

**NATURE AND EFFECTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF  
TEACHERS IN SPECIAL AND REGULAR SECONDARY  
SCHOOLS IN CENTRAL PROVINCE, KENYA**

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**OCTOBER 2009**

## DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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**DEDICATION**

To my late father, Eric Tom Mutimba who put everything he had in the education of his children. Thanks dad.

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**ABBREVIATIONS**

AAUW	- American Association of University Women
BOG	- Board of Governors
DEO	- District Education Officer
EEOC	- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
FGD	- Focus Group Discussion
GBV	- Gender Based Violence
GoK	- Government of Kenya
HIV	- Human Immunodeficiency Virus
KNUT	- Kenya National Union of Teachers
KUPPET	- Kenya Union of Post Primary Education Teachers
MoE	- Ministry of Education
NOW	- National Organization of Women
PTSD	- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
SH	- Sexual Harassment
SPSS	- Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TTC	- Teachers Training College
TSC	- Teachers Service Commission
USAID	- United States Agency for International Development

## ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate the nature and effect of sexual harassment of teachers in both regular and special secondary schools. The objectives and purpose of the study were to establish the extent and nature of sexual harassment of teachers in secondary schools, investigate factors that influence sexual harassment of teachers in secondary schools, establish the effects of teacher sexual harassment on teachers in secondary schools and establish mechanisms devised by schools, teachers and Ministry of Education in preventing sexual harassment of teachers in secondary schools. The study applied descriptive design that employed self-administered questionnaires, focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews. Validity of the instruments was determined by contacting the experts and the multi-disciplinary working group of the school safety project of School of Education, Kenyatta University. Reliability was determined by using test-retest method. Multi-stage sampling technique, which involved both purposive and simple random sampling, was used to arrive at the sample size of 120 respondents. Quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Packages of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.5 while qualitative data were analyzed and presented thematically. Some of the conclusions made from the findings of the study are that teachers, both in regular and special secondary schools, experience sexual harassment. A total of 58.9% of the respondents indicated that the main targets of sexual harassment were young teachers and 67% consider being teachers on teaching practice face sexual harassment. About 17% of the teachers consider offices and distance between home and school as the most risky places for sexual harassment and the level of awareness of teachers about policies protecting them against sexual harassment is low. Some of the recommendations made are that teacher training institutions should offer courses on sexual safety to teacher trainees as a way of preparing them to be proactive in matters of sexual harassment and violence. Secondary schools should strengthen guiding and counseling departments to guide both teachers and students in dealing with sexuality issues.

## **CHAPTER ONE:**

### **INTRODUCTION AND THE STUDY CONTEXT**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose, objectives and the research questions. It further discusses significance of the study, delimitations and limitations, assumptions of the study, the conceptual framework and finally the definition of terms.

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Safety in learning institutions is a concern of all stakeholders in education world over. Parents, educators, religious organizations, non-governmental organizations, policy makers, and governments all work to ensure that teachers, students and other members of the school community are safe from any imminent danger that could otherwise compromise the realization of schools' objectives. However, the emerging evidence and incidents globally indicate that violence is predominant in schools. Cases of shootings, strikes, arsons, kidnappings and hostages have become common occurrences in learning institutions, which have left both students and teachers as victims, (Hand & Sanchez, 2000).

One form of violence that has become critical and threatens to tear apart the educational fabric in many countries is sexual violence and harassment in learning institutions in general and secondary schools in particular. Global studies have established that sexual harassment in schools is a reality that needs to be curbed. For example, a study in United States in 1993, (Croninger, Lee, Linn & Chen, 1996) showed that out of 1,203, 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> graders, 83 percent of girls and 60 percent of boys of the sample had received unwanted sexual attentions in schools. In another study in educational settings in Ecuador, the World Bank (2001) established that 22 percent of the adolescent girls reported being

victims of sexual abuse. In Israel, a national survey showed that boys reported much higher levels of sexual harassment than girls (Leach *et al.*, 2003).

