercourse and 19 % continue to be sexually active. The median age at first sexual encounter for boys is 16.8 years, compared with 16.7 years for the girls. Although boys enter into sexual unions on average five years later than the girls do, they start sexual activity at about the same age. Notably, majority of the studies on adolescents in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda are from the rural areas and very few scholars have put their emphasis on the urban youth. This behavior is perceived as being more and more 'risky and amoral' yet there is very little attempt to bring out the un-risky or moral part of the very same behavior.

Adolescent sexual behaviour is a critical and problematic issue in Sub-Saharan Africa with available literature depicting adolescents as passive victims of the larger structural and cultural factors that shape their risky sexual behaviors. The breakdown of the societal structures seems to have resulted in either the positive or negative changes in the behavior of the youth as witnessed today. Complicating this further is the fact that parents (family) and the church continue to protest against sex education, leaving the youth with very little hope or opportunity of understanding sexuality (Kangara, L. 2004).

Social transformation, the collapse of religiosity and absentee parents also appear to be playing a great role in the cultivation of sexual attitudes by the youth. Formal education has since replaced the socialization function and traditional aspects as sexual education continues to be notably absent from the school curricula (Fuglesang 1997:1249). Many observers believe that peers have filled this void, becoming the most important sources of knowledge and influence on sexuality (Gage, 1998). The only disadvantage of knowledge imparted by peers is that it is usually misguided and uninformed (Nyanzi *et al.* 2000, Fuglesang 1997, Webb1997, Bohmer and Kirumira 1997, Obbo 1995, Akuffo 1987).

As a result, the cultural ideals for adolescent behavior are superseded by peers' concerns for status, material goods and pressure to begin sexual relations and mimic adult norms of sexual behavior (Stavrou and Kaufman 2000, Hughes and McCauley 1998, Caldwell et al. 1993).

Therefore, studies on sexuality and sexual practices among adolescents in sub-Saharan countries are definitely an important stage towards understanding and fighting against the outcomes risky sexual behaviors, which lead to unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections including HIV and Aids (Simbayi et al 2005; Konings et al 1994).

### **4.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The target population of the study comprised of 1500 youth attending private secondary schools in Langata. The population was arrived at after noting that there were 6 private secondary schools in Langata each with approximately 250 students. A sample size of 10% of the population was used. Therefore the sample was 150 youth attending private secondary schools in Langata which were selected through probability sampling technique. The key instruments for data collection were focus group discussions, interviews and questionnaires.

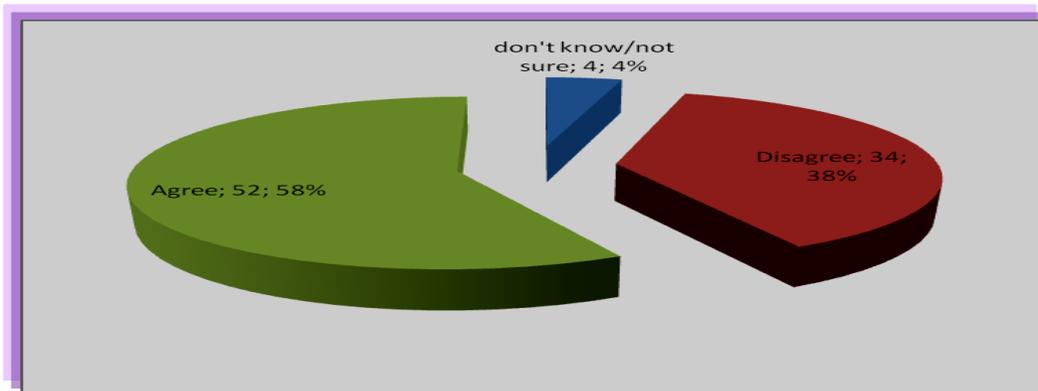
## 5.0 RESULTS AND FINDINGS

### 5.1. Rites of passage

In reference to Figure 5.1 overleaf, 58% of the respondent agreed with the statement that traditional rites of passage continue to be practiced in their community. Thus showing that there is a relative presence of moral standings within the communities where these adolescents hail from. While 38% of the respondent disagreed with the same statement and 4% neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

This is therefore an indication that despite the fact that a higher percentage agreed that traditional rites of passage continued to be practised in their communities; there are an equally large percentage of adolescents who indicated that these were not practised in the communities where they hailed from. Thus the analysis of whether or not they were affected in any way or if they had different behavioural patterns from their counterparts.

