

Media as the Main Choice for Sex Education amongst the Youth: The Case of Radio in Nairobi, Kenya

What is scientifically indisputable is the fact that sex is among the basic biological motives or drives in human life. The other fact is that over the years humans have set rules governing sexuality. While we define sexuality as everything that defines us as girls and boys, women and men, regulating sexuality requires more than simply explaining anatomy and reproduction. First and foremost, sex should be understood as a social construct: That its meaning, the interdicts and imperatives surrounding sex, are socially constructed. Today as the African Communities are facing "sex lawlessness" information on sexuality can be accessed easily and from different forms of media- radio, television, and print. Amidst this is a great concern on how sex content created and presented by the media is affecting the behavior and attitude of the youth. The youth in need of sex knowledge are having the radio as their favorite avenue and the end result is that most of the youth are consuming sex content aired through radio without much restrictions. The fact the youth are consuming sex content aired through radio and the fact that they request for more time is confirmation that the youth consider the topics that are aired on radio to be relevant to them and to add value to their lives. In Kenya today a big share of audiences who tune in to listen to the programs on air are the young who are seeking entertainment as well as information on issues they think are important to them. Among the popular topics Kenyan youth listen to, participate in by way of discussion and questions& answers when they are aired and which they prefer to be allocated more air time are topics on love, HIV/AIDS testing, abstinence, contraceptives, dating, abortion, alcohol & sex, drugs & sex and safe sex. These topics have finally found their way into a "public and unrestricted space" (open to all who choose to participate either as creators or consumers) as opposed to the earlier "closed and guided space" (where there were clear guidelines of who should discuss what with who taking into consideration the age, gender and relationship of the interacting parties) the topics had in the traditional African Society. This shift of space for sex content has raised a lot of concern especially amongst parents who are polarized between those who are opposed to sex content aired on radio and those who find nothing wrong with the content. Whether something is wrong or not, what needs to be considered is how the present society has constructed sex regardless of the primary orientation of any member of the African Society today. Otherwise as it is now the African Society is experiencing the strain of social change (which is normal) and soon the society will strike equilibrium in a new socially constructed meaning of sex. It is at this point that radio and other avenues of communication will be guided to air content that is "universally" acceptable (acceptable by majority if not all).

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