Reports and studies from other countries like Canada, Thailand, Pakistan, and India have also shown the existence of sexual harassment in learning institutions (Anderson & Umberson, 2001).

In Sub – Saharan Africa, a study in Cameroon in the city of Yaoundé' (Mbassa, 2001) revealed that about 16 percent of the 1,688 surveyed students reported being sexually abused, while in Botswana, out of 422 girls interviewed, 38 percent reported that they had been sexually harassed (Mbassa, 2001). In Ethiopia, low enrolment rates in, and high drop–out rates from secondary schools were attributed to bullying and sexual harassment in schools (Terefe & Mengistu, 1997).

In Kenya, both formal and informal evidence has shown the presence of sexual harassment in learning institutions. Universities have been accused of promoting 'sex for grades' phenomena where some lecturers have harassed female students when the students fail to submit to the lecturers' sexual demands. Erulkar (2004) and Ruto and Chege (2006) have indicated the existence of sexual harassment in learning institutions with Johnstone (2003) showing that 24 percent of sexual harassment took place in school learning settings.

In a study conducted by Ruto and Chege (2006), out of 12 districts, Mwingi District had the highest incidents of sexual harassment of students in secondary schools. The survey results reported that 60 percent of girls and 56 percent of boys had been victims of sexual harassment. The study also pointed out that learners with disabilities were more vulnerable to sexual violence, a view supported by Swartz (1998).

One incidence in Kenya that has earned prominence both locally and internationally is the 1991 case in St. Kizito Secondary School in Meru of Eastern Province in which 19

girls were killed and 71 raped by fellow students in one night. This incident was highlighted in both the local and international media because of its magnitude though several cases of sexual violence and harassment have gone unreported to relevant authorities, which makes it more difficult to firmly deal with the problem in schools.

These studies (Erulkar, 2004; Mbassa, 2001 and Ruto and Chege, 2006;) have further asserted that sexual harassment mainly affects women/girls more than it does to men/boys in terms of numbers and impact (Ruto & Chege, 2006). They have also shown that the main perpetrators of sexual harassment in schools are students' fellow peers of the same age followed by adults, and that schools are viewed as dangerous grounds sexually, only second to homes. Lee *et al.*, (1996) post that sexual harassment has negative academic, psychological and behavioral consequences. These in turn bring ineffectiveness in performance in schools.

In spite of these extensive researches, little investigative attention has been paid to sexual harassment of teachers in either special needs or regular schools. Experience, formal and informal reports have shown that female and male teachers in regular boys boarding secondary schools and in girls boarding secondary schools respectively may be facing various forms of sexual harassment. For instance, students who have undergone rites of initiation/passage have been reported to view young teachers as their equals and try to exercise power over them, sometimes of sexual nature (Ruto & Chege, 2006).

Incidents of headteachers and other educational officers extending sexual demands with promises of promotions or transfers to preferred specific schools or districts have been reported by teachers. Failure by the teachers to comply has led to dire consequences including disciplinary proceedings that are framed, or being transferred to very remote schools. This may in many ways affect their performance in schools. Increasingly, it has become paramount for research projects to focus on teacher issues, investigating ways in which teachers can be motivated, in all schools for learners with or without disabilities.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Studies in Sub – Saharan Africa (Akunga, Kwamboka & Muia, 2004; Johnstone, 2003; Leach *et al.*, 2003; Naylor, 2005 and Ruto & Chege, 2006;) have established the existence of sexual harassment in secondary schools.

In Kenya, sexual harassment is one of the gender-based abuses that has been receiving little social acknowledgement and minimal legislative focus, until recently. Unlike sexual abuse that is easily detectable and punishable by law, sexual harassment is a complex, fluid phenomenon, which does not lend itself to precise legal definition. Though Sexual Offenses Act (2006) has explicitly shown how sexual violence can be legally addressed it is relatively silent on the issues of sexual harassment.

