DIFFERENT DISCOURSES ON SEXUALITY EDUCATION: EXAMINING SEXUALITY EDUCATION MATERIALS IN MUMBAI

Introduction

Sexuality education is a body of knowledge which is pedagogically institutionalised. Sexuality, which is central to this body of knowledge, is discussed in a number of ways within this knowledge system. It is talked about within the a) language of Rights, b) medical language: sexual and reproductive health, c) language of prevention: of pregnancy and diseases (HIV/AIDS, STDs, STIs and contraception), d) language of development, e) language of violence- child sexual abuse, rape, sexual violence, and f) language of pleasure and desire: masturbation, orgasm, romance/relationships. In this chapter I would like to examine how different materials on sexuality education in English, produced in Mumbai- and also Delhi- broadly engage with sexuality education. I also understand the discourse of pleasure and desire in these materials. This will entail looking at the discourses of romance/relationships/love and masturbation within these texts. While several ‘languages’ are employed to speak about sexuality, I dwell only on the language of pleasure and desire. I do not focus on the others even though they might appear at some point in the chapter.

One of the key debates in scholarship on sexuality education over the last three decades has been the discussion of pleasure and desire within the curriculum. The discussion of desire within sexuality education became important with Michelle Fine’s (1988) pronouncement about the ‘missing discourse of desire’. Since then scholarship on sexuality education has sought to discuss desire and pleasure. Recent scholarship in the Western context (Allen, Rasmussen and Quinlivan, 2014) has looked at the politics of pleasure in sexuality education to understand what pleasure does. The authors note that “the intention is not to question pleasure’s politics so as to simply dismiss its inclusion, but to deconstruct it in order to understand what pleasure might really ‘do’, and how that ‘doing’ is also regulatory” (Allen et al, 2014: 4). I would like to understand the discourse of pleasure in sexuality education by expanding its definition beyond the narrow confines of sexual pleasure and look at the discussions on romance/relationships/love and masturbation. Examining diverse English language materials available mostly in Mumbai, and some in Delhi, I tentatively divide them into four different discourses acknowledging that the divisions and its borders are always porous and contentious. These four discourses are: the feminist discourse, the Christian
discourse, the sexological discourse, and the State discourse. I specifically chose these four discourses because in Mumbai, Roman Catholic organisations, sexologists, women’s groups and the State have been actively producing materials on sexuality education and engaging with it. These four discourses are not monolithic and self-contained; there are a number of fractures and inconsistencies within them and the categorisation of each discourse- as Christian, feminist, State and sexological- is precarious and contingent. Yet, nonetheless such categorisation is useful to make certain generalisations and arguments about how diversely and richly sexuality education is imagined.

To examine the State discourse I read the AIDS Prevention Education Programme workbook for teachers in secondary schools in Mumbai produced by Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) Public Health Department in collaboration with Mumbai District AIDS Control Society (MDACS) and UNICEF. Within the feminist discourse I will examine the materials on sexuality education produced by the women’s groups Vacha in Mumbai and by the NGOs TARSHI and Nirantar in New Delhi; within the Christian discourse I will examine material produced by Anne de Braganca Cunha, Dr Anthony Grugni and Mumbai’s Archdiocesan Board of Education which are used in convent schools in Mumbai; within the sexological discourse I will look at a brief history of sexology in India and the current writings of two sexologists in Mumbai: Mahindra Watsa and Rajan Bhonsle who are both deeply invested in sexuality education.

In the following sections, I engage with each of these four discourses in turn, reflecting on the ways in which meanings around desire are formed while also locating these reflections within the larger picture of how different discourses contribute to the body of knowledge on sexuality education in urban India. I argue that the feminist discourse brings in the social and political context of sexuality education to the fore, stressing on a Rights-based discourse; the Christian organisation brings to the curriculum an extensive discussion of romance, relationships and love; the State discourse brings in the scientific and the moral discourse on sexuality education; and the sexological discourse, while located within the scientific, crucially brings in the discussion of sexual pleasure. Understanding the crucial contributions of the different discourses to sexuality education also allows me to argue that each discourse in addition to whatever problems it might have, is also rather limited in its vision of sexuality education.
State Discourse on Sexuality Education in Mumbai

The State discourse on sexuality education is not monolithic and can be analysed through the Adolescence Education Programme (AEP), or the lifeskills education programme, or the various other programmes launched in the different states: such as the YUVA programme in Delhi. Focusing the research chiefly on Mumbai, I will only examine in detail the AIDS Prevention Education Programme (APEP) which is a workbook for teachers in secondary schools in Mumbai. In this section I will chart a brief history of the larger State discourse in India to frame the larger State discourse and then specifically examine the APEP programme. I will read how the APEP specifically discusses romance and relationships and point to the similarities with some of the Christian materials analysed earlier. I locate the APEP within a modernist discourse.

Discourse of Population and AIDS Control

Historically, the State discourses on adolescent sexuality education in India have been located within the population control policies and the AIDS prevention drives. These State discourses of sexuality education are located within a discourse of gendered modernity. Nandini Manjrekar (2008) has traced the slippery history of sexuality education in India. She claims that sexuality education has historically emerged out of a concern for population control (Manjrekar 2008: 29). She argues that the concern for population control emerged in the 1950s with the launch of the family planning programme in 1952 (Manjrekar 2008: 29). I will trace here her arguments on the role of the state in sexuality education. Manjrekar argues that by 1970, the Indian government decided to have a population education programme to address what they perceived as the population problem. The school textbooks were one of the ways in which State ideologies were effectively propagated. In 1980 the National Population Education project was launched and the textbooks made during this time propagated the small family norm. The onus of under-development was placed on the poor, illiterate, mostly rural population whose sexual excesses leading to over-population were seen as the root cause of poverty and socio-economic backwardness and the poor were targeted as the main subjects of reform1 (Manjrekar 2008: 29).

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1 The poor have been blamed for having more children. But this is in response to national policies as well as to high infant mortality rates and in rural areas to the requirements of labour. Contrary to popular opinion, it is an informed ‘choice’ that they make. For a longer discussion, check Mamdani, Mahmood. (1972). The Myth of Population Control: Family, Class and Caste in an Indian Village. Monthly Press Review: New York.
At the same time, since population education was introduced in schools, adolescents became the subjects of population growth reforms and were addressed directly by the State through textbooks (Manjrekar 2008: 29). It may be a worthwhile exercise to reflect on Manjrekar’s argument by examining a twelfth standard biology textbook available on the NCERT website dealing with reproduction and reproductive health. The tone of the textbook is set in the beginning with the mention of family planning and how educating people about fertility, pregnant women and so on “would address the importance of bringing up socially conscious healthy families of desired size” (NCERT 2006: 58) while also addressing the problem of ‘uncontrolled population growth, sex-abuse and sex-related crimes’ for a healthy society. The section on ‘Population Explosion and Birth Control’ in the same textbook lays out the need of contraception for the ‘small family’ and to check population growth without which there would be a scarcity of basic amenities such as food clothing and shelter. To achieve this end of the small family, the textbook discusses at length some commonly used contraceptive methods to help prevent unwanted pregnancies, at the end of which the student is duly reminded of its purpose again: on how these methods play “a significant role in checking uncontrolled growth of population” (NCERT 2006: 62).

The entry into reproductive health for adolescents seems only legitimate through a discussion of family planning, having the desired family size and controlling population growth and its related problems of abuse and crime. The need for providing information on contraception to adolescents is carefully marked by a discourse of checking population growth and the resultant under-development. The underlying anxiety is that adolescents, if left to themselves, like the poor, would ‘indulge’ in all the unimaginable: unprotected sex leading to over-population and under-development and the opposite of the envisaged ‘healthy and socially responsible society’.

Manjrekar argues, that by 1994, there was a paradigm shift from targeting the poor to targeting adolescents. With the awareness that there was a large population of young people, between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five vulnerable to HIV and AIDS, the focus of Education Policies shifted to AIDS prevention for adolescents. In 2006 the controversial Adolescent Education Programme (AEP) in collaboration with the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) and UNICEF was launched in all secondary and higher secondary schools (Manjrekar 2008: 30).

The primary aim of the AEP was to prevent the spread of HIV-AIDS. Adolescents and youth were targeted as the subjects of AIDS prevention. The AEP manuals constructed adolescents as irresponsible, abusing substances, and suffering from mental and emotional stress and
adopter risky behaviour. Just like the poor of the population control drives, adolescents in these educational materials too were represented as irresponsible, abusing drugs, sexually and morally depraved and generally the cause of disrupting the moral and developmental values of the nation (Manjrekar 2008: 31).

The AEP was met with strong criticism from State Governments. The arguments made were that such a programme will corrupt youth, is inimical to Indian culture and values; that it will lead to experimentation, that it was a ploy of the United States to sell condoms and a Western import. To this effect, a petition jointly signed by Asha Sharma and Pratiba Naitthani was filed in 2007 in the Rajya Sabha asking to put on hold the sex education programme in schools. This Committee report chaired by Venkaiah Naidu (2009) found that there was no need to have AEP in the curriculum and that children should be told that sex before marriage is immoral, unethical and unhealthy; that consensual sex below sixteen years of age amounts to rape; and that they should be rather taught yoga and ayurveda. This attempt to re-instate conservative norms around sexuality and a hegemonic and monolithic idea of the nation and culture, along with the denial of all sexual activity outside the monogamous heterosexual marriage led to the banning of the AEP in some States in 2009.

In June 2014, Harsh Vardhan, a Right wing politician who was then the Health Minister, commented that the “so-called "sex education" should be banned and that yoga be made compulsory”. He later clarified that this statement of banning was in regard to the AEP. He said he supported a scientific and culturally acceptable pedagogy but was against vulgarity. This comment opens up the other aspect of the State discourse- that of sexuality deeply tied with ‘national culture’ and against any obscenity, vulgarity and so on, but yet accepting science and technology. The AEP and Rajya Shabha Committee Petition need to be read as actively constructing an idea of the nation- which is obviously Hindu- opposed to a promiscuous and vulgar West.

I argue that the location of the State discourse lies in what Dilip Gaonkar (1999) calls a societal modernity- that of order and orderliness, a product of the enlightenment project of reason and rationality. The linking of individual and family behaviour to national welfare and development of the nation is part of an embodied project of modernity. Nilanjana Chatterjee and Nancy Riley (2001) argue that the population control programme in India was a gendered

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3 The Rajya Sabha Committee Petition Report pre-dates the raising of age of consent from 16 to 18.

4 Maharashtra was one of the states where the AEP was banned.
project which constructed the body of the woman in a particular way. They examine how birth control and women’s bodies were sites for the nation’s modern project of development. Similarly, adolescents’ bodies, and by default the female adolescent’s body, becomes the site of control for development purposes and to produce the ideal citizen and ‘responsible mother’. These discourses also place the girl squarely back within unequal patriarchal power structures and deny her any form of agency/autonomy. Consent seems to be missing from the whole discourse and any form of sex outside the heterosexual marriage is deemed dangerous for the nation.

Dilip Gaonkar (1999) discusses how “modernity today is global and multiple and no longer has a governing centre and master-narratives to accompany it (13)”. He also notes how “to think in terms of alternative modernities does not mean one blithely abandons the Western discourse on modernity. That is virtually impossible. Modernity has travelled from the West to the rest of the world not only in terms of cultural forms, social practices, and institutional arrangements but also as a form of discourse that interrogates the present” (13). While modernity is multiple, global and alternative, it is also deeply tied with the ‘older’ model of Western modernity which emerged with the Enlightenment project of science and rationality. In the context of the State discourse of sexuality education, as seen in the APEP, the effort is to stick to scientific modernity and to cast multiple modernities as abject.

The AIDS Prevention Education Programme (APEP) Workbook in Mumbai

The AIDS Prevention Education Programme (2001) is a workbook for teachers in secondary Schools in Mumbai. It is produced by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) Public Health Department in collaboration with Mumbai District AIDS Control Society (MDACS) and UNICEF; it has been compiled by: Dr Vinodini Desai, a retired Executive Health Officer, BMC, Dr Thelma Sequeira, AHO (Schools) BMC, Projects Coordinator, APEP, Mumbai and Dr Sanjana Bharadwaj Assistant Coordinator, APEP, Mumbai.

APEP emerged from a teachers’ training programme conducted by the Public Health Department since 1998 in schools in Mumbai. The workbook describes the programme in the following manner: “Nodal teachers in turn impart the knowledge to the students in their respective schools. A need for the workbook was felt to bring consistency, uniformity and accuracy in dealing with these important subjects of sexuality, life skills and HIV/AIDS among adolescent youth.” (v) The work started in “51 municipal schools [and] expanded to
private schools in 1995 and 199 schools were covered. [This] steadily expanded every year: 1999-2000 [when] 520 schools were covered.” (4)

The workbook is addressed to those between the ages of ten and twenty-five who require HIV and AIDS prevention programmes. The age group is very large, since it clubs adolescents and young adults in the same age category. The entire workbook has a developmental approach to adolescence- categorising adolescence with characteristics which are risky: experimentation, rebellion, mood swings, raging hormones and so on. These set of characteristics are sought to be ‘reigned’ in by sexuality education, and adolescents are sought to be made ‘responsible’. This development approach also assumes that once one becomes a young adult, one will be more ‘responsible’ will not ‘experiment’ or exhibit any ‘risky’ behaviour as seen typically characterising adolescence.

