METHODOLOGY AND METHODOLOGICAL DILEMMAS

Methodological concerns include and extend beyond describing how the researcher went about collecting data and analysing it. It concerns itself with relations on the field, questions of access, reflections on which methods are appropriate to understand specific kinds of data. Methodological issues include laying out ethics of research and dilemmas faced by the researcher in interpreting different kinds of data. In this section I examine these and some more methodological concerns in writing the dissertation. This includes tracing the modes of analysis, access to the field, field relations, interviews, questions of memory and ethical issues.

Modes of Analysis

I have employed different modes of analysis in different chapters. In the third chapter I examine the different discourses around sexuality education using discourse analysis. This is borrowed from a Foucauldian understanding of discourse which is understood as a system of representation. Stuart Hall discusses how discourse “never consists of one statement, one text, one action or one source.” Rather, discourse is “characteristic of the way of thinking or the state of knowledge at any one time [and] will appear across a range of texts, and as forms of conduct, at a number of different institutional sites within society”. These make up a ‘discursive formation’ (Hall 2001: 72-73). I also borrow from Lata Mani’s (2008) framework of discourse analysis which she uses to examine the production of an official discourse on Sati in nineteenth century Bengal. Mani notes that “…discourse analysis focuses on that which is stable and persistent in the ordering of social reality ... Thus it can point to assumptions shared by those who claim to be opposed to each other or are conceptualised in this manner... Discourse … retains the dialogical processes implied in speech and requires at least two parties.” (Mani 2008: 39-40). Mani goes on to explain that discourse is produced through interaction between different actors which is ‘transversed by power’ and ‘embodies the possibility of several simultaneous discourses...” (40)

In the third chapter, I use these ideas of several simultaneous discourses and of discourse produced through interaction. I argue how the official discourse on sexuality education is produced in the spaces of interaction between counsellors/doctors/NGO workers and adolescents. In the case of doctors/counsellors/psychologists like Anthony Grugni, Mahindar Watsa and Rajan Bhonsle knowledge on sexuality education is produced in direct interaction between adolescents and the doctors/counsellors. The space of newspaper columns like Sexpert and magazines like Teenager play a crucial role in mediating this exchange. This
interaction is also ‘transversed by power’- since the question answer format allows for the doctor to answer with a degree of authority and expertise.

The transcripts of in-depth interviews with young men and women, teachers, NGO persons, sex educators haven’t been analysed as discourses. Mary Jane Kehily, in her work on sexuality education in schools in the UK, uses poststructuralist insights to examine her ethnographic data. She notes that there are:

_ moments_ in the transcripts that provide a commentary on the relationship between the domain of the sexual and the domain of the school. Having identified these moments, I began to think of them as _discursive clusters_- instances where ideas and relations are condensed in particular ways. These discursive clusters became… the ‘text’, the object of analysis which was instructive in pointing to ways of understanding and interpreting the social encounter. Specifically, my approach to such moments drawn from the transcripts is to treat them as literary text, paying close attention to linguistic features and devices, particular words and phrases and, occasionally, the absences too (Kehily 2002: 7).

Kehily goes on to note how her reading of these as literary texts drew on her training as a student of literature and her training in cultural studies at Birmingham. Similarly, I have engaged with the transcripts, from young people, from teachers, from NGO persons, from sexologists, counsellors and school staff as a text and looked for ‘moments’. These ‘moments’ tell me either about adolescent romance or sexual knowledge or about teachers’ negotiations of romance in school.

While Kehily has read these as literary texts, I have read these transcripts as texts too, but employed queer feminist criticism to do so. Wilkinson (2014), notes that Oswin (2008) “seek[s] to highlight how a ‘queer approach can be deployed to understand much more than the lives of “queers”’” (Wilkinson: 2453). Similarly, while reading the sexuality education curricula, I often resort to Eve Sedgwick’s _reparative reading_ as a strategy to read against the grain. Wiegman (2014) describes the ‘reparative turn’ in queer feminist criticism as a conscious moving away from ‘paranoid reading’ where the latter purports to know in advance what it wants to critique. Sedgewick questions the hegemony that ‘paranoid reading’ has acquired within critical reading practice. Following Melanie Klein, she develops reparative reading as a form of practice that is open to surprises, is a weak theory and “seek[s] new environments of sensation for the objects they study by displacing critical attachments once forged by correction, rejection, and anger with those crafted by affection, gratitude, solidarity, and love. Under these affective terms, the critical act is reconfigured to value, sustain, and privilege the object’s worldly inhabitations and needs” (Wiegman 2014: 7).

Apart from reparative reading, I follow a mode of critique which Saba Mahmood (2005) calls an ‘expansion of a normative understanding of critique’. Mahmood describes this normative
criticism as “successfully demolishing your opponent’s position and exposing the implausibility of her argument and its logical inconsistencies.” She notes that this is a “very limited and weak understanding of the notion of critique.” In her book *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (2005), Mahmood uses a form of critique which “leaves open the possibility that we might also be remade in the process of engaging another’s worldview, that we might come to learn things that we did not already know before we undertook the engagement. This requires that we occasionally turn the critical gaze upon ourselves, to leave open the possibility that we maybe remade through an encounter with the other” (Mahmood 2005: 36-37).