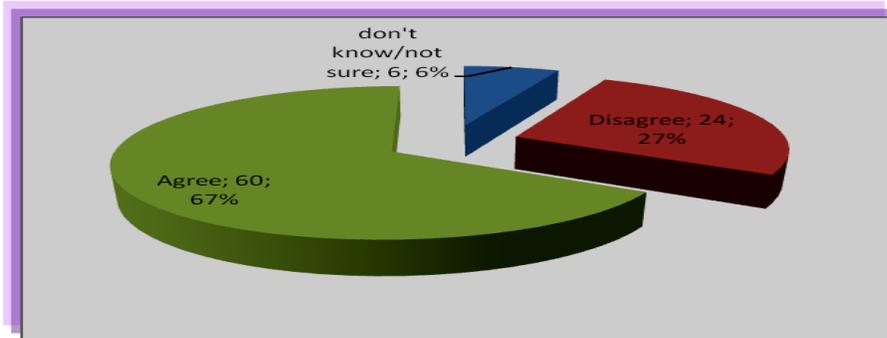
**Figure 5.1: Rites of passage**



### 5.2: Guidance within the community

Results in Figure 5.2 overleaf revealed that majority 67% of the respondents agreed with the statement that parent, aunts and grandparents in their community still take parts in teaching the youth, while only 27% disagreed with the statement, 4% of the respondent neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This therefore shows that in communities where guidance took place, adolescents may be more conversant with matters of sexuality and how they should behave or handle themselves in the company of those from the opposite sex.

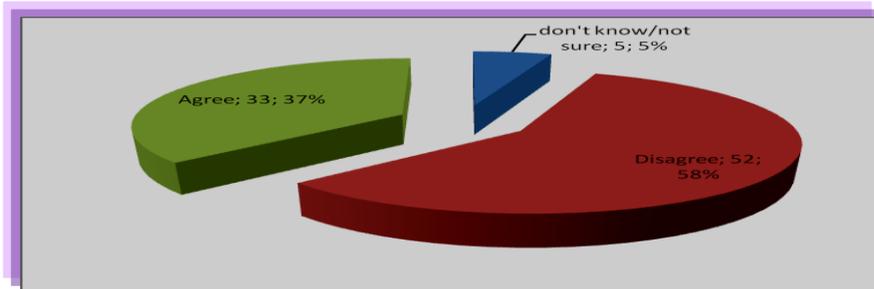
**Figure 5.2: Community involvement**



**5.3: Sexuality as a taboo within the community.**

Results in Figure 5.3 revealed that majority 58% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that in their community talking about sexual relations is a taboo, while only 37% of the respondents agreed with the statement, 5% of the respondent neither agree nor disagree with the statement the findings imply that most of the youths are well educated about sexual relations and can talk openly about sexual issues with the older members within their communities.

**Figure 5. 3: Sexuality as a community taboo**

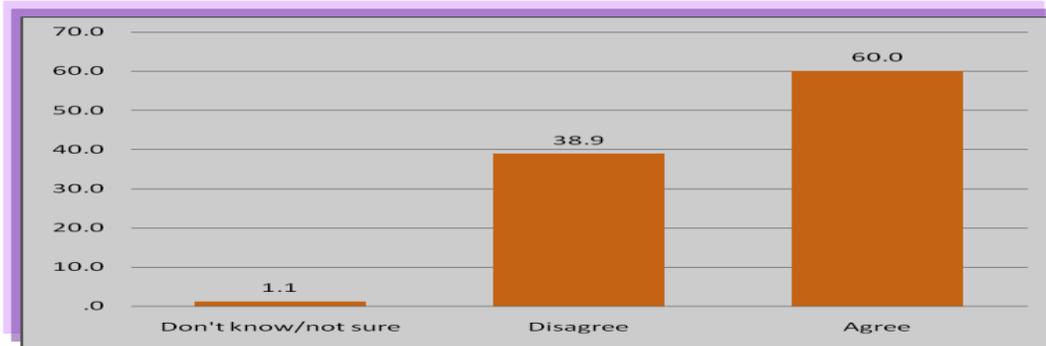


**5.4: Media influence.**

Results in Figure 5.4 revealed that majority 66% of the respondents agreed with the statement that they get all the information they need from the media especially the internet, while 39% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. 1% of the respondent neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. The findings imply that majority get information through online sources a trend that is rather worrying.

This could probably be the root cause of changes in adolescent sexual behaviours despite the fact that they know what they should or should not do. Therefore, the conclusion that there are certain issues which the adolescents prefer to find out about on their own or from the on line sources rather than ask about it from the elders within their communities.