Myths and misconceptions regarding sexuality are addressed in detail and in a non-judgemental manner. These address menstrual taboos, nocturnal emissions, masturbation, circumcision, homosexuality, virginity, vasectomy and tubectomy (8-14). It categorically states that it is the male partner who determines the sex of the baby. Sex is not explicitly within the marriage since there is no talk of husband and wife, but rather of female and partner. It also clarifies the myth that sexuality education will lead to more experimentation, and states studies which say that sexual activity decreases because of these programmes.

Masturbation is seen in a positive light. It is termed as “normal and healthy. Masturbation is an activity usually begun in early adolescence. Masturbation is one way of satisfying one’s sexual urge and is normal and healthy” (10). It corrects that myth that masturbation is practiced exclusively by males by stating that “masturbation is a method to release sexual tension/excitement that occur in young persons. It is not an exclusive male preserve but females also masturbate. Statistically more than 90% male masturbate, in females the percentage is 35-60%.” (12). This discussion of masturbation, among other things, is done through two columns, one of myth and the other of fact. This seems to be a common mode of understanding sexuality within textbooks and is used in sexological and NGO texts as well. This is an example of the way scientific modernity structures understandings of sexuality. The ‘facts’ represent reason and rationality as opposed to the ‘myths’ of pre-modernity.

The APEP has a section where they discuss how they have enlisted support from parents to teach the AIDS prevention programme. There is a brief discussion of population control, where a large population is seen as problematic. While there is a discussion of sexual relationships and sexual intercourse, it is done in a moralistic manner. Sexual relationships, which are heterosexual, are seen only as part of and subordinate to a romantic/"mature
emotional relationship’. Casual sex is examined in four ways: maturity, conquest, paid sex and peer pressure. But these are cast in a negative language. Sexual relationships seem non-existent outside romance and sex is seen as inferior to romance or a part of it. It is never legitimate outside romance or marriage.

Gayle Rubin’s (1984) hierarchy of the sex system is useful to think through the hierarchy of sex created here. Rubin maintains that there is an erotic pyramid with married heterosexuals on top, followed by unmarried ones. Solitary sex floats ambiguously. Below this are gay and lesbian couples in long term relationships. The most despised are transsexuals, transvestites, fetishists, sadomasochists, sex workers and porn models. The APEP does not discuss all these forms of sexuality, but it is clear that they similarly place married couples on top of their pyramid and place casual sex at the bottom.

Despite the workbook being titled AIDS prevention, the discussion of AIDS and its prevention occupies only a small chapter in the book. Surprisingly there is an emphasis on the discussion of love and attraction; but this is done with a regulatory tone. There is a contradiction within the text itself, between what is said in the fact-myth section and what is explained elsewhere. The ‘scientific’ discourse allows for more non-judgemental explorations of sexuality while the sections on love and infatuation slip into a religious discourse similar to the Christian discourse espoused by Grugni which I will discuss later. Similar to the Christian discourse, there is a difference between love and infatuation where infatuation is associated with sex and romance is associated with love. Love is deemed to be higher than infatuation/sex. Sex is sacred, not exploitative, and a ‘total gift of oneself’. Sex is not to be used “as a weapon of domination or retaliation but as an expression of the oneness of mind, heart and life.” Pleasure and sexuality are understood through the paradigm of love: “the pleasure of sex is meant not only for procreation but also reflects the joy of love.” (68) While sex is discussed within Rubin’s hierarchy of the sex system, there is the beginning of a discussion of pleasure. But this is circumscribed by romance and love. The workbook makes it very clear that sex can only be located either within a heterosexual marriage or a long term romantic relationship. Casual sex or sex work are not recognised at all.

Nirantar’s review of West Bengal textbooks called Textbook Regimes (2009), written by Kavita Panjabi and Paromita Chakravarti, has examined the Lifestyle Education book of West Bengal which is produced as a teacher’s manual. This review describes the State material with deep insight and is useful to read the APEP material as well. The authors of the review state that the Lifestyle Education manual “suffers from a split between an ‘objective’, ‘scientific’ medical discourse on the one hand, which seeks to demystify misconceptions about bodies
and infections, and a dogmatic, moralistic discourse which valorises denial, on the other” (Panjabi and Chakravarti 2009: 136). They argue that the “category of the sociological seems curiously absent. Between the medical explication of sex and the moralistic denunciation of sex outside marriage, the issues of social construction of sexuality and gender as well as of disease, health and medicine, and the problematic relationship of these constructions with moral discourses remain missing” (Panjabi and Chakravarti 2009: 136). This largely sums up the manner in which the State discourse around sexuality education is built.

The workbook ends with an interesting exercise, very different from the tone of the rest of the book. A worksheet with lines from popular Bombay cinema songs is included. Students are supposed to group these into three categories: friendship, infatuation or love (69). For instance some of the lines are:

“Tu cheez badi hai mast mast [Girl, you are a ravishing thing]
Ek ladki ko dekha to aisa laga, jaise… [This is how I felt when I saw a girl]
Hum Tum, ek kamre mein band ho, aur chaabi kho jaaye… [What if we were locked in a room together and the key got lost]
Yeh dosti ham nahn chodenge… [We would never break our friendship]
Pyar kiya to darna kya… [Why should we be afraid when we have loved]
Hum tum bane, ek duje ke liye… [We were made for each other]
Ankhiyaan milaye, kabhi ankhiyon churaye, kya tumne kiya jaadu… [Our eyes met, we stole glances, you created magic]” (Translation Mine. 69)

While there are no answer keys given, some of the lines speak for themselves. The line “yeh dosti ham nahn chodenge” is clearly about friendship. This line is taken from Sholay and while there might be a gay subtext in the film, this song is often taken to denote friendship. Other lines though play with multiple meanings. For instance the line “ankhiyaan milaye, kabhi ankhion churaye, kya tumne kiya jaadu” could easily be interpreted as infatuation, but it also marks the beginning of love. “Ek ladki ko dekha to aisa laga, jaise” is from an endearing love story set in colonial times and one would interpret it as standing in for love. But an infatuated young man could also sing that were he to see a young woman he was attracted to. Bombay cinema has a mixed vision of friendship and love. For instance Kuch Kuch Hota Hai has a vision of love as friendship. Other films like Maine Pyaar Kiya and Hum Tum discuss how a boy and a girl cannot be friends since romance and love get in the way. There are fine lines dividing the constructed categories of love and infatuation. These songs highlight the ambiguity between these different emotions.
Both the Christian and the State materials want adolescents to be able to make a distinction between friendship, love and infatuation. This shows us the intimate links between the production of the State discourse in APEP and the Christian discourse in Mumbai. The APEP is not a State discourse divorced from any geo-political space. It borrows from other books published in Mumbai. This points to the specific way in which the APEP curriculum emerges in Mumbai. For instance, many of the sections on masturbation in the APEP are paraphrased from the Roman Catholic doctor/counsellor Anthony Grugni’s book. Grugni’s book came out a few years earlier to the APEP and there is all probability that those who formulated the APEP consulted Grugni’s book. There are considerable overlaps between Grugni’s book—which will be analysed later- and the APEP.

The State discourse on sexuality education has been discussed by Panjabi, Chakravarti and Manjrekar in the larger Indian and specifically West Bengal context. All three understand this discourse as located within scientific modernity, morality and population control. In the geo-political space of Mumbai, the State discourse does manifest these concerns; but in addition, it also makes use of Bombay cinema and draws from the work of certain Christian writers on sexuality education. Divisions of love, infatuation, friendship, understandings of masturbation are taken from Anthony Grugni’s books, which is specific to the geo-political space of Mumbai.

**Feminist Discourse on Sexuality Education: Vacha, TARSHI and Nirantar**

The feminist discourse on sexuality education is not monolithic. While there are many strands of feminism, a particular strand which speaks the language of human rights, has been at the forefront in producing sexuality education materials. A rights-based approach to sexuality cannot always be classified as feminist. But the organisations which produce these materials nonetheless call themselves feminist and do demonstrate certain feminist understandings of sexuality. The feminist discourse that I discuss here belongs to a very particular strand which doesn’t exhaust all feminist imaginations of sexuality education. It might be productive in that case to explore how a feminist imagination of sexuality education speaks to an explicitly rights-based one. But that is outside the scope of the current discussion which only examines the limits of these discourses and what they bring to the curriculum.

While there is no scholarly work on the kind of material on sexuality education available in urban India, a few non-governmental organisations such as Vacha in Mumbai and Nirantar in Delhi have produced reports which review the materials on sexuality education. In this
section I examine the reports produced by these organisations to see what kind of material is reviewed, what this material and the reports say about sexuality education and pleasure/desire. Following this I examine the texts for students, teachers and parents produced by TARSHI, an organisation based in Delhi, drawing up the links it has with the reports produced by Nirantar and Vacha. This will allow one to understand what the feminist discourse on sexuality education is and what its limits are. I also examine how this discourse articulates concerns around adolescent love and relationships.

Nirantar is a centre for gender and education based in Delhi and established in 1993. Since its inception in 1993, it has been involved with the women’s movement and the democratic rights movements. Their website explicitly states that they bring a feminist perspective and democratic rights movement perspective to their work. The organisation further describes itself in the following manner: “Nirantar works towards enabling empowering education, especially for girls and women from marginalised communities. We seek to promote transformatory formal and non-formal learning processes which enable the marginalised to better understand and address their realities. Our focus on gender interlinks strongly with other social dimensions, in particular those of caste, sexuality and religion. ... Nirantar also works at the community level and undertakes research and advocacy, particularly on critical issues which need greater attention from the State as well as civil society....”

Nirantar has been intimately involved with working and negotiating with the State when it comes to gender and education. On their website, they elaborate on their engagement with the State on the Adolescence Education Programme:

Nirantar was intensively involved in the process of revising the Adolescence Education Programme as outlined by NCERT. This engagement involved participation in consultations, a series of working committee meetings, and drafting sections (Process of Growing up) of the training materials for the Adolescence Education Programme “Training and Resource Materials” • NCERT, September 2010. The revised approach and materials have addressed several problems with the earlier AEP material published in 1999, which tended to view adolescence in a negative light, focussing entirely on problems, dangers and disease, although there is still need for further strengthening. The process involved a number of other players, including other civil society groups working on issues of gender and sexuality as well as UNFPA. Nirantar effectively lobbied for discussion and articulation of Guiding Principles of Adolescence Education in order that overall key principles guide the more detailed exercise of designing the content and training materials.

In 2007, sexuality education in schools was banned in twelve states in the country. In the wake of this, Nirantar along with NGOs, women’s groups, academics, researchers, educationists prepared the booklet Sexuality Education for Young People (2008) as part of their education series. This sought to address the need for sexuality education from a Rights-

based approach. It marked the shift from sex education to sexuality education, fore-grounded the voice of young people, countered myths and fears about sexuality education and traced a history of sexuality education by the State in India. The booklet spelt out the range of “rights that sexuality education would help fulfil” (21): the right to gender equality and sexual diversity, right to bodily integrity and right to freedom from violence. The book laid out the current challenges to sexuality education by reviewing material published by Government sponsored agencies in West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and New Delhi. The materials published by these agencies were found to be: instrumentalist, having an overwhelming focus on HIV AIDS, based on discipline and control with an emphasis on individual responsibility rather than social accountability, inadequate engagement with reproductive and sexual health and rights, no space for positive aspects of sexuality, no recognition of diversity, and an inadequate engagement with gender (37). Apart from the State material, there is also a brief review of the materials produced by NGOs, UNICEF and NACO. The NGO materials “appear to have certain strengths but they also reflect some of the same key limitations found in materials published by government agencies” (51). The last section of the book made key recommendations for sexuality education curriculum. It maintained that “the guiding principle of age appropriate information is a must”, the curriculum must not be “driven in an instrumentalist manner by the agenda of disease prevention… must not be fear based and prescriptive… must enable young people’s right to information… affirm a positive sense of self and also a positive approach to sexuality” (57-58). The “framework has to be one of social analysis, based on principles of equity and justice… must not reinforce notions of normal and natural… must be rooted in existing lived realities and reflect the diversities that exist and be non-judgemental and participatory” (59-60). The report also recommended certain law reforms as essential “to creating an enabling policy environment”: repeal of section 377, law on child sexual abuse and criminalisation of marital rape (61).

The report recommended that “the government should constitute a high-level committee to design the framework for the introduction of sexuality education in the core school curriculum”. Another recommendation discussed the kinds of expertise required to form the curriculum. It maintained that “all too often expertise in this area is seen to rest with professionals such as psychologists, doctors, consultants who have been working in the area of HIV and AIDS with educationists who have no particular focus in areas of gender and sexuality.” The report suggested that rather, those with “a perspective of gender justice and sexual rights would be essential for those involved in designing a sexuality education curriculum framework”. They also called for an inclusion of those working on “issues related to same-sex desire, disability and gender transgression” as well as “representative of women’s
groups and women’s studies that have a feminist perspective.” The other group that the report recommended to be included in curriculum development was youth groups who work with a “rights-based” perspective as well as youth “with same-sex desire, disability and gender transgression”. The other recommendations the report made are: that there should be material for students as well as teachers, that special material needs to be designed for those with disabilities, sexuality needs to be built into the curriculum and that intensive teacher training was necessary. The report marked the shift to a rights-based understanding of sexuality, located within the social and political and also challenged State understandings of sexuality. It was important since it provided a subversive voice amidst a loud debate on sexuality education within the media.