The existence of sexual harassment in our society is undeniable, but what needs to be investigated further are its precise nature, extent and impact particularly in learning institutions.

Previous studies have mainly viewed sexual harassment in schools from the perspective of the students as victims of sexual harassment and have mainly been conducted in regular schools. The perspective of teacher as a victim of sexual harassment in schools has largely been ignored. Yet, achievement of school effectiveness demands, among others, a secure environment for teachers, which in turn impacts positively on teacher performance. This study investigated the nature, extent and effect of sexual harassment of teachers in both regular and special secondary schools in Central Province.

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of this study were: -

- i. To establish the extent of sexual harassment of teachers in secondary schools.
- ii. To establish the nature of sexual harassment of teachers in secondary schools.
- iii. To investigate factors that influence sexual harassment of teachers in secondary schools.
- iv. To establish the effects of sexual harassment on teachers in secondary schools.

- v. To establish mechanisms devised by schools, teachers and Ministry of Education (MoE) in preventing sexual harassment of teachers in secondary schools.

#### *1.4 Research Questions*

The research questions were derived from the objectives as:

- i. What is the nature of teachers sexual harassment in secondary schools?
- ii. What is the extent of teachers sexual harassment in secondary schools?
- iii. What factors influence sexual harassment of teachers in secondary schools?
- iv. How does sexual harassment affect teachers in these secondary schools?
- v. What mechanisms have schools, teachers and the MoE devised in preventing sexual harassment of teachers in secondary schools?

#### **1.5 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to establish the prevalence, nature and effect of teachers' sexual harassment in regular and special secondary schools. If teachers' performance was motivated through sexual safety, school effectiveness will be enhanced and in return generate school systems where behavioral issues among students and teachers are adequately prevented and/or addressed.

#### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study may be helpful in highlighting the sexual harassment facing teachers in secondary schools. This may draw attention of the school safety propagators to lobby the Ministry of Education and Teachers Service Commission (TSC) on policy formulation about sexual safety of teachers in special and regular secondary schools. The study may also play a role in influencing re-evaluation of disciplinary procedures, rules and regulations in regard to teacher-student relationship. It may also be helpful to guidance and counseling teachers in modifying students and teachers behaviors in relation to sexuality, particularly sexual harassment.

Findings of this study have the potential to enhance understanding on the factors that affect teacher performance. Redress of such factors is likely to impact positively on

curriculum implementation and the overall school performance and school effectiveness. When schools are effective, both preventive and curative measures can adequately be put in place. Besides, the study findings may instigate teacher training institutions or the government in developing curriculum on sexual safety of teachers in secondary schools for learners with special needs and regular students. Lastly, this study may inspire prospective researchers to explore more dimensions of school safety particularly in institutions catering for children with special needs.

### **1.7 Delimitation and Limitations of the Study**

The study was carried out in both regular and special secondary schools in Central Province. The special schools included secondary schools for learners with visual impairments; physical handicaps and hearing impairments while regular schools were drawn from Thika District. The study investigated sexual harassment of teachers aged between 20 to 50 years irrespective of gender and whether they had a disability or not.

Due to the small sample size investigated, generalization of the findings to the whole population in the country may be inaccurate. The main limitation during the study was the unwillingness of some teachers to complete the questionnaire while others gave incomplete information. Some headteachers were also un-cooperative in giving permission to the researcher to conduct the study. Most of the teachers who had experienced sexual harassment were reluctant to discuss their experiences. This being a cross sectional study, time was limited hence need for a longitudinal study which may produce better results.

### **1.8 Assumptions of the Study**

The study assumed that secondary school teachers were not just perpetrators of sexual harassment as many studies have established, but also victims and that sexual harassment also occurs in special needs institutions. Further, it assumed that at least some of the teachers included in the study sample had experienced sexual harassment and had invented their own ways of confronting the situations.

