CONCLUSION

Many organisations and individuals have been invested in sexuality education in Mumbai and have created a diverse set of curriculum. The State has also had a fraught relationship with sexuality education. While the Adolescent Education Programme (AEP) has been banned in Maharashtra, many schools still teach sexuality education under the guise of gender and health or through the biology textbooks. But this does not mean that sexual knowledge has trickled down as effectively as the educators have desired it to. Adolescents make their own meanings of sexuality education and have their own understanding of what sexual knowledge is.

When I started out the dissertation was a project that intended to examine both adolescent femininities and masculinities. The fieldwork included interviews with young women as well as men. As the dissertation progressed, the narratives from the young men spoke more to me because, as I noted in the second chapter, they were narratives of a ‘silenced experience’. Perhaps as an indication of my own interest I found that in my interviews, the young men’s narratives were longer, more comprehensive and seemed to be pushing existing knowledge on adolescent masculinities in newer directions. While I retained some of the narratives of the young women, the focus shifted to examining adolescent masculinities and their sexuality. The choice to explicitly examine heterosexuality was also rewarding since it helped rethink dominant narratives of heterosexual male desire. The inability to conduct fieldwork within the classroom as a result of lack of permission from schools also determined the choices that I made to rely more on narratives and curriculum, and the focus was more on an adolescent perspective, while I still retained a chapter on teachers’ experiences to understand their perspective as well. The dissertation clearly comes from an adolescent perspective filtered through the prism of memory while also engaging with sexuality education materials and teacher narratives.

In this concluding chapter I trace how the dissertation talks about sexuality education by discussing each chapter and its arguments; I lay out the contributions the dissertation makes to the body of knowledge on sexuality education, masculinities, and adolescent sexuality; I explore the ways sexuality education is shaping up today and lastly lay out potential research areas to explore by discussing ways in which the digital might have altered sexualities.
Arguments Made in Individual Chapters

In the dissertation I have explored adolescent masculinities in middle class Mumbai to uncover these limitations. I have examined how discursive practices understand sexuality education differently and how these are limited. Examining adolescent male romance I have noted that sexuality education cannot be separated from concerns of consumerism, postfeminism and cinema. I have argued that sexuality education does not deal with negative affects and has a limited understanding of adolescent male desire. I have explored how adolescents learn about sexuality and questioned the hierarchies of sexual knowledge. All these point to the limits of formal sexuality education in schools. I have also suggested that the regulation of student romance in schools may be seen as a ‘state of exception’. The dissertation contributes to the debate on desire in sexuality education by arguing for a ‘missing discourse of love’ and tracing how desire was already part of the sexologists’ project on sex education. It also contributes to existing scholarship on adolescent sexuality and masculinity.

The dissertation largely explores the limits of sexuality education by laying out four concerns which are divided into four chapters. These concerns engage with questions of desire, masculinity, affect, romance and sexuality education. Contextually they are located within the middle classes in Mumbai.