Despite this importance of the report, it might be useful to comment on the question of ‘expertise’ in curriculum reform in sexuality education. The Nirantar report categorically shifts the expertise from psychologists, doctors, and educationists to those with expertise on sexual rights, gender justice, disability, queer politics, women’s studies and a feminist perspective. While this shift itself is welcome and necessary within the historical time when it was written- in the wake of the ban of sex education- it might be short sighted in a long term understanding of sexuality education. This is because it excludes the insights that might be useful from psychology and education studies in an understanding of sexuality education. Jen Gilbert (2014) has convincingly argued for the importance of psychoanalysis and theories of learning in thinking afresh about sexuality education. Gilbert thinks from the ‘inside and outside’ of psychoanalysis and queer theory, providing us with useful readings from Winnicott, Freud, Sedgewick and Derrida to rethink sexuality education. Gilbert’s work helps us understand that in dismissing the work of psychology and education in sexuality education we might miss out on thinking more “comprehensively” about sexuality education. While the rights-based work has its place, it might not be entirely productive to do away with insights from education and psychology. This shift away from psychology, medical science, education studies in sexuality education also marks the approach that this particular feminist discourse on sexuality education takes. This shift points to the limits of such a discourse.

I also read the Nirantar report which was first published in 2008, as a response to the banning of sex education in several states in 2007 and as addressing itself to an adult community of those who debate on sexuality education. The report is meant to deconstruct the ways in which sex education is imagined within State curriculum and to present an imagination of sex education which is firmly located within the social which discusses sexual rights, diversity, justice and discrimination. The Nirantar report presents “a transformatory vision of education that seeks to build a critical understanding of social realities and help raise questions about
injustice” (58). While this is important, I read this as an adult desire of what sexuality education should do and be. While the report does acknowledge youth participation in curriculum development, it presents the voices of youth who are “aware” of their rights and formulate their desires for sexuality education along the lines of what the report imagines it to be. As I shall see in the later chapters, this is an adult imagination of sexuality education. Many of the young men I interviewed mentioned how it was most important for them to know ‘how to ask a girl out’ and did not really speak about ‘sexual rights’ or questions of ‘justice’ within the curriculum. This does not mean that the curriculum will not raise questions of justice, but that adolescents do not always think about sexuality and desire alongside questions of justice. To examine this fracture, one might digress a bit to recount a short but telling dialogue from the film Timeout (2015). Fourteen year old Gaurav asks his older brother Mihir- whom he idolises:

*Gaurav: ‘How do you tell if a girl likes you?’*

*Mihir: ‘You come to know. You feel awkward sometimes. But when you close your eyes you see her. It is kind of strange but, you feel like spending time together, like you want to be with them. You would not like it if there is any other guy around her.’ ~ Timeout (2015)*

As the film progresses and his idol-like older brother Mihir announces himself to be gay, Gaurav undergoes shock, anger, pain and finally reconciles with his brother’s sexual identity, to ask by the end of the film ‘how do you know if you like someone?’ The progression from knowing the other’s desire for oneself- (here manifested as heterosexual desire) to knowing one’s own desire for another (shifting to a more “gender-neutral” form of desire) marks the trajectory of the film. It is this knowledge of desires- one’s own and another’s - which forms part of learning about romance, relationships and sexuality during adolescence. While sexual rights and the social are an important understanding of sexuality, young people do not always necessarily experience it that way. It is in these ways that the Nirantar report becomes an adult desire of sexuality education. The report imagines what adults want- social justice and rights- while adolescents, as I shall see later, want something else- to know what is desire. As I shall see in an analysis of TARSHI’s materials on sexuality education, the work of Nirantar and TARSHI all converge in their larger imagination of sexuality education.

Nirantar also reviewed State-produced textbooks from different States: Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Gujarat from a feminist perspective. These were published as *Textbook Regimes*. The review of West Bengal textbooks, written by Kavita Panjabi and Paromita Chakravarti, has examined the Lifestyle Education book which is produced as a teacher’s manual. This book is described as “a compromise between Sex Education and Moral Science” (132). It
looks at all the problem-areas of the book: the manner in which it controls adolescents, centre sexuality and sexual activity within the heteronormative marriage, “suffers from a split between an ‘objective’, ‘scientific’ medical discourse on the one hand, which seeks to demystify misconceptions about bodies and infections, and a dogmatic, moralistic discourse which valourises denial, on the other. The category of the sociological seems curiously absent. Between the medical explication of sex and the moralistic denunciation of sex outside marriage, the issues of social construction of sexuality and gender as well as of disease, health and medicine, and the problematic relationship of these constructions with moral discourses remain missing” (Panjabi and Chakravarti 2009: 136).

The other organisation that has reviewed and engaged extensively with sexuality education materials is Vacha. Vacha Resource Centre for Women and Girls is a women’s group based in Mumbai which emerged during the 1980s. It was “initiated by women active in the women’s rights movement. It started as a resource centre to address need for space for discourse, resources and collective action. It was established and registered as a Trust in 1990. Since 1995 Vacha has focused working with adolescent girls and boys with special focus on girls. Vacha looks at its work with adolescents as a preventive measure against creation of vulnerabilities in women due to lack of education, exposure and opportunity. Vacha believes that empowered girls and sensitized boys have better chance of developing into adults who value equality and become productive citizens.”

One of Vacha’s publications includes a report titled *Review of IEC Material in Marathi, Hindi and Gujarati on General and Reproductive Health of Adolescent Girls* (2011). This review examines the Information Education Communication (IEC) materials in Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati over the last few decades and includes books (available in bookstores), booklets, training modules, workbooks, leaflets, flipbooks, educational kits, flashcards, audio-visual material and posters. Most of the material discusses sexual and reproductive health. Some focus on romance and relationships. Some books discuss love and attraction. These are available in bookstores and are for parents, teachers and often adolescents themselves, such as: *Kannyane* by Minakshi Mehta (Gujarati); *Laingik Shikshan* in Marathi by AP Choudari; *Swasthya Vaidhya* in Gujarati by Bapat Ravi; two books in Marathi by Vitthal Prabhu; Vayat Yetana in Marathi and Gujarati by Mangala Godbole. One training module addresses love and relationships: *Jhula Kishorvayin Mulinkarita Eka Jivanpayogi Abhyaskram* in Marathi by Neha Madhiwala et al. Two educational kits discuss love and relationships: one is titled *Badhate Hum* in Hindi produced by UNAIDS. This discusses ‘the feelings of attraction and

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love towards the opposite sex during adolescence’ (69); the other is titled *Sahjeevan: Yon Shiksha par ek Sansadhan Sanch* produced by Xaviers Institute of Communication, Mumbai in Hindi. One video produced by Comet Media called *Bali Umar ko Salaam* discusses relationships and attraction.

Vacha has reviewed a large number of materials on sexuality education produced for adolescents, teachers, parents and facilitators. But only a handful of these discuss love and attraction, most of which are books available in bookstores. Some are produced by various organisations. While it is recognised that the report is specifically looking at ‘general and reproductive health of adolescent girls’, most of the material is not looking at relationships outside the violence/abuse/risk prevention paradigm. Gender and sexual relationships are not discussed often, and if they are, it is within the violence and risk paradigm. There is no discussion of romance outside the violence/abuse paradigm. A hierarchy within sexuality education curriculum seems obvious, with a discussion of health and Rights at the top and discussions of love and attraction at the bottom. This is exemplified in a statement that Daiwashala Giri, a ‘well known health and gender trainer with women’s perspective’ (5) who was consulted for her opinion on the training material in Vacha’s report, makes: “IEC material should address the topic of menstruation before love and sexuality” (8). Interviews with adolescence (as seen in later chapters) point out the centrality and importance of romance and relationships to sexuality education.

The books and other material which discuss love and attraction are produced by urban, middle class and English speaking organisations such as Xaviers, Comet India and by individuals such as Vittal Prabhu and so on. These books are also available at bookstores and are often accessible by a certain middle class audience. As I have discussed in the introduction, population control is for the lower classes and sexuality education for the middle classes. Similarly, we see a divide between the sexuality education material that is produced for the lower classes and the middle classes. Health and risk prevention is meant for the lower classes and romance, love and relationships for the middle classes. Despite this, romance is discussed in a limited manner for the middle classes.

Vacha has reviewed only a certain kind of material on sexual and reproductive health. The report notes that “first we looked at our existing collection at Vacha Resource Centre. Then we contacted, forty–six NGOs with experience of working with adolescents, youth and women on health issues. Appeals were sent through networks such as feministindia, NCCIndia, JSA and SAForumSH seeking information about relevant IEC materials. Nineteen organisations were visited and material was procured from thirty two places through visits
and by post” (Vacha 2011: 3). This means that Vacha’s report has collected and reviewed only civil society material on sexuality education.

Nirantar and Vacha’s review of sexuality education materials have concentrated on State and civil society material. Normatively, school curriculum is produced by the State and it might be useful to review State material on sexuality education. But sexuality education in India is not restricted to State material only. There are a number of players and discourses involved in teaching sexuality education in schools in Mumbai. One of the reasons this is happening is because the State is abdicating its responsibility from producing materials and training teachers; but at the same time, as seen in the following sections, sexuality education is also historically located outside the State produced curriculum. While it is important to engage with the State and push for a ‘progressive’ State curriculum on sexuality education, it might not be productive to make the State and civil society the only two bodies that produce and debate knowledge on sexuality education. As seen in the Nirantar report, civil society tries to build a consensus on sexuality education, maintaining that: “a national consensus on the approach and content of sexuality education should be evolved by the NCERT and then adopted by the respective SCERTs with local modification”. This is limited since there is one central imagination which is ‘adapted’ to local contexts. As explored in the following sections, sexuality education and its imaginations spill in excess to any one central imagination.

The review of materials by Vacha and Nirantar also places textbooks and production of materials at the heart of the debate on sexuality education. While it is important to point at the problem areas of sexuality education, ‘educational reform’ of these textbooks is only a small part of engagement with sexuality education. Meenakshi Thapan (2015), in the context of curriculum studies in India, discusses how textbooks are only a ‘part’ of the life of a child in school:

An overemphasis on the influence of textbooks on children’s learning at school serves to underscore other important influencing characteristics in learning processes. It also tends to ignore the role children themselves play in the reception of knowledge, even in authoritarian and controlled settings. Textbooks are not always sacrosanct to students in school; they do appreciate that they have to be mastered for purposes of evaluation, but they are only one aspect of a life at school that encompasses more than official knowledge (Thapan 2015: 142).

While ‘textbook reform’ is necessary, it might not be productive to overemphasize every single detail. As Thapan suggests in the quote above, textbooks are also received by students in a certain manner, and material which we think might be ‘judgemental and harmful’ might not be received in the same manner by students. As explored in the following chapters, the school’s official discourse is not the only source of knowledge on sexuality and ‘educational
reform’ of sexuality education cannot replace the need for sexual knowledge outside the classroom.

Talking about Reproductive and Sexual Health Issues (TARSHI), a small organisation comprising of 3-5 staff members, started as an information and counselling helpline on sexual and reproductive health in the early 1990s in New Delhi. They state their vision and mission as:

We believe that all people have the right to sexual well being and to a self-affirming and enjoyable sexuality. TARSHI supports and enables people's control and agency over their sexual and reproductive health and well being through information dissemination, knowledge and perspective building, within a human rights framework. We work on sexual and reproductive health and rights, without restricting it to a disease-prevention, violence against women or sexual minorities framework, but rather approaching issues of sexuality from a broader and an affirmative, rights-based perspective.

TARSHI’s work is radical because it speaks of sexuality in the language of pleasure and desire and not violence. This sex-positive approach makes organisations like TARSHI subversive for the State as well as more mainstream understandings of sexuality. By the late 1990s, TARSHI started producing books on sexuality education. They developed two books for children: the Red Book (1999) for children between the ages of 10-14 and the Blue Book (1999) for children from 15 onwards, a Yellow Book for parents and an Orange Book for teachers. These books have a sex positive, non-instrumental and non-judgmental approach to sexuality. TARSHI’s textbooks are specifically aimed at middle class urban readers. In an interview with a participant M at the organisation, it was made clear that TARSHI drew only from their experience with the helpline and their classroom experience in middle class schools in Delhi.

Whether these books would be suitable for someone in a small town or rural area we would not be able to say since we hadn’t engaged with those groups. But given the fact that a lot of NGOs have used our books- it seems to have taken all right. We didn’t feel we were capable to speak to an audience we hadn’t engaged with. This was very clearly meant for an urban audience only.