Sedgewick’s idea of reparative reading and Mahmood’s concept of an expansive critique come from two different frameworks but seem to be doing the same work. The former is a mode of reading that Sedgewick developed from Melanie Klein, while Mahmood’s notion of critique stems from her trenchant criticism of left-liberal modes of understanding and her desire to locate agency outside the modalities of liberal secularism. Yet, I find both useful because they converge in an understanding of the ‘other’ which is willing to remake the self as well as find sustenance in it. I use these as modes of reading and critique throughout the dissertation. It is most apparent in my reading of Christian and sexological materials on sex education where I explicitly do a reparative reading. While reading the feminist materials on sexuality education I explicitly turn ‘the critical gaze upon ourselves’ and push the boundaries of feminist understandings of sexuality education. These modes of reading are used in understanding narratives of young men’s experiences of romance, since they run counter to established understandings of male desire as violence. An expansive notion of critique is also used to understand teacher narratives in schools. In my analysis of discourses of sexual knowledge, I explicitly draw from a cultural studies project which aims to examine popular culture and break the hierarchies between high and low culture. Similarly, I have aimed to destabilise established official discourses and give importance to unofficial discourses of sexual knowledge.

**Access, Field Relations and Interviews**

Methodologically, sexuality education has been studied through school ethnography, analysis of sexuality education classes and materials, interviews with adolescents, and in the last few years with newer tools like visual methodology which includes photo-elicitation and photodiaries (Allen 2012). The initial ‘research design’ that I had drawn up to study sexuality
education in schools in Mumbai involved observation of classrooms where sexuality education was taught.

When I started fieldwork I was given contact details of some school principals. When I approached them they refused to allow me to conduct any fieldwork in their school. Through my established sources in Mumbai, I also tried to contact other schools and I was refused any entry into them. I was only able to observe two sessions of sexuality education. One was through a sex educator who allowed me to sit in her class at an international school in the suburbs of North Mumbai. But this was after getting prior permission from the school and signing a disclaimer that I will not speak to any students during my time at the school. I tried my best to blend into the classroom making myself invisible, lest the students feel uncomfortable. I did succeed in this since a teacher from that school thought I was a ‘concerned parent’ rather than a researcher. The other classroom that I was able to access to observe a session of sex education was through a women’s group in Mumbai which allowed me to sit in one of their sessions. This took place in a public school – run by a trust in an Eastern suburb of Mumbai. The authorities here were more relaxed and prior permission wasn’t required. I was also allowed to assist the teacher in taking photographs of the session, helping her hold up charts with pictures of ovaries and watching the girls make maps of the human body.

Apart from these, I could visit a number of other schools as well, but I could not sit in classes. A research participant who took keen interest in my research took me to his school and introduced me to his teachers. Here are some notes from that field visit:

We met at Eros theatre at Churchgate at 8:15 am and walked down to his old school. It’s a small school and no one stops us at the gate. There is no security system like in other schools; we don’t have to show our id cards. We go up the old staircase to the second floor. On the way, H points out to me the lab, library and explains how things have changed since he left. We go to the second floor. It’s a long corridor, well lit, with classrooms on either side. The teacher’s room is at the end of the corridor. We enter and meet his old teachers. They all greet H very affectionately. Most of them remember H, ask him what he is doing at present and are very glad to know that he is a doctor. They all exclaim how thin he has become and ask about his younger brother. Many of the teachers remember his younger brother and are introduced to H as his older brother. H introduces me as a friend and researcher and they are happy to see me. We are seated in the AC room, and the teachers chat about H, ask about his friends and what they are doing. H tells them about his gang of friends and who is doing what at present. They also pester H about getting married, and a teacher keeps telling him how he should get another degree, probably do his MD. Inshallah, says H. This teacher is a family friend and visits H’s family often. The other teachers also know the other boys’ family and since there are only forty boys in each class they are familiar with all the kids and their families. It’s a warm homely atmosphere. The teacher orders tea for all of us and gives H and me a bar of chocolate each. The atmosphere of the teacher’s room and the camaraderie is very similar to my school and it puts me at ease. When the teacher gets some time from chatting with H, he turns to me and asks ‘what do you want to ask’. I take out the sheet of paper with the questions on it, and he seizes it. He reads through all the questions and exclaims that most are
not applicable to the school since it’s an all boys’ school. He doesn’t want me to record the conversation and allows me to take notes.

We then meet the principal. She is a single woman maybe in her 50s, short, sharply dressed in pants and a top. The second day when I met her, she was wearing a loose sleeveless top. The other teachers were also in pants, or a frock, or skirt. A teacher introduced H and me to the principal who was pleased to see me. She said she was entertaining me only because I had come with an ex student (H). She said I could talk to the teachers. Their only worry was misrepresentation. The classes for sex education would be held later, but she cannot give me permission now to observe them.

After that, I look around the school. We check out the posters, the ones with all the boys’ photos on them. H points himself and his friend out. The corridors have CCTV cameras and the classrooms have posters of Nelson Mandela. There are boards on Ramabai Ranade, Nehru, Gandhi and so on. Even the attendants in the school are friendly; it is a very casual atmosphere.