**Figure 5.4: Media Influence**

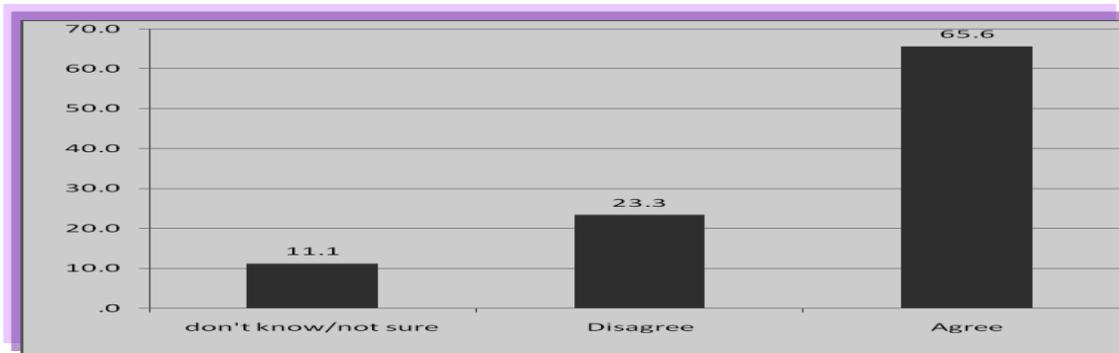


**5.5: Sex before marriage.**

In Figure 5.5, a majority 66% of the respondents agreed with the statement that sex before marriage has bad consequences such as getting pregnant/impregnating their partner or acquiring HIV and Aids or STD's/STD's. 23% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, and 11% of the respondent neither agree nor disagree with the statement. The findings imply that majority agreed that sex before marriage has bad consequences.

It is therefore important to highlight the fact that the 34% of respondents who are not sure of or agree that sexual relations before marriage is not harmful are the ones who need to be educated on the negative aspects of early sexual entry as well as its consequences.

**Figure 5. 5: Sex before marriage**

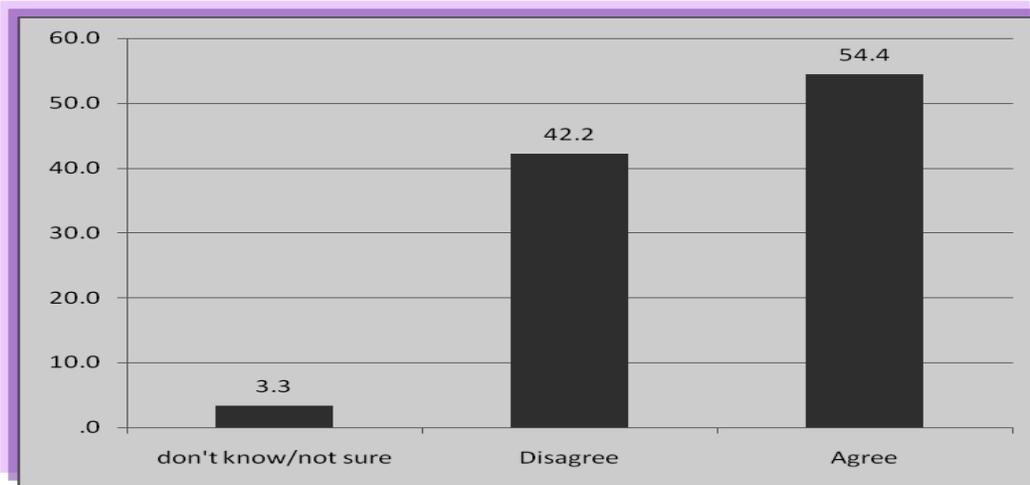


**5.6: Abstinence**

Figure 5.6, reveals that majority 54% of the respondents agreed with the statement that they believe that boys/girls should remain as virgins until they marry while only 42% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, and 3% of the respondent neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

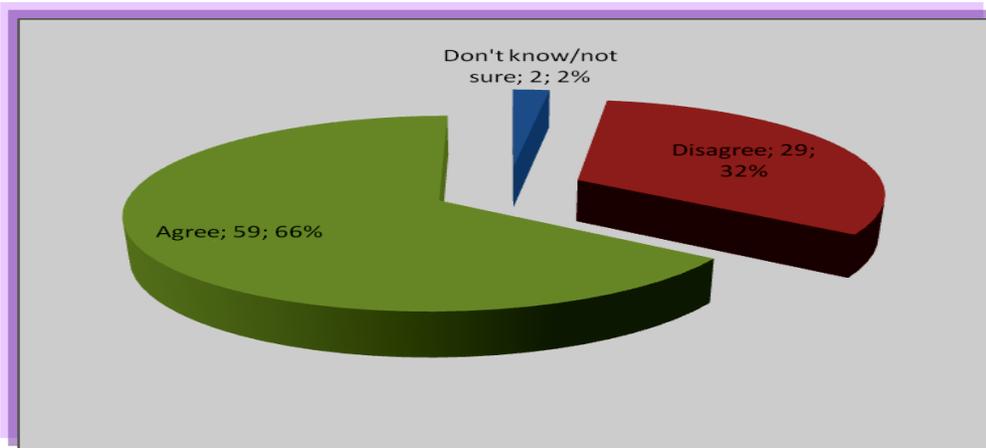
The findings imply that there is an equally big majority of adolescents who do not believe in abstinence before marriage and thus painting the picture of youths who are engaging in sexual relations at an early age despite being aware of the consequences; and definitely showing the breakdown of norms within these circles.