The Red and Blue books are one of the few books produced in English for middle class students in urban India. The Red Book discusses girls’ and boys’ bodies, menstruation, sex, how babies are made, infections, abuse and a note to older people. The Blue Book for older adolescents is more extensive and discusses in addition relationships and the feelings involved in it. It discusses sexual identity in greater detail, contraception, HIV AIDS, sexual harassment, abuse, sexual safety and surviving the teen years. Since TARSHI advocates for

comprehensive sexuality education, the books acknowledge adolescents as sexual beings in a gentle and respectful manner. The tone of both books is non-judgemental, warm, and without many clinical words. The discussion on sex is positive and gentle throughout.

As you grow up you begin to feel attracted to certain people and want to express these feelings. Something happens in your body when you are with that person or are thinking about them. This is a different feeling from the loving feelings you have about other people. People express these feeling through doing things like holding hands, kissing, and other things that give them pleasure. Hugging and kissing your friends or your family is not sex. But hugging and kissing someone you are attracted to in a sexual way is part of sex... Excited, warm, tingly, thrilled, pleasurable, gentle, loved, wanted, special, happy – these are some things that people feel when they have sex (Red Book 12).

These descriptions are accompanied by illustrations of young people who have a happy and contented expression on their faces which conveys a feeling of warmth and happiness to the reader. Even masturbation is discussed in a positive manner:

What is masturbation? When people touch themselves and get sexually excited and do things to their own bodies that give them sexual pleasure, it is called masturbation. Masturbation may involve rubbing, stroking and caressing one’s own genitals. It is a normal and natural activity, done by boys and girls, men and women. As long as people take care to not hurt themselves and do not let it interfere with the other things they have to do (like studies, games etc.) there is no harm in masturbating (Red Book 16).

The Blue Book which is for adolescents above the age of fifteen, discusses romantic relationships, and more importantly some of the problems within a relationship. There seems to be a greater emphasis on the ‘dangers’ of a relationship in this section on romance. The Blue and Red Books, which are addressed to young people directly, speak about desire within a relationship and the feelings and problems that could arise when one person becomes dominating or abusive. Since the Red and Blue Books give us an overview of sexuality education, it does not dwell at length on romance and relationships and the complexities of desire.

The Orange Book (2010) is for teachers and discusses the need for comprehensive sexuality education, and has sections on: body image, basic concepts of gender and sexuality, anatomy, physiology, HIV and AIDS, harassment and abuse and how to handle sticky situations. The guiding principles of the book are: an affirmative approach to sexuality, responsiveness to changing needs, comprehensive understanding of sexuality, confidentiality and privacy, diversity, gender equity and non judgemental services and programmes. The core values that the book emphasises on are: choice, diversity, equality and respect (208-211).

The definition and contours of comprehensive sexuality education is laid down in the introduction and this includes: “young people’s likes, loves, and relationships, with each other, with teachers, with their parents and society at large… It views ‘sexuality’ holistically
and within the context of emotional and social development”’ (14). While this acknowledges love, relationship and emotions, none of the other sections discuss relationships. The section on how to handle sticky situations and the section “It’s in the News!” - which discusses newspaper stories that relate to gender and sexuality and how these can be “effective ways to address issues of class, gender, rights, and so on” (227) - bring in questions of love and relationships.

In the Sticky Situations section, there are three scenarios which discuss questions of love and relationships. In one scenario a male student throws a “piece of rolled up paper in the air. The teachers pick[s] it up when it [falls] near her. When she open[s] up the crumpled ball of paper, she [finds] it ha[s] ‘I love you’ written on it”. The teacher then gets furious and takes the boy to the principal’s office who summons the boy’s father. The book asks the reader to reflect on this situation and ask themselves how they would have reacted in this situation (216). In another scenario a teacher notices “boys and girls sitting together” all over the school and not being ashamed about it. The teacher wonders why this is so and why no other teacher is doing anything about it. In a third scenario, a teacher who shares a good relationship with her students is approached by a couple who are in love and who come from different religious communities. Their parents are against their relationship and are planning to take drastic action against it. The young student couple is scared and look to the teacher for help. The book asks the reader what the teacher should do in this case and how she will negotiate with the parents and the school authorities.

A number of scenarios of difficult relationships, taken from newspapers, are discussed in the “It’s in the News!” section of the Orange Book. All the discussions of love and relationships in this section revolve around inter-caste, inter-class or inter-religious love which challenges the social order. In these cases, the families either kill or severely injure the young couple or the couple are led to commit suicide.

The Orange book focuses on the ‘danger’ aspect of relationships. Simultaneously it discusses the social realities in which relationships are embedded. One section describes the everyday situations in which students and teachers might find themselves, but it also emphasises on the ‘troubles’ and ‘stickiness’ of love or how it might disrupt our understanding of what the classroom and school means. This book is addressed to teachers and allows them to think about how relationships can be normalised. It does not tell teachers how to act, but says that they must follow/subscribe to equality, diversity and respect. Love is difficult because of social structures and not the individual couple. While this is important to foreground, it assumes that the couple forms itself ‘automatically’ and that the difficulties of romance lie
‘outside’ the couple. Desire is presented as ‘stable’ within the couple and ‘unstable’ outside the couple. This presents us with a ‘partial picture’ of desire and romance among adolescents. While the Red and Blue Books do dwell on some of the complexities of desire within a relationship it does not talk at length about romance. The Red, Blue and Orange Books foreground how sexuality is embedded within social structures and power relations and that adolescent sexuality has to be understood in a non-judgemental and positive manner, respecting the autonomy of the adolescent sexual subject. While this shift is important, a complex and rich discussion of desire seems missing.

Vacha, Nirantar and TARSHI’s engagement with sexuality education brings in a discussion of justice and sexual rights and locates sexuality within a social and political context. A discussion of the complexities of desire is missing. Desire is complex between the couple and outside the couple as well. None of the materials I have examined acknowledge that. In a later chapter I discuss how desire is not stable and ‘natural’ even within a heterosexual, monogamous, endogamous relationship. An extensive discussion of desire is palpably present in the materials produced by certain Christian organisations.

**Christian Discourse on Sexuality Education in Mumbai**

In this section I examine some of the materials produced by various individuals who are Christians and whose materials are taught in Christian convent schools. There is no single Christian discourse on sexuality education. Many of the writers that I examine write with or against the grain of the Church. Yet I risk characterising these as Christian because these materials are either produced by the Archdiocesan Board, or are used in Christian convent schools and taught by self-proclaimed Christian teachers. I examine three texts: Anne de Braganca Cunha’s book *Get Set Grow: Ten Tools for Happy-Go-Healthy Teens* (2013), Dr Anthony Grugni’s *Exercises in Education to Love* (1997) and Mumbai’s Archdiocesan Board of Education’s *Sex Education and Aids/HIV Awareness For Std 9* (1997). I will examine the specific ways in which they articulate ideas of romance, relationships, love and masturbation.

Anne de Braganca Cunha is a Mumbai based counsellor and freelance writer with a special interest in relationships, sex, health and parenting. She has also written several children’s books and co-authored *Getting Pregnant*. Her book *Get Set Grow: Ten Tools for Happy-Go-Healthy Teens* (2013) is circulated amongst adolescent students in an elite Christian convent school located in an affluent neighbour in South Mumbai. The book discusses adolescence, growing up, negotiating with parents, friendship, tackling study time, romantic
relationships/dating, negotiating love and sex, considering career options, tackling ‘difficulties’ like pregnancy, contraception, AIDS, parents’ divorce, homosexuality, suicide; and building habits for a lifetime.

While this book is not technically on sexuality education, it does discuss adolescent sexuality and is addressed to adolescents, especially to English educated, urban, upper caste, upper-middle class/affluent ones. The tone of the book is peppy and tries to speak the language of adolescents themselves, without too much jargon. Two chapters discuss romance and relationships in detail. The chapter Be Ready, Before you Go Steady discusses how to find a boyfriend/girlfriend, being exclusive, saying no to sex, and breakups. The other chapter- Suss out Love, Sex Etcetera, Etcetera discusses true love, sex and contraception.

In Be Ready, Before you Go Steady, Cunha gives advice to both boys and girls about how to ‘go out exclusively with somebody’ (96). Firmly located within an upper caste, middle class context, she begins with how going out with somebody depends on “your family background and the society in which you live, and is not based on One Tree Hill or Pretty Little Liars. What is accepted by the Junejas maybe be scandalous for the Jains” (96). Advising the boys first, she notes how one needs to be subtle to make a girl show interest in you. Most girls, Cunha writes, “like intelligent guys, those who are confident of what they want and where they’re going. So that means knowing what you want and aiming for it with subtle aggression” (97). Cunha goes on to discuss rejection and how guys need to “be prepared to accept rejection” (97). She cites three reasons a girl might reject a guy: she might be ‘choosy’ about the guys she wants to date, she might be careful to enter into a new relationship if she experienced hurt in the previous ones, and lastly she might be ‘cordial’ one day and ‘standoffish’ the next. Cunha goes on to discuss the different places a guy might meet girls: at the library, classroom, at annual festivals, clubs, dance classes, gym, coaching classes, language classes, public speaking classes, college sports events. But, according to Cunha, the “best way to find that special girl is to use your interests, something which you like, in which you are at your social best. Like music, acting, politics, tennis, hiking. And become actively engaged in this area, which will be satisfying because you are then most likely to meet a kindred soul.” (98). Cunha goes on to list three kinds of ‘guys’ and what they might need to do to “lure a soul mate”. The “brainy” guy can offer to tutor the girl, the one with ‘brawn’ needs to lose his ‘lover boy image’ and the ‘bashful’ guy needs to ‘break the ice’.

Similarly, the latest dating application Truly Madly Unsingle released a video in 2015 called the Man Parade which lists different kinds of ‘eligible’ men in the following hierarchy: alpha

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males who are decision makers, risk takers and protector of women; men who have a degree from IIT-IIM who proudly display their ‘high IQ’ and salary- from five to fifty lakh rupees; the 36 gym regiment who display their biceps, triceps and six packs; the Dimple battalion who have won wars thanks to their cuteness weapons; the swagger squad who are in stealth mode whose motto is ‘you are my woofer, I am your amplifier’; the Joke-ismit regiment which is the life of every party and keeps everyone entertained by their fresh jokes; and everyone’s favourite, the sports quota unit, who are young and fit and who win over the whole stadium. While this list is more exhaustive than Cunha’s it demonstrates how in the last few years there is an increased attention on masculinities in popular media. But this does not challenge unequal gender relations.

In her effort to advise boys on how to get girls, Cunha creates a masculinity which, while not being hyper-masculine or macho, is nonetheless hard to achieve. She creates the imagination of an adolescent boy who treads the fine line between fun but serious, caring and affectionate but not ‘overly demonstrative in public’, poised but humorous and above all confident. If middle class women are expected to be sexually desirable yet sexually virtuous, upper class boys are expected to be ‘refined’, suave, poised, intelligent, caring, sensitive and yet fun and humorous.

Similar discursive patterns of ‘agony-aunt style advice’ to men can be seen in other media- in men’s lifestyle and health magazines in advice columns in newspapers and in Bombay cinema. Most of these media are located within a neo-liberal and postfeminist space, which like Cunha, talks about women’s empowerment and ‘girl power’ while maintaining gender inequalities. The boundaries of these discourses are also porous, in that the knowledge and advice to men about dating and relationships cross different media. This neo-liberal and postfeminist context produces also a specific masculinity where men are demanded to be sensitive yet ‘subtly aggressive’, caring and yet ‘confident’.

A number of English language men’s lifestyle magazines in India which address upper class, upper caste, urban men in India- GQ (Gentlemen’s Quarterly), Maxim, Man’s World, Men’s Health, The Man, FHM (For Him Magazine)- provide relationship advice to men. Relationship advice is different from ‘sex advice’ and can include how to know when your relationship has ended, to “23 relationship advice the modern Indian man needs to know”, to advice by celebrities and film stars. Most of this advice constructs a masculinity which does

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9 GQ (Gentlemen’s Quarterly), Maxim, Man’s World, Men’s Health, The Man, FHM (For Him Magazine).
not appear hegemonic, but is still unattainable and which does not in any way upset the gender hierarchies in place.

The other site of relationships advice for men (as well as women in this case) is in the form of newspaper columns. Cyrus Broacha, a comedian and TV anchor based in Mumbai, writes a weekly column in the newspaper the Hindustan Times where he answers letters from readers who need relationship advice. The questions range from how to approach a girl, how to not get teased with someone you don’t like, to long distance relationships and how to deal with a patriarchal husband. Broacha answers the questions with characteristic humour and empathy and often clears misconceptions about love and relationships. While a large number of questions are from men, there are also a number of questions from women who talk about their sexist husbands and boyfriends. Broacha deals with the latter in a firm manner, and even advices one of them to go the police if things get worse.

The other site where relationship advice is embedded is in Bombay cinema. The film Partner (2007) directed by David Dhawan and starring Salman Khan, Govinda and Katrina Kaif, is a remake of the popular Hollywood film Hitch and revolves around the notion of relationship advice and men’s inability to express their feelings towards women. Prem (Salman Khan) helps ‘unlucky’ men (only adults) with relationship advice and becomes a ‘love guru’. He teaches smart, stupid, nervous men how to love women and get married to them. But Prem doesn’t offer any advice to men who want have sex with women. The film posits juxtaposes ‘true love’ and sex where it is possible for a ‘love guru’ like Prem to help only those who are termed ‘love failures’ and find it hard to impress a girl. Prem maintains that he helps only those who ‘really need’ it, who are looking for love and who would otherwise fail were it not for his advice. Relationship advice is only for those who have ‘love’ for a woman and not ‘lust’, placing love as ‘higher, purer and worthier’ than ‘sex and lust’ within a relationship.