The third chapter titled, “Different Discourses on Sexuality Education: Examining Sexuality Education Materials in Mumbai” engages with the discourse of desire, arguing that there is a ‘missing discourse of love and romance’ within the curriculum on sexuality education. I examine the sexuality education curricula materials available in Mumbai and Delhi, arguing that these formed largely four discourses: the feminist, Christian, State and sexological discourse. These discourses are porous and seep into each other. They are not monolithic and self-contained; there are a number of fractures and inconsistencies within each one of them and the categorisation of each discourse is precarious and contingent. Yet, I use these to make certain generalisations and arguments about how diversely and richly sexuality education is imagined. The feminist discourse brings to the fore the social and political context of sexuality education, stressing on a Rights-based discourse; 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. Each discourse is important but limited in its approach. This points to the limits of sexuality education as conceptualised by different groups in Mumbai.
The fourth chapter titled, “‘Nothing Much Happened’: Rethinking Heterosexual Middle Class Adolescent Boys’ Romance in Mumbai” extends the discussion of desire and romance by rethinking male desire and the affective registers of romance as experienced by adolescent boys. I examine adolescent male narratives to understand how intimacies are shaped by consumerism, indeterminacy and failure; the relationship between romance and sex and experiences of dating and romantic relationships. Failure emerges as a common trope in many of the adolescent boys’ narratives of crushes, uncertain romance and relationships. This allows me to re-conceptualise adolescent male desire, centring experiences of failure and ‘negative’ affects to a project of sexuality education. I argue that these boys’ narratives of heterosexual romance and desire, crushes and relationships, open to us ‘queer’ ways of thinking of heterosexuality. I contend that failure and the impossibilities of desire exist even within heterosexual romance especially if it is an exogamous relationship, but even within an endogamous one. These narratives help to destabilise the ‘success narratives’ of heteronormativity. The limits of sexuality education are revealed in an absence of ‘negative affects’ and an understanding of adolescent masculinity as stable, violent and predatory. Adolescent masculinity as predatory is a partial reality which I am not contesting but complicating by my discussion of failure, awkwardness and loss. The chapter ends by posing the question: what if sexuality education started with the idea that the romantic subjectivity of adolescent boys is unstable and constituted by the ‘negative affects’ of confusion, awkwardness, shyness, failure and regret? The dissertation does not seek to answer these questions but poses them to push the boundaries of sexuality education research.

The fifth chapter titled, “Learning about Sex in Mumbai: Rethinking the ‘Knowledge Gap’ Debate in Sexuality Education” rethinks what constitutes sexual knowledge. This includes examining the different networks, peer groups and sources of information on sexuality that adolescent boys have access to. This allows me to rethink the ‘knowledge gap’ debate between the official and unofficial discourses around sexuality education and decentres the official discourse of sexual knowledge as most legitimate. The unofficial discourse is constituted by sexual jokes, media, cinema, gossip, peer group discussions about girlfriends, movies and women, and individual and collective watching of pornography. Peer groups are an important source of information on sex and provide a level of comfort which formal education cannot. I do not question the need for formal sexuality education, but rather seek to problematize the centrality it has acquired over all other forms of sexual knowledge. I argue that the thrill of peer group discussions, the prohibitive excitement of using swear words, gossip about friends and their girlfriends cannot really enter the formal space of the classroom. The ‘unofficial’ discourse is based on prohibition, secrecy, thrill and ambiguity,
all of which seem indispensable in acquiring knowledge. The classroom is not structured for these modes of learning and acquiring knowledge. This means that formal sexuality education, while engaging with adolescent experiences, cannot be entirely ‘comprehensive’ and holistic. The limits of the classroom demand that it engage with only a restricted ‘official’ discourse, acknowledging that this can be only a part and not the whole of sexual knowledge.

The sixth chapter titled, “I am a Teacher, I Think the Worst”: Teacher Responsibilities and Regulation of Student Romance in Schools in Mumbai” concerns itself with the relationship between adults and adolescents. This is explored through teacher-adolescent relationships in school and their understanding of student romance in schools spaces. The chapter seeks to understand adult perceptions and desires to regulate and control adolescent sexuality. Through the narratives I seek to theorise how regulation around sexuality in school spaces are ‘states of exception’. I borrow from Agamben to understand how ‘states of exception’ are permanent states of emergency in response to conflict. I argue that teachers walk the tightrope between students and school authorities. They are answerable to both parents and the principal. Student romances throw into sharp relief the difficult roles that teachers play in school. Romances are subversive, but they also play on the vulnerabilities of teachers. Teachers are in constant crisis management mode. The teachers who ostensibly ‘regulate’ student romance are themselves caught in a bind. Conversations about romance in sexuality education have to include thinking about student romances in school spaces. But as this chapter has pointed out, the latter might be impossible without understanding the role of teachers and the tightropes they walk in school. Romances are subversive, but they also play on the vulnerabilities of teachers. Teachers are in constant crisis management mode. The teachers who ostensibly ‘regulate’ student romance are themselves caught in a bind. Conversations about romance in sexuality education have to include thinking about student romances in school spaces. But as this chapter has pointed out, the latter might be impossible without understanding the role of teachers and the tightropes they walk in school. I conclude by trying to understand adolescence as an ‘open psychic structure’ which breaks the boundaries between adolescence and adulthood. I argue that in our efforts to talking about agency and resistance of the adolescence; the adult goes scot free, theoretically speaking. If we can talk about how agency and resistance of adulthood is allowed to seep into adolescents, why not discuss how dreams, desires, and the energies of adolescence are constantly seeping into adults? Adulthood is inhabited by memories of adolescence. And if the latter happens, how does the adult then rethink adolescent romance and sexuality in schools as well as her/his own sense of responsibility? This question is directed towards undoing the developmental categories of adult and adolescent.