**Figure 5.6: Abstinence Scale**



Further, results in Figure 5.11, indicated that majority 66% of the respondents agreed with the statement that they planned to wait until they are engaged to be married or until they find someone they love while only 32% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, and 2% of the respondent neither agree nor disagree with the statement. The findings imply that majority agreed that they wait until they get someone they love.

**Figure5.6 (b): Abstinence scale (b)**

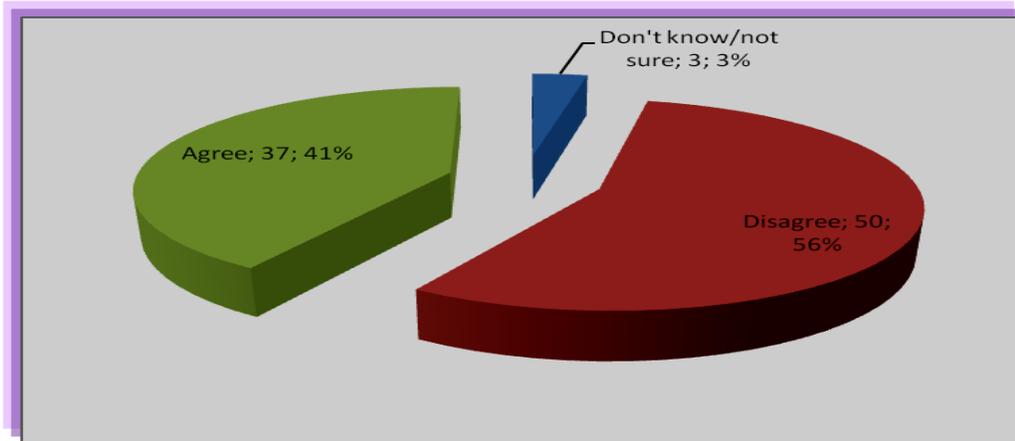


### **5.7: Relationships.**

Results in Figure 5.12 indicated that majority 56% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that it is all right for unmarried boys and girls to have dates while only 41% of the respondents agreed with the statement, and 3% of the respondent neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

The findings imply that majority agree that it is not right for unmarried boys and girls to have relationships or go out on dates. This therefore shows that there are a large percentage of adolescents in Lang'ata area who believe in the need for abstinence.

**Figure 5.7: Involvement in relationship or casual dates.**

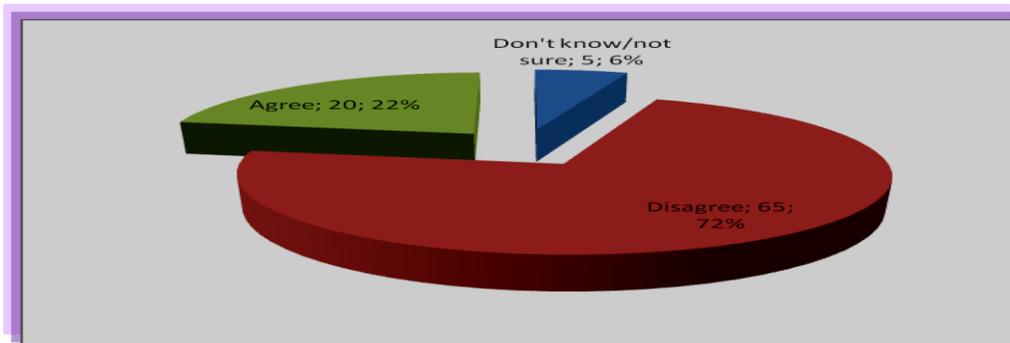


**5.8: Involvement in sexual behaviour before marriage.**

In Figure 5.8 majority 72% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that they believe it is all right for unmarried boys and girls to kiss hug and touch each other while only 22% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, and 6% of the respondent neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

These findings suggest that majority agreed that it's not right to touch each other when you are not married. This therefore means that many of the youths still upheld the moral standings as taught to them within their communities in relation to abstinence.

**Figure 5.8: Involvement in sexual behaviour before marriage**



**5.9: Sexual intercourse**

Results in Figure 5.9 indicated that majority 72% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that there is nothing wrong with unmarried boys and girls having sexual intercourse if they love each other. 22% of the respondents agreed that it was alright for unmarried adolescents to engage in sexual relations and 6% of the respondent neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

The findings infer that majority oppose having sex before marriage. However, there is still a significant group that is nothing wrong with unmarried boys and girls having sexual intercourse if they love each other and these results are disturbing to say the least.