I borrow from Rosalind Gill’s (2009) term “mediated intimacy” to understand the work that this relationship advice does in Cunha’s text as well as the men’s magazines, the newspaper columns and Bombay cinema. Gill describes ‘mediated intimacy’ as “the ways in which different kinds of intimate relationality are constructed in different media sites – from news reports about forced marriages and celebrity motherhood, to ‘chick lit’ and parenting programmes” (346). Rosalind Gill argues that what these examples “of mediated intimacy offer, perhaps more powerfully than anything, is the perfect marriage (heteronormative metaphor intended!) of post-feminism and neoliberalism” (366). One notices how the ‘mediated intimacy’ in Cunha’s text as well as the men’s magazines and the film Partner play on a post-feminist sensibility all the while being embedded within a neo-liberal logic.
Cunha’s advice to boys (and as I shall see later, to girls too) becomes a site of ‘mediated intimacy’ where both boys and girls are required to ‘work on themselves’ and ‘manage’ their emotions, personalities, bodies and sexual selves to please the ‘other’. A particular kind of masculinity is constructed, one which ‘cajoles’ girls and yet is also ‘subtly aggressive’. This also means that only a particular kind of boy is capable of ‘success’ in relationships. While failure is acknowledged, it is also nonetheless meant to be avoided by fashioning oneself in a particular manner. Further, failure is one’s own fault- in much the same way that women are now responsible for their own looks- in a neoliberal, post-feminist world. The masculine self thus undergoes a particular scrutiny, where the focus is not just the body but also a list of qualities: modesty, loyalty, intellectual abilities, poise, sincerity as well as the relationship one has with girls- treating her like a lady.

Cunha advises the girls to increase the number of guys they meet by snowballing from the friends they have. If that is not possible, Cunha suggests that girls meet boys at common spaces such as filmmaking classes, or public speaking or join dramatics, computer studies, sports, karate, rap dancing or DJing. Going to another country or city is also advisable since it opens up ways to meet new boys. Cunha also advises girls to make the first move, citing a Texan psychologist who states that “men are very receptive to women who make the first move and perceive them as more intelligent, warmer and less selfish than the girl who sits beside the phone, waiting for it to ring” (100-101). Giving different scenarios, Cunha advises girls on how to ‘make the first move’ on a friend, on a stranger, on someone you meet at a party.

Despite this elaborate discussion of how to find a boyfriend/girlfriend, Cunha believes that these relationships are transient and of course heterosexual. She notes how adolescents will have many relationships before finding one to settle down with. She does not expect adolescents to be able to find a compatible life partner yet and suggests that they take the time to meet many people and have a series of relationships. This discussion doesn’t include any conversation about sexual intimacy in relationships and concentrates on “going to a movie, having an ice cream, partying, playing games together” as “good ways in which you can get to know each other as members of the opposite sex”. There is no explicit denial of sexual intimacy here. At the same time, sexual intimacy is not part of the practice of ‘getting to know each other’. Cunha follows this up with a warning on why it might not be a good idea to get into a sexual relationship and the ‘twelve good reasons to say no to sex’. Cunha then extensively discusses break ups, giving some ‘survival guides’ on overcoming a break up. The normalisation of breakups is important since it signals that relationships are transient and temporary.
The next chapter called *Suss out Love, Sex Etcetera, Etcetera* starts with a long discussion of what ‘true love’ is and isn’t. Cunha states that everyone ‘longs for true love’ but mistakes it for “that fluttery feeling that makes you long to be with one another every moment of the day. Others think it’s knowing you have a reasons for love, someone to care about and maybe spend your life with.” (114) Cunha clarifies that that is not true love: “real love is when you trust someone totally, when you feel completely at ease with him or her. It’s out there, but you’ll only find it when you truly love yourself. Sounds simple, doesn’t it? But psychologists say this is the block on which most people stumble. Because they feel unfulfilled in themselves, they have little to offer, little love to give. They confuse desire with love, when it’s desire to give that counts as true love” (114). Cunha goes on to list the danger and good signs of true love and how close you are to it. The danger signs are: when you are too demanding, when you don’t give the other person enough space and when you are ready to commit yet. The good signs are: when you can trust each other, when you have different interests, and when you listen to what the other person has to say (115).

Cunha follows this up with a flow chart which discusses how to know if you have found true love. With yes and no answers leading you to the end of the chart, Cunha tells you if it is lust, friendship or true love. According to the flow chart, true love is present only when “nothing gives you as much pleasure as doing something that you know will make him/her happy” (116). Lust is when one wants to spend all one’s time with the other person, and friendship is when one encourages the other person to grow but is not always willing to do something to make the other person happy.

Following this is a discussion of heterosexual peno-vaginal sex between a married couple. Cunha describes the sexual act- albeit in missionary position- in great detail and follows it up with a list of facts on how one might or might not get pregnant. She then goes on to discuss the different forms of contraception for both girls and boys.

Cunha’s long drawn discussions of love, sex and relationships relies on the expertise of psychologists. But Cunha’s advice reinforces gendered ways of being while also providing her with an opportunity to discuss different masculinities and different scenarios in which one might strike up a romance. Desire is not assumed to be automatic between the couple. Desire is something that requires ‘hardwork’ in the form of strategies of finding a romantic partner, of keeping their interest, of grooming oneself, of dealing with heartbreak, of self-introspection. Desire requires investment, strategy and planning and is not something that can be left to chance. While there is an acknowledgment and discussion of failure, this is not an acceptance of failure in romance. Rather, all the advice is meant to avoid failure, the way
Prem does in the movie *Partner*. And as the movie suggests, social class, taste and style form an integral part of the work of relationships and desire. Social mobility seems central to the work of desire. This work on desire is also done at an emotional level, and sexual activity is best avoided. Even if Cunha discusses love, romance, relationships and failure, they are all circumscribed within a language of inequality and a world view where a clear hierarchy between love and sex is imposed.

*Exercises in Education to Love* (1997) is a book used by teachers in a Christian all-boys’ school in South Mumbai and is written by Anthony Grugni who is a doctor and counsellor in Mumbai. The book draws from the letters Dr Grugni received from young people and which have been featured in *The Teenager* magazine published by the Bombay Pauline Periodicals Society. The Society publishes a monthly magazine called the Teenager Today which was founded in 1963 and claims to be India's only 'teenzine' or magazine 'focusing on teen issues’.

In the resource manual, Dr Grugni makes a distinction between infatuation and love. Infatuation, according to Grugni, “surfaces in the years of adolescence. It is a relationship of romantic feelings. It is highly emotional attraction. It includes sexual attraction and sexual feelings... It can make the infatuated person ecstatically happy” (21). Grugni also maintains that infatuation is 'troublesome' since it can make you depressed and it can be painful to be rejected by someone you 'think' you are in 'love with'. Infatuation is characterised in the manual by: "total absorption, jealousy, day dreams, loss of appetite, exclusiveness, love whisperings, possessiveness, fickleness, nearness and reassurance” (21).

Love, on the other hand, is seen as "deeper than emotional relationships. Examples are maternal, paternal love and love between two friends. The challenge of true love is to have depth and constancy in a relationship even when the ecstasy of emotions disappears" (21). Grugni goes on to characterise love as ‘eternal’. “Intrinsic to the meaning of love is the concept of foreverness, sacrifice, understanding, dedication, respect, generosity, forgiveness, permanence, kindness, compassion, sensitivity…” (21).

Dr Grugni draws up a list called "Love versus Infatuation" where he lays out the differences between love and infatuation. Love and infatuation are posited as opposites, where infatuation is associated with all the negative emotions of jealousy, urgency, self- gratification, worry, uncertainty, insecurity, disagreement, hurry and is purely sexual; love on the other hand is associated with ‘positive’ feelings of eternity, security, confidence, trust, acceptance, sacredness, positiveness, progress. Love, unlike infatuation, is also described in exalted terms "Love instead always makes you a better person than you were before. Love says 'I love you not only for what you are, but for what I am when I am with you’” (22). According to Dr
Grugni, the other key difference between love and infatuation also has to do with sexual intimacy between partners. “Infatuation is largely a matter of sex. Your relationship almost always wants to end up in physical intimacy. Sex is also a natural and spontaneous part of love but only a part. You can have fun together even without landing up in bed” (22). Sex seems central to infatuation, while sex is only a part of love, not the whole. In Grugni’s book we see an articulation of desire and pleasure that is divided into love and infatuation, both acquiring a distinct polarised set of affective registers. Sex and infatuation are lower in the hierarchy and love is a higher emotion.

The term infatuation is almost always specifically used for adolescents and not for adults. The use of infatuation to characterise adolescent romance makes adolescents’ romantic and sexual lives seem ‘incomplete’ and work-in-progress. Since adolescence is understood in a developmental mode, adolescent romance too is understood within a similar developmental mode through the use of the term infatuation. Characterising adolescent romance as infatuation pathologises and infantantalisies adolescents who are not mature. This forms part of the larger developmental discourse which characterises adolescence as a phase of ‘raging hormones’ where adolescents are not granted any form of agency and are always a ‘victims’ of their hormones. Grugni’s understanding of adolescent romance as infatuation infantalises them.

In another chapter, Dr Grugni discusses the ‘pros and cons’ of dating. He defines dating as “a process that happens when persons of the opposite sex decide to develop a particular friendship with each other by organizing outings together” (27). Romance and dating are acceptable as long as there is no sexual activity involved between the partners. Premarital sex as well as petting (foreplay, sexual arousal and non-penetrative sexual intimacy between partners) is cast in the language of danger and difficulties while premarital chastity is cast in the language of freedom and affirmation. In Grugni’s understanding, dating has positive effects such as allowing friendships to grow; helping partners to know each other better for a ‘lasting relationship’; and developing qualities such as independence from parents, responsibility and maturity (27). Grugni also sees dating as a space for ‘feeling at ease with a male-female partnership’ (27). He attributes the following ‘qualities’ to dating: “Some of the qualities dating helps foster in the couple are: to deepen mutual respect, to promote self-discipline, to grow in knowledge and admiration, to share values and goals” (27). In Grugni’s understanding, the ‘dangers’ of dating lie in physical and sexual intimacy. At the same time, he also discusses ‘mutuality’ of the relationship elaborating on how ‘decisions made are in the best interests of both’ (Emphasis original, 28).
Grugni draws a chart of a relationship’s linear progression from ‘casual acquaintance’ to ‘affection’, to ‘intimacy (infatuation)’, to ‘sexual intimacy’. The next step he characterises as the ‘beginning of continued sexual relationship’. The relationship chart ends at ‘sexual relationship’. Grugni resists from elaborating on the sexual relationship. His constant reference to the ‘limits of physical intimacy’ clearly announces his unwillingness to discuss sexuality and romance beyond the ‘limits’ of physical intimacy.

Grugni goes on to elaborate on what ‘dating partners should ask themselves’ and sets out a list of questions for young people to think through their negotiations with physical intimacy, clothes, drink/drugs, spending time with their partner and choice of partner. While many of the questions implicitly extol young people to stay within certain ‘limits’- sexual, moral and societal- and are prohibitive, they can also provide space for young people to think about relationships. Jen Gilbert recognises the role of ‘thinking’ in sex education and “characterises this thinking as self-knowledge, thinking about self-other relationships, and thinking about one’s own thoughts” (Chowkhani 2016a: 2). I also borrow from Gilbert’s understanding of “the different versions of ‘no’ that circulate through sex education” (80). One is the “repressive ‘no’ that marks a refusal to receive the anxious projections of youth and a ‘no’ that can return to youth the adult’s capacity for thoughtfulness” (80). I read Grugni’s following questions to youth- which are prohibitive and suspect physical intimacy- as a form of thoughtfulness.

- “What limit should we set to physical intimacy and signs of affection?
- How much time do we need alone?
- Is the time alone helping to build the relationship or it is beginning to sour?
- How much time is spent getting to know each other outside the realm of physical involvement?
- How much time is spent sharing a variety of activities with a variety of people?
- How does a prospective spouse react in different situations, to different age groups of people (the old, children, peers etc…)?
- Is what I wear on a date conducive to my self-respect and maintains the standards I set for physical intimacy?
- Have I said a clear no to drink and drugs on a date?
- What does the choice of the place chosen tell me about the tastes and interests of my partner?”

