

THE SILENCED MINORITY: A LITERATURE
REVIEW OF THE TREATMENT OF GAY
AND LESBIAN STUDENTS IN
SCHOOL

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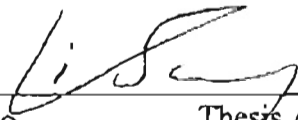
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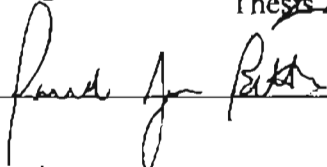
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“...And the dangerous effects of anti-gay harassment and rejection are not limited to homosexuals. Even among heterosexual teens that don't conform to macho teen stereotypes, it is a serious problem. It is also a factor frequently cited in the rash in violent incidents in schools” (Denver Post, 2001)

Issues of sexual orientation are a painful sore and very uncomfortable for a majority of people, both homosexuals and heterosexuals alike. In as much as it is difficult to negotiate life as a homosexual person in a homophobic society, it is even harder for homosexual adolescents during their school going years. The Denver Post (2001), highlights the dangers faced by non-conforming students, who are in most cases mistaken for homosexuals, therefore subjected to anti-gay harassment.

The paper cites three incidents, which relates school violence to anti-gay harassment. The first incident reported took place in 1997 in Paducah, where a 14-year-old heterosexual Michael Carneal shot and killed three girls a few weeks after a student newspaper article was published that said he was gay. One of the victims was the author of the newspaper story. The second incident involved Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold. Even though they both dated and had girlfriends, Eric and Dylan reportedly were taunted with anti-gay epithets regularly in the months before they went on their shooting spree at Columbine High School in 1999. The third incident happened on March 5, 2001, where

15-year-old Andy Williams opened fire on his classmates at Santana High School in California. According to his former girlfriend, Andy is said to have been accused of being gay and repeatedly harassed with anti-gay remarks before he opened fire to his classmates. If society had not place such a negative connotation and stigma against the homosexual people such cases would not have been witnessed. These cases have ended lives of young productive members of the society. The question is; how many of such cases need to be witnessed for society to start to realize that its time to address homophobia and prejudices against homosexuals?

These are major and significant incidents, which have claimed a number of innocent lives and made schools un-safe places. Teachers and parents are greatly concerned about the safety of the students. The magnitude of school-violence deserves immediate and serious attention. The importance of addressing anti-gay harassment cannot be overemphasized. These incidents show that adolescents are not safe from anti-gay harassment, so long as they do not show the macho teen stereotypes they will always be victims of anti-gay harassment because society instilled upon everyone the support for prejudice, social isolation, and stigmatization of homosexual people through institutionalized homophobia. Society, by proudly ostracizing homosexual people, has perpetuated the kind of attitudes that fosters violence, cruelty, and intolerance. From these incidents, the relationship between anti-gay harassment and school violence cannot be denied. By declaring war on homosexuality, society has prescribed compulsory heterosexuality for all people; any one deviating from the heterosexual norms is viewed as an outcast, thus legitimizing anti-gay harassment. According to the Denver Post (2001), the American Academy of Pediatrics say sexual orientation is not a choice, that

is, individuals no more choose to be homosexual than heterosexual. Therefore, society needs to be sensitized about homosexual issues, there has to be a change of attitudes on how sexual orientation issues are dealt with. Homophobia needs to be challenged. It is a threat to peaceful co-existence.

Studies conducted in the United States of America show that homosexuals are the most discriminated lot in the society (Fontaine, 1998; Remafedi, 1991; Sears, 1992; Strommen, 1989; Uribe, 1993, 1994). The same studies also show that gay and lesbian students are the most marginalized members of the public school population. In school, gay and lesbian students are the largest minority group (Fontaine, (1998). This minority grouping cuts across racial, ethnic, social class, and gender boundaries. What is meant is that homosexual people are predicted to be found in all racial groups, in all ethnic groups, in all social class, and in both genders. The invisibility surrounding the homosexual community makes it very difficult for people to understand the fact that every society has homosexual people (Casper, Schultz & Wickens, 1992; DeStefano, 1986; Malinsky, 1997; Siker, 1994; Weis & Fine, 1993). The reason I say that every society has some homosexual people comes from the fact that there are no geographical influences that make a person to be homosexual; studies say a person does not choose to be a homosexual but is born a homosexual; the only difference is how each individual handles the sexual identity crises he/she faces within a particular society or community (Cass, 1984; Malinsky, 1997; Ponse, 1978; Troiden, 1989, 1990;).

Some homosexual people are able to conform to the expectations of their society at the expense of who they are and succumb to the pressures of compulsory heterosexism required by their society. On the other hand, some decide to accept who they are and

follow their sexual orientation and become deviant members of the society (Gustavsson & MacEachron, 1998; Jordan, Vaughan & Woodworth, 1997; Malinsky, 1997). Whichever option they choose, it places their lives into a detrimental position, which has a heavy impact on their lives. Some commit suicide, some get into drugs, some become alcoholic, and some are harassed on a day-to-day basis. If they are still in school, their education is affected. Some contract sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. Some run away from home, while others are thrown out of home (Herr, 1997; Mallon, 1997; Morrow, 1997; Reinert, 1998). Those who manage to immerse themselves into their work become very good in whatever they are doing but fail to become role models for others because society frowns upon them, their achievements are not taken as separate from who they are, that is, that they are gays or lesbians (Blumenfeld, 1994; Feldman, 1989; Harris & Bliss, 1997; Kourany, 1987; Mallon, 1992; Martin & Hetrick, 1988; Zenilman, 1988).

Studies also show that gay and lesbian students are one of the few minority groups who can be victimized with few social consequences. Fontaine (1998) says that they are fair game for adults, adolescents, and other children to harass, demean, threaten, and even physically assault. It is said that they are the most hated group, not only in school but also even in the larger society (Elia, 1993/94; Garland & Zigler, 1993; Herek, 1989; Remafedi, Farrow, & Deisher, 1991; Treadway & Yoakam, 1992). Studies also show that laws and regulations preclude homosexual people's full participation in society; for example, in marriage, tax exemptions, health benefits for domestic partners, and same-sex attendance at school proms, they do not get the same treatment as their heterosexual counterparts (Fontaine, 1998).

The hatred channeled to the homosexual people is not only unique to the American society. In other countries too, the homosexual people experience almost the same predicaments. In Swaziland for instance, even though there have been no reported cases of gay and lesbian students in school, there has been an incident involving the members of the homosexual organization there. The launching of this organization known as the Gays and Lesbians of Swaziland (GALESWA) was not spared the wrath of the public; it was a cause of concern to the traditionalists and the conservatives in 1997 (Times of Swaziland, 1997). Homosexuality in Swaziland is said to be unSwazi, and ungodly, therefore unacceptable. The person who received the most negative attention was the founder of the organization, 21 years old, Mangosuthu Dlamini, who “came-out” on national television and launched the new organization. Apart from inciting the wrath of the majority of the Swazi nation, the announcement of the new organization GALESWA and his coming out also cost him his job with a Mbabane security firm. At a press conference, the Prime Minister, Dr. Sibusiso Dlamini, called homosexuality an “abnormality and sickness.” Another prominent man, a former Prime Minister, Prince Bhekimpi, who was also a chief, threatened the homosexual people in his area, and said “homosexuality is regarded as ‘satanic’ in Swaziland, therefore I am forced to evict all gays and lesbians in my area” (Times of Swaziland, 1997). However, this chief was said to show some tolerance by saying that if the practice (homosexuality) was accepted and allowed by the constitution of Swaziland, he would have no objection to his subjects joining GALESWA.

The question is, what is the big deal about homosexuality? Why is the society making such a farce over the homosexual people? If people could be evicted from their

homes just because of homosexuality, what happens if the homosexual is a child, a student in a local school, what should happen to him or her? How are the teachers supposed to deal with such a case, does the student have to be “chucked out” of school or what? All these were questions I had after the incident describe above, and I did not have some answers because I could not find anything written about homosexuality in Swaziland.

The scarcity of information on homosexuality I felt needed to be addressed. It is my belief that people need to make informed decisions, therefore, in order for them to do that, there has to be some availability of the information on that concept in question. Even though there were no reported cases of homosexual students, with the international influence on human rights that is being discussed all over the world, I felt that in no time Swaziland will have to face a situation where the country would be sanctioned for violating human rights, more especially when it comes to the rights of the child to have education. So this study is trying to meet the need of providing some information about the concept of homosexuality, and narrow it down to the school child within a school setting. By using the American society as a case study, I will be able to get more information because a lot has been written on the concept of homosexuality. Information gained will be transferred to the Swaziland situation. This information is not just to inform the people of Swaziland about the concept of homosexuality, but also to spark further research and debate on homosexuality and the homosexual people in Swaziland.

Homosexuality: A Historical Overview

Licata (1981) claims that historians in the United States of America have overlooked homosexual history. This action by the historians could be interpreted as an

act of erasure of the homosexual history, thus rendering the homosexual people invisible. Licata gives a short account of the homosexual rights movement in the United States. Through his brief account, one gets the feel of the history that has been omitted by historians. From the essay, the fight for the rights of homosexual people dates back into the beginning of the century. The eight stages cited in this essay started in 1908, and went on to 1979. If this section of the population have been fighting for their human right since this period, this shows the fact that homosexuality is not something new, it has always been there through-out the human history, only that people/scholars did not, for whatever reason, see the need to talk/write about it.

This is another way of life. Tielman (1990), though writing about the Dutch gay emancipation, makes reference to the homosexual movement of the United States of America. He goes back to 1730, giving a historical overview of the gay emancipation prior to 1911. Both scholars acknowledge the fact that homosexuality was in existence, but it was not overt because of the anti-homosexual climate that prevailed at the time. Tielman (1990) continues to state that it was during the period of instability, mainly due to an economical and political decline in Netherlands at the turn of the century (1900), that hundreds of sodomites were persecuted as scapegoats. This could have been taken to be hate-crimes, but Tielman does not specify that these were hate crimes. However this came to an end after the separation of the church and state, that there was the abolishment of criminal persecution of sexual acts between mutually consenting adults.

Homosexuality and Religion

The relationship between the church and state, more especially the Christian church, brought about the re-introduction of legal discrimination of homosexual people

by the Christian political coalition. The Christian church has always held the notion that homosexuality is a sin (Gomes, 1996; Siker, 1994; Wink, 1997). Clark et al (1990) says:

At best, a number of religious institutions will concede that "constitutional homosexuality" is not a matter of choice while insisting nevertheless that homosexual *acts* are still sinful. This insistence upon separating sexual orientation from actual sexual fulfillment, upon "loving the sinner" but "hating the sin", belies a fundamental homophobia. This homophobia is grounded in a stubborn refusal either to thoroughly reject the rigid Mosaic condemnation of homosexuality in Leviticus or to consider traditional anti-gay interpretation of the biblical Sodom and Gomorrah (p. 267).

This passage brings to bear the Christian beliefs about homosexual people. The roots of their homophobic beliefs are rooted in the biblical interpretation. Countries that are influenced by Christian values are very homophobic and very intolerant to homosexual people (Bawer, 1993; Sullivan, 1998). This also shows the width of the Christian influence within the American society. The wrath of the society on homosexual people knows no boundaries, whether the person is an adult or a minor, it does not matter, the hatred and the prejudice directed to them is of equal measure, and equally damaging to the recipient (Licata, 1992). Mallon (1992) referring to homosexual adolescents, says:

Gay and lesbian adolescents are members of a minority group because they are victims of prejudice, and as such are subject to stigmatization and problems similar to those suffered by other minority groups. Unlike other minority groups, however, gay and lesbian adolescents do not grow up in a supportive cultural environment that can act as a buffer against stigmatization. When gay and lesbian youngsters are called "fags," "homos," "dykes," or "lezzies," most have no one at home to help them maintain their self esteem in the face of prejudice. In addition, other minorities are not thrown out of their homes for being what they are; gay and lesbian youngsters often are. They also face, uniquely, an erroneous common homophobic belief that they can change their orientation (p. 553).

The plight of homosexual adolescents is very loud and clear from this passage. In

as much as they are taken as members of minority group, their minority status is unique, and different from other minority groups (Dube & Savin-Williams, 1999). Other groups have family support groups, and supportive culture, but for homosexual adolescents, that is not there for them because of the invisibility of other homosexual people. It is this invisibility that makes it hard to cope as an adolescent because they lack the role models, and they also want to see someone to identify with. Adolescence then becomes a very difficult period for them (Fischer, 1995; Marinoble, 1998; Morales, 1990; Strommen, 1990; Uribe, 1994).

I have stated in the introduction that some studies show that gay and lesbian people are the most marginalized members of the society. In some schools, gay and lesbian students are the largest minority group, and that gay and lesbians are one of the few minority groups who can be victimized with few social consequences. They become the fair game for adults, adolescents, and children to harass, demean, threaten, and even physically assault (Elia, 1993/94; Garland & Zigler, 1993; Herek, 1989; Remafedi, Farrow, & Deisher, 1991; Treadway & Yoakam, 1992), this impacts heavily on their lives, there is need to interrupt this trend. The influence of Eurocentric values and the Christian values on the American society and has perpetuated and promoted the institutionalization of homophobia (Clark, 1990).

Homosexuality and HIV/AIDS

Homosexual people have for a long time been associated to the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Besner & Spungin, 1995; Feldman, 1989; Reinert, 1998; Strommen, 1990; Zenilman, 1988). This has caused them to be more marginalized from the rest of the society because they are accused of the spread of the HIV virus. However, Horowitz

(1999), when trying to relate the emergence of the HIV/AIDS virus and how it relates to the homosexual population, more especial the homosexual men (gays), has a different and a very sensitive opinion. What Horowitz (1999) says follows what Blumenfeld (1992) say about institutional homophobia when he says:

Institutional homophobia refers to the ways in which governments, businesses, and educational, religious, and professional organizations systematically discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or identity. Sometimes laws, codes, or policies actually enforce such discrimination. Few institutions have policies actually supportive of sexual minorities, and many actively work against not only those minorities, but also heterosexuals who support them (p.5).

Horowitz (1999) claims that the establishment of the HIV/AIDS virus was used as a strategy to enforce institutional homophobia, and was used as a biological weapon to wipe out the homosexual community and the Black community. Horowitz says:

More telling, Strecker obtained documents through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) that showed the United States Department of Defense (DOD) secured funding from Congress in 1969 to perform studies on immuno-system-destroying agents for germ warfare...In 1969, the United States Defense Department requested and got \$10 million to make the AIDS virus in labs as a political/ethnic weapon to be used mainly against Blacks. The feasibility program and labs were to have been completed in 1974-1975, the virus between 1974-1979. The World Health Organization started to inject AIDS-laced smallpox vaccine into over 100 million Africans (population reduction) in 1977. And over 2000 young white male homosexuals (Trojan horse) in 1978 with the hepatitis B vaccine through the Centers for Disease Control/New York Blood Center...(p.4-5).

With this kind of accusatory belief, it is no wonder that homosexuals are linked to the HIV/AIDS virus. It was a political decision to further stigmatize the homosexual community and be blamed for the worse world killer disease. The pain and suffering that this disease has caused to innocent lives gives justification for the society to be homophobic and be very intolerant of homosexuals, but what does not come out is that this community has been a victim of circumstances. They have been found guilty for a

crime they have not committed. They were not even aware, and even now a lot of people are still not aware of how and why the HIV/AIDS virus emerged. With some of the “truth” still remaining in the hands of only a few individuals, the heterosexual community will always spend their energy to fight the wrong enemy. However, on the other hand, Martin (1999) in the forewords of Horowitz (1999), commenting on this claim by Horowitz is positive and hopeful, and says:

At best, this important text raises far greater hope that by knowing their (viruses) origin, cures for the many complex emerging viruses, including AIDS, may be forthcoming (p. xviii).

HIV/AIDS in Africa

As claimed by Horowitz (1999), that the HVI/AIDS virus was used as a political/ethnic weapon, “... injected the AIDS-laced smallpox vaccine into over 100 million Africans (population reduction) in 1977 (p.4/5)”, the spread of this deadly disease is about to wipe out Africa. The Kingdom of Swaziland (Swaziland) is not exempted from the scourge of this pandemic. The members of society in Swaziland do not look at the AIDS issue as a homosexual issue like the society in the United States, but they take it as a gender issue. Programs are put in place to teach women and girls to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. Recently, the parliament of the Kingdom of Swaziland was reported to have issued a statement asking the Ministry of Education to pass a regulation that will force girl students to stop wearing short skirts/dresses in school because they are tempting the males who then want to have sex with them, and in so doing forcing the males into promiscuous behavior and participate in unprotected and unsafe sexual practice (Times of Swaziland, 2000).

This ban is also carried nationwide to include women as well. Women are not supposed to wear short skirts or short dresses in order to “protect” men from falling prey into sexual temptation. Such thinking promotes the idea that if it were not for females; the people of Swaziland would not be suffering from HIV/AIDS. It also gives the impression that Swazi men are so lustful such that whenever they see a female’s body (whichever part they see), they just have to have sex with her. They are so weak, with no self-control so much so that females have to protect them.

Among other things, the most practice that has promoted HIV/AIDS in the country has been multiple partnership, and promiscuity for those who do not practice “zero grazing”. Zero grazing is used metaphorically to refer to a polygamous family where the man (husband) does not sleep or have sexual relations with other women besides his wives no matter how many they are. Similarly, the wives too, are expected to await their turns until the man completes the cycle and comes back to the first wife to start the cycle again, they are not expected to have other sexual relationships with other men apart from their husband. In some cases it takes a long time for the man to complete the cycle. Possibilities for extra marital affairs are difficult to be ruled out. Polygamy is practiced legally in Swaziland, a man can marry as many women as he possible can, and it is culturally accepted.

Historical Background on the Kingdom of Swaziland

To situate this study within the African context, particularly the Swazi context, I need to introduce Swaziland and the Swazi people. The Swazi people are a unique group of people, with strong holds to their traditions and the Swazi culture (Davies, O’Meara & Dlamini, 1985; Forsyth-Thompson, 1999 Kuper, 1947, 1963;). The landlocked Kingdom

of Swaziland, which comprises about 17,000 square kilometers, is the smallest country in the Southern Hemisphere, with a population of less than 1 million people. It is situated between the Republic of South Africa and Mozambique at latitude of 31 degrees, 30 minutes east of Greenwich and a longitude of 26 degrees, 30 minutes south of the equator. Swaziland, because of its magnificent mountain scenery, has been an attraction for tourists from all over the world. It has always been referred as the Switzerland of Africa.

The People and Traditions

The Central Statistics office of the Kingdom of Swaziland placed the population figure at 912,878 for the year 1997. The population, which may be divided into 76% rural and 24% urban, is a young one with 60% of the people below 21 years and 47% aged up to 15 years.

According to Forsyth-Thompson (1999), during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries an African people of Nguni descent migrated southward from Central Africa and eventually, during the mid-eighteenth century, a group of them settled in the area, which is now the Kingdom of Swaziland. These people, the Nkosi Dlamini, became known as Swazis, and today both names lives on: Nkosi means king and Dlamini is the surname of the royal family. The country derives its name from a later king, Mswati I and another name, Ngwane, is an alternative word for Swaziland. The Swazi people are peaceful, with happy, easy-going and often humorous personalities (Forsyth-Thompson, 1999).

The Kingdom of Swaziland has been a monarchy ever since the Nguni people entered the territory where they lived under the leadership of Dlamini I. Today Dlamini

remains the surname of the royal family although it is important to know that not all Dlaminis are of royal blood. The monarchy is dual with the King or Ngwenyama (lion) ruling in conjunction with the Queen Mother or (she-elephant). The Queen Mother may be the king's natural mother, who is presently the case or, if she dies, a senior wife may take over the position of being the Queen Mother.

Strict stipulations apply in terms of who succeeds to the throne and while many of these are closely guarded secrets it is generally known that the king must be the only child of his mother and unmarried (Forsyth-Thompson, 1999). Thus the Swazi kings are always young men when they come to the throne. The King is regarded as the mouthpiece of his people and is described as *umlomo longacali manga* (the mouth that tells no lies).

The present monarchy, King Mswati III ascended the throne in 1986 at the age of 18, succeeding his father King Sobhuza II, who was known as the world's longest reigning monarch, ruling from 1921-1982. The monarch has endured throughout the Kingdom's history. During the nineteenth century foreign settlers acquired valuable land for agriculture and commercial use. King Sobhuza II was instrumental in reacquiring much of this land for the people and today this is known as Swazi Nation Land (Forsyth-Thompson, 1999; Kuper, 1947).

