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'Do Not Separate Sexuality Education from Religious Teachings': Parents' Perceptions and Suggestions towards Sexuality Education in Uganda

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The Uganda government designed a framework to teach sex education in Uganda primary schools starting from pre-primary school at the age of three up to high school. Sexuality Education (SE) is intended to be a school intervention to provide the right information to young people misled by peers, the media, and social networks that are now easily accessible. Besides, sexuality education is meant to be a school-based intervention to curb the increasing rates of premarital pregnancies that lead to school dropouts of teenage girls. However, the mention of sexuality education creates unease among parents, teachers, and policymakers. There are arguments and counterarguments that sex education potentially leads children into sexual immorality and permissiveness and sexualises the children. On the other hand, there are sections of people who are convinced that sex education is important and timely and important in Uganda. There have been barriers to the implementation of sexuality education in different contexts. The barriers include political, cultural, religious, and social concerns that influence the effective implementation of sexuality education. Besides, parents are critical in implementing any teaching about sexuality because they provide basic sexual information and knowledge to their children. For instance, they discuss issues concerning hygiene, and sexual health, such as STDs, abstinence, virginity, and relationships with their children. Binti et al. (2020) and Turnbull et al. (2008) stated that parents are influential in teaching sex education because they influence their children's behaviours and sexual identity formation. Therefore, their opinions and attitudes are fundamental in handling sex education. In African contexts, parents impart knowledge and skills about puberty, courtship, and marriage. It is against this basis that the article discusses the perceptions and attitudes of parents towards teaching sex education in primary schools in Uganda. The article focuses on the following questions; (i) Is there a need for sexuality education? (ii) What is the appropriate content for sexuality education? (iii) Who is the best teacher for sexuality education? and (iv) What is the appropriate age for sexuality education in Uganda?

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INTRODUCTION

Uganda is one of the countries that signed the Eastern and Southern African Commitment to

Comprehensive Sexuality Education (Government of Uganda, 2013). Between 2017 and 2019, the Ministry of Education designed and launched a Sexuality Education framework which was rolled out by the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) and started with training teachers in different parts of the country. Uganda's Sexuality Education framework is designed for beginning as early as three years old to high school. The Sexuality Education framework is intended to guide the teaching of age-appropriate, cultural, and religious-sensitive sexuality education in schools (Mina, 2018).

The Ministry of Education stated that in Uganda, 'young Ugandans are continuously exposed to sexual and reproductive health challenges, such as high cases of early marriages, teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, and sexual and gender-based violence. Therefore, the framework of Sexuality Education is intended to provide a 'holistic education that goes beyond academic, but empowers children with life skills,

values and builds personal character" (Mina, 2018). Indeed, the UN resident coordinator in Uganda, Rosa Malango, supported Uganda's Ministry of Education initiative for sexuality education, arguing that it is important to provide correct information to young people because they will one day have to make life-changing decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. However, as mentioned earlier, the subject of SE in schools raises controversies among different categories of people, including parents, teachers, political, cultural, and religious leaders, and even educationists.

There are arguments and counterarguments regarding the benefits and detriments of teaching sexuality and related issues to young people. While some people believe that SE benefits young people, others argue that it is an education in the world of sexual immorality and permissiveness where the young are sexualised. In the philosophy of the African worldview, sexuality is treated as a private and sensitive issue. It is an abomination to talk about sexuality at one's ease in public and even with children. Sexual activities and sexual organs are regarded as highly private and sensitive. Sex and sexual talks are for only mature people. Culturally, there are sentiments that Sexuality Education in any

form may introduce obscenity and indecency to children. The study investigated the perceptions and suggestions of parents of primary school-going children toward Sexuality Education in Uganda. To a greater extent, parents believe that age-appropriate sex education benefits children and that schools should include SE in the primary school curriculum. Parents were emphatic that sex education must be taught together with religious education and must be centred on religious values.

In the developed world such USA and the UK, sex-related education is more oriented to human rights discourses and basic education. However, in Uganda, there are fears that sexuality education is set to do more harm than good. The issue of sexuality education in Ugandan communities is met with nuanced attitudes founded on cultural and religious beliefs. Parents always believe that their children aged 15 and below are innocent; sexuality education may introduce them to the unknown. It is unknown to the parents that, in recent years, there has been a persistent change in attitudes toward sex among young people. In many cases, children are aware of and sometimes indulge in sexual activities at a relatively young age (Bankole et al., 2007). Besides, many times they indulge in unprotected sex and risk unwanted pregnancy and STIs.

Consequently, school-based sexuality education is increasingly becoming important because it provides young people with reliable information to guide them in making appropriate choices concerning their sexuality. Carman et al. (2011) argued that school-based sex education prepares young people for healthy sexual lives. The subject of sex or sexuality education is obscure; it lacks both theoretical and conceptual precision. Sex or sexuality education can be designed depending on the intent and motivation in a given context. In this case, the designers are free to choose what befits the given context without tampering with cultural values, morals, and ways of life in a given community. Educationists, academicians, advocates, and proponents of sexuality education

and all related education covering sexuality have created different nomenclatures for formal sex-related teachings, including; (i) Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), defined as a lifelong process of acquiring information and forming attitudes, beliefs and values about identity, relationships and intimacy” (International Planned Parental Federation, IPPF, 2009).

Sexuality and Relationships Education (SRE) is defined as learning about the emotional, social, and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality, and sexual health; Personal, Social, Health, and Economic Education (PSHE) is regarded as a school’s healthy approach because it includes science (Hayman, 2014). All these educations aim at providing information about physical development, sex, sexuality, and relationships, along with skills-building to help young people communicate and make informed decisions regarding sex and their sexual health (Bridges & Hauser, 2014). Abstinence-only-sex education is a form of sex education that teaches young people not to have sex before and outside marriage (Hindman & Yan, 2015). Abstinence-only-Sex-Education excludes other types of sexual and reproductive health education, such as birth control and safe sex. All these definitions and concepts are related, interlinked, overlap, and share the same philosophical orientations.

The concepts of sex education originated from the neo-Malthusian movement in France between 1900 and 1920. It advocated for the lawfulness of birth control and the publicity and selling of contraceptives (Cremaschi, 2016). Education about sex was expanded by the feminist philosophies and theories of women’s emancipation and reproductive rights (Reiss, 1995).

However, in some contexts, sex/sexuality education introduces children to understanding the concepts of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersexual, Queer/Questioning and Asexual (LGBTQIA+) and all its embodiments (Goldfarb & Lieberman, 2020).