(29)

These questions are part of a heteronormative world view where premarital chastity seems non-negotiable and where it seems imperative that one ‘falls in love with’ and marries within one’s social class, caste and religion. These questions are aimed to provide ways to maintain
that worldview. But since few have raised questions of romance and relationships within sexuality education curriculum, this material can allow one to read against the grain. I borrow from Eve Sedgwick’s idea of reparative reading. She notes that there are “many ways selves and communities succeed in extracting sustenance from the objects of a culture – even of a culture whose avowed desire has often been not to sustain them” (151). While Grugni’s and Cunha’s world view and culture does not sustain most forms of democratic living, it is still possible to ‘extract’ from it a discussion of ‘love’. Grugni’s thoughtfulness in these questions, while extremely limited, can be a space for young people to think about the contours of their romantic relationships. It allows adolescents to think of their partners in relation with others, of the different kinds of intimacies within the relationship, of reading a partner’s personality through her/his choices and actions. While the questions are meant to prohibit young people from being sexually active, nothing stops the reader and the adolescent from taking these questions outside the context of prohibition to read it differently as a way to think about relationships. A resistant reading of these questions can subvert the paranoia and prohibitions present in these questions.

Grugni discusses how masturbation does not help in the process of growth. Nevertheless, a discussion on masturbation is included and a definition provided: “Masturbation means a solitary search for pleasure both for boys (among whom it is most common) and girls. It is easily performed by stimulation of the genital organs and is aimed at achieving an orgasm (an ecstatic climax of pleasure)” (30). This definition grudgingly acknowledges that girls also masturbate. It also includes a definition of orgasm and uses the word ‘pleasure’. Grugni dispels myths of semen loss and weakness caused by masturbation, but he also categorically states that masturbation ‘is not necessary’. According to Grugni, sexual tension can be relieved by the body through other means such as night fall (he does not mention anything about women’s release of sexual tension). He creates a hierarchy of bodily needs, by making eating, drinking as a necessity while placing sexual desire lower. Scholarship on sexuality and sexual rights have pointed out that sexual well being is a basic human right on par with other basic necessities like food, water shelter and so on. Elsewhere, Grugni describes masturbation as a self- centred activity.

Grugni discusses various questions he gets from adolescents. These are drawn from his columns in the magazine Teenager. Grugni responds with a knee jerk reaction and places the entire responsibility of confusion on adolescents themselves. He advises them to not venture into any sexual relationship. Grugni’s paranoid response to confusions regarding sexual relationships is to shut down all sexual relationships. Grugni pathologises adolescents by characterising them as being in a ‘hurry to establish emotional and even physical bonds’.
According to him adolescents ‘jump’ into relationships without understanding each other, which according to him leads to all sorts of ‘bitterness and misunderstandings’ (34-35). Grugni also discusses premarital sex as riddled with dangers. He advocates for premarital chastity, which he casts in a language of freedom: freedom from pregnancy before one is ready, from STDs/STIs, from contraceptives, from confusion.

Grugni’s seeks to indirectly address questions of violence, abuse and lack of consent by making a distinction between ‘true love’ and ‘infatuation’. He maintains that if a person is “motivated by ‘true love’” he/she will be loving and caring towards the partner and engage in consensual sex: “true love makes people more generous and open to each other and improves their behaviour and personality” (23). This articulation is specifically talking about ‘love’ between a committed couple and leaves out all other forms of romantic and sexual relationships where discussions of consent are essential. The idea of ‘true love’ as a remedy to violence is extremely limited since it does not allow one to address many other forms of violence which exist outside the narrow confines of a monogamous relationship.

Grugni understands male desire to be predatory; most of his stories and examples illustrate the ways in which young men seem irresponsible, violent, and coercive. At the same time Grugni also uses stories drawn from the magazine Teenager where many young men present various doubts. These stories unpack the ways in which young men experience love and relationships- as deeply felt emotions, as danger. Many of the stories also illustrate young men as confused, guilty about intergenerational or incestual relationships. Adolescent male sexuality, apart from being predatory, is also described as being ‘out of control’ and which can easily become ‘weak’.

The discourse in Grugni’s manual combines medical, scientific and Christian understandings of sexuality where medical and scientific information is drawn upon to lend legitimacy to the arguments. Since Grugni’s book is titled Education to Love, it primarily deals with romance, relationships and marriage. The reproductive system, pregnancy, family planning, sexually transmitted diseases comprise what Grugni ‘biological facts’ and occupy a secondary position in the book. Grugni’s is probably one of the few books for educators and teachers which deals primarily with relationships and brings a discussion of ‘love’ to the centre of a discussion on adolescent sexuality and sexuality education. But his understanding of love is very limited not always democratic. Nonetheless it is still possible to read this text against the grain.

The third text that I analyse to understand the Christian discourse on sexuality education is Archdiocesan Board of Education, Mumbai’s Sex Education and Aids/HIV Awareness For Std 9 (1997). “The Archdiocesan Board of Education, Bombay was registered in 1985 as an
Association under the Societies Registration Act –XXI / 1860. It is a certified body for Catholic Institutions in Mumbai and the Districts of Thane and Raigad under the Archdiocese of Bombay. Functioning as a Federation of Schools for its first 20 years, the Consultation of Catholic Schools held in November 2004, reviewed the role of the ABE and recommended that it be an umbrella body for all Catholic Institutions, and that its role be extended to meet all the needs of Catholic Education. The Board carries out tasks like co-ordination, research and documentation, planning and liaising with the State Department of Education and other Diocesan Bodies for its vast network of Educational Institutes and offers services in legal and administrative problems.10

This textbook is also used by teachers in a Christian all-boys’ school in South Mumbai. The focus of sexuality education in this textbook is to address HIV AIDS awareness and prevention. Like Grugni’s book, ‘love’ seems central to addressing the ‘dangers’ of sexuality, but only within the monogamous heterosexual couple. Unlike Grugni’s and Cunha’s book there are explicit references to divinity in this textbook and a monogamous relationship seems to be the only cure for HIV/AIDs, ignoring the complexities of sexual relationships and AIDs transmission.

While the language of the textbook is clearly heteronormative, it does talk about the struggles and complexities of relationships: “Even the attraction that we have for the opposite sex is sometimes felt as a pleasure, and at other times threatens our emotional stability and peace of mind. But all of this is quite normal. It is part of our struggle to accept ourselves as individuals” (6). Sexuality is located within the heterosexual marriage and is meant for reproduction. Love, commitment and fidelity to your partner and chastity before marriage are seen as ways address the ‘spread’ of HIV AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases as well as prevent unwanted pregnancies.

Like Grugni’s and Cunha’s book, there is a similar language of ‘true love’: “true love involves faith, trust and respect. True love calls for commitment” (10). While there is a discussion of the reproductive system, it is couched in a theistic, patriarchal language where everything, from children to ovulation to fertility are ‘gifts and creation of god’. Reproductive sexuality is at the centre of the discussion of reproductive and sexual health where there is a strange slippage from the use of condoms to acquiring AIDS: “condoms are not foolproof against AIDS, condoms encourage casual sex, and casual sex promotes AIDS. The only remedy for the AIDS epidemic is chastity before marriage and fidelity after marriage” (27).

This is followed by a story which moralises about the ‘dangers’ of ‘premarital sex’ and presents the lives of two young girls, where the girl who has many sexual relationships with boys ends up pregnant and a waitress, whereas the one who is ‘chaste’ goes to college and gets married. While this presents a horrific tale of those who are sexually active as delinquents and losers, it also pits the two girls against each other where the one who is ‘chaste’ refuses to help her friend through an abortion. This exposes the limited nature of ‘love and care’ that is spoken throughout the text.

All three texts while they talk centrally of love, present us with a limited understanding of it, one which does not extend beyond the heterosexual, monogamous, married couple. To use this idea of love to address the ‘missing discourse of love’ in sexuality education would only be dangerous and riddled with inequalities. As I suggested earlier, it might be possible to ‘extract’ ideas of love from this worldview and place it within another world view which is more democratic and just. But this task is not without its risks. Eve Sedgwick points out that the reparative task of ‘extracting sustenance’ from a culture that does not sustain us is risky. She describes the “sustained seeking of pleasure through the reparative strategies of the depressive position” as a “risky positional shift” (137) and that “the reparative reading position undertakes a different range of affects, ambitions, and risks” (150). The reparative task of ‘extracting’ ideas of ‘true love’ from the current Christian discourse on sexuality education thus becomes risky. It requires one to acknowledge that the ways in which ‘true love’ is discussed within this discourse is conservative, but that the idea of ‘true love’, if extracted from this discourse, can perform another task which might not be conservative and can allow one to talk about democratic ideas of sharing, caring, unconditionality, selflessness and the blurring of the boundaries between self and other within sexuality education curriculum. Not only is this task of extraction risky, but the work of true love is also risky. While it is entirely plausible to be increasingly sceptical of ideas of ‘true love’ today, bell hooks (2000) reminds us how to work with this concept. hooks describes ‘true love’ as a ‘soul connection’ which is risky, requires work, asks one to love unconditionally, to let go of ideas of the ‘eternal and forever’ and to open oneself to be worked upon and changed. It is in this risky ‘reparative’ reworking of the risky concept of ‘true love’ that I see a possibility of addressing the ‘missing discourse of love’ in sexuality education.

The Sexological Discourse

In this section I start by briefly looking at the scholarship on sexology in India and then examine the current discourse of sexology through the writings of Mahindra Watsa and Rajan
Bhonsle, both based in Mumbai. I examine the engagement that sexology in Mumbai has had (since the 1940s) and continues to have with sexuality education, the ways in which the discourse on sexology is changing today, the centrality of sexual pleasure to the project of sexology and the organic connections it has had and continues to have with the Family Planning Association of India.

**Sexology in Early Twentieth Century**

Sanjam Ahluwalia and Sanjay Srivastava have written extensively on sexology in India. Ahluwalia (2013) discusses the writings of sexologists in the twentieth century in India. She describes it as a “newly emerging field of intellectual inquiry in the early decades of the twentieth century … The focus on sexology is a productive site for retrieving ideas circulating around sex and desire… Sexologists in the twentieth century, who were a new cast of global actors, were passionately engaged in scripting a sexual narrative, for which they deployed a range of methodologies to investigate, analyse and codify myriad issues related to human bodies- especially in its sexual expressions” (24, 25). She writes about Indian sexologist A.P. Pillay who produced work on sexology in the first half of the 20th century. Pillay was closely associated with the establishment of the Family Planning Associate of India (FPAI)11 (26). Ahluwalia also maintains that sexology in India was part of a transnational network of people working on sexology and sexual cultures.

The sexologists were interested in sex education. Ahluwalia discusses Pillay’s interest in sex education in 1944 in the following manner: “In a chapter titled ‘Sex Education for Children’, Pillay discusses at length the importance of imparting sex education within the school curriculum. In an imaginary dialogue between a teacher and a doctor, Pillay cited Theodore F Tucker to outline the aims of sex education, which should include:

1. Satisfying of the natural curiosity of children relating to sex
2. Presenting the subject of sex in relation to life as a whole,
3. Showing that sex is essentially healthy, and
4. Laying the foundation for moral and social responsibility in relation to the sexes (1944:9).”

Ahluwalia goes on to discuss the links between sexology and sex education in the following manner: “what we see at work is the very act of transforming sex into specialised knowledge,

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11 The Family Planning Association of India is an autonomous body (not related to the State) which was instituted in 1949 in Mumbai. They advocate for and provide services for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. [http://www.fpaindia.org/](http://www.fpaindia.org/) Accessed on 21-12-2016.
which needed guidance and training from an early age. Parents, teachers, and doctors, were identified as ideally suited to impart sexual knowledge to children. What was being unleashed was a global project aimed at defining and shaping sexual desires and pleasures, albeit, in a controlled manner through reliance on sexual experts. Even as some sex experts were willing to accept that their understanding was partial or limited, they were still eager to provide a blueprint on human sexuality and institutionalise their new collective knowledge, around the world” (40-41). When we draw up a history of sex education in India, it might be important to understand the role that sexologists played in it. As it is clear here, Pillay was discussing sex education in 1944. Even though Pillay was never directly involved in sex education, his associations with the FPAI might mark a way of pushing his agenda of sex education. Also the fact that a transnational network like sexology was interested and raising questions about sex education the 1940s tells us how the ‘need’ for sex education might have also emerged from a transnational interaction. It points to us how sex education today cannot be characterised as either Western or Indian, but emerges from a transnational negotiation and exchange of ideas, materials and political strategies.

Sanjay Srivastava has also extensively discussed sexology in India throughout his work on sexual cultures. In the introduction to Sexual Sites, Seminal Attitudes: Sexualities, Masculinities and Culture in South Asia (2004), Srivastava cites Simon about how sexology was part of a ‘modernist tradition’: “Simon points out that in the West ‘sexology was born in [the] modernist tradition’, where:

the modernisation of sex critically involved the naturalisation of sex; the sexual was to be subjected to the perspectives of natural science, which, in turn, required the quest for taxonomies, structures, and mechanisms of change that paralleled the vocabulary of the natural sciences as they applied to all other life forms (20).

In another chapter, he discusses the sex-literature in early twentieth century India. Srivastava also discusses how in Pillay and N.S Phadke’s work, “sex and sexuality were also part of another, more curious register, a context that brought together sexuality, swarajya (‘self-rule’) and eugenics.” (348). Srivastava also notes the exchanges between the Indian sexologists and the Western birth control movement- in Margaret Sanger’s foreword to N.S. Phadke’s book Sex Problem in India: Being a Please for a Eugenic Movement in India and a Study of all Theoretical and Practical Questions Pertaining to Eugenics (published 1927). Srivastava notes that “the subtext here, we can speculate, is both a concern for the nature of Indian masculinity after swarajya, but also the politics of upper caste masculinity at a time of a number of social reform movements in South India that expressed their concerns through the matrices of caste oppression and ‘self-respect’. A ‘plea for a Eugenic movement’ in this
context should alert us, then, to a number of overlapping contexts and anxieties of early twentieth century India” (349).