The Kingdom of Swaziland became a British protectorate in 1903, when the British colonial rule was established, and retained this status until she became a self-governing state in 1967 when King Sobhuza II, previously regarded as paramount chief, received international recognition as king and the country acquired its own flag. In 1968 independence was achieved and the monarchy remains firmly entrenched.

Old Swazi traditions are carefully guarded and colorful ceremonies frequently take place to mark special occasions. The two notable rituals are the *Umhlanga* or reed dance and the *Incwala*, or first fruits ceremony. The *Umhlanga*, which takes place during September, involves unmarried maidens who, dressed in colorful beaded skirts and trimmings, travel to the royal kraal, or village, to honor the Queen Mother and perform traditional dances. On the way, they cut reeds, which are used to make windbreakers or screens around the royal kraal, and it is from this custom that the ceremony derives its name. The *Incwala* involves sacred, secret rites and direct participation by the King. It takes place over a three weeks period during December and January with dates selected by astrologers who monitor the moon phases to determine ideal time. The ritual starts with a journey to collect water from the Indian Ocean, and after the performance of various rites by young men, leads to the slaughter of a bull on the third and darkest night, before the new moon. The fourth day the King appears in full ceremonial dress and after taking part in various rituals and dances with the warriors, he eats the first fruit of the season. The Queen Mother then participates and the *Incwala* ends with a ritual cleansing on the sixth day after the new moon.

Traditionally, the Kingdom of Swaziland has a polygamous society and men may take several wives on payment of dowry, known as *lobola*, which normally entails giving cattle to the bride's parents. However, monogamous marriages, performed in the western custom, have become more common as Swazis adapt to and adopt the Western lifestyle. However the cultural heritage is deeply rooted with traditions carefully protected and sustained (Forsyth-Thompson, 1999; Kuper, 1947).

The Government and Administration of the Kingdom of Swaziland

Although the Kingdom of Swaziland maintains strong economic and trading links with the Republic of South Africa, the country is an independent state with a fully autonomous government, which falls under the monarch who is Head of State. Until 1973, the Kingdom of Swaziland's constitution was Westminster based. This was revoked and replaced with a system designed to facilitate the practice of both western and traditional styles of government. This structure incorporates the system known as *Tinkhundla* and provides for the people to elect candidates to be their parliamentary representatives for specific constituencies. However, during recent years a general feeling emerged that the system should be reviewed to create a more democratic climate and in 1992 the first review commission commissioned to seek the opinions of the Swazi people on how the *Tinkhundla* should be revised was established. The Swazi people participated in their first democratic elections in 1993, first time since the Westminster Constitution was repealed in 1973 (Forsyth-Thompson, 1999; Gillis, 1999).

According to Forsyth-Thompson (1999), power is vested in the King who appoints the Prime Minister and consults with the Cabinet, which is headed by the Prime Minister and the bicameral parliament. These comprise the western style of government. The Upper House (Senate) comprises 30 Senators who are appointed by the King, and the Lower House elects 10 from the members of the public. The Upper House includes the President of the senate and his Deputy. The Lower House (House of Assembly) is made up of the Speaker, Deputy Speaker and 53 other members.

The Swazi National Council, known as *Libandla*, is the traditional side of

government. The King and Queen Mother head this in accordance with the dual monarchy approach, with the Queen Mother's main role being to up-hold the traditional cultural elements. All Swazi adult males are entitled to offer advice and council on matters of traditional law and custom (Davies, O'Meara & Dlamini, 1985).

The country's legal system also operates on dual basis comprising both traditional Swazi National courts as well as constitutional courts. The constitutional courts practices Roman-Dutch law and comprise a High Court with various Magistrate Courts as well as Industrial Court. A Chief Justice under whom fall judges and magistrates heads them. It is important to note that the constitutional courts have the final ruling in the event of any contention arising between the two legal systems (Forsyth-Thompson, 1999).

Effects of International Relations on the Swazi Culture

The Kingdom of Swaziland enjoys international relations with countries all over the world, therefore, in almost all the developed countries, one is sure to find Swazis, either studying or working in the Kingdom's embassy offices. This means those Swazi families are exposed to different cultures and different ways of life.

Though the Swazis who are outside Swaziland do not influence those countries they are in because of their small numbers, they bring a lot of influence into the Swazi culture upon their return home. The Swazi culture and way of life, though said to be traditionalist, has been diluted by influence from countries like the Republic of South Africa, and the United States of America. The younger generation becomes easily influenced by what goes on in these two countries. The issues of human rights have been a big issue. The gay and lesbian community in Swaziland strongly believed in their rights. That is why Swaziland for the first time had to be faced with the gay and lesbian

community coming out in the open through the national TV to announce their newly formed association. This has been the greatest challenge for the patriarchal, male dominated society of Swaziland.

The Call for the Study

Most Swazis are not familiar with the concept of homosexuality, but in their ignorance, they seem not to be prepared to know what it is all about. This poses a problem for the gay and lesbian adolescents living in Swaziland because they would end up denying their “true selves” because of fear of what might happen to them. Looking at the sensitivity of the whole issue, most would end up not even going to school. Since being gay or lesbian, you often come to know about it at the adolescent stage, most students would drop out of school as soon as they have a problem with their sexual orientation. In Swaziland, unlike in the United States of America, education is not compulsory, so it is likely that the schools have experienced many school-drop outs because some of them were grappling with their sexual orientation problems. If it had not happened before, with the formation of GALESWA, these adolescents will join, and find themselves victims of homophobia in schools, then eventually leave school. That being the case, those students would eventually be the disadvantaged group of society, and therefore suffer from effects of social class, suffer economically, suffer psychologically and lose their values as human beings. This then calls for researchers to start work on this untapped area in order to be able to advise the Swaziland Government on the strategies to address the plight of this section of society. Turning a blind eye and saying homosexuality is “unSwazi” will not “cure” the problem. The fact that the gay

and lesbian people have formed an association means that they are there; they have their needs, which are not met. To wait until there is a case or cases of gay and lesbian students in school before policies are formed to make the school a safe place for all students irrespective of their status would be detrimental to the youth of Swaziland.

Significance of Previous Research

The way the concept of homosexuality has been researched in the United States of America will give insight to, and shed information and understanding about the whole concept to other countries like Swaziland, where the subject of homosexuality is taboo. The constitution of Swaziland is very quiet about issues related to sexual orientation or homosexuality. It is not surprising therefore to find that there is little literature or and few studies on issues of homosexuality. It is not surprising also that the homosexual community of Swaziland is very invisible. This shows the state of homophobia displayed by the Swazi society. In Swaziland there have been no reported cases of gay and lesbian people in schools. However, (Hogan and Hudson, 1998) acknowledge that homosexuality has been in existence in Swaziland for a long time, and say:

By the time African nations began to achieve independence in the 1950s and 1960s, most of these traditional patterns of sexuality had faded away (though a traditional female-female marriage was ruled legal by a judge in Swaziland in 1992). As part of the social, political, and technical development that convulsed and, in many cases, destroyed cultures all over the continent, Christian and Muslim missionaries had converted millions from relatively sex-positive religions to belief systems that forbade same-sex relations (p.15).

In fact, homosexuality is a topic that is rarely talked about - it is considered as taboo. It was not until July 1997 that in the local newspapers it was reported that the gay community came out and formed an association known as the "Gays and Lesbians in Swaziland" (GALESWA). This association received the wrath of the traditionalists in

the country. Swaziland, being a predominantly traditionalist society, could never let this association go unchallenged. Though this incident affected some people negatively, it also had a “positive” impact; it broke the “silence” that has been prevailing in Swaziland for a long time on homosexual issues. It is time that some of these issues be brought to bear and be understood as what they mean to each one of us, more especially those people dealing with school matters since the school is the most important vehicle for transmitting the social, political, and cultural values and norms of the society through the overt curriculum, the null curriculum and the hidden curriculum (deMarrais & LeCompte, 1999; Marsh & Willis, 1999).

Problem Statement

The constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland is silent about issues related to homosexuality or issues of sexual orientation. The Gay and Lesbian population is very invisible in Swaziland. It is not surprising therefore to find little literature or studies on issues of homosexuality. This has caused some people to deny that it exists. The invisibility of the gay and lesbian community in Swaziland makes it difficult to find any literature or studies done concerning them in Swaziland. This invisibility does not mean that Swaziland does not have gay and lesbian people; however, it does perpetuate the cycle of ignorance and stereotypes that already exist amongst many Swazi people about this section of the population.

The Purpose of Study: Using existing studies and other secondary material done in the United States, this study has several purposes. Using existing literature, this study seeks to translate and interpret (Noblit, 1988) what has been researched/studied in relation to homosexuality that relates to adolescents and homophobia in the United States

of America. This study seeks to inform and sensitize, not to liberate. It seeks to highlight pertinent themes and issues that need to be problematized in order to de-legitimize the hegemonic state of affairs in school, hence breaking the silence on gay and lesbian adolescents. It seeks to question social construction of heterosexuality as a compulsory prescription for all people. It seeks to question the role of the school, finding out the multiple “layers of silence” that are played out in the school through the systematic inclusion and the systematic exclusion mechanisms (Besner & Spungin, 1995; Friend, 1993; Sears, 1992; Weis & Fine, 1993). It seeks to bring out issues that need research in Swaziland on gay and lesbian adolescents in schools. The hope is that informed research on homosexuality and homosexuals will be able to recommend to policy makers both in the United States and Swaziland about what needs to be done on these issues.

The Significance of the Study: Mallon (1992) points out to the difficulties of placing gay and lesbian youth in out-of-home care setting, and attributes the difficulties to the fact that these institutions have failed to provide gay and lesbian youth needs. Mallon states that there has been a lot of fear, misinformation, and mistaken belief that this population of youngsters should fit into existing youth services. Mallon goes on to say that it is not that gay and lesbian youth are totally denied access to care, but the lack of appropriate program planning makes their lives in many settings intolerable, impelling them in many cases to return to the street safety. In other words, Mallon realizes the need for different programs for gay and lesbian youth in out-of-home care settings. He also points out to the fact that they do not fit into what has been planned for the heterosexual youth because their needs are different. This calls for careful planning for this population of youth. In order for a country like Swaziland to come up with policies and programs

that will address the needs of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth, it needs to embark on a massive study, which will clarify what the needs are. Since homosexuality is not talked about, and it will be a relatively new concept to most people, including the policy makers, people need to know what it is, and what is it all about, and why is it important for society to look at it in a different way as opposed to the way some have looked at it.

To embark on such a study, there is a need for financial resources and skilled researchers to do the exercise. Swaziland might not have enough financial resources to engage in studies about homosexuality, and since this is a sensitive subject, and taking into consideration that Swaziland is a homophobic countries, as it has been pointed above in the case of GALESWA, it might be very difficult to have a good sample population to be studied for the results to be generalizable. It is for this reason that I have decided to use already existing studies to “bring home” information about homosexuality. Just like all situations about sensitive issues, people are often scared even to try and educate themselves about homosexuality because they will be thought to be promoting or condoning it. This is well put by Mallon (1992) when he says:

Another reason is that child welfare professionals have not been trained in how to deal with gay and lesbian matters. Many social service agencies are uncomfortable with-or completely unprepared for-dealing with the question. Many still believe that if their agency offers services to homosexual adolescents, it will be viewed as promoting homosexuality. Other more informed and gay-affirming agencies simply need help in learning how to handle a young person's sexual identity (p.549).

Mallon is pointing out the ignorance from service providers on issues of homosexuality and homosexuals. This does not, however, stop them from being prejudiced about that particular issue.

Swaziland has a homophobic society, even the mere mention of the word gay and

lesbian sends shivers down the spines of some people. They do not even want to hear a word of explanation or clarification about homosexuality. Therefore this study, which is a secondary study or literature synthesis, hopes to bring together as much information possible into one document for the benefit of the Swazi society.

The advantages of this kind of study are that it has benefited from studies done by experts, and the coverage is very wide, compared to a study done traditionally (primary research). Also, using the meta-ethnographic design has taken of constraints such as time, finances, sensitivity of the subject, and the expertise of the researcher. Hakim (1982) referring to secondary analysis of materials, says:

Secondary analysis can provide a wealth of database research on new topics, issues and policy concerns. It is often a crucial step in the process of getting new issues on to the political agenda, defining information gaps, and hence specifying new research needs (p.1-24).

Research Question(s). The research questions are:

- What does the literature say about homosexuality?
- What are the pertinent issues related to homosexual adolescents?
- What are the multiple perspectives represented in the literature?

Hopes and Assumptions

I hope that with this study the people of Swaziland will be able to learn and appreciate something about homosexuality, and all the myths about gay and lesbian people will at least be interrupted and looked at differently. Considering the fact that homophobia cannot be easily dealt with, at least people might not act out of ignorance. I

also hope that this study will trigger more scholarly research on the issues of gay and lesbian people in Swaziland, particularly for and with adolescents.

I assume that the homosexual community of the Kingdom of Swaziland is not different from the other homosexual communities worldwide, they have needs which are not met because of the fact they are forced by social, psychological, religious, and political forces to conform to the heterosexual way of life. I also assume that information and understanding of the concept of homosexuality will lead to most Swazis to understand that homosexuality is not by choice but something that one is born with, just like being black or white.

Scope and Limitations

Every study has limitations, and this one is no exception, however the most outstanding one has been the limited material on doing qualitative research synthesis. Most research materials on doing research synthesis are dealing with quantitative research.

The other limitation is caused by the sensitivity of the topic on homosexuality. Though the study is done in the United States where all the studies that are being synthesized come from, it is very difficult for me to discuss freely about the topic on homosexuality. It would have been much better to use human subjects, but due to the sensitivity of the topic on homosexuality, it would not have been easy to get the sample population for this study. Therefore the needed information, which I finally found through this methodology, would not have been accumulated. Though this is valuable information that might come from primary research, however, to protect everyone concerned, it has been easier and better to use secondary studies,

instead of human subject.

Organization of the Study

In looking at the silenced minority students, this study capitalizes on the treatment of gay and lesbian students in schools: its impact on their learning and their future lives. Though the literature reviewed in this study is not on liberating the gay community, it is however, critical of the way homosexual adolescents are treated in schools and the rest of the society. The study calls for the promotion of sensitivity on the plight of homosexual adolescents by bringing out developmental theories on identity formation as psychological construction and social construction. Other themes and issues addressed by this study are: schooling; safety for all students; institutionalized homophobia, and compulsory heterosexuality

Chapter one is an introduction of the study. It gives a background of the societal beliefs about homosexuality in the United States of America and Swaziland; it gives a historical overview of the concept of homosexuality and homosexuals; it talks about the relationship between homosexuality and religion; the relationship between homosexuality and HIV/AIDS in both the United States of America and the Kingdom of Swaziland; it gives the historical background of the Kingdom of Swaziland, the tradition, the government, and the effects of international relations; it gives the significance of previous research on homosexuality; the problem statement; the purpose of the study; the significance of the study; the research questions; hopes and assumptions; scope and limitations, and finally the organization of the study; definition of terms; finally the summary.

Chapter two deals with the methodology. It addresses the following issues: introduction; research design; literature review; literature search for gay and lesbian students in school (data collection); sampling of data, and summary. Chapter three addresses the synthesis and interpretation of data on the whole concept of homosexuality in general. It has the following topics: introduction to the chapter; defines what homosexuality is; theory behind homosexual identity formation; sexual orientation models; formation of homosexual identities; Troiden's four-stage model of homosexual identity development (sensitization, identity confusion, identity assumption, commitment); coming-out; myths about homosexuality; and conclusion.

Chapter four deals with what the studied literature has found about gay and lesbian adolescents. It has an introduction; it talks about Title IX in relation to sexual harassment in school; talks about gay and lesbian adolescents in school; gives the perspectives of school from the gay and lesbian students' point of view; talks about the systematic inclusion and systematic exclusion mechanisms as played out by the school to promote hegemony; it discusses the role of the school personnel as viewed by the professional organization in relation to homosexuality, and the summary the chapter follows.

Chapter five, which is the last chapter, looks at the role of the school as an institution in relation to the three types of curriculum. The formal curriculum, which is the interrelated set of plans and experiences that a student undertakes under the guidance of the school. It is planned by the school, enacted by the teacher, and finally experienced by the student (Marsh & Willis, 1999). The hidden curriculum which is often parts of the school environment that are unplanned or even unplannable such as unacknowledged

attitudes, beliefs, codes of conduct, and conventions for social relationships that form the overall, but constantly shifting, milieu of school, which seem to exert more subtle but far greater influence over what students learn than does the formal curriculum (Marsh & Willis, 1999). The null curriculum, which is all the missing or absent or omitted interrelated set of experiences that a student is supposed to undertake under the guidance of the school because of certain ideologies (All that is absent from the formal curriculum) (Marsh & Willis, 1999). To see how they are acted in relation to homosexuality; discusses the impact of the school curriculum on the teachers and students; looks at how schools should address the needs of all students; looks at the role of professional organizations on issues of human rights; interpretation of what all this means to policy makers as a way forward; the summary of the chapter follows.

Definition of Terms

Bisexual: is an individual (male or female) who is attracted and may form sexual and affectionate relationships with both men and women. The term refers to a socio-political identity, a sexual behavior, or both. Identification with any particular "label" may be culturally, economically, generally, geographically, or politically influenced (Rankow, 1999).

Bisexuality: is the sexual and affectational attraction to members of either sex.

"Closeted"/ "coming out" or "out of the closet": being closeted refers to not disclosing one's sexual orientation. "Coming out" is the process of the first recognizing and acknowledging non-heterosexual orientation to oneself and then disclosing it to other. This usually occurs in stages and is a non-linear process. An individual may be "out" in some situation or to certain family members or associates and not others. Some

may never “come out” to anyone beside themselves (Rankow, 1999).

Compulsory heterosexuality: is the systematic set of institutional and cultural arrangements existing to reward and privilege people for being or appearing to be heterosexual, and establish potential punishments or lack of privilege for being or appearing homosexual (Weis & Fine, 1993).

Curriculum: The term curriculum originated from a Latin root, which means ‘race course’. Curriculum is an interrelated set of plans and experiences that a student undertakes under the guidance of the school (Marsh & Willis, 1999).

Formal curriculum: It is the interrelated set of plans and experiences that a student undertakes under the guidance of the school. It is planned by the school, enacted by the teacher, and finally experienced by the student (Marsh & Willis, 1999).

Gay man: is a man who forms sexual and affectionate relationships with men. Identification with any particular “label” may be culturally, economically, generally, geographically or politically influenced. Other terms (some which are considered derogatory) include (but not limited to): fairy, faggot, men “in the life”, queers, “family”, “members of the church”. Alternately a man may not identify with any label (Rankow, 1999).

Gender identity: is one’s inner sense of gender (Rankow, 1999).

Gender roles: is the socially constructed and culturally specific behavior and appearance expectations imposed on women (femininity) and men (masculinity) (Rankow, 1999).

Heterosexuality: is the sexual and affectational attraction to members of the other gender (Rankow, 1999).

Heterosexism: It is an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non—heterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship, or community, by assaulting, verbally harassing, isolating homosexuals on the basis that they are sick, wrong, and deserving of any punishment (Garnet, Herek & Levi, 1992; Herek, 1990). It is a belief that everyone is, or should be, heterosexual, or what Lorde describes as “a belief in the inherent superiority of one pattern of loving over all others and thereby the right to dominance (Weis & Fine, 1993).

Hidden curriculum: It is often parts of the school environment that are unplanned or even unplannable such as unacknowledged attitudes, beliefs, codes of conduct, and conventions for social relationships that form the overall, but constantly shifting, milieu of school, which seem to exert more subtle but far greater influence over what students learn than does the formal curriculum (Marsh & Willis, 1999). The hidden curriculum is the implicit curriculum that imparts beliefs and values to students. It is found in messages and norms embedded in the classroom social behavior, values, and who will be successful or not in society, can be deduced from the answers to questions such as: how do schools group children? How much and what kinds of knowledge are presented by the teachers in these groups? How do teacher-student interactions differ from one level group to another? How are different people in society represented in the school text? Are there differences in the amount of information and types of content provided in the curriculum according to the ethnicity, social class, and gender categories of students? Which groups in the community benefit from the kinds of knowledge taught – and not taught – in the schools (deMarrais & LeCompte, 1999). The functions of the hidden curriculum have been variously identified as the inculcation of values, political

socialization, training in obedience and docility, the perpetuation of traditional class structure – functions that may be characterized generally as social control (Vallance, 1973/74 in Giroux & Purpel, 1983).