The proponents of sexuality education, such as Braeken and Cardinal (2008) argue that it is not enough to give children education concerning social, economic, and other educational knowledge without demystifying human sexuality because sex is part of human life. Today, the proponents for sex education link SE to human rights and the millennium development goals and are framed within the CESC, CEDAW, and the CRC human rights instruments (Irvine, 2004). It is argued that everyone has a right to receive relevant and accurate health information to be able to make and act on important decisions about health. As Lottes (2000) stated, 'sex education is not about opinions; it is about evidence, human rights, and gender equality.

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

The study explored parents' perceptions and suggestions toward Sexuality Education in primary schools in Uganda. The study investigated critical issues that included; (i) parents' perception of sexuality education; (ii) whether there is a need for sexuality education in Uganda; (iii) the parents preferred content of sex education for their primary school children, and; (v) the appropriate age for sex education in primary schools.

Participant Selection

The study participants were 600 parents, including fathers, mothers, guardians, and other caretakers, including aunts and uncles. The purposive opportunity and convenient sampling techniques were used to access parents targeted at four primary boarding schools when parents were invited to school to interact with teachers about children's academic performance and general well-being.

Procedure

The school management was requested and accepted the researcher to organise, inform and seek parents' consent. Data were collected on days set aside for parents to interact with teachers. On each day, the researcher met parents in the main hall and

introduced the study, made a brief overview of the sexuality education program, and informed consent was obtained. Parents were officially requested to participate in the study and they were all given the questionnaires by the research assistants. Groups of six parents were formed for focus group discussions. Parents were taken through all ethical information and freedom to participate, all responses were confidential, and no names would be displayed in the report. Parents who chose to participate in the study submitted the questionnaires to the desk that was set for the purpose, and some participated in the focus group discussions.

Research Instruments

The study used questionnaires and focus group discussions to understand the perceptions and suggestions of parents toward sex education in primary schools. The questionnaire comprised 14 questions in three categories, both close-ended and open-ended. 4 questions were open-ended, six filter questions with Yes and No, and 6 were multiple choices with several alternatives from which a respondent would choose 1 or 2 or more options. Close-ended questions are quick to answer and explore a wide range of alternatives and potential themes of the study. However, with open-ended questions, participants voice their opinions, perspectives, and suggestions in their language without limitations (LaDonna, Taylor & Lingard, 2018).

Data Analysis

Data analysis was done differently for the two categories of questions. The closed-ended questionnaires were analysed quantitatively and open-ended qualitatively using thematic analysis through coding and categorising data. Themes and sub-themes were tracked through the data. Data were analysed using thematic analysis, and the common issues of concern from data were identified and analysed together with related literature. It was found out that parents perceive sexuality education

as important for; (i) creating awareness; (ii) eliminating school dropouts; (iii) avoiding misinformation from other sources; (iv) self-defence, and being able to seek help, among others. Parents suggested the desired sexuality education suitable content and appropriate age for sexuality education. Parents unanimously suggested that sexuality education must be premised within the framework of religious teachings.

FINDINGS

The Teaching of Sexuality Education in Ugandan Contexts

The study found that 93.33% of parents have a positive attitude towards teaching sexuality education in primary schools. The findings are contrary to the general assumption that sex/sexuality education in African contexts is an imposition from western cultures. According to Ninsiima et al. (2020), sentiments are high that formalised sexuality education is not cultural. It is intended to corrupt children's minds and sexualises young people.

Consequently, there is a general feeling among people that sexuality education propels immorality among young people. However, the concept of Sexuality Education is not uncommon in Ugandan traditions and cultures where Senga (paternal auntie) and Kojja (maternal uncle) are central (Muyinda et al., 2003; Muyinda, 2004).

The Senga and Kojja sex education involves training young women and men on issues of sex skills and sexual gratification. It also includes values of hard work, family lineage, and community responsibility hinged on the African philosophy of *Ubuntu*. The Senga and Kojja sex education has gained popularity but does not discuss sexual abuse and rights against sexual abuse, reproductive rights, abstinence family planning, and LGBTQ. Arguably, Sengaism and Kojjaism education is filling a vacuum as there is no other type of instituted Sexuality Education. Consequently, the Sengaism

and Kojjaism type of sex education does not match up to school-based and appropriately conceptualised and structured sexuality education because it focuses on skills for sexual gratification.

The Need for Sexuality Education in Schools in Uganda

Findings indicate that parents agreed that sexuality education is a critical need. Six hundred parents were asked, "Do you think there is a need for sexuality education in our communities? Of the 600 participants, 521(93.33%) affirmed Yes, 17 answered No, and 62 left the question unanswered. Given the cultural sentiments that Africans attach to issues of sexuality, it was surprising that such a big number would agree with sexuality education. The response indicates that parents concede that children need to understand their sexuality and express justifications for sexuality education in primary schools.

Creating Awareness to Address Sexual Violence

The major reason for parents to accept sexuality education in schools was to sensitise and create awareness among learners to enable them to understand their sexuality. Given the high rates of sexual abuse, particularly defilement, as reported by UBOS (2020), parents have disregarded cultural beliefs about sexuality. Parents agreed that for children to be vigilant and protect themselves from sexual abuse, it is important to teach them sexuality education and create awareness to prevent sexual-related abuses. According to parents, ignorance can only make children more vulnerable to sexual abuse and mistakes. For instance, parents expressed that,

'Educating our children on matters of sex would enlighten them, and they [children] would easily be able to monitor themselves' (F) parent.

'I agree that sex education should be taken on in schools to help children understand the dangers of sex when it [sexuality education] is carried out early. Therefore, continuous

reminders/lessons on this are necessary since everything is changing in our environment and the world globally', (M) parent.

'Sex education in primary schools should be given at all levels because it is the beginning of every life of these growing pupils' (F) parent.

'When a child is told about sex early enough, she gets aware of the repercussions and she is capable of avoiding it. These things of hiding and hiding are killing our children, and it gives abusers a good chance', (M) parent.