Elsewhere, in *Passionate Modernity: Sexuality, Class and Consumption in India* (2006), Srivastava discusses how “sexological literature of the time targeted the family as the key unit of socio-sexual reform. The family was to be ‘improved’ by nationalising sex, problematising morals, establishing the truth of sexuality through biology, and establishing the validity of ‘scientific’ thinking for a diverse range of contexts. The last of these serves in particular, to establish a transnational basis for the rise of modern Indian sexology” (40).

Srivastava also discusses the contribution of AP Pillay (1889-1956). He notes that “from around the latter half of the 1930s, right up to his death in 1956, Pillay’s name was synonymous with ‘sexual reform’ and with the modernising possibilities of the postcolonial family and body as sites of scientific certainty as well as pleasure” (*Emphasis original* 41). Quoting Hall, Srivastava goes on to elaborate on how it is difficult to define the politics of Pillay or slot him into any readily available category.

There is much to disagree with, Hall says, in the writings and advocacy of the leading figures of the sex-reform movement in England such as Havelock Ellis and Edward Carpenter. However, they ‘were saying [that] sexuality should be discussed, and opening up new ways of doing so was the crucial revolution they were making’ (Srivastava 2006: 41).

Srivastava goes on to discuss the importance of Pillay’s writing for the understanding of sexuality today. “Pillay’s writings on sexology constitute an important archive of ideas on the modern family, the relation between genders, the meanings and pursuit of pleasure and the importance of science, with biology as the indisputable touchstone of any understanding of the social condition. His thinking also allows us an entry into the complex world of Indian modernity that fluctuate between the seductions- and rewards- of adherence to Enlightenment thinking, and the simultaneous rupture with it; sexual modernity in India emerges through these contexts of tense acquiescence and calm refutation” (42). Srivastava goes on to discuss how within the sexological discourse there was an intimate relationship between the project of pleasure, science and self-discipline.

Scientific discourse, eugenics, modernity, pleasure, class, caste and the family are all intertwined in the discourse of sexology that emerged during the 1940s and 1950s with Pillay’s and others’ writings. The middle-class, scientific, modernist discourse which characterises Pillay’s writing does not seem very different from contemporary writing on sexuality education. This is to point to the continuities of the project of the modernist discourse on sexuality. This discourse of modernity is present even in the ‘best’ of the literature on sexuality education today.
It is important to discuss Pillay’s work on sexology in India since he was instrumental in forming the Family Planning Association of India (FPAI) in Mumbai. Jyoti Puri (1999) has examined the FPAI’s material on sexuality education. She notes the ways in which the nation-state articulates and reinforces dominant ideas of gender and sexuality in FPAI’s materials, produced by the Sex Education Counselling Research Training/Therapy (SCERT). She looks at how these texts construct notions of nation, culture and normative ideas of what is sexually acceptable. “Though texts produced by FPAI and SCERT are relatively liberal, they mask inequalities of gender and sexuality that are perhaps inherent to these liberal discourses and strategies. This indicates the importance of unravelling the postcolonial nation state as a more uneven, contradictory, multiplicitous source of power and regulation” (Puri 1999: 41). Puri points to the limits of the liberal code, and how it reproduces normative bodies and relationships, defines respectable sex and encodes all this in the idea of the nation.

Not only was a sexologist like Pillay instrumental in forming FPAI, but contemporary sexologists like Mahindra Watsa and Rajan Bhonsle have also been associated with FPAI’s the Sex Education Counselling Research Training/Therapy in Mumbai. Both are practicing doctors and sexologists and have been deeply invested in sex education in Mumbai. In the following sections I discuss the writings of these two sexologists and note how similar their discourse today is to the discourse on sexology in early twentieth century India. Their writing talks about the centrality of pleasure in sexuality and draws their legitimacy from the scientific discourse. While the need for sexual reform has changed over the last few decades, it is present in Watsa’s and Bhonsle’s writing which addresses readers who are ignorant or at best ill-informed. Bhonsle’s writing also marks a shift within the sexological discourse by talking explicitly about culture and values, though in a limited manner.

**Mahindra Watsa**

Dr Mahindra Watsa is a well-known sexologist based in Mumbai who has been writing columns for the last 60 years. His popular Sexpert Column has been in print in the Mumbai Mirror since 2005. An advocate of sexuality education, Dr Watsa does not shy away from answering questions regarding sex and sexuality with characteristic wit and humour. His latest book *It’s Normal* (2015) draws on his rich experience of 45 years as a sexologist as well as answering around 40,000 queries from people, disseminating information, dispelling

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12 Sex Education Counselling Research Training/Therapy is a part of FPAI.
misconceptions and clarifying ideas about various aspects of sex. My reading of Watsa’s work is based on this book.

The first two sections deal with a range of topics which largely cover most sexual concerns people might have: anatomy of sexual organs, talking to children about sexuality, adolescent sexuality, sexual relationships (within and outside marriage), sexual dysfunctions, contraception and conception, sex after the age of forty, alternative sexuality, unsafe sex and diseases, and unusual sexual behaviour. Watsa draws the reader in by his capacity to address the core issue even as he demonstrates the ludicrous levels of confusion about sex and sexuality. For instance, to the man who wanted to pour drops of lemon juice inside his girlfriend’s vagina to prevent pregnancy, Dr Watsa writes “Are you a bhel puri vendor?” Similarly, to another who wanted to have sex with his goat Ramila, Dr Watsa replies “Ask Ramila whether she would like it”.

Dr Watsa begins the book by reflecting on what is normal in sex, discussing consent, and choice, but sadly concludes suggesting, “sexual pleasuring should culminate in most cases among male-female partners by penile-vaginal intercourse” (6). Thankfully, Dr Watsa does not follow his own advice, since he discusses ‘alternative sexualities’, albeit in a limited fashion, and also repeatedly stresses on the importance of foreplay, masturbation- solo and mutual- massage and oral sex between two people. But despite two short chapters on ‘alternative’ sexualities, the tone of the entire book remains broadly centered around heterosexual sex: peno-vaginal and often centred on the married couple. While Watsa does discuss abortions, he doesn’t really understand it in its entire complexity, but rather asks: “is it bravado, carelessness or ignorance that every year lakhs of legal abortions are carried out?” Abortions are often not about carelessness or ignorance, but results of male partners who refuse to use condoms, of unanticipated failure of contraception, or of the very difficulty in accessing safe contraception for women.

Other discussions on sexuality are also often in stereotypical frames assuming that men want a lot of sex, while women are more emotional; men who to make love with the lights on while women like the lights off. At the same time, Watsa shows no patience with men who want to check if their bride is a virgin, writing tartly “I suggest you don’t get married. Unless you appoint detectives, there is no way to find out. Spare her your suspicious mind” (137). Watsa also frankly discusses child sexuality as well as acknowledges that disabled people are ‘entitled to a good sex life too’, though the conversation does not go any further (73). While addressing questions by adolescents below the age of consent, Watsa often advises them to
wait a few years to have sexual intercourse but nevertheless does answer their queries on safer sex.

The sections on ‘unusual sex’ are most entertaining parts of the book. While Watsa does not always approve of incest, bestiality, voyeurism, fetishes, sadomasochism, threesomes and exhibitionism, the questions themselves do present us with a vast range of sexual practices and desires that people have. While a large number of the questions that Watsa receives are from men, it nevertheless is nothing short of fascinating. The fetishes that the men claim to have are for slippers, breasts, women’s worn underwear and collarbones. There are also many questions on excessive masturbation. One married man wrote in saying that his cat has the habit of watching him masturbate every day. While answering queries on incest, Watsa also often rightly intervenes when he feels that the sexual relationship is non-consensual. He strongly chides the young man who blackmails his mother to sleep with him.

The other section on sex after forty is also equally interesting. There is no doubt in Watsa’s mind that couples (married ones of course) have the right to enjoy a healthy sexual life till the end of their lives. The author encourages both older women and men to find ways of keeping their sexual lives intact and advocates for mutual masturbation, caressing, massages, cuddling and other forms of sexual affection. He seems to assume though that peno-vaginal sexual intercourse is no longer central to a sexual relationship, this on the one hand now suggests a broader vision of sex and sexuality but at the same time is also located in a kind of ageist paradigm.

While the book does talk a great deal about sexual problems, how to solve them and tries to delineate what is ‘normal’ in sex, the focus around sexual pleasure for both women and men seems central for Dr Watsa, and as I have explored earlier to the project of sexology. While the book does expand the definition of what is normal within sexual relationships, it does not in any significant way fracture the vision of the normal which largely remains heterosexual and within the marital bedroom.

One section in Watsa’s book deals with adolescent sexuality and romance titled The Bewildering Growing up Years: Teens and Youth. Watsa begins the chapter by acknowledging that “all human beings are sexual” (40). He characterises adolescence as a phase of confusion, trouble, bewilderment and emotional disturbances. He acknowledges that adolescents might date, fall in love, have relationships and advices that they bring their partners home to introduce to their parents. If adolescents wish to engage in sexual relationships with a partner, Watsa cautions them: “before you decide to go further, it is always better to take advice from your parents or a confidante and clarify any doubts that you
may have” (41). Watsa also discusses adolescent sexuality along gendered lines: “sexual urges can be so strong in the male adolescent that he tends to seek sexual gratification at a purely physical level. Sex at this point of time exists for pleasure alone and often is not associated with emotions or love. In female adolescents, sexual drive is less physical and more emotional in nature (perhaps because of childhood conditioning), associating sex with romantic conditions” (41-42). Similarly Watsa makes a difference between sexual desire and love: “sexual desire is a strong physical excitement. Love is a powerful feeling of caring for someone else. Sex needs caring and sharing, it involves responsibility and an equal partnership. Sex partners need to share responsibility for birth control. They should also protect each other from infections” (42-43). Elsewhere, he advises an eighteen year old woman that “sex alone for mere pleasure is not on the same level as sex out of love” (167).

Watsa does not explicitly tell adolescents not to have sex, but does acknowledge that there might be pressure to do so and that one can chose to have sex when one is ready. He also places a great deal of stress on trust, time, touch and communication to the formation of the couple. Communication, Watsa maintains, is of utmost importance, especially within a sexual relationship. Even though Watsa clearly states that love and sexual desire are different, he does elaborate on how they are intertwined: that there is sexual desire in a relationship and that there is caring and sharing in sex.

Watsa is well aware of the legal age of consent and advices young people below that age to be careful while having sex or getting married; he advises them to wait until they turn eighteen. He does not present a moral understanding of sexual relationships among adolescents, but places the focus on legal aspects as well as discusses consent between partners. Watsa also acknowledges the role of fantasy in sexuality, though he thinks that pornography is not a “proper sources for sex education as they exaggerate a great deal” (160). He also clearly advocates for ‘safe sex’, categorically stating to a nineteen year old woman who is pregnant: “do not be foolish in the future. No sex without a condom” (157).

Watsa gives space for young people to have sexual agency though he seems worried about the consequences for those who are below the legal age of consent. Watsa also raises questions of consent and equality within a romantic and sexual relationship. While sexual pleasure is central to the project of sexology, this seems limited to adult sexuality. Sexology does not talk about pleasure for adolescents. While adolescent sexuality is not always spoken in a language of danger, there is also no explicit language of sexual pleasure. Love and romance are not discussed in great detail, even though there is an acknowledgement of sexual relations between adolescents. Watsa also refrains from explicit moralising, though there are times
where he does give out prohibitive statements like “no sex without a condom” or advises young couples not to have sex until they are eighteen or in some cases twenty-one.

Rajan Bhonsle

The other sexologist in Mumbai who is also deeply invested in sex education is Dr Rajan Bhonsle. In this section, I draw on my interview with him as well his book. Dr Bhonsle is Professor of sexual medicine at KEM Hospital and is a diplomate at the American Board of Sexology, and a fellow of the Council of Sex Education and Parenthood International. He has founded along with his wife Dr Minnu Bhonsle, the Institute of Human Technology: Heart to Heart Counselling Centre. Bhonsle writes columns for English and Marathi language newspapers, answering readers’ queries about sex and sexuality. He has written a column called ‘Intimacy Issues’ for the last seventeen years in the women’s magazine The New Woman, and also has written for Bombay Times, the DNA, Navkar, Loksatta, Samna. He claims that his columns have reached a wide audience since he writes for elite Marathi newspapers like Loksatta as well as non-elite ones like Navkar. While Bhonsle has written over six books on sex education in English and Marathi, I will examine the English language book he has co-authored with Minnu Bhonsle titled The Ultimate Book of Sex: A Handbook for Sex Education that is Value Based, Culture Specific and Age Appropriate (2012). Before I go into the text, I will briefly discuss his work on sex education at the Institute of Human Technology which will provide a background and context to the book.