At this school I met two teachers, one of whom was very helpful. She allowed me to borrow the materials she used to teacher sexuality education so I could make a personal copy. While she did not directly ask me personal questions, she was interested in how I knew the research participant and what my relationship was with him (since he was only a few years younger than me). As we rode down the elevator together, she looked at my clothes and I felt relieved that I appeared ‘respectfully’ dressed in pants and a longish, lose cotton shirt.

I was also able to access other schools. One was in Thane and I was introduced through a family connection. While the principal entertained me, took my questions and promised to allow me to sit in her classes, she never got back to me regarding those. While I followed her up through email and on the telephone it was not possible to get an appointment for classroom observation. Another school in the suburbs of North Mumbai was easier to access and the teachers were willing to speak to me and allowed me to take some of their teaching materials. These were some of the ways I could collect the sexuality education materials used in schools in Mumbai. Over the course of my fieldwork I realised that classroom observation of sexuality education was not possible. This made me resort to relying on: retrospective narratives of young people who went to school in Mumbai, curricula collected from various sources and interviews with teachers. As mentioned earlier, Allen (2012) has used photo elicitation and photo diaries to look at the different spaces in school which are imbued with sexual meanings. Visual research methods in the Indian context and the distribution of cameras and the permission and time to take them- by the participants- might be ethically and practically difficult. Working with these tensions, I have discussed sexuality and education in the Indian context through in depth personal interviews.

Access to teachers, young people, NGO resource persons, sexologists, counsellors and sex educators was relatively easier than gaining access to schools. The young people were interviewed from 2013 to 2015. These were in-depth, open ended interviews which lasted
between one to three hours. While contacting the participants, I did not explicitly mention the sexual identity of the research participant I was seeking. Despite this, fifteen out of twenty of the participants I was able to recruit were heterosexual men, and a few were gay men. This mix of sexual identities helped in asking different questions and building a complex understanding of sexuality education. Many of these interviews were audio recorded with informed consent of the research participant. I elaborate on the research participants’ profiles later.

Since I began living in Mumbai in 2012, I met the first batch of participants either in workshops or training programmes in Mumbai, or at the institute where I am based. Using Facebook, I built a network of those who were between the age group of eighteen to twenty-eight years old and had done their schooling in Mumbai. Most of the participants were contacted through email, phone or on Facebook and I set up meetings with them at either a coffee shop or within different educational institution spaces in Mumbai. The interviews were conducted in English and lasted one hour to almost three hours. The second batch of participants was interviewed in 2015. Since I had already lived in Mumbai for three years and established a number of contacts, I found these participants with considerable ease. I also used dating apps like Tinder and Truly Madly\(^1\) to build a network of friends in Mumbai who introduced me to their friends as research participants. Since I had already interviewed teachers, the latter put me in touch with some of their former students. I used Tinder to build a network of people from Mumbai, one of whom happened to be a teacher who eventually gave me a telephonic interview.

Sex educators, NGO resource persons and sexologists were directly contacted through email or telephone. The women’s groups and feminist organisations were happy to give me interviews in Delhi and Mumbai. I was initially introduced to some of them through my supervisor while I made direct contact with the rest. Most of the organisations were familiar with my institute and noticed that I was registered in the Centre for Women’s Studies. This made it easier for me to gain access. I engaged further with organisations like TARSHI by contributing articles to their e-magazine and keeping abreast of their publications and activities. The sexologist Dr Rajan Bhonsle was also happy to grant me an interview, gave me a list of readings that he used in his training programme (which I will discuss in detail in the third chapter) and gave me contact details of a number of sex educators. It was easy for me to get in touch with these sex educators since I had Dr Bhonsle’s reference and they readily gave

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\(^1\) Tinder and Truly Madly are dating apps. Tinder is a global dating app started in 2012, while Truly Madly is an Indian one started in 2014. Both use Facebook to connect users, utilise anonymous swiping to make matches and allow users to chat with their matches.
me interviews. Other sex educators were contacted cold but were also willing to be interviewed since they felt that I was part of a growing ‘tribe’ of people interested in sex education. I got in touch with the teachers through research participants, my supervisor at the institute and through sex educators that I interviewed. Being a student at Tata Institute of Social Sciences gave me legitimacy to contact most organisations and individuals in Mumbai since they were familiar with the institute and/or knew people there.

Since access to most participants was facilitated through established contacts and networks, it was easier to build trust. One of my research participants asked his friend if he could trust me and his friend replied that he could. Following this he felt comfortable enough to talk about his homosexuality. Since I was introduced to the young men and women through friends and to the teachers through trusted sources like my supervisor at the institute, it became easier for them to talk freely.

I collected and analysed some of the data simultaneously. This resulted in papers which I presented at various national and international conferences. My interlocutors at conferences often wondered how I had managed to get my participants to talk so openly about their experiences. These papers mainly drew from the interviews with young men and dealt with experiences of masculinities, schooling, romance and sexual knowledge. I noted that the young men whom I interviewed seemed very willing to share personal information: about their past romantic and sexual lives, about sexual abuse and about their experiences of schooling. I noticed that the men who spent close to three hours talking to me were the homosexual men, while the heterosexual men spoke for approximately an hour less than that.