Creating awareness is a major concern for proponents of sexuality education. For instance, Parker et al. (2009), Robinson et al. (2017), and Kantor and Lindberg (2020), among others, contend that sex or sexuality education provides young people with the information they need to protect themselves from being abused; and to make informed decisions concerning their sexuality. Young people are mindful of an exceedingly sexual world that surrounds them, and they are mindful of sexual activities such as prostitution, sex in the media and pornography, drug and sex, and a fair knowledge of adults' sexual practices. Therefore, treating children as innocents in sexuality only exposes them to HIV/AIDS, sexual abuse, and vulnerability. In a study by Ferguson et al. (2008) in the Netherlands, it was revealed that young people who had not been exposed to sexuality education wireless were likely to use adequate contraception to contract STIs more than others and were more likely to become unintentionally impregnated. Parents expressed the need for sexuality education in the following responses,

'Sexuality education will make children able to fully decide on what is best for them. Through sexuality education, children will learn the outcomes of indulging in acts of sex. They will stand assertively, they will chase away men who want to defile them, and they will even report the' (M) parent.

'Sex education is very important because our kids will become aware of the dangers they would face if ignorant, especially the girls. They will learn to open up in case they are faced with the problem', (F) parent.

'It should be taught to create awareness among the youth and children who may fall victims, at least the basics, the things that can save, tell them to run away, to call parents, to report instead of keeping quiet, (F) parent.

Ignorance can make children vulnerable to sexual abuse, diseases, and unwanted pregnancies. All children are vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse; the responses and reactions to sexual abuse by children depend on the age of the child. Defilement and rape victims can be categorised according to age and knowledge.

Category 1: 0-7 Years

These are innocent children who trust any adult who shows them care and love. Statistics indicate that in the year 2021, 1280 girls and boys between 0-8 years were defiled (Nzito, 2022). Many cases of defilement that are reported show that victims do not resist. The victims become accomplices in the defilement by obeying and following instructions of the abusers; they can undress, lie down or do anything without question. The abusers touch their private parts and romance them without resistance because they have no clue what is going on. It dawns on them only when they feel pain during the process. For example, Kamusiime (2020) reported that a 70-year-old male adult, Kiwanuka Haruna was convicted for the aggravated defilement of his 4-year-old grandchild. It was reported that Kiwanuka, the victim's grandfather, called the young girl to go behind the latrines and asked her to undress and lie on her back, and she obliged. The suspect then removed his trouser and defiled her. Defilement and rape cases also happen to boys. For example, Ntezza (2015), an eight-year-old girl, testified in court that a housemaid sexually abused

a 2-year-old boy for oral sex first and later made the boy penetrate. The girl explained that the maid locked herself in one of the bedrooms, but she would watch through the keyhole. However, she did not tell the mother until the boy started crying out of pain in the private parts. Children between 0-7 years would willingly report if they have an opportunity to be listened to, but they are easily intimidated by their abusers.

Category 2: 7-11 Years

Boys and girls in this age group may not be fully aware of sexuality. However, some may have a developed consciousness about sexuality out of natural curiosity. Children begin feeling shy about being naked. Such children may be shy to report when someone has touched their private parts. In some communities, especially in slum areas where parents share bedrooms with their children, children get to see parents in sexual acts and begin trying out what their parents do. Sometimes, they even tell their classmates about what they have seen. They are not very sure what exactly goes on, but they are curious. Between these ages, children play sex games with other children. These children may be aroused when repeatedly tickled by abusers. Abusers make friends with children, and they share a lot in secrecy. Children between 7-11 years are more likely not to tell their parents about their sexual activities. As a result, children's sexual behaviour is more likely to be hidden from adults. Children also become increasingly curious about adult sexual behaviour in homes that employ domestic workers and keep.

In extended families, these adults often begin teaching such children sex stuff. They play games, showing and touching each other's private parts playfully. Children get attached to domestic workers or adult relatives [the uncles and aunties] and feel comfortable in their presence. The ill-intentioned adults introduce sex and related activities to these children. For example, on 14

November 2018, a court heard that a 53-year-old man defiled an 11-year-old granddaughter.

Sebandeke had earlier asked the young girl to share a bed with her to teach her something.

The girl, on that specific day, refused the grandfather's request and ran away from him. However, the girl did not report to anyone. Later, Sebandeke defiled the girl when he grabbed her by force and defiled. The fact that the young girl resisted sharing a bed with the grandfather implies that he had an idea of what was likely to happen. Unfortunately, because of ignorance, she did not report it, and later, her grandfather grabbed and defiled her by force. Such children report easily but are also intimidated by death threats.

Category 3: 10-15 Years

In this category, children have some limited knowledge about sex. For instance, they are aware that adults do have sex. Sex talk with adults [teachers and parents] makes them uncomfortable. They begin to experience puberty and develop sexual hormones. Their bodies may respond to intimate body touches, begin to feel excited and feel their bodies demanding sex. Puberty is a very sensitive stage, and if the child is used to a person, she/he can easily be defiled, and in many cases, she/he will keep quiet even when not threatened. Often these are only discovered when they get pregnant or after contracting HIV aids, and then they reveal their ordeals. Children in this category usually choose to keep quiet, get withdrawn, suffer from anxiety, and some blame themselves for the sexual abuse that they experience.

Category 4: 15-17+ Years

These are aware of sex issues, they respond quickly to fondling, and some of them ignorantly accept to indulge in sexual activities, though others are raped and threatened by the abusers. However, children between 15-17 years are not mature enough and have not fully developed the capacity to make

informed decisions. They may not be sure whether it is proper to indulge in sexual activities or not. Nevertheless, because the body and hormones demand sex, they accept it without understanding the consequences. These children can be lured by money and gifts and do not easily reveal when sexually abused.

Children of this age group are easily misinformed by peers and are vulnerable to peer pressure. They enjoy the pleasures of sex. Therefore, parents argue that sexuality education has the potential to create awareness and sensitise children about their sexuality and reduce defilement and other forms of sexual abuse. Parents also explained that sexuality education potentially provides young people with self-defence skills. Many young people do not know how to say no, especially adults. They do not know how to resist sexual advances. They do not know the appropriate words to tell their sexual tormentors.

According to Stover (2007), children should be able to; (i) SAY NO to whoever intends to abuse them in any way; (ii) not let anyone touch their private parts (bad touches); (iii) avoid strangers; (iv) be cautious and take note of early warning signs; (iv) communicate with their parents and caretakers; (v) children need to be encouraged to condemn their parents and; (iv) parents need to learn to reassure their children to give them emotional support. Parents explained that sexuality education should enable young people to defend themselves. For instance, a parent stated that:

'Children fear, they fear to talk to men even when they do not want to participate in sexual activities. Even if a man is not going to rape her, but can coerce and convince her that after all, it is going to take a short time and nothing is going to happen to his', (M) parent.