In an in-depth interview, Rajan Bhonsle discussed at length his interest and work on sex education over the last thirty years specifically in Mumbai and largely in Maharashtra. Around seventeen years back, Bhonsle started a certificate course titled Training Programme for Sex Educators at his Institute. When asked why he started this programme, Bhonsle traced a long history of not just his work on sex education and the training of trainers/teachers of sex education, but also a history of his engagement with the State regarding sex education.

I started talking about the necessity of sex education from day one, 30 years back. It used to be rejected. I was thought to be idiotic. Everywhere I was called for public talks and TV shows, I used to talk about the necessity of sex education people would ridicule or shun me, there was opposition, violent opposition. I was adamant that it is necessary.

Around sixteen-seventeen years back, in 1999, when Vilasrao Deshmukh first became Chief Minister of Maharashtra, it came up that sex education be made compulsory in schools. He [the CM] was younger and progressive. They formed a committee called the Estimates Committee. One MLA from Ahmednagar called Prasad Tanpure was heading that committee. They [the committee] took people from all parties. The committee was given the task to find out and present to the assembly whether it [sex education] is necessary or not. In the process of the committee doing their own research, they came to me also because I was the only vocal
guy, they took my interview. They put a report together and it was presented in Maharashtra assembly. It was unanimously accepted and made front page news. Prasad Tanpure headed that committee and strongly recommended sex education. No one was opposed to it, not even opposition. It was passed and orders went to all the schools. From the coming academic year sex education was made compulsory. The schools said ‘great, we also want it, but our teachers are not trained. Provide teachers. If you can’t provide teachers, provide training to our teachers.’ But the government didn’t have that, there was no manual, no book, no training.

At that time, my Marathi book on sex education was about to be released. I deliberately called the Health Minister Digvijay Khanvilkar from the congress (it was a coalition Government) and also called the Education Minister. I also called Smita Thackeray as a kind of a Shiv Sena representative. I also called Mangesh Padgaonkar the Marathi poet. I called all of them, including the press for the release of my Marathi book [on sex education]. On the dais, I asked the question to the ministers that why has it [sex education] not been implemented. That is where Digvijay Khanvilkar admitted that neither do we [the government] have teachers, nor do we have a structure ready. Then he said in front of the entire audience “how about you design a course for the teachers and present it to us and we will pass it, prepare the course.” I prepared it, but before I could present it to them, Vilasrao Deshmukh lost his post as CM and Sushilkumar Shinde became the new Chief Minister. Digvijay Khanvilkar never became health minister. So those who had committed [to the programme] were no more in power. I had no courage to be after their lives, as if I need it more. Society requires it. I am talking on all the forums. Almost six to seven times I have been called by Doordarshan. I have discussed this. They [the State] don’t want it to happen. I don’t know the reason they are biased towards sex, whatever the reason. There was a time when I used to feel angry and agitated, now I feel amused.

I sell my books, write in newspaper columns, write in Samna too and Lokmat. I have written columns for one year [respectively in each of these]. I have given talks for free, spoken about it to everyone. To hell with them [the State], who cares. I am teaching at my Institute, people are coming and offering help to teach us… I created a formal structure. What I had created I presented. I will do it at my centre. Of course I have a small capacity where I can’t teach more than twenty people at a time. But I can take many batches of twenty one after another. And that is what I have been doing, trained a few hundred people.

Bhonsle has been conducting the training programme for sex educators in Mumbai for the last seventeen years because of a failure of political will to implement sex education in schools in Maharashtra. His capacity to reach people, while broad based in terms of ideology- he writes in Shiv Sena’s Samna as well as newspapers like Bombay Times- is also limited since he can train only a few hundred people. But since there is no training of trainers in Mumbai, Bhonsle’s work acquires importance. The training program, conducted in English, consists of two hour sessions spread over a month. The emphasis is on imparting “scientifically accurate knowledge about the human reproductive system, and the physical, psychological, emotional and sexual changes that one undergoes at adolescence.” Scientific knowledge is at the centre of the course since that will lead to “building healthy attitudes towards sex, high standards of conduct, responsible behaviour and wholesome personalities.” The other aims of the course are to help young adults “develop skills to interact with both genders comfortably, respectfully and in appropriate ways so that they learn to develop and maintain meaningful relationships”. The course also educates youth about responsible and irresponsible sexual
behaviour. The course is meant specifically for teachers, social workers, counsellors, psychologists, trainers, doctors, health workers and parents who have children. A certificate is offered at the end of the training program.

The suggested reading list of the training program is a mix of books by various authors. There is Anthony Grugni’s book on Sex Education (which I have discussed earlier), SIECUS guidelines, Osho’s books *From Sex to Superconsciousness* (1998) and *Revolution in Education* (1997), two volumes by Masters and Johnson on Human Sexuality, Planned Parenthood Federation of America’s *How to Talk to your children about Sexuality* (1986), WHO/UNFPA/UNICEF’s *The Reproductive Health of Adolescents: A Strategy for Action* (1989). This a mix of spiritual, scientific and NGO work on sexuality education.

Dr Bhonsle mentions that there was no work in the Indian context when he started putting this material together 30 years back. He discusses the dearth and limitations of material - like the books of Dr Prakash Kothari on sex education. He often drew from Masters and Johnson’s books, though he did not agree with everything they wrote. He also mentions loving the work of Osho and one notices how his enthusiasm to talk about sex parallels Osho’s. Bhonsle also discusses the Adolescent Education Program manual which the Maharashtra State Government had banned. He maintains that he found the material to be borrowed directly from other sources without contextualising it to the Indian context. He points to his book lying in front of him and says “when you read my book, it is value based, culture specific and age appropriate. I have added these three lines for what? It has to be in the Indian context…” (emphasis mine). Bhonsle discusses the relationship between the book and his training program. He maintains that the ‘book is just the theory’ and source of knowledge for the

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14 *From Sex to Superconsciousness* is a book by the spiritual leader Osho where he discusses the importance of sex and how sex must not be repressed in society.

15*Revolution in Education* is a book by Osho where he discusses the links between teachers, society, revolution, love-oriented education and so on.

16 Masters and Johnson were pioneering sex researchers in the 1950s in the United States who researched human sexuality, human sexual response among other things.

17 Planned Parenthood is a provider of reproductive health care in the United States. It was formed around 100 years back when Margaret Sangers opened the first birth control clinic for women.

training programme. He draws on his experience as a sexologist and counsellor to teach about sexuality education within the classroom, while changing the curriculum with every batch depending on the students’ responses.

The Ultimate Book of Sex (2012) is styled as a manual for adult sex-educators whose aim is to create awareness to ‘eradicate’ ‘sexual crimes, sexual exploitation, sexual ignorance, sexual dysfunctions, and sexual diseases’ (xi). While the book seeks to gain legitimacy through ‘scientific accuracy’, there is a shift to talking about “value-based, age-appropriate and culture-specific’ sex education. This marks a shift within the sexological discourse on sex education which has always sought legitimacy in ‘science’ rather than culture.

Bhonsle in the interview as well as the book is very careful to disassociate sex and sexuality from vulgarity. While discussing his sex education classes in Madrasas, Bhonsle discusses how he was often stopped by the school authorities and sometimes not allowed to talk about masturbation. He maintains that he stood his ground and was “convinced beyond doubts that this has to be spoken about irrespective of your religion. But I will not ridicule your religion. And I will address these issues, without making it sound vulgar, in a plain simple manner.” In the Dos and Don’ts section of the book he states: “do not narrate vulgar jokes. Use humour with great care. The sex educator can speak in an informal, pleasant way. But should never turn anything into a laughing matter” (5). He also instructs sex educators to “strictly avoid sharing any personal sexual experience” (5). While the larger focus is on ‘accurate scientific information’, there is a shift to thinking about the socio-cultural context: “teaching should have a social perspective. Strictly avoid religious and cultural criticism during teaching sessions” (4).

Parents are encouraged to talk to children about sexuality in an open and matter of fact manner and to “help children feel comfortable about their sexuality from the very beginning” (8). There is an explicit acknowledgment of children as sexual beings: “from the very infancy children have a curiosity about their own bodies, which is absolutely normal and healthy” (8). But yet, children also “have no modesty at this stage of their development” and need to be taught not to touch themselves in front of others. The tensions throughout the text run along the lines of the vulgar and modest argument. There is also an acknowledgment of ‘everyone is different’ and that ‘being different is normal’. There is also an emphasis on using the ‘correct’ name for the genitals and this is tied up the ‘right to privacy’ of the genitals and avoiding child sexual abuse. Bhonsle also describes learning about sex as an ‘ongoing process’ where children might ask questions which need to be answered specifically. He encourages that parents eventually address their children’s questions.
Bhonsle discusses human sexuality as a ‘normal and natural part of life’, encourages children to have access to information on sexuality, characterises men and women as complimentary sexes, advocates for consent in sexual relationships but yet talks of harm and risk in sexual relationships, maintains that pornography offers a ‘distorted view of human sexuality’ and that it ‘humiliates men and women’. Bhonsle also maintains that ‘sexual behaviour must be responsible and disciplined’, that ‘refraining’ from penetrative sexual intercourse is the most ‘foolproof’ way of being safe, and that sexuality has four dimensions: physical, emotional, sociological and spiritual (15-19).

Bhonsle adopts a developmental approach to discussing sexuality and raises concerns to delay sexual intercourse. The language is one of risk, disease and pregnancy prevention and discusses the ‘emotional’ trauma of teenage pregnancy or even casual sex. Bhonsle discusses adolescent sexuality in a chapter titled “Adolescence: A Sexual Transition”. He describes the biological changes that adolescents undergo during puberty, discussing the boys’ biological changes first and then the girls. He writes at length on masturbation, for both boys and girls. Borrowing from a scientific discourse, Bhonsle focuses on how masturbation has no ill effects, that it is safe and even has benefits like relieving sexual tension and providing personal gratification. He also describes the cases where masturbation might be harmful—when it is done in front of others, when it harms one’s education or career. Bhonsle discusses masturbation for women in a more positive manner, terming it ‘empowering’, as an activity that gives ‘a sense of sexual independence’, as a way to ‘enjoy sexual pleasure’ and that masturbation is central to a woman’s sexuality: “masturbation is extremely beneficial to women throughout their life. While a woman may not always have a sex partner, she will always have herself” (118-119).

Regarding the sexological discussion of women’s masturbation, Srivastava similarly discusses how “it is also important, however, to note the acknowledgement of the masturbator within this discourse. Here the rules of science as idealised social matrix overcome the traditionalist nationalist position on female sexuality in particular and the women as a sign of purity in general… This is not to suggest the emergence of an unambiguous feminist position in the early stages of the public discourses of the Indian nation-state. For, individualised sexuality, such as that of the masturbating woman, could easily be recuperated towards the ends of atomistic modernity…Vast body of sexological literature on masturbation that followed the lead provided by Pillay implicitly articulated a fluid model of the body that sought to map it to the perceived temporality of modernity…” (Srivastava 2006: 53).
Most of the sexological writings in the past and present have put sexual pleasure—both men and women’s—at the centre of their project, something which isn’t as evident in the other discourses. Since sexology has been intimately tied with and interested in sex education, one needs to rethink the idea of the ‘missing discourse of desire’ within the curriculum. But if one looks closely at the ways adolescent sexuality is talked about within the sexological discourse, one notes that there is not as much emphasis on pleasure as there is for adults, especially for heterosexual married couples. In Watsa and Bhonsle there is an acknowledgement of children being sexual, but the language to talk of adolescent sexuality is predominantly one of danger, risk and prohibition. The sexological discourse’s biggest contribution though lies in their explicit encouragement of sexual pleasure, and it might be useful if this enthusiasm spilt into other forms of sexual activity outside the heterosexual marriage and also into their understandings of adolescent sexuality. The sexological discourse, like the State discourse is also couched within a language of scientific modernity.

**Concluding Remarks**

I have noted how the feminist discourse brings to the fore a Rights-based discourse and focuses on the social and political context of sexuality education; the Christian organisation brings in an extensive discussion of romance and love; the State discourse brings in the scientific and the moral discourse and the sexological discourse, while located within the scientific, crucially brings in a discussion of sexual pleasure. These are broad categorisations and there are fractures within each discourse and overlaps between each discourse. For instance I note how the State discourse borrows from the Christian materials, or how the sexological discourse also speaks about the hierarchies of love and sex. The State, Christian and sexological discourses are also within a discourse of scientific modernity which offers us a limited understanding of sexuality. The feminist discourse presents a particular rights-based vision of sexuality. Yet this discourse also adheres to certain modernist understandings of sexuality and seeks to discuss sexuality by talking about myths and facts. The State and Christian discourses are also embedded within a discourse of modernity. I also discuss how the reports on sexuality education produced by feminist organisations present an adult desire for sexuality education. Again, this is true of not just the feminist materials but all materials on sexuality education. The State, Christian and sexological discourses are all adult desires of what sexuality education should be and what adolescents want. In the following chapters I will examine adolescent lives to understand how we might shift this adult-centric discourse. All four discourses, while not monolithic, are embedded within a discourse of modernity and
present adult desires of sexuality education. Yet, I have also discussed what each discourse brings to sexuality education. This is contribution is limited. A re-imagination of sexuality education would begin where these discourses end and borrow from all of them rather than simply reform them.