A couple of young men though spoke for a brief period of forty five minutes and these were affluent young men from prominent families based in South Mumbai. While I continued to maintain close connections with many of the young men I had interviewed, the homosexual men became close friends and found in me a close confidante. They shared their current sexual and romantic lives and continued to spend time with me outside the professional space of the interview. Some friendships extended into larger conversations about life, career and personal growth.

Hapke and Ayyankeril (2001) discuss field relations and the relationships between the white, female researcher and her Indian male research assistant. They write together about how their relationship and marriage “affected and was affected by the field” (343). While that is not the case in my field relations, the interviews with young men were affected by our respective age and gender. Since young men do no easily discuss intimate details of their lives with other men, but feel comfortable to do so with either girlfriends or with other women, it helped that I
was an adult woman. When I started fieldwork, in was around twenty-seven/twenty-eight years old and many of my participants were only a couple of years younger than me. In these cases they were willing to share intimate details since they saw me as a friendly figure. By the time I conducted the second round of fieldwork, I had crossed thirty and many of the young men I interviewed were around eighteen or nineteen. This age gap also helped since they saw me either as a competent older person, and some of them referred to me as Ma’am. Many of the young men at first mistook me for a psychologist or counsellor and thought I might be able to analyse their interviews from a psychological point of view. I had to inform them that I was not a psychologist but a researcher. This also helped them talk more openly since they didn’t feel threatened and perceived the interview as a ‘safe space’.

The ‘professionalism’ of disciplines- social sciences – helped the young men trust me further. Despite being considered ‘trustworthy’, I was also outside most of the young men’s social circles. I did not work at their office, I did not study with them, and often did not know their friends and family. This helped in sharing confidential information since they knew that I would not divulge it to anyone. I also furnished a consent form, and their consent was taken to record the interviews and take notes. Since I mentioned that the interviews would be anonymous, they were more at ease. I made it amply clear at the beginning of the interview that any information they shared was confidential and that no one would be able to identify them in my writing. Since most of the men were educated and English speaking, I maintained close contact with them throughout the writing phase, sending them drafts of papers I wrote containing their quotes. Many wrote back with comments, questions and were pleased to read my papers.

Many of the teachers, sex educators and schools that I went to were upper class and upper middle class. As an upper middle class, upper caste, English speaking woman, it was easier to get access to these spaces and individuals. As I mentioned earlier, ‘looking respectable’ was important, and I paid close attention to what I wore for interviews with upper class participants. This helped in gaining legitimacy which someone from a different social class, caste would have probably found difficult. While turning the gaze onto the middle classes is necessary, my fieldwork also proved that only certain people can legitimately afford to do so. The power relations that structure ethnographic work allow only certain people access to middle, upper middle class and affluent research participants⁵.

⁵ I thank Vaishali Sonavane for pointing this out to me. She noted how as a Dalit woman it would never be possible or legitimate for her to research upper caste, middle class lives.
I would like to reflect further on the interaction between the female researcher and the male research participant. Radhika Chopra (2004) discusses the ‘problem of knowing’ about male lives as a female researcher in rural Punjab. She notes that “the problem of my own gender and subject position confronts me head on. Do I need to accept that my gender closes worlds to me in ways that I may never access, know and write them? Is there a risk of sacrificing knowledge of the male world in order to keep intact access and knowledge of another, because of who I am? In the face of transgressing gender boundaries, would I risk losing that thin, protective and very hard-won layer of the ‘respectable’ academic that legitimized my hanging loose in the field…?” (Chopra 2004: 37). Chopra notes that knowledge about gender is always fragmented and partially visible. “Thus, there are processes of being and becoming that are veiled for me and signal the possibility that there are categories of men and male worlds that are not ‘visible’ but veiled” (Chopra 2004: 39). Chopra also recounts an incident of street harassment that she encountered during her fieldwork. This was perpetuated by a gang of adolescent boys and while she made a note of it in her field diary, she chose to ignore the incident to continue belonging in that space as a fieldworker. Chopra chooses to discuss this incident in detail because it holds methodological significance. She notes that in studying masculinities and men in that village in Punjab, she could not in any legitimate way get access to that ‘gang’ of boys. She writes that “the adolescent gang briefly opened itself to me with a gesture of violence, yet in many crucial respects it presents a close world. I cannot access the gendering process in the same way I access the gendered world of work in the field” (Chopra 2004: 50). Chopra also discusses how certain gestures among men, like the ‘ball grabbing’ gesture cannot be understood by a female researcher like her since it “remains invisible to [her] because of [her] gender and the fact that [her] femininity marks [her] as a victim of molestation represented by that grabbing gesture” (54). Rather, she seeks to understand this by displacing it, and by dispersions, and outside the particular, specific location where it is embedded (54). Pushpesh Kumar (2015), on the other hand reflects on “the methodological and epistemological implications of male ethnographers’ (in)accessibility to “women’s world” and the resultant (in)ability to produce a gender-sensitive ethnography” (40).