Homophobia: is the fear and hatred of homosexuality in one's self and in others and emerges as a result of heterosexism. These feelings of fear and hatred create a discomfort that reinforces the attitude that "people should not be homosexual" (Weis & Fine, 1993). It is a dislike, fear or hatred of individuals who are romantically attracted to members of the same sex (Besner & Spungin, 1995).

Homosexuality: it is the sexual and affectional attraction to members of one's own gender (Rankow, 1999).

Homosexuals: are men and women who form sexual and affectionate relationships with members of the same gender. Also referred to as gay or lesbian (Rankow, 1999).

Inclusive language: is the use of gender non-specific language (i.e. "partner" instead of "husband" or "wife") in the patient interview, clinic intake forms, education materials and public health campaigns to avoid assumption which limit the information available to clinicians and to enhance the accessibility to services to women who partner with women (Rankow, 1999).

Internalized homophobia: is the experience of shame, aversion or self-hatred in reaction to one's own feelings of attraction for a person of the same sex (Rankow, 1999).

Lesbian: is a woman who forms sexual and affectionate relationships with women. Identification with any particular "label" may be culturally, economically, generally, geographically or politically influenced. Other terms (some which are

considered derogatory) include (but not limited to): gay women, dykes, women “in the life”, queers, “tortilleras”, “family”, “members of the church”. Alternately a woman may not identify with any label (Rankow, 1999).

Null curriculum: it is all the missing or absent or omitted interrelated set of experiences that a student is supposed to undertake under the guidance of the school because of certain ideologies (All that is absent from the formal curriculum) (Marsh & Willis, 1999).

Partner or significant other: is a primary domestic partner or spousal relationship(s). May be referred to as “girlfriend/boyfriend”, “lover”, “roommate”, “life partner”, “wife/husband” or other terms (Rankow, 1999).

“Straight person”: is someone who does not have sexual identity crises, a male or female who is not a homosexual

PFLAG: stands for Parents /Friends of Gays And Lesbian. It is an association for parents and friends for gays and lesbians.

Conclusion

The study analyzes some prominent themes that are highlighted as findings from the studies done on gay and lesbian students in schools. I present an informative recount on the concept of homosexuality and sexual orientation and situate it socially, politically, culturally, and economically in the United States. I transfer the American situation to inform the Swazi situation of these issues that are raised in this study. I point out how the gay and lesbian adolescents are situated in American schools and the rest of the American society. I look at how the school as an institution deals with sexual orientation issues. I look at the invisibility of gay and lesbian adolescents in American schools and in Swazi

schools, and bring out the reasons for the invisibility. I bring out the minority status of the gay and lesbian adolescents to bear. I work on the premise that there is lack information, particularly in Swaziland on this subject. I assume that the availability of the information will lead other scholars to research further on some of the issues that are highlighted in this study. I also assume that the absence of information on this subject lead most people, more especially the Swazis, to have a lot of myths and misinformation about sexual orientation. Therefore the availability of the information could influence policy formulation in Swaziland, more especially those dealing with the role of the school as a socializing agent, reproductive health issues including HIV/AIDS, the meaning of family, human rights, and how gender and gender roles as social constructs are viewed.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a description of the methodology and methods that are employed in conducting this research. The methodology and method are dictated by the purpose and sensitivity of the study, which is to investigate the treatment of gay and lesbian students, and the impact on their learning and future lives. The purposes of the study are to conscientize and sensitize the reader about plight of gay and lesbian students, and discuss issues of sexual orientation (homosexuality). It will do literature review, looking at the themes that are addressed by other researchers on sexual orientation. The study aims at coming up with some suggestive measures that can be taken by the school system, and the educational system as a whole, to try to make school a better and safe place for all students regardless of their sexual orientation. This study moves from the premise that all students have a right to be in school, it is their human right, and so if some students, because of their sexual orientation, as it pointed out by the literature, feel uncomfortable in school, it may be a violation of their human rights.

Research Design

For this study I employ literature review that draws upon interpretive methods and contextualize the literature on sexual orientation. I describe the historical factors especially as they relate to the oppression of homosexuals. Special emphasis is placed on the adolescent homosexuals in the school setting. Patton (1990) describes qualitative methods as consisting of three kinds of data collection: (1) in-depth, open-ended interviews; (2) direct observation; and (3) written documents. As pointed out by Patton (1990) on the categories of qualitative research methods, I use qualitative methods, focusing on written documents as data for this study. The written documents are not going to be the documents that are generally used by researchers doing qualitative research, but it will be the actual research documents done by other scholars on the sexual orientation or homosexuality, particularly in school setting and youth. For instance, researchers using documents as their sources, usually refer to historical documents, records, biographies, diaries etc. This would not be the case for this study. The documents I am using are documents addressing the concept of homosexuality as a subject, written by other scholars or writers in trying to explain some of the concepts related to homosexuality. Some would be research documents. Some would be newspaper reports, to get the views of the readers about sexual orientation issues. All these will be reviewed to gather, analyze, and interpret the perspectives that are represented in this field.

Literature Review

Literature reviews can be seen as an end in it-self, either to inform practice or to

provide a comprehensive understanding about what is known about a topic or it can be done prior to conducting primary research (Jackson, 1980; Mertens, 1998).

Reviews of research are a fundamental activity in the behavioral sciences; they usually precede any major new research study and also are done as independent scholarly works. The focuses and purposes of such reviews vary substantially. Some investigators are primarily interested in sizing up new substantive and/or methodological developments in the field. Some are primarily interested in verifying existing theories or developing new ones. Some are interested in synthesizing knowledge from the different lines or fields of research, and still others are primarily interested in inferring generalizations about substantive issues from a set of studies directly bearing on those issues (Jackson, 1980 p. 438).

Therefore when I embark on this study, I intend to provide a comprehensive understanding about the topic. Taking into cognizance the fact that many scholars have written about this topic, I feel there is need to bring the information into one document for easy accessibility, and thematically. Writing as an "outsider" in this area, I feel more people need to take initiatives to know more about that that makes us feel uncomfortable when discussing the homosexual tensions in the heterosexual social institution. Marsh (1991) looks at this type of study as:

The place for a form of inquiry that yields integrative knowledge, that is, the type of knowledge that brings together what is known from various, perhaps disparate studies that may be relevant to the particular needs of practice. Through integrative inquiry, ongoing or previously done studies are screened and synthesized for the kinds of knowledge that will help address those problems which are at hand and about which planning or action decisions must be made (p. 271).

This is basically what this study aims to achieve. It aims to provide a comprehensive understanding about what is known about the treatment of gay and lesbian students and how this affects their learning and future lives. Mertens (1998) puts it this way:

Therefore, when you look to the literature for solutions, you may rely on other people's literature reviews, or you may seek out primary research reports until

you find one that seems to fit your situation (p. 36).

As pointed above from all the view points of the scholarly work cited, qualitative researchers can use existing research as data to come up with some new research findings. I pursue the thematic approach when looking at existing research/literature to try to find the perspectives/beliefs, and also identify existing gaps. In exploring, synthesizing, and interpreting the literature that deals with gay and lesbian adolescents, the study looks at the common themes and concepts that are emerging from the data, and looks at the theoretical and conceptual frames that are emerging from the studies.

The Rationale for the Methodology

The rationale for using written data, as a method of research is that it allows for maximum availability of information from previously researched studies on the subject of sexual orientation. The advantage of this research design is that it guarantees benefits from studies done by experts on the subject. For instance, with the sensitivity of the subject of sexual orientation, it would not be as easy to pursue this study because of issues of ethics and access in sampling the population. The sensitivity of issues surrounding sexual orientation creates an invisible population thus creating a gap in representation. This study hopes to highlight the existence of such tensions.

The other advantage is that of coverage; the secondary studies used in this study come from all over the United States, so distance, time, and finances do not become a constraint (Cooper, 1998; Hakim, 1982; Hakim, 1987). Hakim (1982), in support for secondary analysis points out that the advantage of secondary analysis is that it offers all researchers opportunities for empirical research based on large national datasets that have been tended for the privilege of the few. Hakim goes on to state that secondary analysis

can provide a wealth of data based research on new topics, issues and policy concerns. This is often a crucial step in the process of getting new issues on the political agenda, defining information gaps, and hence specifying new research needs. Hakim (1982) points out that secondary analysis of existing sources played a part in the recognition of the one-parent family as a new type of family structure; it also played a part in putting discrimination against ethnic minorities in council housing on the agenda, and in revealing the changing patterns of homework.

Supporting secondary research, Angela, Arber, & Procter (1988) note that in as much as it may appear that secondary research offers little by way of originality, and may seem to be an unlikely method of revealing new and exiting findings, secondary analysis can open doors that would not otherwise be accessible to academic social researchers, and can offer more than a simple re-analysis of somebody else's data. Therefore they warn that in as much as secondary research has financial benefit advantages, more especially where the primary data has been produced by governmental funding, if it is to produce a worthwhile contribution to the knowledge and understanding, secondary analysis must not be used as a short-cut to quick results. It is important that the secondary analyst takes as much time and trouble over defining the research problem as would be required by any other method of research. Angela, Arber, & Procter (1988) position the analysts, and say secondary analyst joins the research process at a point when the primary analysis has probably finished, it is important that s/he becomes fully aware of the nature of the data to be used, its method of collection, and any limitations that this imposes on analysis and subsequent interpretation of results.

Literature Search for Gay and Lesbian Students in Schools

There are several ways to collect data on sexual orientation, however for the purposes of this study, I consulted the following search engines: the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), the Psychological Abstracts, the Sociological Abstracts, some published books. Some of the documents, mostly journal articles, were able to give what I interpreted to be a Federal perspective on the homosexual issues; this has been the case on the article dealing with sexual harassment laws. These were the commentaries from West Education Law Quarterly and the School Law Bulletin. The National Education Association document also reflected the views of a majority of Americans. In the case of Swaziland, the daily newspaper reports carried the voice of government because the government officials were quoted verbatim on what they said on the issues on behalf of the Swaziland Government.

Some of the data was collected by using bibliographies and references of articles to find more studies dealing with related topics. This means one article was used to get other articles by reviewing the references, which are appearing in most of the articles. One article led to others.

Sampling

Sampling is one of the characteristics, which differentiates qualitative research methods from quantitative research methods. Patton (1990), states this about sampling:

Perhaps nothing better captures the difference between quantitative and qualitative methods than the different logics that undergird sampling approaches. Qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on relatively small samples, even single cases ($n=1$), selected purposefully. Quantitative methods typically depend on larger samples selected randomly. Not only are the techniques for sampling different, but also the very logic of each is unique because the purpose of each

strategy is different...the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in the selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about the issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling (p. 169).

I used the purposeful sampling approach for this study. This is a sampling of only those studies and documents that are directly related to the area of interest in my study. Among the strategies I used for this study, though not all could be used, however it is worth mentioning that some are used more than others, that is to say, I make use of more than one sampling strategy in sampling the studies that are used in this study. Through the purposeful sampling approach, I sampled journal articles, and what has been documented between 1980-2000 on sexual orientation and adolescents. The studies have to deal with adolescence, schools and homosexuality, violence, homophobia, harassment of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students.

The reason for the sample period is that it is in this period that homosexuality was socially constructed in a different manner. In the period before this time, studies on this subject were under the domain of the psychotherapist and the medical scholars because the notion was dominantly a pathological view. The period marked for the study was after social scientists became increasingly involved in studying the subject from a sociological perspective. This period is also after the American Medical and Dental Association have removed homosexuality as a disease, and declared it as another way of life. Then, homosexuals can no longer be treated as suffering from mental illness (Cass, 1984, 1990). This period saw a lot of liberals and other scholars delving into the subject. For some, it was a new area of research, while for others it was a way of presenting the concept of homosexuality to the world, and dispelling the myths and misconceptions about the whole issue. And for others, it was to give voice to the

voiceless, presenting the plight of gay and lesbian community, exposing the injustices, which this community has suffered for so long (Besner & Spungin, 1995).

Conclusion

In as much it would have been better to use other methods of research for this study, the literature review as a method of research has proved to be useful because it has afforded me the opportunity to access a wide range of information, which would not have been accessed when using primary research. Reviewing existing research takes care of the financial constraints as well as coverage. Through literature review, the researcher has a wide coverage, and the scope of the research sample population is widened. In the case of this study, the literature covers data collected since 1980 when the social scientist developed interests on issues of homosexuality. This method also takes care of the sensitivity of the topic. Without having to deal with human subjects, through the use of literature review, data for the research has been available through written documents. A study, which might have taken a longer time to complete, takes relatively a shorter period when using literature review. Though this method, I have been able to come up with gaps on the issues of gay and lesbian adolescent research; I have been able to employ the critical perspective and questioned/challenged some issues such as the compulsory heterosexuality, the role of the school as a socializing agent; and finally looked at the various ways of dealing with the subject of sexuality and identity development from different theoretical views.

CHAPTER III

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

This is a presentation of literature discussing three ways of sexuality and homosexual identity development. The theories presented in this chapter are not necessarily the only ones dealing with the subject, and they are also not necessarily in agreement. However, they give some clear picture developmental stages of the gay and lesbian adolescents. The whole discussion about the concept of homosexuality and all the issues surrounding the homosexual community is based on the Western cultural representation. In other cultures the situation might not be as prominent as described by this literature. Hence the need for further research from other cultures. For instance a Swazi situation may not be similar to the American situation because even the cultures are different.

According to Herdt (1998), several scholars have taken keen interest in studying gay and lesbian adolescents and youth. Herdt says they have just begun to open a new discourse on understanding homosexuality and adolescence. Herdt points out that there is so much that remains unknown; they have barely scratched the surface of the sensibilities and cultures of these young people. Herdt says there are so many controversies involved in these studies, and the road to understanding is filled with potholes and intellectual

humps and political land mines. In as much as many of the scholars study the same population, their findings and conclusions are not necessarily agreeing. There are variations in their approaches, and their interests are different. This then makes this study more interesting because it brings the different perspectives to bear. This chapter will review what the different scholars are presenting on homosexuality, gay and lesbian adolescent development, heterosexuality, sexual harassment, homophobia, homosexuality and schooling, adolescent suicide, and any other issues that are brought up by the studies under review. Various scholars and different positions explaining how we come to be sexual beings are presented. Several theories on sexuality as a social construct are also presented. The debate on sexual orientation is still on; there is still need for further research on adolescent homosexuality.

What is Homosexuality?

Strommen (1989) defines homosexuality as a type of behavior rather than a condition. Fischer (1995) says homosexuality refers to being sexually and romantically attracted only to members of one's own sex. Fischer continues to state that it is important to note that homosexuality does not depend on being sexually active any more than being heterosexual does. Homosexuality as a word is used in less commonly sociological research. It does not allow for distinction between gay men and lesbians and it also increasingly carries pejorative connotations says Fischer. Other scholars think homosexuality is an identity (Cass, 1984b; Dankmeijer, 1992/3; Herdt, 1989; Minton and McDonald 1984; Troiden, 1989) talk about homosexuality as an identity and they talk of homosexual identity formation. They say this is conceptualized as life-spanning developmental process that eventually leads to personal acceptance of a positive gay self-

image and a coherent personal identity. They conclude that the homosexual identity formation generally emerge in a three-stage process in which the person progresses from an egocentric interpretation of homoerotic feelings to an internalization of the normative, conventional assumptions about homosexuality to a post-conventional phase in which societal norms are critically evaluated and a positive gay identity is achieved and managed.

However, it has to be noted, that some scholars make a difference in their treatment of the subject. A distinction is made between homosexual males and homosexual females - the homosexual males are referred to as gays, and the homosexual females are referred to as lesbians (Feldman, 1989; Griffin, 1992; Olson, 1987; Uribe & Herbeck, 1991). This study is also going to try to make the distinction between the gays and the lesbians. It will also point out that there are those that are called bisexuals, though on day-to-day classification they are regarded as homosexuals too, hence the need for the distinction (Uribe & Herbeck, 1991). Though this study will mention the bisexuals here and there, the scope of this study will not focus on bisexuals. In addition, for purposes of this study, a homosexual person would refer to a person who is sexually and romantically attracted to a person of the same sex. If that person is a male and then is sexually and romantically attracted to another male, then he would be gay, and if that person is a female and is sexually and romantically attracted to another female, that person would be said to be a lesbian. If that person were sexually and romantically attracted to both males and females, than that person would be said to be bisexual regardless of his or her sex.

Theory behind Homosexual Identity Formation

Troiden (1989) gets into more details about the homosexual identity, and states

that homosexuality is one of the sexual identities that are there in people. Women and men decide what type of feelings they have, their significance and predominance, and whether they are personally relevant and salient enough to warrant self-definition as heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual. Troiden (1989) agrees with Cass (1984) that homosexual identity is one of the several identities incorporated into a person's self-concept. A perception of self as homosexual is an attitude, a potential line of action toward self and others that are mobilized in settings defined as sexual and romantic. Depending upon the context, the homosexual identity may function as a self-identity, a perceived identity, a presented identity, or all three. The *perceived identity* is described as a situation where people think or know that others view them as homosexual, and a *presented identity* is when people present or announce themselves as homosexual in concrete social settings, and is a *self-identity* when people see themselves as homosexual in relation to romantic and sexual setting (Troiden 1989).

From the above, it can be deduced that homosexuality cannot be understood as a one dimensional concept, it involves attitudes, individual's value judgment, self-perception, way of life, and behavior, including emotions and feelings, hence Herdt (1989) talks about the "homosexual world".

Studies show that for a long time homosexuality has been a topic of psychological scrutiny since the emergence of psychology as a discipline in the late 1800s, and this traditional orientation of homosexuality research has been viewed as etiological in nature, viewing homosexuality as a pathological syndrome or as a learned pathological behavior (Coleman, 1982; De Cecco 1982; Robinson, 1980; Strommen 1989). However, Boswell (1990) says "homosexual" on the other hand, is understood as a primary and permanent

category, a constant and defining characteristic that implies a great deal beyond occasional sexual behavior about the person to whom the term is applied. He continues to say, not only does his or her sexuality define all other aspects of personality and life-style-which are implicitly subordinate to sex in the case of homosexuals but not heterosexuals- but the connotations of the term homosexual and its place in the modern construction of sexuality suggest that homosexuals are much more sexual than heterosexuals. This brings to bear the aspect of taking just one element of a human being and use it as a deciding factor of how that human being will/should be identified as.

Cass (1990) also points out that the study of homosexual identity formation where some people come out to adopt a lesbian/gay/homosexual identity is relatively new. This shows a change in people's thinking, a change as evident in gay/lesbian people themselves as well as heterosexuals (Carter, 1998; Fontaine, 1997; Jordan, Vaughan & Woodworth, 1997). There has been a shift away from viewing the gay person as a psychiatric aberration and toward seeing him or her as a member of a minority group. The question that is relevant to ask is "what factors caused this person to become homosexual?" rather than "How did he/she come to adopt a gay/lesbian identity?" and "What is it like to live as a gay person?" This type of questioning acknowledges that being a homosexual is not something a person can change but it can either be hidden or expressed depending on the level of homophobia of a particular society (Herr, 1977; Savin-Williams, 1989; Strommen, 1989;).

According to Cass (1984, 1990), it was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that the notion of homosexual identity began to be documented in the homosexual literature. Until that time, primarily members of those professions concerned with the

social control and medical documentation of individuals practicing “unacceptable” sexual behaviors had used the label “homosexual”. By the mid-1970s, homosexuals themselves had taken the label and transformed it into an expression of identification with the gay minority group. Groups such as homosexuals could now claim to be minorities having the same right to self-expression as other minorities. There was concern to present the homosexual’s own view of the world and self. The label “homosexual/lesbian” and later “gay/dyke” came to be used by homosexuals themselves as a means of identifying membership in a group rather than as an indication of pathology. This brought the sense that homosexual can be viewed as a person rather than as a clinical condition. The homosexual identity became the means for referring to all those personal aspects of identification with the group known as “homosexuals”. Everything that related to belonging to the gay group was seen to be relevant to holding a gay identity (Cass, 1984, 1990).

It is of interest to note that scholars like Cass (1990) realized that these changes that are mentioned above, that is, the move to seeing the homosexual as a person, someone who belongs to a stigmatized minority group, as documented in both the popular and the scientific literature would impact on the Kinsey’s Model (1948, 1953). It is worth pointing out what the Kinsey’s model entails in order to follow what the scholars have to say about the impact of this change on this model.