## **1.9 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

### **1.9.1 Theoretical Framework**

The study adopted the social structure theory that is based on factors of social-economic stratification of the society and that deviance is distributed in the structures (Durkheim 1951 and Merton 1938). Violence is said to be more prevalent within the lower social-economic strata; who suffer greater frustrations and therefore aggression. The theory further postulates that personality problems arise from such antecedents as poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, isolation, stress, infidelity and many other factors within the presumably disadvantaged strata. Their frequent response to these frustrations is violence, as also observed by Coser (1967), which is or has been institutionalized through socialization. Adherents of the theory argue that Gender Based Violence (GBV) is caused by the structured differences within the society in question. In this case, the institutions of learning form the unique grouping with potential and levels of frustration and therefore violence, arising from competitions among the newly experienced high number of students from different social strata's both economically and socially.

The social structure theory, according to Machera (2006), is suitable in the explanation of the prevalence of severe forms of violence that is frequently reported in Kenyan media. The theory postulates that personality problems arise from such antecedents as poverty, stress, infidelity and many other factors within the society's disadvantaged strata. These are all easily observable in the Kenyan society. Accordingly, a frequent response to these frustrations and deprivation is reaction with violence (Coser 1967).

### **1.9.2 Conceptual Framework**

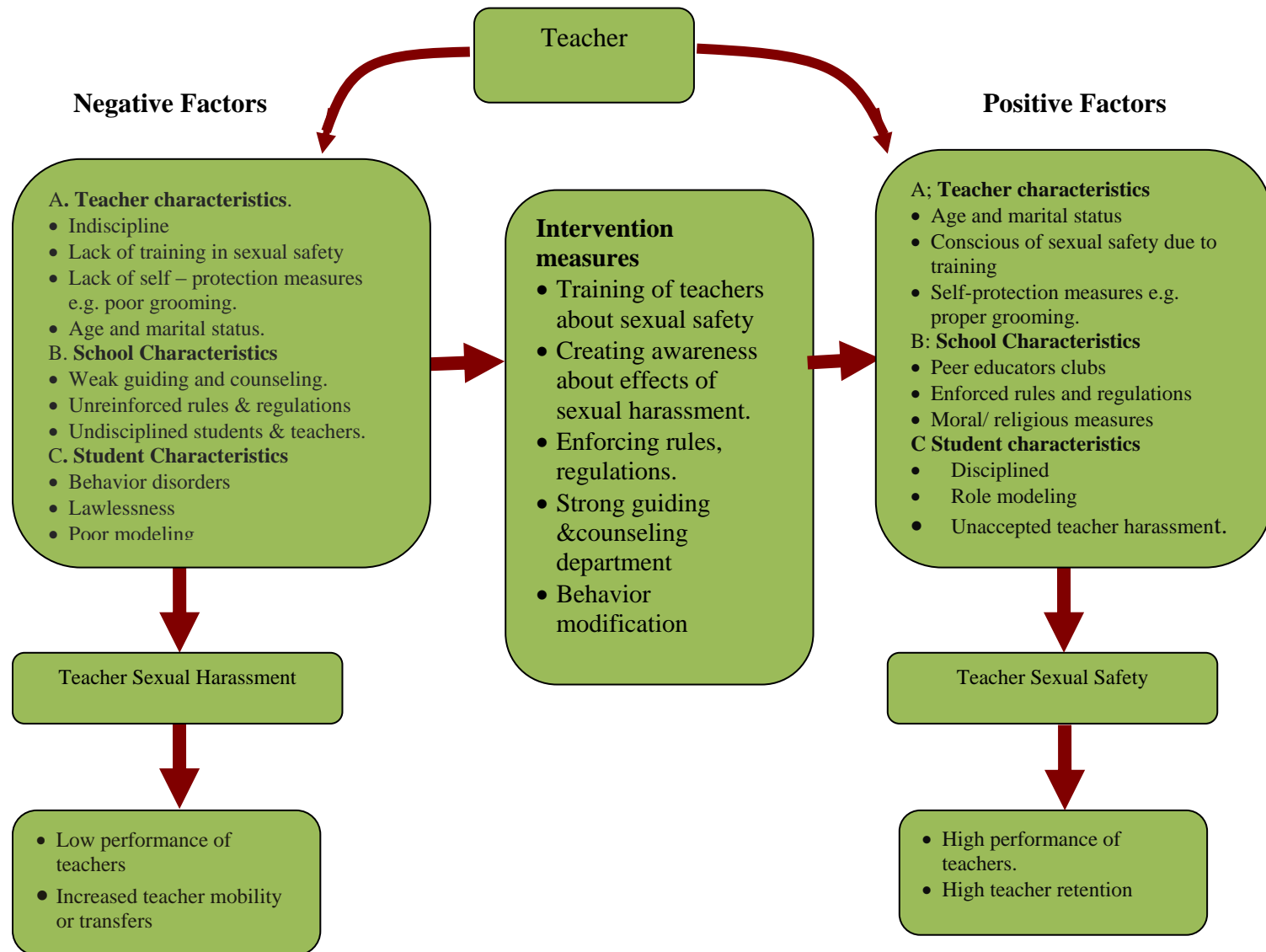
Lee *et al.*, (1996) and Hand & Sanchez (2000) who are of the view that sexual harassment has negative academic, psychological and behavioral consequences. An individual who is sexually harassed may exhibit characteristics like loss of self – esteem, depression, fear for personal safety, anger, hostility towards the perpetrator, increased risk of suicide and self-doubt. Academically and professionally, an individual may be