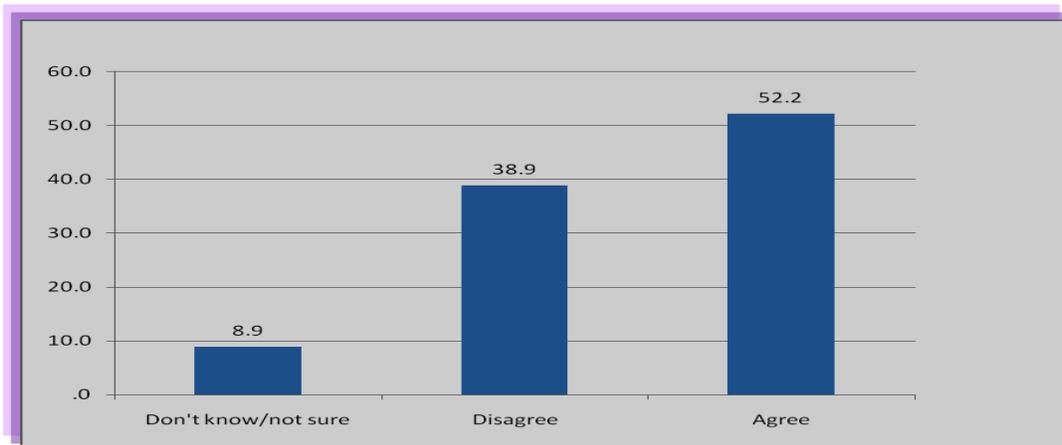
**Figure 5.9: Sexual relations before marriage.**



**5.10: Love and sexual relations**

Figure 5.10 indicates that majority 52% of the respondents agreed with the statement that that one should be in love with someone before having sex with him or her, while only 39% of the respondents disagreed with the same statement, and 9% of the respondent neither agree nor disagree with the statement. The findings imply that majority would readily engage in sexual relations agree with anyone whom they felt they were in love with.

**Figure 5.10: Love and sexual relations.**

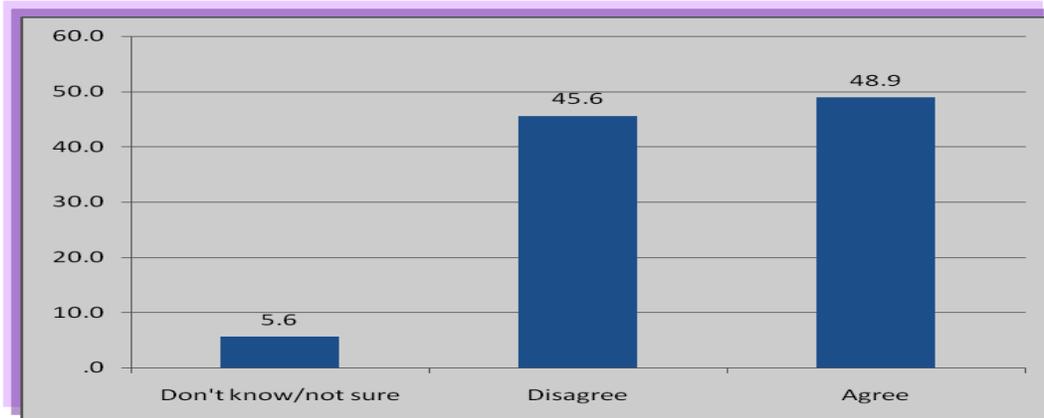


**5.11: Disrespect between boys and girls.**

As indicated in Figure 5.11 it clearly show that a majority 49% of the respondents agreed with the statement that boys do not respect girls who agree to have sex with them, while only 46% of the respondents disagreed with the same statement, and 6% of the respondent neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

The findings point toward a majority agreement that more often than not most girls are more likely to suffer the consequences related to early sexual entry and are often shunned by their male counter parts once they have agreed to or have had sexual relations with them. Therefore, it is evident that emphasis must be placed on educating the girl child on the consequences of early sexual entry.

**Figure 5. 11: Consequences of early sexual entry on the girl child.**

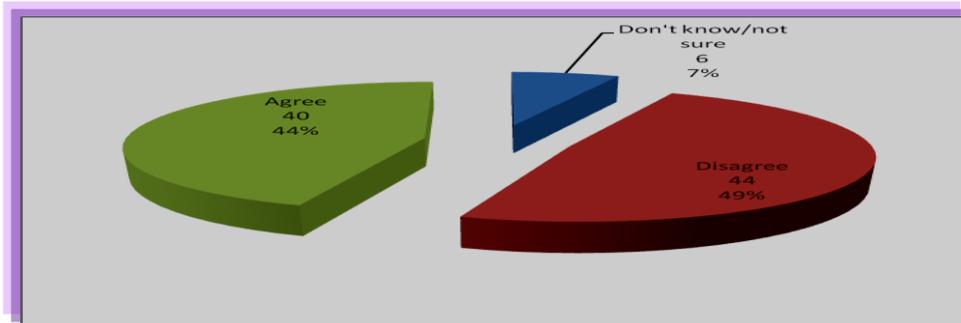


**5.12: Forced participation in sexual activities.**

Results in Figure 5.12 indicated that majority 49% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that sometimes a boy has to force a girl to have sex if he loves her, while only 44% of the respondents agreed with the same statement, and 7% of the respondent neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

The finding suggest that a majority agree that a boy does not have to force a girl to have sex if he loves her, thus the voluntary participation of both parties as long as they are “in love”. However there are an equally large percentage of those who agree that boys should force the girls to have sexual relations with them. This therefore shows the risk that is present for the girls and also shows their vulnerability when they involve themselves in sexual relations at an early age.