Adolescent boys’ experiences of romance were easier to talk about and did not pose a threat to me. Adolescent boys’ sex talk is also possible to access because I am a stranger. Despite this, some of them were hesitant to talk about sexual knowledge and constructed themselves carefully. They took great pains to construct the image of the ‘good boy’ and told me what they thought I might want to know. I asked a nineteen year old what kind of pornography he accessed. He said that he does not watch any porn online, but he would ask his friends and send me a list of the websites. After the interview, as I made my way home, he sent me a text
message listing the sites of pornography that his friends supposedly watched and most of them were sites for hardcore pornography. Other participants also discuss sex talk as something that they don’t personally engage in. The ‘naughty’ boy is always someone else, not them. There were also very few research participants who owned up to being a source of information on sexuality. Most of them attributed sexual knowledge and sexual experience to other boys. In the narratives, the other boys were always ‘popular’ or ‘rowdy’ or had many girlfriends. When I asked to be introduced to these ‘popular and rowdy’ boys, my participants distanced themselves from them by saying that they no longer kept in touch with these men. I concluded that I had either accessed a sample of young men who were truly not popular in school, or that the boys led me to believe that they were ‘good boys’ instead of ‘popular, rowdy boys’.

The other interviews were with teachers, NGO workers, sexologist and sex educators. As mentioned earlier, many of these were upper class and upper middle class. But some of these, especially the NGO workers, were part of feminist organisations and women’s groups which formed part of a progressive circle. As researchers we assume that we form part of a similar progressive circle. What might be some of the problems of turning the critical gaze back upon ourselves, or as Lashaw (2012) notes, “turning progressive phenomena into objects of critical analysis” (Lashaw 2012: 3)? Amanda Lashaw asks this question explicitly in a number of articles (2008, 2010, 2012) where she does an ethnography of NGOs which work for education reform in the United States. In analysing reformist zeal she notes that “in as much as reformers do not claim to be revolutionaries, they are not accountable for the high hopes they raise. To the extent that scholars collaborate in keeping the material conditions of reform hidden, they help movements avoid critical assessment” (Lashaw 2010:339).

In another essay, Lashaw (2012) notes how progressive culture resists critique and how there is a blurring between academic and NGO worlds. Lashaw notes that people who worked at NGOs often go to universities to do a PhD, and that academicians often sit on NGOs’ boards. She discusses at length her engagements with theoretical and methodological frameworks to examine NGO workers and progressive actors and the frustrations, ethical concerns and barriers to such a project. Her location as an insider-outsider further complicated her writing. Lashaw identifies overexposure as a reason for a failure of critique. She also discusses how ‘progressive reform’ “resists critical analysis because it is morally prized and moral charged” (Lashaw 2012: 16). Lashaw felt the burden of foregoing a critique of ‘those who do good’ because she thought it would be “perceived as the cynical indulgence of a white middle-class intellectual. Who could be against closing the achievement gap? As the moral code goes: critique equals pessimism which equals paralysis. You are either for reform or you are for the
I was constantly dogged by these methodological issues while examining NGO and feminist organisational work on sexuality education and the curricula that these organisations created. While I wasn’t exactly an insider, I was still recognised as being a part of the larger progressive circle and as someone who empathised and agreed with whatever these organisations were working for. Access to these organisations was easy since most either knew about my institution, or my supervisor, or were willing to talk to another feminist and women’s studies scholar who was researching sexuality education. I even engaged closely with one organisation by contributing regularly to their e-magazine. Like Lashaw I was unsure about how to critique the work and texts that I was supposed to ‘celebrate’. I tried various routes, examining the existing literature which critiqued NGOisation, NGO feminism and the institutionalisation of feminism. I even went as far as using a lens of secularism and sexularism used by Rasmussen to critique progressive sexuality education curricula. None seemed to fit the context that I was examining. At last, I decided to closely read the texts prepared by these organisations, trying to find instances of convergence and understanding a discourse whose strengths and weaknesses I laid out. I pointed to the gaps in the curricula and tried to understand the larger discursive shifts these organisations had made. With some alarm, I noted that some of the organisations pushed their agenda and approach as the only legitimate one. Lashaw describes this as a “liberal ethos that asserted itself as the only legitimate way to think, feel, and talk about [a particular issue] ...” (Lashaw 2012:4). As a researcher, I felt responsible to turn the critical gaze on these all the while recognising the worth of this work in the current political climate.

Primary and Secondary Sources and Research Participant Profiles

During the course of fieldwork I interviewed twenty young men and ten young women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-seven; a total of seven resource persons from seven non-governmental organisations and women’s groups in Delhi and Mumbai; eight teachers, one sexologist, three school principals and five sex educators. Only a subset of these interviews formed part of the analysis. I examined only the following interviews- a total of thirty-one interviews- in the data chapters: twenty young men’s interviews, three young women’s interviews, one NGO person’s interview, six teachers’ interviews and one sexologist’s interview. The sexologist is referred to by his name in the chapters and for the
rest pseudonyms are used. The NGO resource person is referred to as M, the young women are referred to as Antara, Angela and Smita; the teachers are referred to as Jasmine, Ameena, Kirti, Sita, Gaurav, Nilima, Binsu. The pseudonyms used for the young men are: Ayan, Anil, Aditya, Hari, Kevin, Manish, Saras, Prakash, Shantanu, Krishna, Heraan, Varun, Pratik, Nitin, Jerry, Vinay, Veeru, Farhad, Naresh and Atul.