'Fear is the greatest hindrance in cases of sexual abuse. Sexual abusers instil a sense of fear in their victims. The young do not imagine that everybody would blame them for being

abused. Our children fear to report to us parents when they are sexually abused, many children think that parents can punish them if they report people who sexualise them. I think even parents need to be sensitised to always listen to their children. But some parents also punish children who report sexual harassment, especially from close relatives' (F) parent.

'Well, sex education would be crucial for young people to know a small bit of it, not to disclose each and everything but to talk about a few important things followed by cultural taboos. For example, that is, do not allow people, especially minor boys, to touch your thighs or breasts, or you will not grow well. If you have sex before menstruation, you will not have babies in future. Otherwise, if the teacher is not very organised, all things will go wrong. Teach what is necessary for the', (M) parent.

'Tell children about sex, tell her who is likely to use her/him and how she/he can avoid it., tell her/him to run away and report immediately to parents, teachers or another caretaker', (F) parent.

Young people need to know that even some parents and guardians abuse their children. In a police report, it was revealed that in the year 2020, 120 children were abused by their parents and another 200 by their guardians (Kasujja, 2022).

'This thing of touching our children, even boys can be excited by touches and want to discover what comes next, and next and next and finally they are abused and they continue keeping quiet, teach them how to talk, to report, but report the right thing', (M) parent.

'Sex education will enable the kids to report any sexual abuse before it is late, be assertive in saying no to inappropriate touches, and beware of the options available for support in case of sexual abuse. It is only when they are aware that

they can be empowered to know the right touches from the wrong,' (M) parent.

A survey revealed that more than two-thirds, 75.8% of children experience sexual violence, being touched, and forced to have sex (Network for Research, Learning & Action, undated). In Uganda, the types of sexual abuse include penetrative sex and touching (fondling and pinching around the sexual body parts). During childhood, 35.3% of girls and 16.5% of boys experience sexual abuse (Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development, 2018). Children encounter sexual violence from anywhere. For example, an 11-year-old girl was raped in a toilet (Athumani, 2018). Arguably, sexual abuse among children results from a lack of knowledge. Therefore, parents suggest that sex education is a potential avenue to prevent actions of sexual abuse against children.

Sexually Healthy and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

Another critical argument for SE is sexual health, the general hygiene of the body. Sexuality

Education strong messages about sexually transmitted diseases such as Human

Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), which leads to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Most proponents of sex education see it as a channel for transmitting much-needed information about sexually transmitted diseases to young people. As Rajbhandari (2008) explained that education is an important source for development not only academically but also in improving lives socially. Education can be a conduit for transmitting knowledge about the prevention of diseases. In the early 1990s, there was a Presidential Initiative on Aids Strategy for Communication to the Youth program (PIASCY), which was aimed at encouraging children in primary schools to abstain from sex as a strategy to curb the spread of HIV/Aids among young people (Stephen & Costa, 2010). The program was implemented by primary

school teachers who helped pupils to understand their growing bodies and changing emotions (Uganda Ministry of Education & Sports, undated). Therefore, parents' expressions are in tandem with the way PIASCY was implemented. Parents expressed that Sex education is fundamental in the fight against the spread of STDs. In this vein, parents explained that,

'Sex education helps children to know the outcomes of early pregnancy, STDs among others. Sex education helps children to revise the value of virginity and abstinence. It can also create awareness for circumcision of boys to ensure they keep safe from infections,' (M) parent.

'It will help pupils to be aware of STD infections including HIV/AIDS and how to avoid it. Like here [at school], the way girls are infected with candida (a fungal infection that mostly attacks women), they get scared and fear to approach teachers and the school nurse because they think it is an STD, but sexuality education will help learners know about all these infections and seek treatment', (F) parent.

Uganda is one of the countries worst hit by the HIV pandemic, which led to many deaths between 1980-1995. According to the World Health Organisation's 2004 report 'Changing History', the HIV/AIDS pandemic was "the world's leading public challenge" that led to disastrous social and economic consequences, caused deaths among 15 to 59-year-olds worldwide, and the second leading cause of serious sickness and disability in the world (Genuis & Genuis, 2005). The HIV/AIDS infections were greatly reduced because of government intervention through the ABC program of creating awareness and sensitisation through the media. The program was about control of sexual behaviour and delayed sexual encounters for youth through (A) abstinence, (B) being faithful, and (C) condoms popularising condom use and spreading factual information regarding condom use for those who

were infected or involved in risky sexual lifestyles (Stephen & Costa, 2010). Over time, creating mass awareness and sensitisation by the government curbed the spread of HIV/AIDS. Today, the country registers a 5.5% infection rate among ages 15-49 years (Ministry of Health, 2022). Arguably, HIV is still prevalent, and sexuality education will add to the ongoing efforts to curb the disease from spreading further.

'Sex education in primary schools should be taught for young children to prevent children from being infected by HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. Even boys get such infections and get cared for. Instead of reporting to their parents or the teachers, they tell their friends, who provide no solution, and this is not good' (M) parent.

While it is a common belief that sex/sexuality education has the potential to prevent young people from contracting STDs, there are contexts where STDs continue to prevail. However, young people have been taught sexuality education. Francis (2010) & Baxen and Breidlid (2004) observed that even when information about sex and STDs is readily available, young people still fail to negotiate safe-sex practices. Consequently, the youth continue to indulge in unprotected sex and get infected with STDs, particularly HIV and AIDS. Parents who recommended sexuality education argue that it will spread information about sexual health.

Sexuality Education should Enable Children to Understand their Bodies

Parents who participated in this study expressed concern that young people do not understand how their physical bodies link with their spirituality. In the first instance, young people need to understand their bodies, especially when experiencing body changes during puberty.

Body changes make young people uncomfortable. Sometimes they feel awkward with the body shapes and need to learn how to respond.

'Sex education opens the girls' eyes to her body, the changes as one become a man or a woman, they need to understand that their bodies demand sex and respond to touches, but self-control is a value' (F) parent.

Body changes confuse them; when breasts come, developing beards; some girls do not want breasts to come, but they still enjoy the comfort of being young. Sometimes they get scared and be emotional, especially when they have no one to guide them; sexuality education teachers can handle all these challenges, but teachers must be scrutinised because they may confuse our children more, (M) parent.

'Christianity teaches that God created human beings from His image; therefore, men and women are encouraged to respect their bodies as God's temples, valuing of bodies is critical in one's life', (F) parent.