**Contributions of the Dissertation**

Having established what the dissertation argues in each chapter, I want to examine the contributions of the dissertation not just to sexuality education, but to also masculinities
studies and adolescent sexualities in urban India. The dissertation pushes sexuality education in various directions that it might not have gone were it to deal with solely disease and pregnancy prevention or abstinence. I bring in a number of crucial discussions to sexuality education: ‘negative affects’; the conception of masculinity in the curriculum; the discussion of love and romance in the curriculum as opposed to a discussion of just sexual desire or pleasure; the opening of other forms of sexual knowledge outside sexuality education- in media texts, peer groups discussions; and negotiating with how romance is thought about in school spaces. The present boundaries of sexuality education are extended in multiple directions. Further research would be required to constantly question and push the limits.

Apart from laying out the limits of sexuality education, the dissertation also contributes to a number of other areas. It allows one to rethink the relationship between the adolescent and the adult by rethinking romance in school spaces. Interviews with teachers help in understanding how adult negotiations with school based romance are deeply fraught. The dissertation rethinks the category of adolescence as porous and questions the category of adulthood. It tries to blur the boundaries between adulthood and adolescence. The breaking of these developmental categories will push one to rethink adolescence, adolescent sexuality and sexuality education.

In examining the sexuality education curriculum, I note how most of the materials seem to articulate adult desires and imaginations of sexuality education. Through the narratives in chapter four and five, I establish how adolescent desires for sexuality education are different from adult desires. Adolescent desires, I note, centre on romance, excitement, erotics of sexuality, thrill, secrecy, prohibition, rather than on health, reproduction, and sure and stable meanings. The dissertation aims to present an adolescent perspective on sexuality education rather than trying to push adult agendas. These aim to raise more questions than provide answers.

The dissertation also begins a conversation on adolescent sexuality, especially adolescent male sexuality in middle class Mumbai. The study clearly states how sexuality education is often a middle class project and seeks to examine middle class lives and materials prepared for middle class subjects. This allows one to understand the context in which sexuality education is embedded today: in a neo-liberal, post-feminist and middle class space. Sexuality education is located within this space and any re-imagining, challenging or analytical understanding of it must begin with an understanding of this context. Sexuality education in Mumbai cannot be divorced from the middle classes, neo-liberalism, post-feminism, consumerism, and cinema.
Masculinity studies is emerging within women’s studies as a legitimate field of enquiry. As I have discussed earlier, discussing masculinities is important since it allows one to unpack the complex anxieties about adolescent sexuality and sexuality education. Theorising adolescent masculinities forms a large part of the dissertation since that allows an entry point into conceptualising the limits of sexuality education, which is the central question of the dissertation. But apart from this, the dissertation also brings into play a study of masculinities. It begins to think about adolescent masculinities by examining adolescent male romance and sexual knowledge. These point to the connection between male romance and ‘negative affects’ and the hierarchies of access to sexual knowledge. Normative understandings of sexual knowledge and sexual learning are challenged by examining masculinities. The normative understanding is that adolescents require sexual knowledge from formal sources. But masculinities are structured in such a way that it frustrates adults’ desires of formal sexuality education. Adolescent boys believe they are self-sufficient when it comes to sexual knowledge and will not admit to lacking sexual knowledge.