There are a number of reasons for the attrition. Since I decided to concentrate on masculinities, the young women’s interviews were not used. Many of the sex educators’ interviews were not useful since the dissertation is curriculum and adolescent focused. While there are teacher narratives, it forms a small part of the dissertation. Many narratives from sex educators, principals and NGO persons were not used since the focus was not on the actual classroom teaching and learning of sexuality education, but rather on adolescents’ learning about sexuality outside the classroom.

A number of secondary sources were used to analyse sexuality education curricula in Mumbai- and partly New Delhi. To analyse the feminist discourse I analysed the following reports: Nirantar’s report titled *Sexuality Education for Young People* (2008), Vacha’s report titled *Review of IEC Material in Marathi, Hindi and Gujarati on General and Reproductive Health of Adolescent Girls* (2011) and TARSHI’s *Red Book* (1999), *Blue Book* (1999), and the *Orange Book* (2010). To analyse the Christian Material on Sexuality Education in Mumbai I analysed Anne de Braganca Cunha’s *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). As part of the Sexological discourse in Mumbai I examined the writings and work of Mahindra Watsa and Rajan Bhonsle. The State discourse on sexuality education in Mumbai was read through the *AIDS Prevention Education Programme* (APEP), a workbook for teachers in secondary schools in Mumbai.

Cinematic texts were also read alongside the interviews and sexuality education curricula, helping to build an argument around adolescent sexuality, schooling and romance. The following films in Hindi, Marathi and English were analysed: *Timeout* (2015), *Partner* (2007), *Time Pass* (2014), *Rockford* (1999), and *Balak Palak* (2012). Apart from this I also examined Loya Agarwala’s *A School Counsellor’s Diary* (2013) to examine adolescent romance in school spaces. All the chapters draw upon a textual analysis of popular cinema in Mumbai over the last few years. Cinematic texts are used to build a context and to substantiate the narratives from the young men, women and teachers. There are ruptures between cinematic imaginations and narratives of participants in Mumbai.
Here are two tables listing all the young people whose narratives I have analysed. I have reported communities as described by the respondents and they are not internally coherent. For instance those who reported as Hindu I am writing as Hindu. Those who simply say Bengali, I am writing as Bengali though they are also Hindu.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Young Men</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>School</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ayan</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Not clear</td>
<td>Private, International, Alternative School Andheri</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anil</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Sindhi</td>
<td>Sindhi Public Private Trust School, Chembur</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Atul</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Syrian Christian</td>
<td>Upper Class Private Convent School South Mumbai</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aditya</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Christian and Parsi</td>
<td>Upper Class Private Catholic School Colaba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Varun</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>Private Christian Boys' School South Mumbai</td>
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<td>Heraan</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Gujarati Memon, Muslim</td>
<td>Private Christian Boys' School South Mumbai</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hari</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Maharashtrian</td>
<td>Private International School Tardeo</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Veeru</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Tamilian Brahmin</td>
<td>Middle Class School Dombivili</td>
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<td>Co Educational Convent School, Badlapur</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<td>Manish</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>Nitin</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Malayali Syrian Christian</td>
<td>Convent All Boys' School, Dadar</td>
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<td>Community</td>
<td>School</td>
<td></td>
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Table No. 1 List of Young Men interviewed

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<th>Name</th>
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<th>School</th>
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<td>Smita</td>
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<td>Antara</td>
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<td>Maharashtrian Brahmin</td>
<td>Co Educational School, Vile Parle</td>
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<td>Angela</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Roman Catholic, East Indian</td>
<td>Co Educational Convent School, Andheri East</td>
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Table No. 2 List of Young Women Interviewed
All schools have English language as their medium of instruction\(^3\). The insistence on speaking in English becomes a signifier for upward social mobility and a marker of modernity. In postcolonial India, Kancha Illiah considers English to be a means for Dalits and other lower castes to lay a legitimate claim to modernity, the global market and equality. The schools which are located in the affluent neighbourhoods of South Mumbai and suburbs like Andheri and Bandra have upper middle class, upper class and often affluent students from different linguistic communities. The schools which are located in the suburbs of Dombivili, Borivali, Chembur, Thane have middle class and working class students from different linguistic communities. Most of the young men who are in their twenties today have largely attended convent schools. The younger men who have just turned eighteen or around twenty, are attending international schools. This is indicative of the continued popularity of convent schools. Convent schools in India were started by the Christian missionaries and are run by different Catholic dioceses. There are all girls’ convent schools run by the nuns, all boys’ convent schools run by the priests and even co-educational convent schools. During the second half of the 20th Century, convent education was seen as desirable because the nuns and fathers taught English, and being convent educated was a marker of status and modernity. With the advent of private schools, international school and alternative education, convent education is not as coveted, but still maintains high standards. The fact that so many young people still went to convent schools shows that these schools were still desirable when these young people went to school in the 1990s and early decade of 2000.