Parents suggest that children engage in sexual activities because they do not understand what their bodies mean to them. Secondly, children must learn that all humans are created in God's image and that the human body is God's temple and should not be used as a sex tool. For instance, teachers explained that:

'... Sex education opens the girls' eyes to their bodies. Teachers should be ready to teach her how to control herself, strengthen her spirituality and religious values about one's body should be strengthened, (M) parent.

'Sexuality education should teach children to value their bodies as bodies of Christ that need not be used for bad acts. Girls should know that sleeping around with men causes bad spirits to contaminate one's body and soul, which causes misfortunes in one's life, (F) parent.

Parents do not point out exactly what they want teachers to teach children about their bodies. Religious teachings show God created man in His image (Melchert, 2011). In Christianity, one's body is God's temple, and the spirit of God dwells in the temple. God's temple must be kept holy, and the body must be kept holy (1 Cor 3: 16-17). Human bodies are supposed to be kept holy and clean and must be treated with respect, dress decently and be clean, and avoid things that violate God's temple. The notion of the human body may not be easy to teach sexuality education because human rights proponents and libertarians advocate for each one to use their bodies freely, that is, the concept of somatic rights (Tchinaryanetal., 2020; Tyeva, 2018). Scholars such as Cohen (2009), Brenkert (1998) Attas (2000) expand the theorisation of somatic rights and state it more clearly as freedom and rights to self-ownership. Such freedoms and rights may include one's right to 'hac' own body, to change one's sex, to deny sex to one's partner, and to decide one's sexual orientation, among others. The discussion of these issues is not the focus of this paper. However, these are some of the distinctive issues that should not be underestimated in the implementation of Sexuality Education.

Sexuality Education Demystifies Sexuality Myths and Misinformation

Parents were concerned that sexuality education is important in the era of too much information. Parents expressed that children know too much wrong information and never care to find out what is right and wrong about human sexuality. Parents expressed fears that if children are not given apposite information about sex and sexuality, they are more likely to make the wrong decision. Parents explained that,

"... pupils should be taught about sex. They get lots of false information from fellow pupils and other bad wrongdoers. In addition, the media, such as TV and magazines, show them these bad habits which confuse them; sex education to

provide children with the right information, (F) parent.

"...the world is changing fast, and children get exposed to so much early because of information that is scattered everywhere, in papers, on WhatsApp and smartphones. Moreover, there is too much pornographic stuff, and there is an urgent need to give children the right information, or else children will get spoiled' (F) parent.

'The more we keep a blind eye/deaf ear, the more dangerous children are getting the wrong information about sex and sexuality. There are also many dangers out there in the world or even within our homes, so it is proper to teach sex education. For example, in my school, a girl was telling another one that men do not want virgin girls because they are stupid and do not know anything; this is wrong because our culture values virginity', (M) parent.

'Schools and parents need to open up and teach children about sex education to avoid the social media, television, and peer group influence them negatively. Concealing the relevant information from the children is bad because they will never be empowered and become assertive to handle sex-compromising situations' (F) parent.

During the teacher training programs for sexuality education in different parts of the country, teachers explained some of the lies young people tell each about sex. For instance,(i) a girl cannot become pregnant when she does sex for the first time; (ii) if one washes up with soda after sex, she will not become pregnant;(iii) a girl cannot get pregnant when sex is done while standing;(iv)if a girl does not accept to have sex with a boy, he will walk away on her; (v) It easy to see a person who has HIV/AIDS from the way he/she looks like; (vi) If a girl does not get a boyfriend in secondary school, she will fail to get a husband in future;(vii)

producing a child with a boyfriend makes love stronger; (viii) virginity is not a value anymore, people will laugh once they know you are a virgin; (xv) some boyfriends show love by battering you and (x) do not tell other people about your boyfriend's violence. Such stories may sound childish, but young people believe them and base them on such stories to make decisions.

'We need to tell our children the right things, when I was in S. 6, my friend told me things and when I remember now, I laugh, she said that taking tea removes a foetus from the womb' (F) parent.

'Some children know too much, but most of what they know is wrong, they do not know any negative thing about sex. For instance, young people do not look for any information or disadvantages of early sex or premarital sex. It is very challenging; we are in a conundrum. We need to teach the' (M) parent.

'Sex education is important to our children to sensitise them about the consequences of early pregnancy, peer pressure and influence and even talk about homosexuality. Even if we do not talk about it, they will still find it out' (F) parent.

Children, by all means, get information about sexuality and sex whether parents and teachers like it. The 21st century is making things worse with new technological advancements. However, the unexpected ways to access all sorts of information mislead young people. There are many photographs in all forms. Nevertheless, children depend on this knowledge and misinformation to form their attitudes and perceptions of sex and sexuality. Therefore, parents expressed concerns about the wrong information children get from different sources about sex and related issues from internet sites such as social media, WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok, U-tube, and many others. Young people perceive internet-based information as the best way

to acquire confidential and reliable information about sexuality. However, such information is not censored, it is not age-appropriate, and in many cases, it is intended to excite young people and assure them that sex is good. Everyone has a right to indulge in sex. The sex education information online does not call young people to form and sustain healthy sexual relationships.

There are random people and organisations interested in teaching sex education to our children without permission from parents. For example, it was reported that in Uganda, numerous volunteer organisations teach sex education that does not respect Ugandan cultural values (Ahimbisibwe, 2016). For instance, there is an internet-based HIV prevention known as Cybersenga initiated by the Centre for Innovative Public Health Research CiPHR, which is involved in comprehensive sexuality. However, according to Bull et al.'s (2010) analysis, the CyberSenga project provides inconsistent, incomplete, erroneous information from wrong sources. Consequently, sex/sexuality education that is designed and monitored by the government's Ministry of Education is important. Shunning away from sex education will not stop children from indulging in sexual activities. Even if sex education cannot prevent underaged children from engaging in sexual activities, at least let them know the dangers so they decide to avoid abstaining. Without sex/sexuality education, children will continue to make wrong decisions based on inaccurate information, which makes them more vulnerable to unwanted sex, unintended pregnancies, and sexually transmitted diseases. The basis for introducing sexuality education in Uganda is to enable young people to avoid being lured into sex at a tender age because they do not know what it is, and their brains are filled with myths than facts concerning sexuality.

Eliminate School Dropouts (Girls)

Uganda experiences increasing rates of school dropouts due to premarital pregnancy. Many young

girls get pregnant while in school, which marks the end of their education, and their futures get shuttered. However, if they get to know the dangers of early sex, they could be saved. Indeed, many parents expressed that sex education is an important way of aiding children, especially young girls from indulging in early sex, thus, preventing early pregnancies. Parents explained that,

'Sex education in schools, more so primary schools help pupils to get to know about the dangers of early sex, that is to say, it helps them from becoming pregnant and keep in school' (F) parent.