Sexual Orientation Models

Kinsey was not the only scholar who came up with a model for sexual orientation. Sanders, Rienisch, and McWhirter (1990) write about three sexual orientation models including the one by Kinsey. They point out though that Kinsey’s was very influential in

shaping sexual orientation thinking even up to modern times. The first model they talk about is the Dichotomous-Psychoanalytic model, which states that people are either masculine or feminine anything in between was abnormal. Masculinity and femininity were viewed as discrete, dichotomous categories equated with maleness and femaleness, respectively. Any individual whose behavior was not concordant with the expectations for his or her sex was considered to be abnormal, says Sanders et al (1990). This model therefore divided people further into heterosexuals and homosexuals, and then added a third category of bisexuality for those who fell in between the two.

The second model, which Sanders et al (1990) have discussed, is Kinsey's model. They say this is a unidimensional-bipolar model with a scale of zero to six (0-6). Zero being on the lower end of the line and representing heterosexuality, three being in the middle of the line representing bisexuality, and finally six being on the end of the line representing homosexuality. Kinsey is said to have reported that across a lifetime, a person's sexual behavior pattern could change dramatically. There appears to be a continuum of sexuality from exclusively heterosexual to exclusively homosexual. This model implies that the more homosexual an individual is, the less heterosexual he or she must be, and vice versa.

The third model Sanders et al (1990) discuss is the Two-Dimensional-Orthogonal model developed by Storms (1978, 1980). This one seems to be an improved version of the Kinsey model, with a few changes. Storms proposed that homoeroticism and heteroeroticism are independent, orthogonal continua. In this model a bisexual is high on both homoeroticism and heteroeroticism, a heterosexual is high on heteroeroticism and low on homoeroticism, a homosexual is high on homoeroticism and low on

heteroeroticism, and a person low on both dimensions would be asexual. However, they point out that Storms model has not been widely used by sex researchers.

Although Kinsey (1948, 1953) did not explicitly outline a theoretical framework for sexual preference, he provided enough information for scholars to draw conclusions. Kinsey, according to Cass (Cass, 1990), distinguished between the expression of sexual preference and the development of sexual preference. Kinsey (1948, 1953) said sexual preference could be assessed by monitoring the two ways in which it is expressed: (1) "psychic reaction," reactions to being erotically stimulated by a particular type of person such as someone of the same sex or opposite sex, and (2) sociosexual contacts which were defined as engagement in sexual activity to the point of orgasm with someone of the same or opposite sex.

Kinsey's model or scale indicates that an individual may express his or her sexual preference via one of the three preference patterns: exclusive homosexuality, exclusive heterosexuality, or bisexuality, hence it is sometimes referred to as the exclusivity model. Cass (1990) points out that while Kinsey proposed that both psychic reactions and sexual contacts must be taken into account in the measurement of the expression of sexual preference, he suggested that the former is more truly indicative of preference than the latter since social opportunity can influence the level of the activity engaged in. Some people, he noted, may engage in sexual contacts simply because circumstances make them available and not from any strong preference. Similarly, those with a strong homosexual preference may choose not to express themselves overtly because of fears about behaving in such a manner. Thus, psychic responses and socio-sexual activity represent independent but related dimensions of behavior.

According to Cass (1990), it is of significance to note that Kinsey was aware that the meaning a person gives this behavior may not coincide with the definition accorded it by virtue of the gender of the sexual partner. Cass says according to Kinsey et al (1948) the homosexuality of certain relationships between individuals of the same sex may be denied by some persons, because the situation does not fulfill other criteria that they think should be attached to the definition. Cass continues to say that Kinsey did not consider it necessary to incorporate the individual's interpretation of his or her own behavior, or the difference between meaning and his or her behavior into his ideas on the expression of sexual preferences. It is sexual response, not the individual's perceptions of that response, that is considered important.

Formation of Homosexual Identities

Troiden (1980) used the sociological perspective to develop an ideal-typical model of homosexual identity formation. He came out with a four-stage model, which he outlined using previous research and theorizing on homosexual identity development. Troiden presents the theoretical perspective by claiming that sexual conduct is primarily social in origin, existing socio-cultural arrangements define what sexuality is, and the purposes it serves, its manner of expression, and what it means to be sexual. Troiden's idea come from a number of studies: Gagnon (1977); Gagnon & Simon (1973); Plummer (1975); Ponce (1978), and Simon & Gagnon (1984). According to Troiden (1980), people learn to be sexual the same way they learn everything else. Women and men are born with an open-ended, diffuse, and relatively fluid capacity for bodily pleasure that is shaped and expressed through sexual scripts. These sexual scripts are learned and organized during adolescence along lines previously laid during gender-role socialization.

According to these sexual scripts, males for instance are taught to see sex in active, genitally focused, and goal-oriented terms; females on the other hand are encouraged to view sexuality in reactive, emotionally focused, and process-oriented ways. Troiden (1980) further says:

Sexual scripts are articulated by the wider culture and are similar to blueprint: they shape, direct, and focus sexual conduct by providing sexuality with its effective and cognitive boundaries. Sexual scripts provide sexuality with its effective or emotional boundaries by specifying what kinds of feelings are sexual. The mind has to define something as 'sexual' before it is sexual in its consequences. In addition, the sexual scripts designate the cognitive limits of sexuality by indicating appropriate sexual behavior (the whats), permissible and non-permissible settings for sex (the where), positively and negatively sanctioned motives for sex (the whys), and appropriate and inappropriate sexual techniques (the hows) (p. 44).

The whole essence of sexual scripts is not meant to undermine and deny the biological substratum of sexuality, is meant to emphasize the powerful role of social forces in shaping sexual conduct. Sexual learning occurs within a specific historical period and socio-cultural settings, sexual conduct and its meanings vary across history and among cultures. It is on the basis of the understanding that today, in the research tradition established by Kinsey and his associates; sexuality experts generally view heterosexuality and homosexuality as matters of degree rather than kind. People are described as occupying various points along a continuum in their sexual behaviors and responsiveness from exclusive heterosexuality (Kinsey 6s) through bisexuality (Kinsey 3s) to exclusive homosexuality. People construct their sexual feelings to the extent that they actively interpret, define, and make sense of their erotic yearnings using systems of sexual meanings articulated by the wider culture (Troiden, 1989). Troiden concludes the theoretical claim by saying sexual identities (perceptions of self as homosexual, heterosexual, or bisexual in relation to sexual and romantic contexts) are constructed

similarly. People learn to identify and label their sexual feelings through experiences gained with gender roles and their related sexual scripts. Women and men decide what types of feelings they have, their significance and predominance, and whether they are personally relevant and salient enough to warrant self-definition as heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual.

Homosexuality identity formation is not conceptualized by Troiden (1989) as a linear, step-by-step process in which one stage precedes another and one necessarily builds on another, with fluctuations written off as developmental regressions, instead, the process of homosexuality formation is likened to a horizontal spiral, like a spring lying on its side.

Troiden's Four-Stage Model of Homosexual Identity Development

Troiden's (1989) model is based on Plummer's (1975) model, and incorporated insights from Ponce (1978), and Cass (1979, 1984). The model has four stages, and these stages are sensitization, identity confusion, identity assumption, and finally commitment. According to the model, sociological analysis of homosexual identity formation begins with an examination of social contexts and patterns of interaction that make homosexuality personally relevant. The meanings of feelings or activities, sexual or otherwise, are not self-evident; therefore before people can identify themselves in terms of a social condition or category, Troiden suggests that people must:

Learn that a social condition representing the activity or feelings exists (e.g., homosexual preferences or behavior); (b) learn that other people occupy the social category (e.g., homosexuals exist as a group); (c) learn that their own socially constructed needs and interests are more similar to those who occupy the social category than they are different; (d) begin to identify with those included in the social category on the basis of activity and feelings in various settings; (f) elect to label themselves in terms of the social category, that is define themselves as

“being” the social category in contexts where category membership is relevant (e.g., self-definition as homosexual); and (g) incorporate and absorb these situationally linked identities into their self-concepts over time (Troiden, 1989 p. 49).

Troiden in this passage brings out what goes on in someone’s mind when he/she discovers that he/she is homosexual. The confusion gets so big such that he/she feels so alone and lost. This then assures them that homosexual preferences or behavior exists; homosexual people exists; by being homosexual, one should not feel bad, but must identify with those in the same social category for support.

Stage One: Sensitization

The sensitization stage occurs before puberty, claims Troiden (1989). At this stage, lesbians and gays are said to typically acquire social experiences during their childhood that serve later as bases for seeing homosexuality as personally relevant, that lend support to emerging perceptions of themselves as possibly homosexual. In other words, childhood experiences sensitize lesbians and gays to subsequent self-definition as homosexuals.

The characteristics of this stage are said to be generalized feelings of marginality, and perceptions of being different from same-sex peers. Troiden (1989) picks some of the comments from a study conducted by Bell et al. (1981) that illustrates the forms, that childhood feelings of difference assumed for lesbians:

“I wasn’t interested in boys”; “I was more interested in arts and intellectual things”; “I felt different: unfeminine, ungraceful, not very pretty, kind of a messy”; “I was becoming aware of my homosexuality. It’s a staggering thing for a kid to live with”; “I was more masculine, more independent, more aggressive, more outdoorish”; and “I didn’t express myself the way other girls would, for example, I never showed my feelings. I wasn’t emotional” (p. 48).

Similar comments of marginality are echoed from gay childhood experiences, as reported by Troiden from the study conducted by Bell et al (1981):

"I had keener interests in arts and intellectual things"; "I couldn't stand sports, so naturally that made me different. A ball thrown at me was like a bomb"; "I never learnt to fight"; "I wasn't interested in laying girls in the cornfields. It turned me off completely"; "I just didn't feel I was like the other boys. I was very fond of pretty things like ribbons and flowers and music"; "I began to get the feelings I was gay. I noticed other boys' bodies in the gym and masturbate excessively"; "I was indifferent to boys' games, like cops and robbers. I was more interested in watching insects and reflecting on certain things"; and "I was called the sissy of the family. I had been very pointedly told that I was effeminate" (p. 50).

Therefore it can be said that "prehomosexuals" use gender metaphors, rather than sexual metaphors, to interpret and explain their childhood feelings of differences: the mastery of gender roles, rather than sexual scripts, is emphasized during childhood.

Troiden (1989) concludes the sensitization stage by asserting that the significance of sensitization resides in the meanings attached subsequently to childhood experiences, rather than the experiences themselves. Childhood experiences gained in social, emotional, and genital realms come to be vested with homosexual significance during adolescence. The reinterpretation of past events as indicating a homosexual potential appears to be a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for the eventual adoption of homosexual identity.

Stage Two: Identity confusion

Troiden states that lesbians and gays typically begin to personalize homosexuality during adolescence, when they begin to reflect upon the idea that their feelings, behaviors, or both could be regarded as homosexual. The thought that they are potentially homosexual is dissonant with previously held self-images. This stage is characterized by identity confusion, inner turmoil and uncertainty surrounding their ambiguous status

(Johnson, 1996). It can be said that the sexual identities of gays and lesbians at this stage are in limbo: they can no longer take their heterosexual identities as given, but they have yet to develop perceptions of themselves as homosexuals. Cass (1984) describes the early phase of identity confusion like this:

You are not sure who you are. You are confused about what sort of person you are and where your life is going. You ask yourself the questions "who am I?" "Am I a homosexual?" "Am I really a heterosexual?" (p.156)

According to Troiden (1989) there are several factors that are responsible for the identity confusion experienced during this phase: altered perceptions of self; the experience of heterosexual and homosexual arousal and behavior; the stigma surrounding homosexuality; and inaccurate knowledge about homosexuals and homosexuality (p. 53). Altered perceptions of self are partly responsible for identity confusion experienced during this phase. Childhood perceptions of self as different crystallize into perceptions of self as sexually different after the onset of adolescence. Another source of identity confusion is found in the realm of sexual experience itself. Troiden, citing Bell & Weinberg (1978); Bell et al (1981); Saghir & Robins (1973); Schafer (1976) and Weinberg & Williams (1974), says recent investigations of homosexuality have revealed consistently that homosexuals exhibit greater variability in their childhood and adolescent sexual feelings and behaviors than heterosexuals. The stigma surrounding homosexuality also contributes to identity confusion because it discourages adolescents (and some adults) lesbians and gays from discussing their emerging sexual desires, or activities, or both with either age mates or family. Troiden (1989) acknowledges that Plummer (1975) noted that the societal condemnation of homosexuality creates problems of guilt, secrecy, and difficulty in gaining access to other homosexuals. Ignorance and inaccurate

knowledge about homosexuality also contributes to identity confusion. People are unlikely to identify themselves in terms of a social category as long as they are unaware that the category exists, lack of accurate information about the kinds of people who occupy the category, or believe they have nothing in common with category members.

Troiden (1989) quickly points out to the fact that lesbians and gays respond differently to this stage of identity confusion, Troiden says they adopt one or more of the following strategies: denial; repair; avoidance; redefinition and acceptance. Gays and lesbians, who use denial, deny the homosexual component to their feelings, fantasies, or activities. Repair refers to those who are involved in wholesale attempts to eradicate homosexual feelings and behaviors. Professional help is sought to eliminate the homosexual feelings, fantasies, or activities. Avoidance is a third overall strategy for dealing with identity confusion. Troiden says avoidance may assume at least one to six forms. Some adolescent (and adult) men and women inhibit behaviors or interests they have learned to associate with homosexuality:

“I thought my sexual interest in other girls would go away if I paid attention to boys and concentrated more on being feminine”; “I figured I’d go straight and develop more of an interest in girls if I got even more involved in sports and didn’t spend as much time on my art” (p. 56).

The second avoidance strategy involves limiting one’s exposure to the opposite sex to prevent peers or family from learning about one’s relative lack of heterosexual responsiveness:

“I hated dating. I was always afraid I wouldn’t get erect when petted and kissed and that the girls would find out I was probably gay”; “I felt really weird compared to the girls. I couldn’t understand why they thought guys were so great. I dated to keep my parents off my back” (p. 56).

The third avoidance strategy involves avoiding exposure to information about

homosexuality.

“Your first lecture on homosexuality awakened my fears of being homosexual. I cut class during the homosexuality section and skipped assigned readings. I just couldn’t accept the idea of being a lesbian”; “One ingenious defense was to remain as ignorant as possible on the subject of homosexuality. No one would ever catch me at the ‘Ho’ drawer of the New York Public Library Catalog” (p. 56).

The fourth avoidance strategy involves antihomosexual postures. Some adolescents (and adult) men and women distance themselves from their own homoerotic feelings by attacking and ridiculing known homosexuals:

“At one time I hated myself because of my sexual feelings for men. I’m ashamed to admit that I made a Nellie guy’s life miserable because of it”; “I really put down masculine acting women until I came out and realized that not all those lesbians act that way and that many straight women do” (p. 56).

Heterosexual immersion is the fifth avoidance strategy. Some teenaged lesbians and gays establish heterosexual involvements at varying levels of intimacy in order to eliminate their “inappropriate” sexual interests. Some adolescent girl may purposely become pregnant as a means of “proving” that she couldn’t possibly be homosexual, in some cases adolescent (and adult) men and women even get involved in heterosexual marriages proving that they could not possibly be homosexuals:

“I thought my homosexual feelings would go away if I dated a lot and had sex with as many women as possible”; “I thought my attraction to women was a passing phase and would go once I started having intercourse with my boyfriend”(p.57).

The sixth avoidance strategy involves escapism. Some adolescent lesbians and gays avoid confronting their homoerotic feelings through the use and abuse of chemical substances.

Troiden (1989) says the fourth general means of reducing identity confusion involves redefining behavior, feelings, or context along more conventional lines. Redefining is reflected through the use of special case, ambisexual, temporary identity, or

situational strategies. In special case strategy, homosexual behavior and feelings are seen as an isolated case, a one-time occurrence, and part of a special, never-to-be-repeated relationship:

“I never thought of my feelings and our love making as lesbian. The whole experience was too beautiful for it to be something so ugly. I didn’t think I could ever have those feelings for another woman” (p. 57).

Defining the self as ambisexual is another redefinitional strategy:

“I guess I’m attracted to both men and women” (p. 57).

A third redefinitional response is the temporary identity strategy. Here people see their homosexual feelings and behavior as stages or phases of development that will pass with time:

“I’m just passing through a phase, I’m really not homosexual” (p. 57).

People who adopt the situational redefinitional strategy define the situation, rather than themselves, as responsible for the homosexual activity or feelings:

“It only happened because I was drunk”; “It would never have happened if I hadn’t been sent to prison” (p. 57).

The fifth overall strategy to respond to identity confusion is acceptance. With acceptance, men and women acknowledge that their behavior, feelings, or fantasies may be homosexual and seek out additional sources of information to learn more about their feelings. The homosexual category provides them with a label for their difference.

“From the time I was quite young, I felt different from other girls and I felt masculine than feminine. When I learned that lesbians existed I had a word that explained why I was different from other girls”; “The first name I had for what I was, was ‘cocksucker’. ‘Cocksucker’ was an awful word the way they used it, but it means that my condition was namable. I finally had a name for all those feelings. I wasn’t nothing” (Troiden, 1989, p. 58).

Overall, Troiden (1989) asserts that perceptions of self anchored in the strategies

of denial, repair, avoidance, or redefining may be sustained for months, years, or permanently. Bisexual (ambisexual) perceptions of self, for example, a redefinitional strategy, may be maintained or undermined by a person's social roles, position in the social structure, intimate relationships, and by the perceived strength, persistence, and salience of the homosexual feelings. Although individuals may use several different stigma-management strategies, they characteristically use some more than others.

Stage Three: Identity Assumption

Despite differences in stigma-management strategies, a significant number of men and women progress to identity assumption, the third stage of homosexual identity formation, during or after late adolescence. In this stage, the homosexual identity becomes both a self-identity and a presented identity to some homosexuals. Coleman (1982) says defining the self, as homosexual and presenting the self as homosexual to others are the first stages in a larger process of identity disclosure called "coming out". The characteristics of this stage are self-definition as homosexual, identity tolerance, and acceptance, regular association with other homosexuals, sexual experimentation, and exploration of the homosexual subculture (Troiden, 1989).

Although homosexual identities are assumed during this stage, they are tolerated initially rather than accepted. Cass (1984) describes people who tolerate their homosexual identities as follows:

You feel sure you are a homosexual and you put up with, or tolerate this. You see yourself as a homosexual for now but are not sure about how you will be in the future. You usually take care to put across a heterosexual image. You sometimes mix socially with homosexuals, or would like to do this. You feel a need to meet others like yourself (p, 156).

Self-definition as homosexual may occur just before, at the same time as, or shortly after first social contact with other homosexuals. These initial contacts may have been engineered consciously (e.g. deciding to go to a homosexual bar) or accidentally (e.g. learning that a respected friend is homosexual). Troiden states that Ponse (1978) claimed that self-designation as homosexual in the absence of affiliation with other homosexuals (e.g. as a consequence of reading about homosexuality) has been referred to as disembodied affiliation.

Drawing on the work of Cass (1979), Troiden points out that the quality of a person's initial contacts with homosexuals is extremely important. If the initial contacts are negative, further contact with homosexuals may be avoided and homosexual perceptions of self will persist, maintained through the strategies of denial, repair, ambisexuality, or temporary identity described earlier. Perceptions of increased risks of living as a homosexual in a homophobic society may also encourage individuals to cling to nonhomosexual perceptions of self. Positive contacts with homosexuals, on the other hand, facilitate homosexual identity formation. Favorable contacts provide lesbians and gays with opportunity to obtain information about homosexuality at first hand. The meanings attributed to the homosexual label begin to change in a more favorable direction.

Troiden (1989) states that once they adopt homosexual identities, lesbians and gays are confronted with the issue of stigma and its management. They may adopt one of the several stigma-evasion strategies during identity assumption: capitulation, minstrelization, passing, and group alignment. Men and women who capitulate avoid homosexual activity because they have internalized a stigmatizing view of

homosexuality. The persistence of homosexual feelings in the absence of homosexual activity, however, may lead them to experience self-hatred and despair, says Troiden.

Individuals who use minstrelization express their homosexuality along lines etched out by the popular culture. They behave as the wider culture expects them to behave, highly stereotyped, gender-inappropriate fashions. Passing as heterosexual is probably the most common stigma-evasion. Men and women, who pass as heterosexuals define themselves as homosexual, but conceal their sexual preferences and behavior from heterosexual family, friends, and colleagues, by careful, even torturous, control of information. Passers lead double lives, they segregate their social worlds into heterosexual and homosexual spheres and hope the two never collide. Group alignment is another stigma-evasion strategy commonly adopted by neophyte homosexuals. Men and women who evade stigma through affiliation become actively involved in the homosexual community. The perception of “belonging” to the world of others situated similarly ease the pain of stigma.