embarrassed to work, avoid assignments, fear going to work and might not wish to advance in his/her profession or education and might even resign from work.

In a school setting, teachers may be sexually harassed because of their personal characteristics (ignorance of sexual safety measures, gender, age and marital status) or school-related factors (absence of standards defining moral relations in schools or poor discipline). Sexual harassment, combined with other unfortunate school factors like strikes, lack of teaching/learning materials and indiscipline of students will lead to poor performance of students. Knutson and Sullivan (1998) hold the view that youth who are deaf and hard of hearing and who have been victims of maltreatment present behavior problems which attain the level of clinical significance. They are significantly more withdrawn, anxious and depressed, and aggressive. They also exhibit social, attention and thought problems than non-abused peers. The researcher poses a question of whether the affected youths can pass their vented aggression to their teachers in the learning institutions.

On the other hand, a school that is free from sexual harassment of teachers as a result of strong guidance and counseling programs, religious/moral values, elaborate and reinforced schools rules and policies, role models, peer educators clubs among others, is likely to lead to good academic performance of students. This can be achieved through intervention measures like training teachers in universities, diploma colleges and teacher training colleges on sexual safety in schools, creating awareness about dangers of sexual harassment in schools and finally enforcing rules and regulations that discourage sexual harassment and having programs that bring about behavior change. This can be summarized as shown in figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework



### **1.10 Operational Definition of Terms**

**School effectiveness:** Is the ability of a school to efficiently achieve all its set objectives, relating to learners, teachers, members of staff and the community

**Sexual harassment:** This involves any unwanted or unsolicited physical, verbal and non-verbal advances that make an individual feel sexually unsafe. Aspects of harassment may include sexual comments, finger sign, displaying pornographic literature, whistling, and spreading sexual rumors about a teacher among others.

**Sexual safety:** This is a state in which teachers in schools and teachers feel secure and are not afraid of imminent harassment from students, fellow teachers or any other member of the school community.

**Sexual Abuse:** This is when forced into a sexual activity by an individual through threats or coercion. Has element of physical injury.

**Special Schools:** These are residential schools that cater for all learners who cannot benefit from regular schools, as a result of various handicapping situations

**Teacher performance:** This is when a teacher is able to take up the assignments in the school and perform them optimally as expected of him/her by the school administration and other members in the school.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section discusses several definitions and forms of sexual harassment. The second section tackles gender, sexual harassment and the general perspectives. The third section, reviews general global and national trends on sexual harassment in secondary schools and the fourth section briefly analyses the impact of sexual harassment on students' health, psychological and academic orientations. Finally, the last section looks at the policy formulation and the challenges facing the war against sexual harassment in schools in Kenya.