**Figure 5. 12: Use of force during sexual relations.**



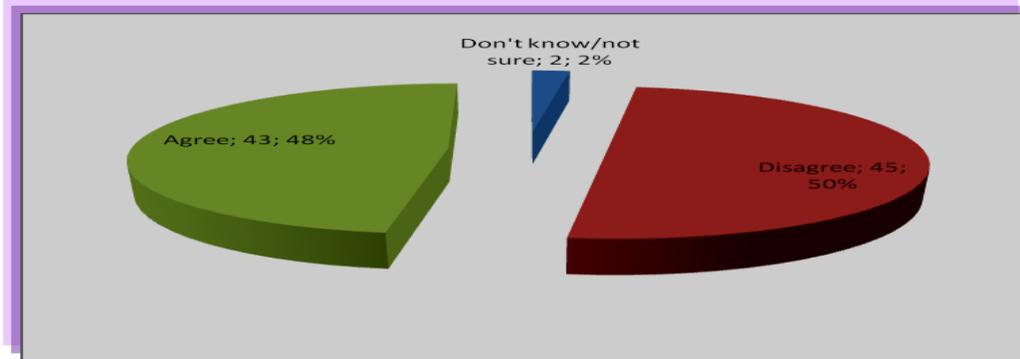
**5.13: Contraception use.**

With regards to contraceptive use results in Figure 5.13 indicates that majority 50% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that it’s all right for boys and girls to have sex with each other provided that they use methods to stop pregnancy, while only 48% of the respondents agreed with the same statement, and 2% of the respondent neither agree nor disagree with the statement. Thus a majority agree that engaging in sexual relations has consequences such as pregnancy and therefore they should not engage in it. It is also evident that a large number of the youths interviewed are aware about contraception and would ready engage in sexual relations.

However it is important to note that studies highlighted herein show that many adolescents are aware of the availability of contraception but many neither use nor use them incorrectly. Thus,

resulting into unwanted pregnancies and abortions as well as high school dropout rates for the girls involved.

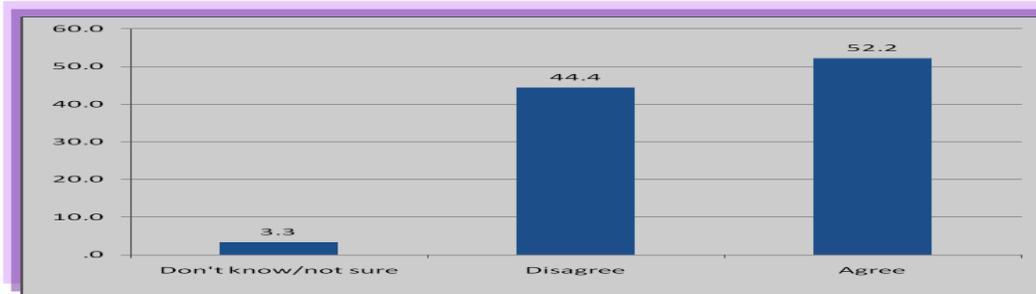
**Figure 5.132: Contraception use**



#### 5.14: Personal view

Results in Figure 5.14 indicated that majority 52% of the respondents agreed with the statement that they would refuse to have sex with someone who is not prepared to use a condom, while only 44% of the respondents disagreed with the same statement, and 3% of the respondent neither agree nor disagree with the statement. The findings hint at a majority agreement that they can use condoms every time they have sex thus indicates that there are youths who are aware of the need to have safe sexual relations. However, this also shows that the same youth would be willing to engage in sexual relations with multiple sexual partners as long as there was the presence of condoms. A fact that is rather disturbing.