By the end of the assumption stage, people begin to accept themselves as homosexual, and Cass (1984) describes acceptance of homosexual identity as follows:

You are quite sure you are a homosexual and you accept this fairly happily. You are prepared to tell fellow people about being a homosexual but you carefully select whom you will tell. You adopt an attitude of fitting in where you live and work. You can't see any point in confronting people with your homosexuality if it's going to embarrass all concerned (p. 156).

Stage Four: Commitment

Troiden (1989) says a commitment is a feeling of obligation to follow a particular course of action. In the homosexual context, commitment involves adopting homosexuality as a way of life. For the committed homosexual, it becomes easier, more

attractive, and less costly to remain a homosexual than to try and function as a heterosexual. This stage is characterized by entering a same-sex relationship, which marks the onset of commitment. The other characteristics of this stage are self-acceptance and comfort with the homosexual identity and role.

Troiden (1989) also states that commitment has both internal and external dimensions. It is indicated internally by: the fusion of sexuality and emotionality into a significant whole; a shift in the meanings attached to homosexual identities; a perception of the homosexual identity as a valid self-identity; expressed satisfaction with the homosexual identity; and increased happiness after self-definition as homosexual disclosure of homosexual. On the other hand, it is indicated externally by: same-sex love relationships; disclosure of homosexual identity to nonhomosexual audiences; and a shift in the type of stigma-management strategies.

Troiden's Four-Stage Model has brought to light what it feels/means to be a homosexual, and all the various stages that one has to go through in order to achieve homosexual identities. Most of the studies used by Troiden (1989) were retrospective, that is, the participants in the research were trying to recall their homosexual identity formation, and trying to recall their adolescent experiences. It is from these studies that one is able to relate the difficulties gay and lesbian adolescents go through in trying to get their identity. It should also be borne in mind that the adolescent stage is a hard stage for all adolescents, not just homosexuals, but for heterosexuals too. However, the heterosexual adolescents always have somewhere to fall back to, that is, they have family members and other heterosexuals who act as role models for them in their process of growing up. Homosexual adolescents do not have this kind of opportunity to have role

models because of the invisibility of the homosexual role models. There are several reasons that cause the homosexual population to be invisible, and they are going to be discussed in the next topic, the coming out process.

“Coming Out”

According to Gonsiorek & Weinrich (1991) the process of “coming out” and defining oneself as gay/lesbian, together with the additional act of coming out publicly as gay/lesbian, can create profound events in the lives of homosexual men and women living in disparaging society. Gonsiorek and Weinrich say perhaps that is why the term *sexual preference* is sometimes used. It might appear to outsiders (nonhomosexuals) that individuals going through this process have “chosen” their homosexuality. According to these scholars this term is misleading as it assumes conscious or deliberate choice and may trivialize the depth of psychological processes involved. Therefore they recommend the term *sexual orientation* because most research findings indicate that homosexual feelings are basic part of an individual’s psyche and are established much earlier than conscious choice would indicate. Bell, Weinberg, & Hammer-Smith, (1981); Green, (1988); Money, (1988), have concluded that sexual orientation is set by early childhood.

“Coming out” is a term that is often used to refer to the phase of emerging self-acceptance as gay or lesbian (Minton & McDonald, 1984). This period is characterized as the first major exploration of the homosexual community. It provides the opportunity to interact with other homosexuals, legitimates the homosexual experience, and thereby enables the individual to develop an acceptance of a gay or lesbian identity. This is a stepping-stone into development of young gays and lesbians, vital transition between childhood and adulthood, a life experience that’s startling and exhilarating and

galvanizing all at once (Chandler,1995). Chandler also says most gay and lesbian teenagers are alone in their journey through adolescence, ignored or condemned, driven to secrecy out of fear of being turned away by family and friends. Gay and lesbian teenagers not only are in the midst of growing up, but they are compelled to grapple with a sexual orientation that they probably know very little about. Growing up gay or as a lesbian becomes a great challenge and a very difficult process for them.

Chandler (1995) defines coming out as the process by which gays and lesbians come to term with their homosexuality-their same-sex attractions, affections, fantasies- and decide to incorporate it into their social and personal lives. Chandler says the term has a dual meaning because gays and lesbians come out internally to themselves and subsequently come out to others, announcing that they are homosexual. In as much as Chandler agrees with other scholars that to a large measure, the coming-out process spans a lifetime, extending from stages of self-awareness to self-disclosure to self-acceptance and beyond, as gays and lesbians choose to reveal their sexual orientation incrementally- to other gays and lesbians, to families and friends, to coworkers, to the public at large- throughout their lives, Chandler also adds that at the onset, coming out is a complicated time of turmoil and uncertainty, a taxing process on all fronts- emotionally, psychologically, socially, spiritually, sometimes even physically. Gays and lesbian adolescents face a number of underlying trials in the coming out process, and in addition, they also must deal with growing up.

Chandler (1995) says in many ways the developmental tasks of coming out parallel the tasks of adolescence in general. As teenagers, they must establish a sense of identity, develop self-esteem, and work toward intimacy and socialization-through

friendships, peer group associations, and sexual relations. For instance, as teenagers, that's when they think about dating or flirting with others, gays and lesbians cannot do that; they have to hide all their emotional feelings and affections for each other. Gay and lesbian adolescents are much more like other adolescents than they are like gay and lesbian adults, they go through the same struggles as all young people, yet for gay or lesbian adolescents, there are detours and barriers along the road to adulthood that are unique to their sexual orientation, according to Chandler(1995).

Gonsiorek & Rudolf (1991) discuss the coming out process and say it represents a shift in the person's core sexual identity and may be accompanied by dramatic levels of emotional distress. Individuals may temporarily display virtually any psychiatric symptom, especially if they are without support or adequate information about sexuality. They state, though that there appears to be some differences in the coming out process between males and females. Whereas the process seems to be abrupt and more likely to be associated with psychiatric symptoms, the same process for women appears to be characterized by greater fluidity and ambiguity. Gonsiorek and Rudolf say women are allowed a broader range of behavioral and emotional interactions with other women, they may experience emerging sexual and emotional intimacy as "mere friendship". On the other hand, men are confined to more narrow patterns of expression, longing for emotional and physical contact with other males is apt to be perceived as clearly "homosexual".

Consistent with traditional sex role socialization, males are more prone to sexualizing distress during the coming out process and women are more likely to respond with reflection and self-absorption. Sears (1989) brings to bear the important differences

among males and females in the meaning constructed around these sexual feelings and experiences. Sears (1989) says lesbians more often than gays, attach emotional-romantic meaning to same-sex relationships prior to engaging to homosexual behavior, they define the term homosexual in an emotional romantic context, and deny the legitimacy of their own sexual feelings. This makes lesbians to have more in common with heterosexual females than they do with gays. Schipper (1990) says the term “coming out” is a political term. Schipper says there are some problems with it; it can be seen as trivializing in that it connotes a single point in time and a deliberate choice. Further, it is most specific to particular juncture of social and political events in the mid and late 20th century Western world. “Coming out” may also be subtly sexist in that it implies a linear “male” process that is reasonably destructive for some men, but ignores the fluidity described by many women. Hence Sears (1989) points out that the development of homosexual identity is shaped by the racial and gendered contexts in which the person is situated.

Gonsiorek & Rudolf (1991) discuss the self-psychology and the coming out process in relation to narcissistic injury. Gonsiorek and Rudolf say the process of healing the narcissistic injury of disparaged sexuality of otherwise healthy gay or lesbian youth is analogous to the process involved in the healing of the narcissistic injuries of early childhood. The gay or lesbian youth who successfully works through their internalized homophobia and adopts an affirmative homosexual identity frequently does so in the context of a positive, ongoing gay/lesbian social support network. This support network helps to heal the narcissistically injured gay/lesbian youth in three sectors of self, the self-esteem, involvement in the community, and acceptance of self. A positive affirming community heals the wounds of external oppression. This manifests itself in three

different sectors: the grandiose-exhibitionistic sector, the idealizing sector, and the twinship/alterego sector.

The grandiose-exhibitionist sector is when the network support mirrors and admires the homosexual and homoerotic behaviors of gay or lesbian youth coming out. For example, encouragement and approval are offered as the youth begins to flirt, date, and become sexually active with same-sex others, and youth just generally identifies himself or herself as a homosexual person. It is at this sector that the youth internalizes the approval of the support network, representing the larger homosexual community, as pride in his or her sexual orientation, as self-esteem, assertiveness, and self-acceptance.

The idealizing sector is when the inexperienced youth coming out perceives the established, already-out support network as wiser and more powerful than him or her. Identifying with the support network, and through it with the larger homosexual community, the youth derives feelings of empowerment and greater certainty, replacing those of fear, confusion, and powerlessness. At this sector, the values and ideals of the larger homosexual community are gradually incorporated into the personality structure of the coming-out youth, whose, self is healing and maturing.

At the twinship\alterego sector, associating with other gay and lesbian persons in the support network both humanizes the youth's sexuality. For the first time, the youth can be among others of essential likeness; he or she can be a "homosexual among homosexuals". In time, this benign affiliation results in the youth's acquiring skills and talents needed to succeed socially, sexually, politically, and otherwise in the larger homosexual community.

Following the healing over of the narcissistic injury of disparaged homosexuality,

the gay or lesbian youth chooses more developmentally mature self-objects, those with whom he or she can experience relationships of deeper empathic resonance. An example of behavior indicating a healing or healed over, narcissistic injury might include a gay youth who is able, without self-derision, to walk away from, or object to, the telling of a homophobic joke; a young lesbian who is able to compose herself following the negative reaction of a long-time acquaintance to the disclosure of her homosexuality; or a young gay or lesbian youth who is able, despite parental disapproval, to volunteer in the campaign of self-identified homosexual candidate, or who, for the first time, is able to go to a same-sex social club and ask someone attractive to dance. Through a multitude of such experiences during the coming out period, the selves of the gay and lesbian youth, narcissistically injured by the disparagement of their homosexuality by society and significant others, are restored to wholeness, vigor and harmony (Gonsiorek & Rudolf, 1991).

The coming out process can be also taken as some form of socialization. It leads to homosocialization, that is, to friendships with other gays and to varying degrees of involvement in social networks. It also leads to relationships that are mutual and loving, both sexual and non sexual, and these are essential to healthy integration of a homosexual identity, promoting a positive self-image. Such relationships assist in overcoming the feelings of alienation and despair that are caused by rejection by parents and by peers in childhood and early adolescence (Gonsiorek & Rudolf, 1991).

The reaction of members of the family may either enhance the identity formation of gay and lesbian youth or make him or her to remain closeted. If the coming out process was met with warmth, acceptance and assurance from the family members, the self-

esteem of the gay/lesbian youth is enhanced, but if the opposite is true, the gay/lesbian youth loses self-esteem and remain in the closet, thus denying the developmental stages that come with homosexual identity formation (Savin-Williams 1990; Isay 1990). Some gay/lesbian youth even marry because of their inability to accept themselves as gays or lesbians. Their low self-esteem makes them to disguise the fact that they are homosexuals, they disguise this to themselves and to others as well. This repression and denial of their homosexuality is not discovered until they are married. This repression and denial are caused by pressure for social conformity. Remaining in the marriage, however, may make it difficult for a gay man to integrate his sexuality fully into a positive gay identity; it makes it hard, and often impossible, for him to enter into a same-sex relationship in which he can be loved in a sustained and nourishing manner. Isay (1990) summarizes this by saying:

The development of a gay identity, which begins in the earliest years of childhood with the same-sex erotic fantasies, usually carries with it, in our culture, the burden of guilt and self-loathing that may impede and delay its consolidation and integration. Social stigmatization is particularly damaging to the adolescent and young adult because of the importance of peer acceptance in the task of separation from the parents. Such stigmatization and internalization of social bias often lead to further lags in the formation of a healthy sexual identity by encouraging conformity to prevailing social conventions such as marriage and to the denial of inherent sexual and attendant psychological and social needs (p.66).

Coming out at an educational setting has some other problems for the adolescents. Harris & Bliss (1997) conducted a study about the gay and lesbian experiences concerning their coming out at an educational setting, and their respondents reported that the few who came out received positive feedback for doing that. However, the majority did not come out because of the fear of the consequences and not wanting others to know. The study shows that gays were more likely to come out to both male and female

teachers, whereas lesbians were more likely to come out to female teachers. The respondents in their study reported that they came out to the principal, teachers, counselors, and close friends, but not to everyone. Harris and Bliss notes that even though one might hope that educational institutions like the school would be less homophobic, and be models of enlightened thinking, and that they would be places in which prejudices would be examined rather than taught, it is realistic and accurate to recognize that these negative attitudes are pervasive in schools as well. To this, Elia (1993/94) states, "it could be argued that homophobia is more concentrated and more vicious in high schools than any other institution" (p.179).

The widespread prejudice against homosexual students socializes them to conceal their homosexuality. The lesson they learn from this prejudice is that disclosing one's sexual orientation carries definite risks for individuals who do not fit the expected heterosexual pattern. The risks may be particularly great for students, the most numerous and most vulnerable members of the educational community, since adolescence is a time when peer pressure is at its peak, and when developing a sense of self is particularly important (Teljohann & Price, 1993; Martin & Hetrick, 1998). The attempts to conceal their homosexuality may lead them to distance themselves from family and peers and may cause a reduction in self-esteem that continues with them into adulthood. The need for concealment may partially explain why gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth face an increased risk of suicide, depression, truancy, dropping out of school, and other behavioral problems associated with increased stress and decreased self-esteem (Elia, 1993/94; Harbeck, 1993/94; O'Connor, 1993/94; Reynolds & Koski, 1993/94; Rofes, 1989; Teljohann & Price, 1993; Uribe, 1993/94).

Myths about Homosexuality

The subject of homosexuality is surrounded with a lot of myths and misconceptions because of the invisibility of homosexual people and the sensitivity of the issue. The society has managed to make it tough for homosexuals to come out freely without fear of intimidation and discrimination. The society, through its compulsory heterosexuality has succeeded to keep most homosexuals closeted. In addition, a lot of myths have been created, and the unfortunate situation is that there are very few homosexuals who can be able to come out and clear these myths labeled against them. The society has created all kinds of homophobic strategies against homosexuals such that a lot of discretion has to be practiced by homosexuals should they want or feel they want to challenge the status quo. The homophobia is so engrained into the society in such a way that even useful and valuable information that might help the “straight” community into understanding the homosexual community is either not available to those who might want to use it, or institutional policies are closing out all information leading to knowledge about homosexuality, and or just the society is so closed minded that it just does not even want to hear any thing about homosexuality. It is on the bases of all this misinformation and ignorance about homosexuality, that a lot of myths have been developed by society.

Besner and Spungin (1995) discuss the myths that surround the homosexual community and explain what a myth is and say:

It is a traditional story of unknown origins that becomes accepted as fact. Although the belief may initially be based on some partial truths, as the story is retold it can be embellished to the point that it has little resemblance to the actual events or situation. In modern society, despite instant access to information, many myths persist about homosexuality that are not only inaccurate

but harmful (p. 11).

According to Besner and Spungin (1995), myths are perpetuated by word of mouth and frequently develop unchallenged. They are handed from generation to generation, with each generation adding its own perspective to the story. They say myths typically develop out of fear and ignorance. When individuals have little knowledge about something they tend to rely on past experience and what they have been taught. The knowledge they gain through these modes of information sharing goes unchallenged and these belief systems then become generalized to other areas. This is true to the homosexual community. Just because many of them remain in the closet about their identity as they interact within the mainstream society, the group that has chosen to come out publicly does not necessarily reflect the mainstream gay and lesbian community. Besner and Spungin (1995) feel that society bases its assumptions about the gay and lesbian community on inaccurate and incomplete knowledge of members of the mainstream but closeted gay and lesbian community. The commonly held myths about the homosexual community include the following:

“All gays and lesbians are easily identifiable, because gay men are effeminate and lesbian women are masculine”. Besner & Spungin (1995) argue and say if this myth were true, then there would be no need for homosexuals to stay in the closet because they could easily be identifiable. Besner and Spungin claim that in as much as there are effeminate gay men and masculine lesbian women, there are macho gay men and feminine lesbian women. Besner and Spungin say the majority of gay and lesbian population is indistinguishable from the rest of the general population. In effect many gays and lesbians go to length to ensure that they fit in with the mainstream society

because they have to be discrete and cautious in order to maintain their jobs and community status, most of them are not discernible. They look and act like everyone else.

“In homosexual relationships one partner plays the male role and the other plays the female role”. Besner and Spungin claim that studies have found that in homosexual relationships there tends to be an egalitarian relationship rather than the dichotomization of male and female behavior as seen within heterosexual relationships.

“Homosexuality is an emotional illness”. Besner and Spungin (1995) do not dispute the emotional illness on the part of the homosexuals, however, they dispute the fact that homosexuality causes emotional illness. They say many gays and lesbians become emotionally ill from being persecuted or being forced to hide their sexual orientation from a hostile society. They continue to say many gay and lesbian children learn to feel guilty about their differences at an early age and discover their only safety is pretense, which can take its emotional toll. The fact that the American Psychiatric and American Psychological Associations both formally rejected this idea in the early 1970 proves that homosexuality does not cause emotional illness, but it is the social pressure against homosexuality that causes emotional illness on the gays and lesbians.

“Gays and lesbians can change to become heterosexuals”. Besner and Spungin (1995) say this is the most destructive myth of all the myths. They say this destruction has been perpetuated by the mental health professions who have used various techniques in good faith, based on what they believed to be true about the causes of homosexuality. According to Besner and Spungin, there is scientific evidence to support the view that gays and lesbians can change their sexual orientation. Though they acknowledge that a person's behavior may change to avoid punitive therapies or the wrath of a hostile

society, but the sexual orientation does not seem to change. They say being gay or lesbian is not a matter of choice, sexual orientation is determined from an early age despite efforts to modify the behavior. Besner and Spungin (1995) say:

Lesbians do not become lesbians because they are failures at being female or because they have not found the right man. Neither do lesbians want to become men. Lesbians are lesbians because they feel attracted to women and are comfortable emotionally and sexually in the company of other women. Likewise, gay men do not want to become women. Gay men are attracted to other men and want to be in their company. For the most part, homosexuals are no different from anyone else in their desires and needs, except that they want to experience their feelings with someone of the same sex, rather than the opposite sex (p. 16).

“Acting like a ‘sissy’ or a ‘tomboy’ causes homosexuality”. Besner and Spungin say this myth has been found to be baseless because both heterosexuals and homosexuals may act like sissies and tomboys, and the heterosexuals do not change into homosexuals. This type of behavior does not necessarily results into homosexuality.

“Gays and lesbians are oversexed and indiscriminately promiscuous”. On this one they say there is no statistics to support it. They say this myth may have been perpetuated recently because of the publicity associated with the AIDS epidemic and the closing of many bathhouses, which were believed to be contributing to the spread of AIDS. And a bathhouse is a facility that some gay individuals frequent to meet other gay individuals sometimes for the purpose of finding sex partners. Besner and Spungin (1995), however, note that although there may have been a great amount of unsafe sex practiced in these settings, the gay community has been at the front of trying to prevent the spread of AIDS, and statistics indicate a decline in the percentage of new cases within the gay community and an increase is noted in the young heterosexual female population (UNAIDS Report, 1999).

“Gay men and lesbians gravitate to particular occupations”. Besner and Spungin

(1995) do not dispute the fact that it is common for gay men to work as hairdressers, clothing designers, interior decorators, or table waiter, or be involved in the theater. Lesbians on the other hand, are associated with athletics and the military. They point out though that the society at large has been willing to accept gay men and lesbians in these occupations and has found comfort in believing they are identified and categorized like that. Besner & Spungin (1995) also caution though that it should also be known that there are a lot of gay men and lesbians women who are members of every profession or job description which do not fit these perpetual stereotypes. They base their caution of the fact that gays and lesbians make up 10% of the general population; it would be unrealistic for one to believe that they all work within a few occupation. Due to the homophobic nature of the society, most gays and lesbians feel they must remain closeted in order to keep their jobs and maintain their invisible status in the community.

“Gays and lesbians tend to hang in seedy bars and restaurants, and gay men frequent bathhouses”. On this one they say although some homosexuals frequent bars and bars, most do not because they feel uncomfortable in these places and do not feel they have the potential to develop a long-term relationship with individuals they meet in these settings. In this regard, most homosexuals are not different from heterosexuals. They look for companionships, and similar value or belief systems. And partner for life. Many homosexuals are very family oriented and want to have close relationships with their partners and their families.