The respondents are from a wide range of linguistic and religious communities. Those whose parents come from different communities spent some time in explaining their identities. Heraan said his father was a Memon and mother a Gujarati and that they were liberal Muslims, though he identified as an atheist. It is not surprising that those who came from Muslim families spent some time in delineating and explaining their identities. It was not ‘natural’ to just say they were Muslims, a religious minority community in India and one that has felt increasingly threatened in the last twenty-five years. The ones who most easily stated their communities were those who were Bengali, Punjabi, Gujarati - as if those categories were self explanatory - without delineating their caste or religious affiliations. The class

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background of the respondents also ranges from lower middle class, to middle class and upper class. Only four of the male respondents identified themselves as homosexuals, while the rest didn’t explicitly state their heterosexuality, assuming it to be ‘natural’ and ‘unmarked’. They did though talk about their desires for and romantic relationships with women. All the young men have grown up in the 1990s and first decade of 2000 and their experiences are also drawn from those two decades. This was also a time when digital cultures and mobile technology weren’t well developed. Data from 2010 onwards will have different concerns and will point to a direction different from what I have described in my dissertation.

I use the category middle class loosely. The participants were not asked their income group to ascertain whether they were from the middle classes or not. The participants were asked other questions to ascertain whether they belonged to the middle classes: the schools they went to and the social class background of the students there, English education, the community they belonged to. Middle class is often self-defined and does not carry the meanings it started out with.

**Memory**

Commenting on “new ethnography”, James Clifford says “ethnographic truths are inherently partial, committed and incomplete”. This is not to dismiss the narratives of the young people I have interviewed as lies, but to state that any narrative is always a ‘partial truth’. At the same time, story-telling becomes central to the articulation of experience (Kehily and Nayak 1996: 212). The experiences that young people recount is often deeply personal, intimate and at the same time a reflexive exercise which they perform in front of a stranger or a friend.

Knightley (2008) discusses memory as a method for cultural studies as well as a topic of study (191). She notes how memory is both socially and culturally constructed (175, 176) and that “memory is the mode by which we represent our experiences to ourselves in all its particular and general dimensions” (177). She goes on to discuss how memory’s “claims to truth are fleeting, transient and contingent, where the meanings of memories are valid only for the dialogic moment of remembrance” (178). Memory is also “one of the key ways in which we make sense of our experience and make sense of ourselves as temporal beings” (186). Following Keightley, I note that memory played a large part in accessing the production of the narratives. Many of the participants noted time and again how certain ideas they expressed were in retrospect, or how they had thought about it only when the researcher asked them this question. The experiences that they shared were often shaped by an adult perspective as well.
as through my questions. The responses that were elicited were decided by the kind of questions I asked and the direction in which I steered the conversation. The narratives were produced in the space between my questions and their answers. I became, in a way, a co-producer of the narratives.

The narratives were also often contradictory. Ruth Frankenberg (1993) discusses how there are multiple levels of memories. Quoting Luisa Passerini, she says there are two kinds of memory, one an “‘all-ready’ memory, stereotyped, revealing general views of the world” and the other “more directly connected with life experience” (Frankenberg 1993: 40). The participants had ready-made views of how things should have been at school reflecting from the vantage point of their adult world as well as that of a well-informed adult in Mumbai. For instance Tina explained how the girls in their school had vehemently resisted oiling their hair since that was against what they did at home. This was a reflection of the affluent class status of her family and the families of the girls in her school. She asserted a strong feminist inclination too. At the same time, she proudly mentioned how she was a ‘stickler for rules’ and how she had learnt to ‘respect elders’ in her school. Smita reflected bitterly on how the nuns in her school had ‘spoilt’ a whole generation of students. At the same time, Varun spoke in retrospect about how the teachers did a good job in telling them about their bodies and that at that age they felt they knew it all.

Narratives of painful or guilty experiences are not necessarily reflected upon with the same intensity of pain that they felt at the time of the incident. One respondent spoke about his sexual explorations with his uncle when he was six years old and how he felt guilty for a long time. But during the narration of the incident, he mentioned that he didn’t feel as guilty about it. Time, memory and coming to terms with one’s own sexuality often erase the pain or the intensity of the experience. Heraan spoke about his memories of being fat during this schooling years and how teachers taunted him for eating too much. This incident was recounted in a jovial manner. There was a lot of humour attached to it in retrospect. The interviews also acted as triggers to memories the participants had long forgotten. The narratives of the experiences of sexuality and schooling were thus produced through these different kinds of memories and in the space of the interaction between the participants and me.

Methodologically, memory is centrally used in testimonios which are “seen to provide a first-hand witness account of atrocities and oppression, and the intellectual or ethnographer, who writes up the account and distributes it, is seen as a messenger or ‘editor’, rather than ‘author’” (Saukko 2003: 67). Saukko goes on to note that the “testimonio is also a border
genre. In a sense, it is a personal account from an indigenous or local point of view; yet, it speaks for a collective experience and is thoroughly transcultural, aiming to communicate and translate peripheral experiences to a metropolitan audience” (Saukko 2003: 67). According to Saukko, testimonios also speak of a ‘silenced experience’. While testimonios as well as oral histories speak of marginal experiences, subjects and lives (Perks and Thomson 1998), the interviews that I did with young men cannot be characterised as oral history. This is because these men occupy fairly dominant positions within social structures in terms of gender, sexuality (often), class, caste and sometimes religion. Yet, the narratives that I have collected speak of a ‘silenced experience’ and use memory to access as well as construct these experiences. I use the term ‘silenced experience’ because many of the narratives of adolescent male romance are often marginal and ignored. Since most of the young male research participants are between the ages of eighteen and twenty-seven, the period which they talk about is the decade of the 1990s and the first decade of 2000. Further study would be required to understand adolescent sexuality in the decade of 2010. There wasn’t too much separation of memory between the eighteen year olds and the twenty-five year olds. The greater distance did not mean that they remembered less, or had any greater opportunity to come to terms with dilemmas and crises. Many of the eighteen or nineteen year olds also found it easy to come to terms with their adolescent dilemmas.