**Figure 5. 14: Personal views on condomising**

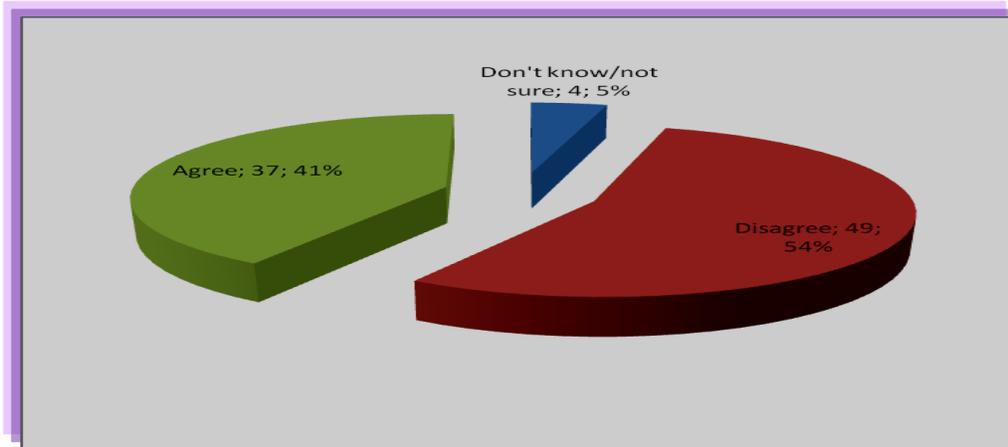


#### 5. 15: One-night stands

Concerning one night stands Figure 5.15 indicates that majority 54% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that most of their friends think that one-night stands are ok, while only 41% of the respondents agreed with the same statement, and 5% of the respondent neither agree nor disagree with the statement. The findings indicate that a majority of the youths and their friends are unlikely to engage in one night stands or have sexual relations with someone they just met.

Therefore it is evident that most of the youths here know the consequences attached to involving themselves in risky sexual behaviours. However, among the very same youths there are those who will readily have sexual relations with strangers or anyone they just met probably for the thrill it brings or to show how macho they are.

**Figure 5. 15: One-night stands.**

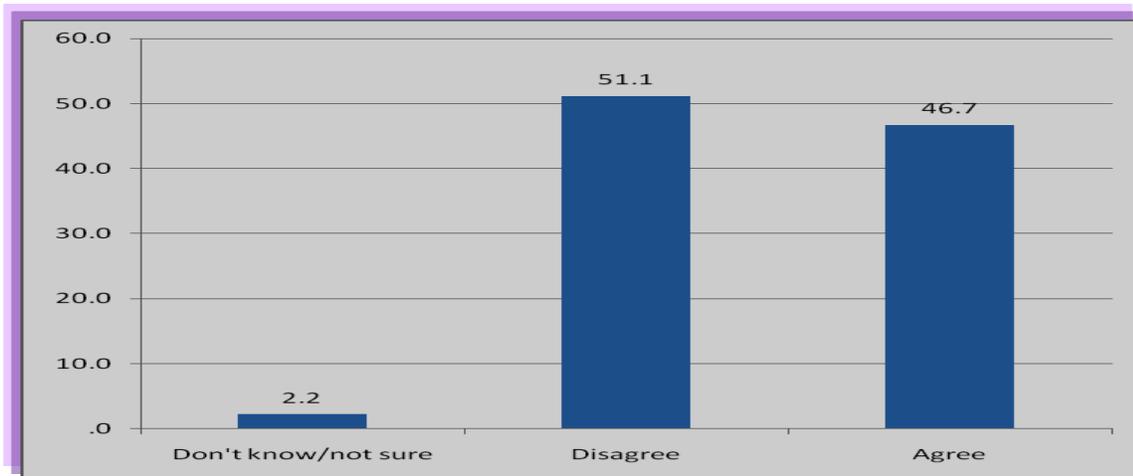


**5.16: Boys/girls urge for sex.**

Figure 5.16 shows that a majority 51% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that boys need sex more frequently than the girls do, while only 47% of the respondents agreed with the same statement, and 2% of the respondent neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

The findings imply that many felt that the pressure to have sex is usually vested on the girl child. This is probably an indication of the truth in the studies carried out and highlighted herein that show that the girl child is probably more inclined to engage in early sexual relations especially as a result of the environment that they are in.

**Figure 5.3: Boys/girls urge for sex**



**6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH**

**6.1 Recommendation for further Research**

Societies and societal norms have changed greatly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and it is evident that most norms as well as values have been twisted or altered to suit the current stereotypes as well as changing contemporary societal needs.

- Based on this and the study's research findings, below are the recommendations for further researches resulting from the study are as follows,

- Sexuality is a sensitive subject and a lot must be done to ensure that the youth in Lang'ata Ward get the correct information.
- The media as a source of information as cited by many of the youth only provides information that is lacking in proper content and is more subversive than educative for them as young and growing adults.
- Many studies on adolescent sexuality have been carried out in rural Kenya while urban Kenya has been neglected. It is therefore important for various stakeholders, Non-governmental organizations, religious institutions as well as the Kenyan Government to carry out further studies on sexuality in Lang'ata ward and Nairobi County in general.
- Religious institutions and leaders should be trained on how to address sexuality within their circles and provide forums for young people to discuss the issues they are faced with. This is because many youth today are drifting away from the various religious institutions and neglecting the guiding teachings and doctrines.
- Scholars in this field of sexuality should do more research studies on sexuality and related issues so that upcoming scholars like me can have a database of literature for reference so that sexuality can be understood and interpreted in African terms.
- Lang'ata ward needs a youth recreational facility and counselling centre with trained professionals, where they can access the correct information education, & training as well as counselling services without feeling embarrassed, intimidated, or victimized.

## **6.2 Limitations of the study**

This particular study was carried out at a time when Kenya as a country was very volatile after the conclusion of the general elections. Therefore, many institutions that were slated to take part in the study were unavailable due to closures, go-slows and striking workers.