“Gay and lesbian parents will raise gay and lesbian children”. Besner and Spungin (1995) say there is no evidence to support this myth. They say children of gay or lesbian parents have the same chance of being homosexual as the children of heterosexuals.

“Gays and lesbians cannot maintain long-term relationships”. Besner and Spungin (1995) dispute this myth basing their argument on a study by Bell and Weinberg (1978), and they say that many homosexual men and women lead stable lives without frenetic sexual activity and that some are considerably happier and adjusted than heterosexuals as a whole. That is why according to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (1993) in a number of states gays and lesbians are forming unions and exchanging vows. Gay and lesbian couples are requesting and demanding that their partners be included on their health insurance policies, and that they be given the same benefits that married spouses enjoy.

“Homosexuality and religion are antithetical”. Besner and Spungin (1995) seem to suggest that there is a lot of confusion surrounding this area. The religious leaders seem to be divided on this issue. They therefore point out that the Protestant denominations in the United States vary in their attitudes concerning homosexuality and sin. Some adhere to the literal interpretation of the Bible and others take a more liberal view. Many denominations, including Presbyterians, the United Church of Christ, and Unitarians, have made public announcements supporting gay and lesbian causes.

“Gays and lesbians have abandoned organized religion”. According to Besner and Spungin (1995), the fact that most of gays and lesbians have organized themselves into religious groups similar to the ones they were raised does not mean that they have abandoned organized religion, but the problem is with the treatment they receive from these organized religious groups. They say it is reasonable to believe that homosexuals have been brought up in homes where organized religion played a variety of roles in the family, similar to the religious experiences of heterosexuals. However, when gays and

lesbians turn away from institutional religion, it is usually because they feel rejected or made to feel guilty due to religious doctrines, but the need for religious affiliation does not disappear, nor does it become less intense.

“Gay and lesbians contribute little to society and are not part of mainstream America”. This myth is also disputed because there are a number of talented gay and lesbian artist, composers, doctors, scientists, lawyers, architects, politicians, activists, and others listed by Besner and Spungin (1995). They also continue to say that gays and lesbians have made and continue to make significant contributions, especially in the judicial and military arenas. They say most gay and lesbian couples are working partners who have a serious commitment to their work, they tend to be financially successful at their career endeavors, they have a greater amount of discretionary income than heterosexuals and therefore have a great impact on the economy of the society. Gays and lesbians feel they are similar in their thoughts and actions to the mainstream American society and want to feel more a part of it, but it is the heterosexual society that has a problem with them. It is because of the ostracism they experience from the society that has made them to be very vocal in public, and their increasing vocal element is having a great influence on political and social events.

“All gays and lesbians think alike and tend to stick together”. Besner and Spungin (1995) say though in many cases this is true, there are individuals who, despite their homosexuality, are antigay. They may be antagonistic, hostile, and at time destructive to the well being of others. For example, they say there are groups of activists, such as the Queer Nation; their public demonstrations are uncomfortable not only for many heterosexuals but also for the mainstream gays and lesbians.

“Having one or a few homosexual experiences designate a person as a homosexual”. On this one Besner & Spungin (1995) say it is uncommon for adolescents, particularly males, to experiment sexually with one another, but these early experiences do not necessarily mean a person is homosexual.

“Gay men molest children”. Besner and Spungin (1995) strongly dispute this myth, and say child molesters are primarily heterosexual and the victims generally are female. They say according to Paul et al. (1982), recognized researchers in the field of child abuse and law enforcement concur almost unanimously that homosexuals are less likely to approach children.

Conclusion

Based on what has been said about the myths on homosexuals, I would like to conclude by pointing out that it could not be denied that these myths have a lasting impact on the lives of gay and lesbians. These myths can be said to have contributed to the homophobia that is currently engulfing the society. The homosexual community is only left to face all the trauma and the depression that eventually lead them to suicide, alcoholism, substance abuse, prostitution and other numerous mental conditions because the society expects them to conform to the mainstream societal norms.

The whole discussion about the concept of homosexuality and all the issues that surround the homosexual community, it is important to note that this is the representation of the western culture. In other cultures the situation might not be as prominent as it has been described above. I would like to draw from my own experiences as a Swazi national, for instance, in the case of Swaziland, there are situations that might be found to be conducive for gays to feel comfortable, as is the case with the lesbians. There are

social situations that allow men to be together and women to be together, such that those who are in the company of their partners can be there without causing any suspicion. This also has something to do with how relationships are expressed. It seems the American culture allows couples to show their love for everyone to see and admire. In the case of Swazis, that becomes a private matter between the couple. The lovers, in most cases are discreet about their relationship, however does not mean that they have no feelings for one another. Since love relationships are so discreet in Swaziland, it is not easy to see a gay or lesbian couple. One other thing that makes it not easy to see such a couple is the fact that the Swazi culture is more accepting to males socializing together, and females socializing together rather than to have a mixture of males and females together, particularly when it comes to adolescents. Adolescents are strictly discouraged to start relationships for the fear of impregnating each other (McLean, 1995).

Whereas an American parent might worry about her/his adolescent child not dating, a Swazi parent would be more comfortable when his/her child hangs out with females if she is a female or males if he is male. This does not mean that Swazi parents are more accepting or tolerant to homosexuality, but they are not aware that some of their adolescents might be gay or lesbians because intimacy is not openly expressed in public. The other thing about the Swazi culture, which is very different from the American culture, is the openness that exists between the parents and the children. The Swazi culture does not encourage the children to be very open to their parents, therefore it can be very difficult for an adolescent to get straight to the parents and tell them that he is gay or lesbian, because sexual matters are never discussed between parents and children. The parents speak in "parables" and are never straight with their children in such issues,

parents are only concerned about avoiding pregnancy in adolescents' relationship (McLean, 1995). Coping with problems of growing up, the adolescents look for solutions from schools or other social support like friends and youth groups. Adolescents in Swaziland learn about growing up more from other sources like their peers than from parents. Talking sex is a taboo in the Swazi culture, it is considered immoral as well. The discourse of making sex and sexuality issues an issue for the bedroom has made the Swazi society not to be able to address even the HIV/AIDS pandemic that is threatening the society (UNAIDS Report, 1999). It cannot be said that HIV/AIDS in Swaziland is threatening the homosexual community and is as a result of homosexual activities, but it is a threat to all the people, both heterosexuals and homosexuals, and both homosexuals and heterosexuals spread it since there is no research evidence that has proved otherwise (UNAIDS Report, 1999). There is great need to educate both the homosexual and the heterosexual community about this epidemic without attaching any stigma.

There are other cultural practices that can be interpreted as promoting homosexuality within the Swazi culture. It is not uncommon among the Swazis to find same sex people holding hands. Holding hands is not as sensitive in the Swazi culture as it is in the American culture. Sharing the same room and sleeping facilities by same sex people is also very common, and that has never occurred to people to be interpreted as a homosexual act. This goes to an extent of even sharing the same sleeping linen (sharing a bed) mostly with females. These cultural practices may be an advantage to gay and lesbian adolescents. This is an area, which needs to be researched among the Swazi adolescents.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

It is natural for individuals to have fears and insecurities in life. No one is without some type of anxiety. These fears develop in a number of ways. Some fears are learned through first-hand experience. Others are passed on through what has been read or heard from others. How individuals react to these experiences and information determines whether these become magnified. This is true for homophobia; many fallacies about homosexuality have been perpetuated throughout society, creating many problems, including verbal and physical violence Besner and Spungin (1995, p. 27).

This quote seems to legitimize homophobia by saying it is natural to have fears and insecurities. The fact that Besner and Spungin (1995) say everyone has some type of anxiety could be mistaken for the justification of the gay and lesbian bashing which some of the writers are concerned about in the literature on gay and lesbian adolescents in schools. What is important to note, however, is the these fears are developed, the fact that they are learnt, and some are passed on from what has been read or heard from others. The findings discussed in this chapter are drawn from the stereotypes and misconceptions leading to the treatment received by gay and lesbian adolescents in the school setting.

Blumenfeld (1992) says homophobia does not only affect and hurt homosexuals. Heterosexuals are also victims of homophobia, and however, the irony of it is that they are not aware of that fact. Both homosexuals and heterosexuals pay a great price for

homophobia. Blumenfeld states that homophobia causes both pain and stress equally to homosexuals as to heterosexuals. Homophobia, as described by Besner and Spungin (1995), is a dislike, fear, or hatred of individuals who are intimately attracted to members of the same sex. This attitude frequently leads to acts of discrimination against gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. Pellegrine (1992) says this may be another term whose uncritical deployment effectively reinforces the hegemony of white, masculinist, and heterosexual values. According to Pellegrine, language has been used to come up with this inappropriate term, and this term has been caught in the circuit of "blaming the victim". Pellegrine says homophobia, which literally means "fear of the same", might seem to replace the burden of responsibility onto targets. She continues to say an analysis of homophobia may all too easily become an investigation into what it is about gays and lesbians that "make" heterosexuals hate homosexuals so much. This move shifts attention away from what it is about the institution of compulsory heterosexuality that not only directs but also approves the hatred of homosexual people. Looking at clinical discourse, Pellegrine says phobia inscribes the oppression of gays and lesbians, and it is the same discourse that has named them inverts, and later, homosexuals. Pellegrine (1992) complains that gays and lesbians have historically been made "objects" of scientific study and experimentation; therefore a healthy skepticism toward clinical terms might seem advisable. She points out that what is worth considering is how, within psychoanalytic discourse, phobias categorically represent an irrational fear and/or hatred.

The discourse of language around homophobia overlooks the manifold ways in which compulsory heterosexuality functions as an institution. It denies the ways in which sexism and heterosexism are mutually reinforced. It says the oppression of gays and

lesbians have nothing in common with the oppression of any other targeted class of individuals. Further, it "naturalizes" the hatred of same-sex love by pronouncing this hatred and fear as a somehow inescapable feature of human psyche. Pellegrine (1992) asserts that the hatred of gays and lesbians comes not from the subterranean order of the psyche but from the unexamined premises of the social realm. One of the premises is that women exist for men, and if not for men, therefore they do not exist at all. In the case of lesbians, the society does not recognize them as human beings because they are not part of the norm; they have decided to exist for each other instead of existing for men, hence the hatred. On the other hand, society does not expect men to exist for women; men do exist as socially and politically autonomous human beings. This may be one of the defining characteristics of a man's social gender: his independence or his autonomy; he lacks nothing and no one. A woman is said to be lacking something: lack of a penis (Freudian penis envy theory), of autonomous moral agency, of social position, of political and economic power. Therefore in the case of gay men, they are said to be feminine, therefore have most of the characteristics attributed to women by society, makes them lesser human beings, as shameful, disgrace, and an insult to the men's world. Therefore deserve the hatred from the other men. This premise explains the reason behind the social construction of homophobia.

Title IX and Sexual Harassment in Schools

Schools are the most important agent of socialization, together with the family and the church. The values of the society are transmitted through the school through the overt, the null, and the hidden curriculum. The school is also one of the institutions that are entrusted by the parents for the protection of their children, so the teachers are

expected to play the loco parentis role. All those involved in the schooling business are supposed to know these roles. Schools are supposed to service all students equally without any form of discrimination. However, when it comes to gay and lesbian adolescents the school personnel, seems to abdicate some of these roles. In a study by the National Gay Lesbian Task Force (1987) as reported by McFarland (1993), over the 2000 surveyed gay and lesbian people, the reports state that 20% of the women and 50% of the men were harassed, threatened, or physically assaulted in high school or junior high school because they were perceived to be gay.

Sexual harassment in public schools has been a growing concern, however, the interventions were only meant for employees. There has been an enactment of civil and criminal penalties for abuse and neglect by states and the extension of federal civil right laws to acts of sexual harassment in public school settings (Beckham, 1995). These interventions are the provision of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 1983 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Both provisions have been interpreted to permit a cause of action for school district liability in instances of sexual harassment involving the acts of employees. However, the federal courts have restricted the extension of these laws to school district liability for harassing acts of peers. These laws have also assumed that sexual harassment can only take place among people of opposite sex, therefore harassment of people from the same sex group is not clearly covered by these provisions. The Office of Civil Rights for the Department of Education (OCR) defines sexual harassment under Title IX as:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requested for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature, imposed on the basis of sex, that could (a) deny, limit, or provide different aids, benefits, services or opportunities, (b) condition the provision of aids, benefits, services or opportunities, or (c)

otherwise limit a student's enjoyment of any right, privilege, advantage, or opportunity protected by Title IX (Wolohan, 1996).

Wolohan (1996) continues to explain that sexual harassment is a violation of Title IX under either one or two legal theories: quid pro quo or hostile environment. Quid pro quo sexual harassment occurs when a person grants or withholds benefits, as a result of other person's willingness or refusal to submit to the first person's sexual demands. Because the pressure may be either explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of the relationship, the critical point is not whether the victim submits voluntarily, but whether the conduct he/she submits to is unwanted. Hostile environment sexual harassment exists when a person's conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance, or otherwise limiting the ability of that individual to benefit from services, opportunities or privileges, by creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment so severe that it creates a hostile environment that interferes with the individual's ability to perform. In determining whether the person's conduct is severe enough to constitute hostile environment sexual harassment, it does not matter if the harasser's behavior is deliberate or simply has the effect of creating an offensive atmosphere, the only thing that matters is the outcome. Hostile environment sexual harassment, therefore, is sexual harassment not because it necessarily involves sexual gestures, language, or activities, but because it is motivated by the victim's sex. Therefore, sexual harassment under Title IX states:

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance (Wolohan, 1996).

In as much as the details of sexual harassment are well explained by Wolohan

(1996), there are still some gaps on these provisions. They only take care of the students attending federal funded institutions, and leave out those students who are attending private institutions because of the funding withholding policy. The provisions assume that all students attend public schools, since those are the ones that receive federal funding. It assumes, on the other hand, that there is no sexual harassment in private schools. It has been pointed out that these provisions assumes male to female harass, and or female to male harassment, it does not cater to male to male harassment and female to female harassment, and how these could be said to be sexual harassment. Since the sexual harassment laws were made to protect students against employees, it does not acknowledge the fact that students could also sexually harass each other in school. Since it is not explicit about gay, lesbian and bisexual students, it also assumes that gay, lesbian, and bisexual students do not exist, and if they exist, they do not suffer from sexual harassment different from the ones stated above. The silence and the omission of this sector of student population make it difficult for such students to take up their case on the basis of these provisions. The silence and the omission of this sector of the student population is a clear message from the society about the values that this society holds. Society does not acknowledge the existence of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students. Even though they are there, they are invisible and federal laws have not been made to cater for them.

That is why cases like the following; Jamie had to go to the extent of physical injuries before the public could realize the magnitude of the problem:

Jamie was an easy target. Students who wanted to cause trouble learned quickly that they'd be in big trouble- most likely be suspended- if they attacked anyone else at school. But somehow, when these bullies attacked Jamie, nothing happened. After enduring five years of name-calling, which eventually escalated

into physical violence including being shoved, spat upon, beaten, and even urinated upon, Jamie determined that his school was not a safe place for him. Jamie's case, however, received national media attention when Jamie, at 21 years old, sued the school district in Ashland, a town of 8,000 people in North Wisconsin, on the grounds that their failure to shield the repeated abuse of other students amounted to a violation of his rights, and he won \$900,000-00 (Price, 1996 as cited by Mallon, 1997).

Though Jamie was later able to get a financial redress for what he suffered from during his school days, he had to endure this inhumane treatment from his schoolmates for five years. The treatment got to the point that he realized that he had to save his own life because no one in the school was able to do that for him. This suggests the gaps of Title IX that do not cover gay students. Since the only 'crime' Jamie had committed was being gay, his teachers were not even prepared to take him as one of the students under their care. That is why they were silent and did not try to stop the violence against him. Jamie had to take it upon himself to rescue himself from this situation. This scenario also shows that sexual harassment as a hostile environment does exist in schools and is caused by both students to students, and teachers to students, as is the case here. The teachers by their silence condoned what the other students were doing to Jamie thus rendering the school environment not safe for Jamie because of his sexuality - he was gay. The students guilty of sexually harassing Jamie were male students because acts like being urinated upon could only take place in the male restrooms. All these aspects of harassment are not clearly dealt with under Title IX, maybe that is why Jamie did not act earlier on the grounds of sexual harassment, but had to act as violation of human rights.

One other thing that was not very clear about Jamie's case was the role played by his parents through out all the five years of suffering. The fact that he had to wait until 21 years presupposes that he was not able to do it earlier. He was now an adult, he could do

everything without his family support and consent, but the question is where were they at this time when he needed them so badly. In other cases of harassment in schools the parents are the ones to complain to the school authority about the treatment received by their children in school, but in this case there seems to be no parental involvement.

This brings the other aspect of the life lived by some of the gay and lesbian and bisexual adolescents. They are afraid to talk about what they are going through if it is because of their sexual orientation. Society has engrained it in their minds that to be gay/lesbian or bisexual is the worse thing one can ever be. One is not normal, that is why it was okay for the students to ill-treat Jamie and get away with it while they could be suspended if they were to be seen doing the same to any other student who is not perceived to be gay. Also some parents do not want to associate themselves with their children if they realize or find out that they are gay, lesbian or bisexual. They disown them right away and throw them out of the house/home (Cramer, 1989; Savin-Williams, 1989; Strommen, 1989). The last thing a person in Jamie's situation needs is to be out of home, hence the endurance. The question is how many, of these gay, lesbian, and bisexual adolescents are subjected to this kind of inhumane treatment? How many of them are able to endure like Jamie, and later seek redress? Those who do not endure, what eventually happen to them, do they continue with school in such a hostile environment, if not where are they? What is it about the school system that allows everyone to sit back and watch other students under their care suffer like this? What is it in the school environment that makes it okay for students to be able to do on gay, lesbian, and bisexual students what they would otherwise not do to other students? How does it feel to be in school for gay, lesbian, and bisexual students in light of what happened to

Jamie? All these are not easy questions to answer because of the invisibility of the homosexual community and the homophobic attitude of the society.

Gay and Lesbian Adolescents

Childhood and adolescent homosexuality brings both the school and the gay and lesbian adolescents into conflict with the social values and the norms of society. These values and norms are socially constructed to promote compulsory heterosexuality, and everyone is assumed and believed to be heterosexual. This leaves out the gay, lesbian, and bisexual population (Pratt & Telljohann, 1991; Treadway & Yoakam, 1992; Powell, 1987). Uribe (1994) looks at this attitude as denying the existence adolescent homosexuality, and yet this is the time when the youngest and most vulnerable members of the gay and lesbian community enter puberty and schools. This is when they need help to cope with their growing up. Uribe states that it is imperative to make these adolescents understand that homosexuality is not a choice, not a sickness, and not a developmental flaw. But the question is how is this expected to happen when the school community itself is homophobic. How is this to happen when even those teachers who are gay and lesbians are also invisible? These are the very people who are supposed to be role models for these students, and yet they too live in fear, fear of saying who they are.

The issues of gay and lesbian adolescents in school are a 'hot potato' or a major issue because of the homophobic beliefs and attitudes that are codified in laws, social policies, religious beliefs, child rearing-practices, and school curricula (Maylon, 1981). In as much as there are laws protecting students against sexual harassment, some of them are not very clear when it comes to the protection of the gay and lesbian adolescents. Gustavsson and MacEachron (1998) comment on the legality of harassment in schools:

Because sexuality is unprotected by federal regulation, it is legal to discriminate against persons because of their sexuality. Some municipalities have enacted legislation to extend limited protections against gay, lesbian, and bisexual adults. However, Title IX is of limited value to the lesbian and gay students. Young people will not find redress if they claim they were harassed or suffered a hostile environment because they are gay or lesbian because sexuality is not protected. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual students are better served by making a claim based on gender (pp. 44).

On the bases of Title IX, one could expect that all students would be protected, and one would think that schools would be safe places for all students, but there are aspects of this Title that leaves other students out. The sexual minority youth are left out. This gives a message that it is okay to marginalize sexual minority youth. Gustavsson and MacEachron (1998) acknowledge the efforts to protect the gay, lesbian and bisexual students, but because of the nature of the laws, and regulations, it becomes difficult to make sure that these students are protected. They say that lesbian, gay and bisexual young people face an increased risk of violence as a result of their sexual minority status. They complain that the definition of violence as physical force, or threat of physical force, to control and abuse misses many of the more subtle forms of violence. They consider the denied opportunities to fully participate in the society or suffering nonphysical acts of humiliation as violence because they can diminish self-esteem, undermine self-confidence, and encourage a pervasive sense of insecurity and self-doubt.