'I have seen many young girls crying endlessly because they are pregnant and cannot go back to school. Even parents force them to marry when they are still children. Sex education should have started in primary schools long ago as many children drop out of primary level' (F) parent.

The phenomenon of school dropout is cyclic. Uganda continues to register a high number of girls' school dropouts, including early pregnancy, early marriages, and family responsibilities. Unlike boys, girls never get opportunities to go back to school. According to a survey by Ahikire and Madanda (2011), 54% of children who register in primary one do not complete PRIMARY 7. In the Uganda context, a girl who gets pregnant in school automatically becomes a failure, humiliates the family, is foolish, stupid, a curse to the parents and a waste of life. A girl who conceives in school is worse than a thief and a paedophile in the context. Pregnancy is a sure way of being expelled from school, and in many cases, the girl is chased away from home, and parents disown such a girl, *'okumuzalukuk'*.

Research blames pregnancy-related school dropouts for a lack of guiding policies and legal frameworks to regulate the situation (FAWEU, 2010). The study shows that parents perceive sex education as a

channel to help girls acquire skills to protect themselves from early sex and pregnancy. A study revealed that pupils who were taught SE were twice as knowledgeable as those who did not participate in the intervention (Haberland & Rogow, 2015). However, it is not ascertained that being knowledgeable automatically reduces the chances of getting pregnant and dropping out of school. Besides, it is not automatic that all girls who drop out of school are pregnant. Nevertheless, Kemigisha et al. (2019) further opine that children/young girls should be taught sexuality education before engaging in sexual activity.

Opponents of Sexuality Education in Ugandan Contexts

While the biggest percentage of parents support sexuality education in primary schools, some parents expressed fears and opposed it explaining that;

'Sex education is not good in primary schools because; it can lead to loss of virginity, it can lead to the spread of HIV/AIDS, children can lose their future because of thinking about sex' (M) parent.

There is a general misconception that when children are taught sexuality education, they become curious and learn more about sexual acts that lead them to permissiveness.

'Children are young and innocent, they are already being spoilt by their peers, sexuality education would just do more harm. Children can learn as they grow naturally. You see, sex things do not have to be taught; it is a natural thing', (F) parent.

There is a thinking that teaching sexuality education may lead children to be curious and find more about sexual acts and eventually indulge in sex. Parents who oppose sex education think that children would be taught the way Sengas and Kojjas train adults. A parent explained that,

'Religion does not allow such things to be taught; in my church, we teach young people who are going to wed the Tuesday class. Schools should be schools or learning knowledge that will help children get jobs but not teaching sex' (M) parent.

Parents and religious bodies against sex education imagine that young people will be taught the skills of sex, which instead sexualise innocent children. Others perceive sexuality education as a pretext to introduce homosexuality to children.

Content and Pedagogy of Sexuality Education

Parents who supported sexuality education expressed fear about the age, the content, and the methods of teaching the content. Parents perceived sexuality education as a sensitive subject and wanted their suggestions to be considered during the implementation of sexuality education.

Virginity and Abstinence

Parents emphasised that sexuality education should focus on virginity and abstinence. Virginity is a cherished value in Ugandan communities. However, the emphasis on virginity is on the side of girls only. In the same vein, parents expressed interest in sexual abstinence until marriage. However, both virginity and sexual abstinence are only emphasised on the side of girls, and boys are free to do what they want, as parents explained,

'When pupils are taught about sex education, there will be a promotion of virginity among girl children. They will be scared of indulging in sexual activities because teachers will warn them of the repercussions of early sex' (M) parent.

'The need to revise the value of virginity; our children do not care about keeping their virginity, both boys and girls. Nevertheless, also our culture is wrong. It tells girls to be virgins but encourages boys to move around with

different girls. Now it confuses; even boys need to be told to be virgins until they are mature enough to marry' (F) parent.

'Sexuality education should ensure our children abstain from sex till marriage, controlling lust is very important, children are not mature enough, even all religious teachings emphasise the value of virginity' (M) parent.

All parents agree that abstinence should be one of the important things in teaching sexuality education. However, studies show that Abstinence-until-marriage programs fail to achieve objectives because, firstly, the programs fail to provide useful information about safe sex, to prevent STDs and early pregnancies; secondly, such programs do not emphasise issues of early marriages. Thus, abstinence-until-marriage programs fail to directly inform young people about the risks of early marriages (Cohen & Tate, 2006). Consequently, young people in Uganda are still vulnerable to early sex, early pregnancy, and sexual abuse. Besides, sexual abstinence is a broad concept covering virginity and secondary sexual abstinence for individuals who have previously engaged in penile-virginal intercourse but have chosen to refrain for a given time and for a reason. Byers (2009) argues that Abstinence-until-marriage programs do not mention other sexual activities, such as oral sex, masturbation, and telephone sex, which are equally not good among young people.

Dangers of Pornography

Parents mentioned that pornography should be one of the things that must be seriously discussed in teaching sexuality education.

'Smartphones are showing much porn to young people; porn is the only reason I do not want to buy Smartphones for my children. There is a need to include the dangers of porn, spiritually and physically, and the way it affects the brain. It can be a habit and lead to masturbation with

all the negative effects on our children' (F) parent.

Access to pornography among young people grows daily, and primary school children are more vulnerable to the vice as they are easily lured into sex exploitation (Solomon, 2016; The Independent, 2021). The human rights instruments such as the African Charter on the Rights of the Child obligate states to protect children from pornography. Therefore, sexuality education is a potential channel for creating awareness among people about the negative effects of pornography; as a parent stated,

'Teach the dangers of porn to young people, porn sticks in the mind and brain; these pictures keep coming back time and again. In fact, it is said that porn is worse than drugs. Watch porn results in sexual lust and automatically leads to sexual addiction' (F) parent.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/AIDS

Parents were concerned that the efforts put into the PIACY program of teaching young people about sex ended, and currently, children are only taught educational subjects at school. A parent explained,

'The primary school program I used to see in schools is not there anymore. Children need to know that HIV is not only for long time ago, even now, many people are suffering from HIV, even young people, but some were also born with it and are now spreading it', (M) parent.

Another parent explained,

'HIV is still a problem in our society. Primary school children have to know about it so that they can protect themselves by not indulging in sexual acts. You can find long lines of people receiving HIV medication in hospitals; this means HIV is still with us' (F) parent.