Sexuality in itself is a very sensitive topic and many people often shy away from discussing it as many cultures consider it to be a 'taboo' subject. It was therefore not an easy task convincing some of the youth to participate in the study.

There are very few scholars and experts in the field of sexuality and as a result it was very difficult getting the required mentorships, literary assistance and guidance for the study.

I had very limited time to carry out my study because sexuality as a topic is very sensitive and it took quite some time getting the respondents to trust in me and comfortably open up as well take part in the discussions.

Many of my respondents were not able to comfortably discuss the topic due to its sensitivity especially when they sat together in groups with members from opposite sexes.

Lang'ata ward is very expansive and it was therefore very difficult for me to constantly transverse the ward to meet my respondents due to limited finances and constant traffic jams.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

Social change refers to either an alteration in the social order within a society, socio-cultural evolution, or social progression. More generally, social change may include alterations in behaviors, institutions, or social relations. Cultural, religious, economic, scientific, or technological forces often are the driving forces behind change.

In a world that is characterized by technological advanced and increased connectivity, people are confronted with sexuality issues on a daily basis through television, radio, music, newspapers,

magazines, adverts, dressing, etc..., making it impossible to escape the invasion. Contradictory norms, some inhibiting sexual activity, and others encouraging it characterize young people's sexual culture (Wright et al., 2006). Young people now have developed values from what is widely available and largely uncontrolled by religious, societal, or parental structures.

Cultural practices which formed the framework of sexual behaviour among adolescents in these societies have also been eroded. Thus the breakdown of traditional communication networks and changes in the role of parents in the provision of appropriate sexuality related information to their adolescent children. For example, the disappearance of traditional sex education during rites of passage in African societies has left many youth uncertain of where to look for information and many now use sex as a commodity/service or a gateway to obtaining jobs, promotions, educational certificates among other favours.

Migrations to towns have also led to the adoption of sexually permissive lifestyles laced with all manner of sexual activities and loose clusters of 'family units' have substituted the once closely-knit communities and the extended family's opinions and roles are minimal.

Similarly due to peer pressure, many adolescents today desire to have some level of sexual prowess because of a miasma of confused myths, tales and stereotypical approaches. For example, a study by Wamoyi (2010) shows that boys who had not had sex by age 15 were ridiculed, creating an important motive to start sex. For example, a 19 year old explained he first had sex at 11,

*"...Due to the pressure, he was getting from youth who already had begun having sex. ...his friends laughed at him, saying that he was afraid to seduce girls, or that he was impotent..."* He decided to rid himself of the shame that confronted him every time he met his friends.

Likewise, parents also seem to tolerate their son's sexual activities, as compared to that of the girls a fact that is partly because of the traditional social norms surrounding male power and sexual behavior. This is also because parents believed that sons would not inflict the economic burden of an unplanned pregnancy.

According to a study by Wamoyi (2010) young women reported to have far fewer economic opportunities compared to their male counterparts, so for most sex became a critical economic resource, encapsulated by an 18 year old woman: *"...what use is pleasure when there is no money?"*.

Thus, transactional sex underlay the great majority of non-marital relationships because in their teens, the girls are to provide for personal needs, such as soap, underwear, or food at school, but had very little access to cash. In relation to this is the 'chips or sausage funga' phenomena in Kenya where young people visit entertainment joints to selectively choose a partner(s) for a one nightstand which are seen as cheaper and less stressful as compared to monogamous relationships.

Further, disco funerals mainly in the Western part of Kenya namely Luo Nyanza are seen as an important place for young people to hang out, meet and engage in (risky) sexual activities. Many adolescents usually have casual unprotected sex on these occasions, sometimes with multiple partners. Sometimes girls are forced into sex and there are high chances of gang rape. At these disco funerals, many boys do not take precaution during sex.

“..A few, yes, do use protection, though there are many who are normally in a hurry and have no time to put on condoms, once the girl has accepted, then he follows her quickly ...”( Njue et al, 2009).

Desensitization of sexuality has also been disregarded by the media going by all the sexual things shown on TV, at movies and the internet. All these have made sex look like any other activity thus contributing greatly to the erosion of social sensitivities towards moral practices. Consequently, television, magazines, and peers remain the only other option for learning about sex an option that has contributed immensely to the decay of youth morality. Despite the social changes that have occurred in the lives of Kenyans, religious institutions continue to celebrate an era of sexual chastity.

Additionally, religious institutions still hamper dispensation of sex education that can guide and assist its members towards surviving in the global sex culture yet the youth are constantly bombarded with conflicting views, cultures, and perceptions. Thus, in an era of sexual freedom where many young people are growing up in an unguided manner and receive their sexual orientations from their peers, any young person with a lack of sexual experience is shunned or subjected to constant mockery.

Justifiably, the effects of the unwillingness to accept changes or new ideas on sexuality are devastating, especially considering that the church constitutes one of the most powerful agents of socialization.

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