Adolescent male desire at the contemporary moment is overwhelmingly characterised as violent and predatory. This dissertation argues that adolescent masculinity is also simultaneously deeply tied with experiences of confusion, awkwardness, shyness, failure, regret and loss. Adolescent boys’ romance is underscored by experiences of uncertainty, failure, regret and awkwardness. Adolescent male romance is also serious and not ‘puppy love’. These findings question the surety and confidence that masculinities are characterised with when it comes to love and romance. Adolescent male sexuality is also unpacked to reveal how penetrative sex might not be common among middle class adolescent boys. Rather, many adolescent boys fear penetrative sex and often do not desire to ‘go all the way’ but are genuinely happy ‘only holding hands’.

**Present Day Engagements with Sexuality Education**

Sex educators and media organisations are engaging with sexuality education in ways not seen before. Since 2014, a few web-based materials have sought to address sexuality education, often for urban, English educated, upper caste and middle class audiences. Yash Raj Films in collaboration with condom company Durex launched a five part web series in July 2016 called Sex Chat with Pappu and Papa. Pappu, a seven year old boy has various questions on masturbation, condoms, homosexuality, pregnancy and periods which are
answered by his father. The film explores inter-generational discomfort around conversations with sexuality, and uses metaphors of technology to explain sex.¹

Agents of Ishq² is a multi-media projects that discusses sex, romance, love by borrowing heavily from popular cinema. They run videos, podcasts, songs, essays and stories on love, romance, contraceptives, sexual identity, puberty in Hindi and English. As discussed earlier, sexuality education is being outsourced to a number of individual sex educators. Anju Kischinchandani, who conducts sex education workshops³ privately to upper class adolescents, also produces a play on growing up that discusses puberty, reproduction, feelings, attraction through song, dance and humour. A number of other sex educators conduct workshops on sexuality education in schools in Mumbai. Where there is an increase in organisational efforts to create newer models of sexuality education, academic scholarship lags behind in examining sexuality education analytically. While the dissertation has aimed to examine this gap, in the following section I would like to discuss further research on sexuality education which examines how the digital has altered sexualities.

**Potential Research Areas to Explore**

Scholarship on sexuality education is well established in the Western context, but is making interesting contributions of late. The latest addition to this growing body of knowledge is the Palgrave Handbook of Sexuality Education (2017) edited by Louisa Allen and Mary Lou Rasmussen. The handbook discusses the assemblages of sexuality education, sexual cultures

---


Here are the links to the five episodes:

Episode 1- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2Aa16laoE8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2Aa16laoE8)

Episode 2- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cUMGUyWfeno](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cUMGUyWfeno)

Episode 3- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?annotation_id=annotation_1225116873&feature=iv&src_vid=wC47UsW_44U&v=n15hImjPQPg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?annotation_id=annotation_1225116873&feature=iv&src_vid=wC47UsW_44U&v=n15hImjPQPg)

Episode 4- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MH0J294EalY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MH0J294EalY)

Episode 5- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boiwcx23GHE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boiwcx23GHE)


³ The website Out of the Box which has details about the sex education workshops. [http://www.otbworkshops.com/](http://www.otbworkshops.com/)
and media, sexuality education in schools and what sexuality education research can do. Scholars engaging with sexuality education have begun to use the work of Deleuze and Guattari, Karen Barad and the post-humanist strand. The Handbook puts assemblage at the heart of conceptualising sexuality education. This is an exciting turn within scholarship on sexuality education, since it borrows from emerging theoretical trends within the humanities. The handbook pushes at normative boundaries within sexuality education research. With the field of sexuality education being analytically over-determined in a number of ways, this Handbook proposes fresh ways of examining sexuality education. The section on sexual cultures, entertainment media and communication technologies is especially important since the arguments made there are similar to the ones I have made in chapter five. This points to convergence in research across socio-cultural contexts. Kath Albury and Alan McKee in the section argue:

Much sexuality education research has privileged the schoolroom as the most important place for young people to learn about sex, and the work of teachers as the most important communication technology. But we know that young people learn about sex from a range of sources—including their parents, peers, and entertainment media as well as formal schooling (McKee 2012). It is our position that research into how young people learn about sex must take account of this learning ecology, asking how and what young people learn from each of these sources, and how the sources interact, support, or contradict each other. Traditionally this has not been how sexuality education research has approached the issue (415).