#### **2.1 Sexual Harassment**

In a democratic and civilized society, each person irrespective of age, disability, gender, sex, ethnicity and race must be able to exercise individual freedom. Personal liberty is the basis of any just society. However, sexual harassment is inconsistent with the exercise of freedom and liberty as it violates and debases the individual. According to Kibwana and Mute (2000), protection against sexual harassment and abuse promotes the free exercise of one's sexuality and safeguards the self and the right to self-determination. Freedom from sexual harassment is, a basic human right associated with personal liberty.

##### **2.1.1 Understanding Sexual Harassment**

Unlike sexual abuse in which unwanted physical acts of sexual nature happen, and is easily detectable and punishable, sexual harassment is a complex, fluid, phenomenon which does not lend itself to precise legal definition. Kibwana and Mute (2000) define sexual harassment as unsolicited non-reciprocal male behavior that asserts a woman's sexual role. It can be any of the following: staring at, commenting upon or touching a woman's body for acquiescence in sexual behavior, propositions for dates and demand for sexual intercourse. Of course, this definition is biased as it looks at sexual harassment from a woman's perspective yet men have also been victims of this form of harassment.

Further, Blackstone and Uggen (2004) assert that sexual harassment occurs when unwelcome sexual advances or a wide range of verbal or physical sexual conduct unreasonably interferes with a person's job or creates an intimidating or offensive work atmosphere.

Oladepo and Brieger (2000), Bingham (1994) and Lee *et al.*, (1996) have reported that the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) developed a legal definition of sexual harassment in 1980 that elaborated two main types: *Quid pro quo* and hostile environment. They state that *Quid pro quo* sexual harassment involves actual or threatening use of rewards or punishment from an organizationally dominant person to gain sexual favors from a subordinate. This means that a person in authority uses his powers to solicit for sexual favors either by threats or promise of rewards like favoritism or promotion. Loosely put, "the principle of a carrot and a stick."

In contrast, hostile environment is a sexual conduct that establishes an offensive environment and interferes with a person's ability to adequately perform a job or obtain an education. Hostile environment does not necessarily involve formal hierarchical relationships and encompasses a broader spectrum of the behaviors such as making lewd remarks, using demeaning languages exhibiting sexual photographs or posters and circulating sexual rumors about a person.

### **2.1.2 Forms of Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment manifests itself in many forms both overt and subtle. Acts of sexual harassment range from supposedly trivial, and inoffensive forms of behavior bordering on social interacting, to extremely serious and offensive behavior. In the studies and reports of Brieger and Oladepo (2000); Ruto and Chege (2006); Erulker (2004); GOK, (2006) and Naylor, (2005), it is reported that sexual harassment can assume different forms:

- I. Physical contacts that include sexual assault, touching one's private parts without consent, forced kissing among others.

- II. The spoken verbal conduct that includes unwelcome suggestions, comments and advances, phone calls of a sexual nature or sexual related jokes and insults that are unwelcome. It also includes inappropriate comments and rumors about one's sex life or person's body.
- III. Non – spoken, non – verbal conduct that comprises unwelcome gestures (such as rude finger signs) unwelcome displays of pictures/pornographic materials or movies involving sex, sending letters, faxes, short messages on phones or emails containing sexually clear or explicit remarks.

It is important to note that these forms become offensive, criminal and immoral if the recipient is a non- consenting and non-participating subject. As long as the non-consenting party shows clearly that he/she does not wish to reciprocate, any form of continued pressure by the initiator, then is sexual harassment.