From the discussion, it is clear that being gay/lesbian or bisexual adolescents is made difficult by the fact that Title IX does not protect these students, as is the case with all the other students. Even though they suffer hostile environment sexual harassment, the powers that be find it very difficult to take action against those who victimize others. The victims of the hostile environment sexual harassment also find it very difficult to report such cases to the teachers because they are made to believe that what is happening to

them is their fault, they have asked for it by being gay/lesbian or bisexual. The silence of Title IX on the issues of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students makes it difficult for those teachers who might want to try to protect these students because they would be said to be promoting homosexuality in school and their jobs would be on the line.

How Does It Feel To Be in School: Gay, Lesbian,

and Bisexual Students' Perspectives

Being in school for these students at this time of their lives when they start to realize that they are different from the rest of the students becomes a major life obstacle. They have to learn to be invisible. They discover that school is not safe for them. They learn that in their confusion and frustration, they have no one to turn to. They learn that school leaves them out; they do not feature in the school's agenda. Herr (1997) states that the theme of invisibility has become a popular metaphor in educational writing as more researchers are viewing schools as consisting of multiple realities in which some realities are defined from the dominant social construction (p.51). The lived experiences of gay and lesbian and bisexual youth in schools are perhaps the most elusive; rendered invisible through the stigma attached to their identification as sexual minorities, they are conveniently forgotten by the institutions charged with facilitating their education. Herr (1997) elaborates on how the school deliberately leaves out gay and lesbian and bisexual students in the school program. Herr sees the role of the school as one that is meant to promote the pervasive ideology of heterosexism and thereby perpetuate clear constructs of maleness and femaleness (p. 52). Friend (1993) as cited by Herr (1997) states that the root of heterosexism are in sexism, with one of the purposes being to create boys and

girls who grow up to be 'real' men and women. Hence anything that deviates from the traditional gender role is considered out of question, and has to be punished in whatever way. Friend (1993) argues that educators ignore gay, lesbian, and bisexual students. Uribe (1994) claims that gay and lesbian youth are an underserved lot as compared to all students in the school system. These two claims are well supported by Friend (1993) when he discusses the prevalence of homophobia and sexism in school, and says these are shaped and reinforced by two interrelated mechanisms of silencing: systemic exclusion and systematic inclusion. Systemic exclusion is said to be the process of excluding positive messages, and images of gays and lesbians, rendering them invisible. On the other hand, systematic inclusion is said to be a system when discussions regarding gays and lesbians do occur, they are consistently placed in pathology or dangerous behaviors. Friend (1993) says these techniques of silencing help to create the climate whereby tacit approval is given for antigay violence to take place in school. At the same time, these silencing mechanisms also reflect and reinforce heterosexist beliefs and attitudes.

Studies, however, show that gay, lesbian and bisexual adolescents are not a homogeneous group. There are some elements of differences. There are adolescents whose parents are supportive to their sexual orientation, while on the other hand there are adolescents who are rejected by every significant adult in their lives. The former group has supportive adults who share their confidence and self-worth, while the latter still questions their sexuality, and is desperately lonely, knowing they are different, and rejected. Although these two groups are different somehow, they still share some commonalities in their struggles of struggling to affirm themselves in a world where they feel threatened or invisible (Friend, 1993).

Homosexual adolescents also have a lot of things in common with their heterosexual counterparts. Like their heterosexual contemporaries, they struggle with peer pressure, parental authority, sexuality and personal identity yet unlike most adolescents, gay and lesbian youth deal with these issues in a hostile world that fears and rejects them. Those who reveal their sexual orientation to friends, teachers, or parents they ridicule, ostracism, and violence. And those who do not reveal their sexual orientation try to hide their identity and live in constant fear that someone will discover that they are gay. And if they are successful at concealing their identity, they must live everyday as a lie, pretending to be someone they are not and surrounded by homophobic jokes and comments in the classroom, the locker room and the cafeteria, says Kissen (1993). Most of the gay and lesbian and bisexual youth fall into this category where they have to hide who they are. It becomes unbearable to most of them to keep up with all this hostility, and the outcomes are very detrimental to their school life and their lives in general. This is clearly stated by Johnson (1996) who says one of the extraordinarily negative consequences of living in a homophobic environment for the gay and lesbian youth is the internalized belief that acceptance becomes based on how well one can hide or lie about who one really is (p. 40). This negates one of the purposes of school of teaching honesty and truthfulness among students. To these youth, the school is teaching them that it is okay to lie and not to be honest on who one is.

Those who are trying to avoid the verbal abuse, religious condemnation, physical brutality, discrimination, or rejection because of their sexual orientation employ a variety of psychological defenses to avoid their homosexual interests. Apart from denying their feelings, and trying to "pass" for heterosexual, they get involved in heterosexual dating.

They also channel their energy into other pursuits, or repeat a variety of common conceptualization of homosexual behavior that permit individuals to escape the stigma of sexual labeling. While this may seem less self destructive than school drop-out, drugs, alcohol abuse etc, the emotional costs of leading a double life or carrying a terrible secret that no one must know are incalculable (Uribe, 1994).

Gay and lesbian and bisexual youth have a unique and difficult minority status. Unlike children of racial and ethnic minorities who may turn to family and community for support, most gay and lesbian and bisexual teenagers carry the double burden of being part of an oppressed minority and knowing absolutely no one like them. Some feel it is their fault that they are different since there is no one like them they could relate to, that is why it is not surprising to find some of them in great emotional pain, which eventually leads them to drop out of school or to be suicidal due to the depression they suffer from. This picture is summed up by Uribe (1994) when she says among the predictable consequences of such rejection are substance abuse, runaway behavior, poor school performance, peer and family conflict, depression, and attempted suicide. This view is also supported by the following quote from a gay participant talking about school:

School? You mean how was I treated in school? That was the worst place. If it wasn't the kids teasing or harassing you, it was the teachers dropping some nasty comment. The gym teachers, they were the worst. It was horrible; in fact, it was like a nightmare. That is why I stopped going (Mallon, 1997, p. 41).

The view represented in this quote tells of how detrimental the hostile environment is to the future of the gay and lesbian youth. It is a fact that schooling is a right to every child more especially in America, and school person should make sure that every child belongs into the school, but what comes out from this quote is the role played by the school personnel into "pushing" this student out of the school. The teacher, instead

of protecting the student, condones the harassment against the student to a point that he/she becomes the perpetrator of such harassment. The student finds no other option but to leave school for the harsh and unfriendly world. A world where it is extremely difficult to survive without a job, a job that is guaranteed by the amount of education one has attained. This means that for gay and lesbian youth the future become very bleak, hence they are victims of other social pressures and ills such as drugs, alcohol, and prostitution as a means of survival.

Since the American Psychiatric Association declassified homosexuality as a form of mental illness, increasingly, persons in the medical, psychological, and mental health professions view homosexuality as neither a moral nor a mental illness, but rather a normal variation of human sexuality, and recognize sexual orientation as one dimension of sexual behavior and personality development (Martin, 1982; Sullivan & Schneider, 1987; Uribe, 1994). Mallon (1992) and Schneider (1988) mourns the fact that despite these advances, old myths and stereotypes and the increased politicization of homosexuality have worked against broad enlightenment on the subject. Most people tend to focus almost exclusively on the sexual aspects of homosexuality, and people of homosexual orientation become labeled in terms of their sexuality. The scriptor 'homosexuality' is often allowed to obscure everything else about a person. However on the other hand, 'heterosexuality' is not looked at that way. The sexuality aspect of heterosexuals have never been an issue, in effect it has been taken to be a private matter, the society looks at all the contributions of heterosexuals without bringing their sexuality to bear.

Systematic Inclusion and Systematic Exclusion Mechanisms

Systematic inclusion is a mechanism of silencing homosexual issues in school. This mechanism allows discussion of gay and lesbian and bisexual issues in a negative context, linking homosexuality to pathology or dangerous behaviors. Studies show that schools practice the systematic inclusion mechanism and present homosexuals as sick people, sinners, perverts and child molesters, and all the stereotypes talked about in chapter three of this document. The emphasis on these stereotypes against homosexuals promotes the homophobic state of the school environment, making it even more difficult for a student struggling with sexual identity confusion to accept him/herself as gay/lesbian. These students end up being silent about who they are and suffer from depression, hence increasing the risk behaviors which most of them later find themselves practicing. In addition, the fact that they are not able to see a normal role model within their community makes them believe that these stereotypes are true, they never want to identify themselves with homosexuality, which thing they themselves are. The hatred they witness against homosexuals and homosexuality as a whole makes them to hate themselves, but at the same time they cannot divorce themselves from who they are because it is their reality. The hatred gets so hard that they sometimes attempt suicide, of which some succeed in doing it, and end their lives because they cannot accept that they are that 'bad'. The society and the school make them to feel that bad through the systematic inclusion mechanism (Gustavsson and MacEachron, 1998; Herr, 1997; Morrow, 1997; Uribe, 1994;).

Weis and Fine (1993) take up the discussion of systematic inclusion and say it is the process that functions to institutionalize heterosexism in school. They give an

example where the discussion on homosexuality was included to warn the students about the danger from homosexuals. The homosexual is framed as a male who lurks patiently, day after day, around a high school waiting, until he feel safe to befriend a student. According to this message, the students have to be very alert enough to keep an eye on such strangers to avoid being trapped. To Weis and Fine, this topic only deals with the sexuality of homosexuals, it presents a negativity that ends up silencing homosexual students, since it presents to the rest of the students that they are such a dangerous lot, they need to be avoided at all costs. Besides limiting discussions to sexual frames, the discussions take a pathological trend, and in most cases discuss the dangers of HIV/AIDS as if they are only related to homosexuals. Weis and Fine (1993) state that limiting discussions about homosexuality to HIV/AIDS not only explicitly links homosexuality with the danger and pathology, but also undermines effective HIV/AIDS prevention education (p. 216). This gives the impression that if you are not a homosexual then you do not have to be concerned with HIV/AIDS. If one can be able to avoid contact with homosexuals, then that person is safe from HIV/AIDS, and yet it is not the case, even heterosexuals do contract and suffer from HIV/AIDS.

Weis and Fine (1993) are also critical of the way sexual behavior is discussed in school. Sexual behavior is discussed in relation to homosexuals to differentiate between love and sex. When it is concerning homosexuals, sexual behavior is talked about as sex, while on the other hand, when the same behavior is discussed in relation to heterosexual, the same behavior is talked about as love, family, romance etc. This give the message that sex is nasty and vulgar, but love and family and romance are the best things a student could identify with. This silences homosexual adolescents because they get the

impression what whatever they feel has no emotional value, and worse of all, no love, and cannot have family values attached to it, it is just sexual act. "Homosexuals are presented in school like people who spend 24 hours a day in bed doing sex" (p.216). One other aspect that is brought up by Weis and Fine (1993) is the confinement of the sexual expression and sexual privileges to adults by society. Society privileges adult heterosexuals to sexual expression, particularly in a monogamous setting. This leaves out the adolescents who are only left to hear about sexuality discussed in relation to problems such teenage pregnancy, epidemic such as the HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, and horrors such as rape, incest, and other forms of assault. Weis and Fine (1993) say that the focus on the dangers of sexuality at the exclusion of conversations regarding the pleasure of sexuality, particularly in sexuality education of adolescents, contributes to the negativity of sex, and therefore passing the message that sex is not innocent. This also sends contradictory ideas to the adolescents - they are not sure of what to make of sexual pleasures, do they have to be guilty about it, do they have to have anxiety about it, or do they have to fear the fact they are experiencing some pleasure from sex?

The systematic exclusion mechanism occurs in school to exclude positive role models, positive messages, and positive images of gays and lesbians with an aim of making homosexuality invisible and to privilege heterosexuality (Herr, 1997). This systematic exclusion of positive role models legitimizes violence against gay and lesbian student by the other students and teachers as well because the only thing they learn about this sector of the population are all the 'dangerous and bad' things they are fed with by the school due to homophobia. For example educators in the school are working to

interrupt racist discourses in the school, they are still unlikely to hear or comment on remarks expressed by all students or professional peers that are derogatory to young gays and lesbians (Herr, 1997). This renders this group of students to be victims of hate crime as well. On the other hand, the gay and lesbian youth is always frustrated by the unavailability of information on homosexuality because they also do not understand what is happening to them, they want to talk to someone about why they are different, but there is always no one to talk to, and also no resources to read so that they could more about themselves. This denial of positive material and role models disadvantages both the heterosexuals and the homosexuals alike. The homosexuals are denied resources that could help them understand who they are, while for the heterosexuals, it denies them the chance to know more about the differences they have with homosexuals. Such information, if gained with an open mind could minimize the level of homophobia that is engrained in their minds through the stereotypes about homosexuals. D'Augelli (1992) points out, young gays and lesbians are often deleted from the formal curriculum, and yet the hidden curriculum that devalues the existence and contributions of gay men and lesbians is very clear.

Adolescent homosexuality is a highly complex, controversial, and emotionally charged subject. Despite the educational establishment's interests in the health and well-being of its youth, issues of teen homosexuality have not been confronted (Uribe, 1994). Uribe (1994) continues to state some of the problems caused by the compulsory heterosexism practiced in school and say educators have a problem of having personal attitudes and biases against homosexuals. In the same way they were able to identify and relearn these negative attitudes and biases against other areas of ethnic minorities, they

can do the same with homosexuality if they want to. With homosexuality, they still have the myths and misinformation, hence the prevalence of the homophobic attitude. The most persistent misinformation, according to Uribe (1994) is that adolescent homosexuality is a passing phase. This notion permeates education in such a way that it devalues homosexual feelings and actually intensifies anxiety in some teenagers. Uribe also states that some adults are not able to understand how people can be homosexuals if they have not had any sex. Such a question is never even thought about with heterosexuals. This is a sign of marginalizing the homosexuals. Another fear on the part of educators is that discussing homosexuality will “create” it. Uribe says this comes from people who think that if schools could discuss issues of homosexuality, they would be promoting it. And yet some studies have shown that homosexuality cannot be promoted or created, a person is either born homosexual or heterosexual, there is no choice about that, the choice would be to deny it and live a lie or to come out and accept who you are.

Some studies also show that young people could benefit from sound and complete information about human sexuality and from clear and consistent messages that sexual orientation does not determine the value of a person, their mental health status, or their quality of life (Bidwell, 1988; Coleman, 1982; Gonsiorek, 1998; Remafedi, 1987).

School Personnel and Homosexuality

One of the places gay and lesbian teenagers may turn to for information and support is their schools: teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, school psychologists, and other school personnel. It is expected that educators should always be prepared to deal effectively with issues affecting their students' lives. Studies have shown that gay and lesbian students are at risk for suicide, alcoholism, substance abuse,

academic difficulties, poor peer relationships, and lowered self-esteem. One of the only places that can help these students in all these problems is the school. How well the school is positioned and prepared to deal with these students is another issue.

Sears (1991) in his study on the perceptions of gay and lesbian youth regarding attitudes of school personnel toward homosexuality found that generally, teachers, counselors, and administrators avoided the subject of homosexuality. The students viewed counselors as academic advisors and not personal advisors. It was also found that some educators harbor negative perspectives towards gays and lesbians. Sears found that Black teachers expressed more negative attitudes about homosexuality than their white counterparts, but were no more homophobic in their feelings toward gay and lesbians. Regarding the counselors, this study show that school counselors express negative attitudes and feelings about homosexuality and homosexual persons. Only a few felt that their administrators viewed homosexual concerns as legitimate topics for counselors to discuss with their students, and also only a few of these counselors had participated in any in-service programs to expand their knowledge about homosexuality.

In a study by Telljohann and Price (1993) on gay and lesbian students, most of them reported that they knew they were homosexuals, but only a few of them were able to discuss this with their counselors. Some of the respondents reported that homosexuality was discussed in their classes, but each time it was discussed, it was handled negatively. Some of the participants in this study reported that they could not find anyone supportive of them in school about their sexual orientation problems.

From the above, it is clear that the school personnel is not as prepared to deal with these issues as would be expected of them. On the other hand, they, as educators have a

significant impact on the feelings and experiences of students. Students look to educators for guidance and exposure to information about attitudes, knowledge, and feelings. Students perceive teacher attitudes and feelings through the teacher's verbal and nonverbal behavior. Gay and lesbian teenagers who are trying to determine teacher acceptance or rejection of homosexuality are particularly attuned to these cues. Teacher attitudes may provide the validation for the student's self-acceptance or self-rejection (Besner and Spungin, 1995).

In as much as individual school personnel have different and negative attitudes toward gay and lesbian youth, the National Education Association (NEA) (1994) is highly committed to justice and human rights. It recommends all school personnel to acknowledge diversity of the student body, including the presence of gay as well as non-gay students. It also wants school personnel to address gay and lesbian student needs in programs on self-esteem, adolescent development, human relations, pluralism and diversity, conflict reduction etc. It also wants school personnel to respect the confidentiality of students who confide the fact or suspicion of their homosexual orientation or who ask for assistance in this matter. NEA also wants school personnel to intervene to stop the harassment, including name-calling, of gay and lesbian students. According to the NEA, this should include sex education courses information about risk related to HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. School personnel should also work to ensure school policy that prevents the harassment of students. School personnel should become involved as volunteers in a community program designed to assist gay and lesbian students. And finally, the NEA calls for school personnel to work to promote the inclusion of in-service programs that help education employees deal effectively with

gay and lesbian youth (NEA, 1994).

Even though schools are a natural forum for presenting information to students, information about homosexuality has often been left out or excluded from the school curriculum. Besner and Spungin (1995) note with interest that other subjects that affect minority groups are covered, however, when it comes to homosexual minority, those issues are not covered. It seems logical these authors that the schools should also cover issues related to homosexual minorities as well. The NEA in 1988 also adopted a resolution on student sexual orientation that all persons, regardless of sexual orientation, should be afforded equal opportunity within the public education system. In its belief that every school district should provide counseling for students who are struggling with their sexual/gender orientation and in its recommendations to school districts, it encouraged them to come up with policies and programs that recognize some fundamental rights. For example the rights should include: the right to all students to attend schools free of verbal and physical harassment; the right to attend school where respect and dignity for all is standard; the right to have access to accurate information about themselves, free of negative judgment, and delivered by trained adults who not only inform them, but affirm them; the right to positive role models, both in person and the curriculum; the right to be included in all support programs that exist to help teenagers deal with the difficulties of adolescents; the right to attend schools where education, not survival, is a priority; and the right to a heritage free of crippling self-hate and unchallenged discrimination (NEA, 1994).

The NEA (1994) further encouraged schools districts to develop policies and programs for education and counseling to include: education (awareness training for staff,

expansion of school library, development of speakers bureau); school safety (elimination of harassment, training of staff in responding to victims of sexual harassment, and development of systems for reporting harassment); dropout prevention (sponsoring rap groups and peer counseling, inclusion of the gay and lesbian perspective in suicide and substance abuse prevention programs, and sponsoring of positive social programs: and support services(referrals, hot lines, and accessibility to community resources).

The National Education Association was not the only professional organization to be concerned with what goes on in school in relation to gay and lesbian youth. The Associational for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), in 1990 passed a resolution concerning sexual orientation. The ASCD resolution stated:

Recent studies indicate that some students experience discrimination and harassment because of their sexual orientation. ASCD believes that schools should demonstrate respect for dignity and worth of all students and that all students should be treated equitably. ASCD opposes discrimination and supports policies and programs that promote equity. Therefore, ASCD urges its members to develop policies, curriculum materials, and teaching strategies that do not discriminate on bases of sexual orientation. ASCD encourages schools to provide staff development training and materials to enable educators to better work with this at-risk student population. Finally, ASCD encourages its members to collaborate with other professional organizations toward this goal (ASCD, 1990).

The sentiments of the National Education Association (NEA) besides being supported by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) were also supported by the American School Health Association (ASHA). In 1990 ASHA also passed a resolution stating that sexual orientation should be addressed in the sexuality component of a comprehensive health education curriculum (Telljohann & Price, 1993).

Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, it is worth pointing out that the plight of the gay and lesbian youth was heard by a number of people, hence the various recommendations and resolutions from these professional organizations. All the issues raised by these organizations concerning sexual orientation were loud and clear enough to present a more adequate picture of what goes on in schools. It is only hoped that these recommendations and resolutions did not fall on deaf ears, it is only hoped that some of them were implemented. One other thing to note is the time, it at least more than five years that these resolutions were taken, there is need to dig further to find out if the situation has changed or not for the gay and lesbian students in school. Follow-up studies are needed on the plight of gay and lesbian youth in schools; to measure the attitudes of school personnel toward homosexuality and homosexual persons; to measure the visibility of homosexual students in schools; the harassment of homosexual students; the homophobic level of other students toward homosexuals.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Though this is very hard to swallow for a majority of people, it cannot be denied though that homosexuality is a sexual identity as is heterosexuality. As I come to this stage of this document I realize how much effort the homosexual community put in negotiating life each day of their lives in such a homophobic environment which we, (the heterosexual) have created. The hardship endured by the homosexual community, more especially the adolescents are counter to the democratic values we hold as society. We contradict ourselves when we talk of justice for all and yet there is a section of society that we marginalize without shame and guilt.

The studies I have used in this study suggested that when gay and lesbian people realize they are different from the 'norm' they begin to have mixed feelings about themselves. Their 'difference' from the rest of the society does not make them happy and satisfied about who they are. They struggle to question this difference. Some end up not coming to terms with it, while on the other hand, some eventually come to terms with their social reality. They go through a lot of internal trauma trying to make sense of their identity, (who they are), and what have they done to deserve this. Trying to come to terms with the identity crisis they find themselves in, impacts heavily on them mentally,

psychologically, emotionally, socially, economically, academically, and health-wise.

It has been presented here that society is so homophobic in such a way that any traits of femininity coming from males are suspected, and taken as a threat to the expected male masculinity. This then becomes an open door for the victimization of that individual. This victimization takes several forms that become extremely harsh for that individual - sometimes leading to death by suicide or murder. This is clearly stated by the Denver Post (2001) when reporting about the school violence. The victimization of anything suspicious of being homosexual has led to a great loss of innocent lives. By innocent here I do not mean that homosexual students are guilty of anything, but I mean that the element of compulsory heterosexuality by society has led to victimization of students for no apparent reason. They have been singled out and stigmatized for who they are, something they did not choose to be. The anti-gay perpetrators have legitimized cruelty and violence to a point that anything feminine on males is suspected, as it has been the case with the Paducah, Columbine, and Santana cases (Denver Post, 2001).

Women too, who have traits of masculinity are taken as a threat to the society because of the patriarchal ideology which instills that women should be there for men, and not for themselves. So for lesbians, women who are seen existing for the pleasure of other women, they are constructed as social deviants. This too opens a door for stigmatization, victimization, and harassment. Both gay and lesbian are stigmatized, and hated by the society. The prejudices the society holds against them is so harsh in such a way that institutional homophobia has been firmly engrained within the heterosexual community, thus legitimizing the ill treatment of this section of society without any interventions or recourse from law enforcers. Life becomes very difficult for this sector

of society.

This study has narrowed the trend of the arguments by following what is said about gay and lesbian adolescents within the school setting. The school too, has been found to be the main player in institutionalizing homophobia. This has been found to be very detrimental to the lives of all students. The role of the school has been put to question. According to the research presented here, it sends mixed messages to students. Homosexual students receive a different message from that received by heterosexual students. One wonders, is that what the school as an institution is meant to be, to discriminate between students?

This chapter concludes this study by looking at the following topics in relation to homosexuality: The role of the school, including the different types of curriculum found in school; the impact of the curriculum on the teachers and the students; how schools should be to address the needs of all students; the role of professional organizations on issues of human rights; what does this all mean to policy makers as a way forward.

The Role of the School

In discussing the role of school, I will divert a little and look at the role of school from an angle whereby I will discuss the purpose of school and schooling. Spring (1996) asserts that the school as an institution has several roles, and they are: to control the values, actions, and ideas of citizens. The school functions as an ideological management institution. By its curriculum and its culture, the school is used to consciously shape the social behavior of students. The school exists to instill belief in a particular economic, political, and social system to the learners. However, Spring also points out that the school also contains seeds of resistance and revolution, in as much as it can serve as an

instrument for control, it can also serve as an instrument for freedom (p. 200-201).

I concur with Spring because the studies I have analyzed for this study suggest that the school controls the learners by what is taught in school implicitly and explicitly. Coming to the purpose of school and schooling, I believe that if the purpose of schooling is understood, then it will be easier to understand how the school is situated in the whole debate about gay and lesbian students. For instance, if all school going age students attend school that imparts the same values, they will graduate from school having learnt those values. There are several purposes of schooling, and they come from different theoretical perspectives. The theoretical perspectives I am referring to are the social transmission theory: the interpretive theory, the conflict theory, critical theory, and the social transformation theory.

According to deMarrais & LeCompte (1999) functionalists believe that schooling serves to reinforce the existing social and political order use the social transmission theories. Functionalists view educational systems as one of the structures that carry out the function of transmission of attitudes, values, skills, and norms from one generation to another. The interpretive theory, on the other hand, views school as a place where meaning is constructed through the social interaction of people within the setting. The conflict theorists rather than accepting the status quo as natural, abhor the inequalities perpetuated by this reproduction. The conflict theorist employ three models to explain how the school promote inequality and perpetuate class structure distinction, and these models are economic reproduction, cultural reproduction, and hegemonic state reproduction. According to the conflict theorists, all the three models have an impact on what is taught in school. The critical theorists believe that the school is a site where

power struggles between the dominant and the subordinate groups take place. The school according to the critical theorists is to serve the interests of the dominant class, however, the individual student has the power in school to structure his/her own destiny and to ameliorate the oppressive nature of the institution. The transformation theory is a sociological theory based on the transformation, rather than the transmission of culture. The transformation theorists believe that the individual should be an active participant in socially constructing his/her own reality. The school should work to teach students to be identify the contradictions that affect their lives, they also should be aware of the forces that oppress them. With growth in awareness, they can begin to transform their lives (deMarrais & LeCompte, 1999).

Even though there are several theories about the purpose of school and schooling, the widely used theory is the social transmission theory known as the functional theory. Its social purpose for school are to promote a sense of social and moral responsibility; to serve as a site for the solution or amelioration of social problems; to supplement the efforts of other institutions of socialization, such as the family and the church (deMarrais & LeCompte, 1999, p.10). It should not come as a surprise then that the problems faced by the homosexual people are tabled here as a school agenda. I strongly believe that in school, a solution can emerge, since one of the perceived functions of school is to solve social problems. In as much as the school can offer some lasting solutions to this problem, the school itself is not innocent, it has played a crucial role in perpetuating the problem. The school is brought into question because of its curriculum. Through the curriculum, the school has allowed itself to play into the hands of the dominant culture, and has been used by the dominant culture to keep the hegemonic state of the society at

the expense of the subordinate culture. In this case the school has allowed itself to be used by the dominant heterosexual culture at the expense of the homosexual culture. The social actors, teachers have been used as instruments to maintain the status quo, and in this case, to maintain heterosexuality, thus rendering the school as a breeding ground for sexual harassment, hate crimes, homophobia, and social injustice (deMarrais & LeCompte, 1999).

The School Curriculum

What am I referring to by the school curriculum? A school curriculum, according to Marsh & Willis (1999), is an interrelated set of plans and experiences that a student undertakes under the guidance of a school. The curriculum is planned by the school, enacted by the teacher, and finally experienced by the student. According to Marsh & Willis, there are three types of curriculum: the formal curriculum, which is the interrelated set of plans and experiences that a student undertakes under the guidance of the school. It is planned by the school, enacted by the teacher, and finally experienced by the student; the null curriculum, which is all the missing or absent or omitted interrelated set of experiences that a student is supposed to undertake under the guidance of the school because of certain ideologies (All that is absent from the formal curriculum). And the hidden curriculum, which is often parts of the school environment that are unplanned or even unplannable such as unacknowledged attitudes, beliefs, codes of conduct, and conventions for social relationships that form the overall, but constantly shifting, milieu of school, which seem to exert more subtle but far greater influence over what students learn than does the formal curriculum (Marsh & Willis, 1999).

The hidden curriculum is the implicit curriculum that imparts beliefs and values to

students. It is found in messages and norms embedded in the classroom social behavior, values, and who will be successful or not in society, can be deduced from the answers to questions such as: how do schools group children? How much and what kinds of knowledge are presented by the teachers in these groups? How do teacher-student interactions differ from one level group to another? How are different people in society represented in the school text? Are there differences in the amount of information and types of content provided in the curriculum according to the ethnicity, social class, and gender categories of students? Which groups in the community benefit from the kinds of knowledge taught – and not taught – in the schools (deMarrais & LeCompte, 1999). The functions of the hidden curriculum have been variously identified as the inculcation of values, political socialization, training in obedience and docility, the perpetuation of traditional class structure – functions that may be characterized generally as social control (Vallance, 1973/74 in Giroux & Purpel, 1983).

For the purpose of this study, the types of curriculum research suggests have contributed to the problems faced by gay and lesbian students are the null curriculum and the hidden curriculum. Critical theorists like Giroux are said to have been critical about the hidden curriculum, he contends that the messages that are learnt informally by students as they go about their daily life are sometimes intentional outcomes of the formal structure and the school curriculum. In addition to the information about the social relationships in school life, the hidden curriculum conveys messages both through the form and content of school knowledge and through the “silence” or what is left out from the school curriculum (deMarrais & LeCompte, 1999, p.10). For an example, in chapter four there is evidence that the school formal curricular content does not positively

address homosexual issues. Homosexual people are also not used as positive role models in school. These silences/omissions and selective inclusions of the formal curriculum give students a clear but implicit message about what knowledge society considers to be valuable or acceptable and what is not. The purpose of the hidden curriculum in school is to produce specific outcomes for later life, particularly to prepare students to accept as legitimate specific patterns of social behavior and positions. In this study, research shows that students learn that it is okay to harass another student if that student is gay or lesbian. They get this message from the teacher who does not condemn harassment of gay and lesbian students. It has been suggested that teachers are the ones who initiate the name-calling and harassment against the students. Gay and lesbian students learn that they have to hide or deny their sexual orientation if they want to avoid being harassed in school.

How School Should Address the Needs of All Students

The school as a democratic institution has a duty to address the needs of all students. The curriculum should be presented in a form or way that does not promote inequality and discrimination on the students. The school should play a neutral role; it should not be seen to favor heterosexuality at the expense of homosexuality. Students should be made to feel that they have a right to freedom of knowledge and information. The school should help the students realize their weaknesses and help them overcome those weaknesses. The school should be a safe place for all students, free from harassments, homophobic attitudes, and prejudice, and this can be achieved by having school personnel who are supportive of all students, thus playing the loco parentis role more equitably.

The school should also be welcoming to gay and lesbian teachers, who then will

act as role models to the gay and lesbian adolescents. The students by realizing that their best teacher is gay or lesbian will learn to accept him or her because what they will be seeing will be the good in the teacher not the sexual aspect. The good in the teacher can only be seen once the school has started to take homosexual teachers as members of the profession without any discrimination. The starting point then would be to *teach against homophobia*. The teachers need to come out of the closet but can only do that if they are sure that the homophobic attitude against them is challenged.

Currently there still exists a deafening silence that teachers are reluctant to break. The resistance to break the silence on homosexual issues in school by educators is discussed by Weis & Fine (1993). Teachers are scared to break the silence because they would be said to be unduly influencing, or imposing values, or they could be suspected, too. These teachers do not realize that they are influencing the lives of their students by the fact that they stand with some authority in front of their students everyday. It cannot be overemphasized how influential teachers are in the lives of their students. By breaking the silence they can influence a lot of students, and ultimately turn the school into a safer place for all students. It has to be noted also that by remaining silent, teachers are communicating a very loud message.

It is the result of the lack of correct information that some teachers might believe they can encourage or recruit some students into homosexuality. Chapter three dealt with some of these myths, and it was made clear that a person cannot be recruited or encouraged into homosexuality because to be a homosexual you have to be born one. This also brings to light the mythical assumption that homosexuality is out there and that students are assumed heterosexuals but can only become homosexuals by being led into

it. This attitude is an indication of erasure of the homosexual people, they are assumed to be nonexistent. These are the reflections of the heterosexism ideologies that perpetuate the multiple layers of silence in school, thus rendering it unsafe for some students.

Teachers fear to break the silence on homosexuality in school because they would be said to be imposing their values and this is perceived to be the role of public education. However, Weis & Fine (1993) caution that by not talking, they are already passing a set of values that accepts the prejudice against lesbian and gay people, bolstering the authority of privileged groups. The task for the teachers is to consider the school climate that they help create and take responsibility for the outcomes that result from their value choices.

Finally the multiple layers of silence need to be broken in order for school to serve all students. School is not a matter of choice, but a right for every child. For many students the texture and tone of schooling, with its potential violence and victimization, weave together a powerful and often contradictory pattern of experiences. For some students, the silencing and oppression may result in feelings of confusion, depression, and alienation. Some may react by dropping out of school, abuse alcohol and drugs, or commit suicide. However, on the other hand, within the context of oppressive silencing, lesbian and gay students may develop strong sources of inner strength and a healthy sense of self and excel academically and socially. The accumulation of oppression and resistance cannot be denied though. These always have long lasting effects on them (Weis & Fine, 1993).

The Role of Other Professional Organizations in the Plight of Gay and Lesbian Students

The problems faced by gay and lesbian students have a long history and deeply grounded roots. The school cannot fight it on its own. There is need for a collected effort from other interested organizations. There is need for multiple voices from all fronts to be able to influence policy formation to protect the rights of gay and lesbian students in the school. There is need to make the school a safe a better place for all students. Efforts by the National Education Association (NEA) as discussed in chapter four can help promote some change in the harassment of students in school. The moves by this association show its views on promotion of human rights and justice for all students. It recommended that school personnel acknowledge diversity of the student body, including the presence of gay as well as non-gay students. This brings out the point that school personnel should not assume that all students are heterosexual, they should not deny the other group their existential rights by erasing it through the silences that are played out in the school. The NEA also wants school personnel to intervene to stop the harassment, including name-calling, of gay and lesbian students.

The National Education Association was not the only professional organization to be concerned with what goes on in school in relation to gay and lesbian youth. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), in 1990 passed a resolution concerning sexual orientation. This was also supported by the American School Health Association (ASHA), which in 1990 also passed a resolution stating that sexual orientation should be addressed in the sexuality component of a comprehensive health education curriculum (Telljohann & Price, 1993).

The magnitude of the problem cannot be denied. However, it is difficult to know where to start. The call for multiple voices can help give more voice to the voiceless gay and lesbian students. The silence has to be broken; and professional organizations are beginning to discuss along this. Therefore, more and more voices should come out and speak against institutional homophobia. By so doing, it will help in dealing with other related social problems that are always associated with homosexual people, and yet they are a threat to all people regardless of their sexual identity.

Implication for Policy Makers

Unless policy makers realize the danger behind the institutional homophobia in school, the harassment of gay and lesbian students will never stop. Policy makers are the major players here. There is need for policies that seek to protect gay and lesbian students in school if their dreams as future citizens have to be realized. There is need for policies that try to address anti-gay harassment in schools because sexual matters are very private matters, people end up taking actions, which are based on myths about homosexual people. In the process of pursuing their anti-gay agenda, lead other students to difficult and fatal situations. Their rights to education need not be taken away from them when they are pushed out of the school because of the negative climate. Policy makers need not end by formulating the policies; they also need to make sure that those policies are implemented. Education and schooling should be a right for every child without any reservations. Information given to the students should be the one to make a student be able to make informed choices out of all the choices presented to him or her. The policies should try to take care of the needs of all the students.

I need to point out that the situation in Swaziland is different from the American

situation in the sense that school violence is not comparable in these two countries. There has not been any study done on school violence in Swaziland, therefore it is not correct to say it does not exist. This is still a virgin ground for research in Swaziland.

According to Teljohann & Price (1993), the most common problem homosexual adolescents face, as a rejected minority is isolation. Hetrick & Martin (1987) say this is social isolation, emotional isolation, and cognitive isolation. These feelings of being alone, having no one to talk to, doubting one's self-worth, and constantly feeling anxious over the discovery may lead to an internalized homophobia. The internalized homophobia can be very dangerous to the growing adolescent, therefore interventions are needed. Schools should consider developing support groups for homosexual students or at least develop a referral system within the community where community agencies, most likely to be free of conservative encumbrances characteristic of most school systems, can provide the support system which these students claim they want. Such a climate can only exist where homophobia has been dealt with. The whole issue and the treatment of homosexuality can also be viewed as a political one. So long as political leaders are negative about homosexuals, it gives permission to the rest of the society to treat homosexuals in a negative way.

The Times of Swaziland (June, 1997) reported that the King of Swaziland urged Christians to accept homosexuals. Such a political statement has made people to start talking about the subject, both positively and negatively. Whatever their attitudes, it does not matter, the most important thing is that the silence has been broken. Homosexuality is still a major issue in Swaziland. There are those who talk about the issue, not knowing that they do not have factual information about the subject. For instance, one Senator

submitted in parliament that it was not okay for ambassadors on ambassadorial mission to leave their wives because that would promote homosexuality (Times of Swaziland, 1996). This point shows that there are a lot of misconceptions about homosexuality. People in power use their positions to paint whatever color they want on homosexuality for people to see it as bad. I feel people have a right to correct information. The studies in this study have shown that homosexuality cannot be promoted a person is born a homosexual.

On another point of privilege, another member of parliament accused bookshops for promoting the gay and lesbian association of Swaziland (GALESWA). The political muscle is shown here where an ordinary businessman is trying to give service to customers, then there comes the dominant group of the society to deny that service to the whole society. This is the control of knowledge and information by political leaders. I think the Swazi nation is torn apart on the issue of homosexuality.

With the review of the constitution in 1997, the homosexual community was urged to come out and make their submissions to the Constitutional Review Commission, so that the laws of the country embrace them (Times of Swaziland, 1997). With the homophobic attitudes displayed by prominent political leaders in the country, this sounded just like a window dressing for the outside world, the homosexual community never risked their lives to go and make those submissions.

What does this all mean for Swazi policy makers? It means they have to acknowledge that there are different sexual orientations among the society. They need to take time to know what this is all about so that they can make informed decisions in the policies they are forming. Therefore, there is need for workshops on sexuality and sexual

orientation for all the policy makers, including service provision officers like teacher, guidance counselors, education officials, health-care providers and all those directly related with students and school life. Researchers should work hard to find out more about the homosexual community in Swaziland to be able to advise the policy makers on what interventions need to be taken to take care of this sector of society. All interventions should be supported by research. They should know that if there is a group of students that need support and understanding from the school personnel, that group is the homosexual group. They have no one to turn to other than the school for the correct information on who they are.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the role of the school and it is clear that when it comes to gay and lesbian people, the school has not done justice to them. The school has legitimize the prejudice and harassment of gay and lesbian students through the curriculum. Schools have proved to be unsafe for gay and lesbian students, and that has been detrimental to their lives. There is call for a united effort to fight against the plight of gay and lesbian students in school.

The plight of gay and lesbian students goes further than the eyes could see. I believe that there are a lot of other problems that they face but because they are such an invisible community, and homophobia has inhibited them so much so that they find it very hard to cry out for help. This is a challenge to all members of the society, more especially the “straight” community, there is need to try to understand what is going on and work on the homophobic attitudes and prejudices, to be able to see them and hear them. So long as we see homosexuals as abnormal we are not helping them into being

normal, we are worsening their situation. They should feel comfortable to come out and talk about their problems, and solutions to homophobic and anti-gay harassment should be offered where possible.

The point of having the homosexual people presenting their problems cannot be overemphasized. As I pointed out earlier on that this study is not to liberate them but to sensitize the Swazi society about these issues, I strongly believe that if we (the straight people) talk on their behalf, we might misrepresent them, there is need for collaboration and working together in researching the needs of homosexual adolescents to be addressed by policy. In order for them to collaborate, they have to be “out” without any fear of intimidation or victimization. Talking about the outsider/insider (researcher/researched) stance in research, Smith (1999) says in as much as many researcher think that by their research they are giving voice to the marginalized groups, they are actually not telling the story of those groups they claim to be talking on their behalf. Those marginalized people have an alternative story to tell. It is on this ground that I feel it is important to sensitize the society so that it can be accepting to the homosexual adolescents, and the rest of the homosexual community so that they can be “out” to tell their own “story”, take part in the formation of policies that will address their needs.

Currently I am aware that in the case of Swaziland it would be very difficult for the insider to discuss these issues because they are not out. At the same time, it is equally extremely difficult for the outsider to discuss these issues. As an outsider one feels threatened and overwhelmed by the dangers that exist in the society when such sensitive issues are brought up. There is need to provide space for the insider to tell his/her story. There is need to interrupt the comfort zone enjoyed by the heterosexual community in

order to provide space that the voice of the homosexual community could be heard. They need not be objects of research, but they should be active participants in their own liberation.

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