In the fifth chapter, I analyse sources of sexual knowledge outside the classroom and argue that these are equally important to learning about sexuality. Albury and McKee elaborate on this to discuss how:

Sexuality educators have tended to assign different values to each of these sources without necessarily drawing on empirical evidence about how the various forms might operate in the context of everyday practices. For example, parents and schools are typically viewed as unproblematically positive sources of information about sex (Fisher and Barak 1989). This is despite the fact that mounting evidence suggests that both of these sources have important limitations as sex educators... Conversely, entertainment media are assumed by many researchers of sex education—again often without empirical evidence—to be a delivery mechanism for ‘myths’ and misinformation about sex, sexuality, and gender (Brown and Bobkowski 2011). This view of popular media implicitly draws on traditions of communication theory sometimes referred to as sitting within the media effects model (Gauntlett 2005) which seek to determine the ‘impact’ of media consumption in the same way scientists might determine physiological reactions to a drug, or a foreign substance within the body. Viewed through this lens, young people’s media practices are understood as a problem of consumption (similar to smoking, drinking alcohol, or eating junk food). In this context, the educative response has traditionally been to explain the ‘impact’ of their media consumption to young people and encourage them to consume more wholesome fare. Implicit here is the notion that media contain ‘distorted’ representations of sex and sexuality, and therefore serve as false or misleading pedagogical material (415-416).

In the dissertation I have analysed how different sources of media provide sexual learning which is based on prohibition, thrill and secrecy and how these affects are not part of the
classroom. Albury and McKee note how media representations of sexuality are assumed to be inadequate and ‘distorted’ and need formal sexuality education to cure it. The chapters that form part of the section on media and sexuality education in the handbook argue: “that entertainment media are not simply a bad object that can be corrected by more formal schooling or input from parents. They take a critical approach to the learning processes facilitated by communication technologies, in some cases demonstrating their limitations, in others demonstrating possibilities that go beyond what is possible in classrooms.” (420).

My discussion of sexual knowledge suggests that adolescents don’t retain information about safe sex, contraception, diseases and sexual and reproductive health\(^4\). They tend to retain information on the erotics of sexuality, the fantasies of the sexual act and romance. The limited information that they have is deemed self-sufficient since they feel they know everything that is to know. Masculinity also plays a role in acquiring sexual knowledge since boys will not admit to not having any sexual knowledge in the classroom. They can admit to sexual ignorance only within the relatively safe space of the peer group. It is clear that adolescent boys do not retain the information that they are given and that formal sex education often plays a very minor role in their sexual learning, however comprehensive the classroom teaching might be. This not only points to the limits of formal sexuality education but also its failures when it comes to adolescent boys’ sexual learning. The new Palgrave Handbook might provide a way to think through this dilemma. It might be important to rethink the role media and technology play in sexual learning and open up how we conceptualise sexuality education. As my findings suggest, sexual learning can come from anywhere and the ‘positive sources of parents and schools’ approach is not sufficient any more. Newer models of sexuality education, engagement with newer forms of media texts and newer modes of sexual learning have to permeate any discussion on sexual knowledge. It is time to rethink the school-based (or parent/home-based) sexuality education as the most positive, desirable and unbiased form of sexuality education.

While there is already a conversation around how the digital alters sexualities, the links between the digital and sexuality education is only beginning to be understood. While the handbook and my research begin a conversation on this, my contention is that some of the newer areas of research on sexuality education might head in the direction of exploring how the digital intersects with sexuality education. The digital is not divorced from the market and the neo-liberal economy. While I have explicitly located sexuality education today within a neo-liberal space, one still needs to examine the intersections between the digital, neo-

\(^4\)This is not to suggest that these are irrelevant.
liberalism and sexuality education. This exploration of the digital also opens a Pandora’s Box of interlinked concerns: of technology and science. I have discussed earlier how sexuality education cannot escape the scientific discourse. Exploring the digital points us to newer directions of engaging with sexuality education and science and technology. Research on sexuality has engaged with reproductive technologies and genetic research. But these concerns also need to spill over into research on sexuality education. It is in engaging with science, technology and the digital in this fashion that one can push the existing boundaries of scholarship on sexuality education.