The narratives not only drew on the memories of the participants, but also mine. Reading the young men’s narratives left me with a sense of inadequacy as I reflected on my own romantic failures, feelings, impatience, awkwardness, and sadness. While these narratives made the men reflect on their adolescent past, it made me reflect on my own adolescent past and the ‘lack’ of romance that marked those years. It also made me jealous of the richness of experiences that these boys had, and reminded me of other narratives from men I had known who had equally rich romantic histories. The feelings of awkwardness, fears, regrets, crushes, all spoke to my own memories of adolescence as well as the present failures, fears and regrets I feel today as an adult. I have theorised adolescent male romance using the affective registers of failure and inadequacy, which is a highly subjective task. It emerged from my own experiences of romantic failure, as an adolescent and adult.

The task of thinking about the past also left one of my participants sad and melancholic. A day after my interview with him, this particular participant sent me a text saying that the interview triggered his memories about the ‘lack of romance’ in his adolescent years. This made him sad today as an adult. Another participant wrote back to me after the interview saying how it was a useful process for him to think through certain ideas about sexuality. The exercise of reflection is not necessarily traumatic, or joyful, but often sad, thoughtful,
reconstructing a past that one imagines to be ‘not so serious’, ‘frivolous’ and ‘stupid’. As adults, we reconstruct our adolescence to be a space of stupidity, of ‘immaturity’ and failure. Little do we know that as adults those feelings do not always go away. The ways in which those memories of adolescence spoke to me as an adult says a lot about the continuities between adolescence and adulthood and the instabilities/precarity of adulthood.

Ethical Concerns

While the dissertation engages with adolescent sexuality, I have not interviewed any adolescents. As I have discussed earlier, I have interviewed young adult men – and some women too – between the ages of eighteen and twenty-seven reflecting on their adolescence. This has been a deliberate choice because of ethical concerns of conducting research on sexuality with adolescents. I chose to interview adults after unsuccessfully trying to access schools. This worked out well since the ethical concerns are not as complex and pressing when interviewing adults. Robinson and Davies (2014) discuss the ethics of doing sexuality research with children and young people. They describe the institutionalisation of this practice of ethics within academia as an extension of the surveillance and moral panic around children and adolescents. They note that “dominant discourses of childhood in Western societies have defined what is relevant and appropriate to address with children … pertaining to issues such as sexuality, death, war, poverty, violence and politics, being socio-culturally and politically constructed as ‘difficult knowledge’ and viewed as relevant to the domain of adults only. Conducting research around these issues with children has been subject to increased censorship in an effort to protect children and the notion of childhood innocence. Dominant discourses of childhood have positioned sexuality, in particular, not only as largely irrelevant to children’s lives, but also as a danger from which they need to be protected ...” (Robinson and Davies 2014: 250). This has led to research on sexuality with children and adolescent being ethically fraught. Robinson and Davies maintain that getting ethical approval for this kind of research is not only difficult to negotiate but is also often arbitrary, depending on ethical committees and practices of different disciplines and different countries. But largely, most ethical research concerns revolve around the idea that:

Children’s involvement in research is a process that is governed by strict ethical practices and procedures, which are designed to protect children from potential harm and exploitation. Research with children and young people under the age of 18 is considered ‘high risk’ and, when coupled with the topic of sexuality, can raise even more concerns, which result in greater scrutiny by committees and stricter regulation of projects. The discourses of child protection and childhood innocence have increased the perceived riskiness of undertaking research with children with a sexuality focus. (Robinson and Davies 2014: 254).
Given these concerns of “research with children and young people under the age of 18” as ‘high risk’ and the ethical practices designed to “designed to protect children from potential harm and exploitation”, I decided to interview adults older than eighteen years of age. This did not mean that no ethical practices were followed. Informed consent was sought from the research participants through a consent form which they signed. This indicated that they could withdraw their consent at any point of time. The privacy of the participants is maintained and no information about the interviews is discussed outside academic papers. All use of interviews is anonymous and pseudonyms are used to protect the participants’ identities. Care is taken that none of the participants could be identified in the analysis. No one apart from me has access to the audio recordings, I transcribed the interviews myself to maintain confidentiality.

The chapter has explored some dilemmas faced by the researcher in interpreting different kinds of data and in accessing the field. With difficulty in accessing schools and the ethical concerns of interviewing adolescents, the research took a different turn. Interviewing adults also raised newer concerns of memory and field relations. It brought to the fore dilemmas of a woman researcher accessing men’s worlds and shaped the knowledge produced about adolescent male sexuality. The following chapters are a result of these methodological deliberations and negotiations.