Before the introduction of Sexuality Education in Uganda, there were aspects of sex education in the PIACSY program, which aimed at mitigating the

spread of HIV/AIDS among young people in primary schools. Unlike the cultural teachings about sex, PIACSY targeted both boys and girls. The program aimed at creating awareness based on respect for God, emphasising virginity and abstinence (Iyer et al., 2014). The most popular approach was through student clubs and talking compounds in schools, for instance, 'HIV/Aids kill', 'Virginity is a virtue, 'Premarital sex is a si', an' Respect your body', among others. In the same vein, in 2004, the Uganda AIDS Commission (UAC) embarked on the "Abstinence and Being Faithful (AB)" program to emphasise abstinence until marriage. However, all these programs ended, and there seems to be a vacuum.

Limited Approach to Sexuality Education

Another important concern was the approaches to sexuality education regarding how much should be taught, who should teach, and how sexuality education should be taught. While parents agree that sexuality education is fundamental, the issue of sexuality education content is controversial and sentimental. Many parents suggested that children should be taught small bits of information.

'...sex education would be crucial for young children to know a small bit of sexuality, not to disclose each and everything but to talk about a few important things followed by taboos, that is, do not allow people, especially minor boys, to touch on your thigh or breasts because you will not grow well. Otherwise, if the teacher is not very organised, all things will go wrong. Teach what is necessary for the', (F) parent.

In the recent past, Uganda has experienced a growing phenomenon of LGBTQI, and advocates are focusing on the protection of the rights of homosexuals and lesbians. However, there is a big resistance from Ugandan communities against same-sex relationships and people of gay and lesbian orientation are perceived as evil and anticultural. Indeed, at one time, the parliament of

Uganda proposed a death penalty for homosexual acts (DW Africa, undated). There are arguments that LGBTQI is not African (Ajei, 2022). Parents further suggested that children must be taught that anyone, even every close relative, can take advantage of them, including fathers, brothers, and even sisters.

'...teach about uncles, neighbours, and strangers. All these are potential sexual abusers. Sometimes even fathers can abuse their children, and children should know that brothers sometimes turn to their sisters and vice-versa. Let children get all the general knowledge' (M) parent.

'Children should be taught further about HIV because it is now coming in different ways. Same-sex relationships are now common but very dangerous because they cause diseases including making men fail to control their bowels. Teach them the dangers of early sex, incest and include all these on the curriculum and should all be taught based on the Bible' (M) parent.

As mentioned earlier, much-uncensored information is available to children. There is a need to counteract social media information through teaching.

'Children should only be taught about sexual abuse, early pregnancies, virginity till marriage, same-sex relationships, and dangers of gifts from old men, preserving the private parts, dangers of early sex, growth and development of body parts' (F) parent.

Parents identified the main issues to be included in the sexuality education curriculum, including virginity, abstinence, body growth and development, the danger of early sex, dangers of early pregnancy, and dangers of same-sex relationships. Parents suggested they demanded that sexuality education teaching should be entrenched within religious beliefs, practices, and values.

A Religious-Based Sexuality Education

Parents were emphatic on the approach to sexuality education. They urged implementers to teach sexuality education based on the teachings of religion. Parents suggested that teachers should help learners relate sexuality with God and religion. The issue of Godliness stands out loud through parents' expressions. Parents demonstrate that children should develop religious attitudes, values, and beliefs about sexuality issues. For instance, concerning the body anatomy and changes, parents opined that children should be reminded that they were created in the image of God and that their bodies are God's temples. God should be put at the centre of

Sexuality Education, as expressed by parents;

All sexuality education originates from the bible. The book of Leviticus should be the first, and it teaches about the laws of sex and relationships. For example, in relations with relatives, sometimes you hear stories of brothers and sisters indulging in sexual activities; the bible is clear. Even though it talks about gay and animal relationships, it is clear in Leviticus 8:22, and 23 'Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman. 'Do not have sex with any animal, or you will be unclean. Furthermore, no woman should give herself to an animal to lie with it', (F) parent.

"... teach children that God created human beings from His image; therefore, children should be encouraged to respect their bodies, and need to be taught to value their bodies as bodies of Christ that need not be used for bad acts. The boys and girls should be encouraged to practice sexual purity", (F) parent.

Religious teachings emphasise the values of chastity, virginity, and an individual's purity; sexual purity is taught across all religions. Religious teachings do not mention safer sex options such as condom use and contraception and pay no attention

to sexual deviations such as LGBTQI. A parent explained that,

Sexuality education should be based on religious teaching for proper teaching and discourage children from indulging in sex until marriage. Even marriage should only be for opposite sexes, and not relative', (F) parent.

When conducting sex education, we need to derive it from religious views/values. Ideally, sexuality education should be taught by religious teachers, particularly the priests in the Anglican and Catholic churches,'(F) parent.

'Learners need to be taught about body development as someone grows, self-confidence and living according to religious values. Sexuality education should be taught together with religious values, including patience, courage, hard work, self-control, and others' (M) parent.

Parents suggested that sex/sexuality education should not be a standalone subject but should be part of religious education. Parents were asked how Sexuality Education should be approached, and they explained that,

'Make it part of religious education. Sexuality education can be a topic of divinity or religious education. Try to quote verses in the bible, and show children that even God does not love sex before marriage. Once the sexuality values are taught early enough and based on religion, these things will stick in their heads and brain' (M) parent.

'Teachers in Christian schools should use a biblical approach. In Islamic schools, the Quran and even the teachings of the prophet and other Islamic teachings should be the beginning point of sexuality. I mean that sexuality education should be rooted in religious teachings, telling children that our bodies belong to God', (F) parent.

All these expressions show that parents wish Sexuality Education to be grounded in spirituality and religious teaching. The issue of grounding sexuality education in religious teachings is prevalent in sex education debates. Sexuality and spirituality overlap because they are equally illuminated by God's command to love each other and treat each other with dignity and respect (Garcia, 2017). Sexuality education should be based on God created our magnificent sexualities and sexual pleasure (Haffner, 2011). Subsequently, appropriate sexuality education must be linked to spirituality, religious, and moral values. Proponents of faith-based sexuality education emphasise the following;(i) sexual activity outside marriage is dangerous and unhealthy; (ii) chastity, virginity, and purity; (iii) the religious, sexual ethic also called Abstinence-Only-Until Marriage (AOUM)and; (iv) the divine nature of sex as a gift from God for procreation.

Faith-based sexuality education omits important topics such as safer-sex practices, reproductive options, sexual abuse, lesbianism, and gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer persons.

Appropriate Age for Sexuality Education

Parents were concerned with the appropriate age at which children should be taught sexuality education. Parents explained that,

'The age at which this topic is introduced is very critical. I believe it should be for pupils in primary 5 and above. Sex education should not be given to very young people, i.e., children in primary 1, primary 2, primary 3 and primary 4. At least it should be taught to the children of primary 5, primary 6 and p. 7 such that children in the upper classes, they can pick what is being taught. Sex education is important in our society but for more advanced children probably from primary 6 and primary 7', (M) parent.

'It is not bad to teach sex education, but it should be done in primary 5, primary 6 and primary 7 because lower classes are still young for it. And these lower classes learn very fast than those in the upper classes. I think sex education in schools should begin with primary five', (M) parent.

Many parents presume their children to be young and, therefore, innocent as far as sexual activities are concerned. However, Uganda is one country that registers big numbers of early pregnancy and child mothers, rated at 25% (Ashaba, 2020; Ochen et al., 2019). Some children get pregnant at the of 9 years. For example, Kasujja (2022) reported that according to a police report, 140 children below the age of 7 years were defiled in the year 2021.

'... we need it (SE) to be well packaged, depending on the age of the children. The right time to introduce sexuality education would be primary 5 as some of our children start experiencing body changes in primary 5. The body changes and their implications should be explained to our children before the harsh world inserts misguided and wrong information, (F) parent.

Some parents still express that sexuality education should be delayed. Parents suggest that sexuality education needs to be packaged according to the age of the learners. Based on parents' expressions, there is a general worry about the age at which sex education should be taught. Parents prefer that it should begin when children get to primary five. However, learners' age groups in Uganda are not uniform and do not correspond with classes. For example, in urban settings, the approximate age for the primary 5 class is between 8 to 12 years. Yet, in some cases, especially in rural areas primary 5 age group can range from 9-14 years and indeed, early pregnancies are mostly registered in rural areas. Nevertheless, it is important to understand that all children can be vulnerable to defilement and sexual abuse. It is important to explain to parents that

Sexuality Education content is, in most cases, designed according to age. The proponents of SE argue that all children, irrespective of age, have a right to sexuality education as they must develop their self-understanding, maturity, and self-concept (Goldman, 2003).

The Best Teacher for Sexuality Education

During the study, some parents argued that sexuality education is the responsibility of parents, not teachers. Parents argued that they [parents] must take centre stage in teaching sexuality education, especially to primary school children. According to Ajiambo (2018), out of anger, one parent stated that teachers gave children ideas they had never thought about before. The parent added that sexuality education issues should be left to parents because '... it is our responsibility as parents to raise our children the way we want ... it is embarrassing to see our kids start to think[about]and discuss sex' (Ajiambo, 2018). During the study, a parent expressed that

'But you know those things are taught by parents, for example, it is the mother or auntie who teaches the girl child how to use a pad and what to do during menstruation, the parent or auntie grooms the girl and the uncle grooms the boy, teachers should go ahead to teach their subjects as usual' (M) parent.

However, parents who support sexuality education admit the inefficiency of parents in teaching sexuality education, and it should be handled better by teachers. Parents explained that,

'Sexuality education is relevant, but parents are not equipped or trained to teach their children. Besides, the methods parents use to teach sexuality education to their children may cause them to rebel. Teachers have the skill, so the two groups should work together to teach children', (F) parent.

Another parent explained,

'Today's parents are always busy; some may not have time to talk to their children about sex. Today's nature of work may not allow parents to have enough time for their children. Sometimes when children arrive for holidays (remember it is a short one, two weeks) most of the time the mind is occupied with ways of paying fees...you leave home early for work and report late in the evening', (F) parent.

'...we parents are shy, there are things we fail to discuss with children. One time, a boy in primary two in one of the male boarding schools around shared what happened at school. He said that there are some bad boys at school, and when you annoy them, 'they can do you [meaning the big boys could do things homosexual stuff to small boys], I heard this with my ears, and I felt terrible, but I kept quiet as I feared to ask more or even to share it with anyone', (F) parent.

The expression insinuates that parents do not know how to discuss sexuality issues. Another parent suggested that,

'Parents should confide with teachers regarding the information they want to pass on to their children as many of us are shy. Parents fear and get embarrassment to discuss sexuality issues with their children', (M) parent.

On the other hand, children have little time at home. Children stay in schools much longer, and they spend most of the time at school; as another parent expressed,

'Our children spend more time in school with teachers than at home. Some of us work in the private sector and it is difficult to get a meaningful annual leave to attend to our children. For example, I always leave home by 7 am when they are sleeping, I leave work sometimes after 7 pm, and get home tired. The best I can do is to ask if children ate food', (M) Parent.

Parents should be the first-line educators; they understand their children better and can detect their children's weaknesses and strengths. While it may be true that parents have the primary responsibility to educate their children about sexuality, they have no skills and competencies to teach their own children's issues of sexuality (Merghati-Khoei et al., 2014; Ganji et al., 2017). Besides, noting from the parents' expressions, there are possibilities that parents may misinform children about sexualities. For example, a parent advised that,

'... do not disclose each and everything but talk about few important things followed by taboos and cultural customs, that is, do not allow people especially minor boys to touch on your thigh or breasts lest you will not grow well', (F) parent.

From this comment, it is evident that some parents may teach children wrong things that may instead confuse the child. Arguably, it is appropriate for teachers to teach sexuality education. As Reppucci and Herman (1991) reveals, parents are inadequate sex educators, and therefore, in many contexts, sex education is gradually becoming part and parcel of school systems.

CONCLUSION

In Uganda, parents support the implementation of sexuality education in primary schools to reduce premarital pregnancy, defilement, rape, and sexually transmitted diseases, instil virginity and abstinence values, and demystify sexual myths shared by peers and from the media. Parents suggested a limited approach to teaching sexuality education. The study reveals that traditional and cultural beliefs influence parents' perceptions and attitudes toward sexuality. Issues of reproductive health, sexual rights, rights to one's body, contraception, and sexual & gender-based violence were not mentioned by parents. Parents instead emphasised virginity and abstinence. The study also revealed that parents are shy and have no time to

educate children about issues of sexuality. The implementation of sexuality education should be based on religious beliefs and practices. Parents suggest that sexuality education should be part of religious education and needs to focus on religious values.

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