## **2.2 Gender and Sexual Harassment**

Scholars like Sadker and Sadker (1994); Skaine (1996) and Thorne (1993) have observed that gender is a social construction partly acquired through a detailed process of socialization that begins at birth and continues throughout adult life. Children learn through daily interaction that being male is not only different from being female but also preferred. This gender gap leads to the perception of harassment by boys as a mere expression of gender supremacy over girls (power relation) and it rarely receives condemnation from adults. This is further confirmed by Lee *et al.*, (1996), who established that frequency, and severity of harassment varies by gender, with girls being more frequent targets of harassment.

It is also indicated that both women and men suffer sexual violence and harassment but current statistics show that women are more disadvantaged than men and with more consequences respectively, (Akungu *et al.*, 2004); Blackstone & Uggen, 2004; Brieger & Oldadepo, 2000; Ruto & Chege, 2006; Hand & Sanchez, 2000; and Johnstone, 2003). Women are also significantly less tolerant of harassment, more likely to see these

behaviors as coercive and harmful and more likely to perceive the harasser negatively. Turner (1995) supports the views that gender roles encouraged by society are one explanation for the greater sensitivity of girls towards harassing behavior.

Men and women are likely to experience and perceive sexually harassing behaviors differently because of gender inequality and culturally prescribed expression of sexuality. Men and women are held to different standards of sexuality and these standards work to maintain the existing gender order. Women may perceive sexually harassing behavior as threatening in part because they are taught from an early age to be concerned about their bodily safety and to protect their sexuality. Men, on the other hand, are taught less as far as the possibility of sexual predators is concerned and for a good reason – targets of sexual harassment are overwhelmingly female and perpetrators are men. This, however, is still debatable (Blackstone & Uggen, 2004).

Because of such findings, little attention has been paid to sexual harassment of boys and men. Miller (1991) and Heidenson (2000) have gone further and claimed that feminist scholars have been hesitant to grapple with the issue of women's violence since it draws attention away from the fact that violence is predominantly a male phenomenon and because studying women's violence can play into sensationalized accounts of female offenders. Perhaps this is the fact why in Sub-Saharan Africa, there is a growing body of literature on adolescent and young adult women but much less is known about male sexual and reproductive health (Blackstone & Uggen, 2004; Erulkar, 2004; & Njung'e, 2007). This has given rise to misconception that men are less affected by sexual harassment, or are always perpetrators yet evidence from researchers conducted indicate that men are also victims (Blackstone & Uggen, 2004; Crocco, 2001; Kalof *et al.*, 2001; Kohlman, 2003; Naylor, 2005; Ruto & Chege, 2006 and Tlbot, 2002). The problem is that men/boys are too ashamed or embarrassed to speak about sexual harassment (Njung'e, 2007).

Another issue is that men minimize sexual harassment they get from women or do not interpret the signs as sexual harassment (Anderson & Umberson, 2001). Hand and Sanchez (2000) have also explained that heteronormative masculinity encourages men to conceive of themselves as predators or protectors rather than targets (victims) of such harassment behavior. The authors also observe that men lack a cultural reference point that would give meaning to sexual harassment behaviors as a unified contrast or phenomenon. This means that if a man and a woman were to be sexually harassed, a woman will realize it faster and seek redress from relevant authorities but the man will either remotely interpret it as sexual harassment or (most likely) minimize it or not completely see it as sexual harassment and therefore ignore it and not seek any help.

Another aspect is that financially vulnerable men as well as women are most likely to experience sexual harassing behaviors and men pursuing more egalitarian gender relationships are most likely to identify this. Blackstone and Uggen (2004) have further stated that a clear harassment syndrome is found of all age and sex groups but never the less, adult women remain the most frequent targets of classic sexual harassment markers, such as unwanted reaching and invasion of personal space.

Addressing power imbalances between men and women is central to preventing gender violence in general and sexual harassment in particular and this process must begin in schools. Successful efforts must include both boys and girls. The lives of girls/women and boys/men are intimately interwoven, and working only with girls is, at best only half a solution. Framing the issue in the polarization language of girls versus boys, victims versus perpetrators only exacerbates an already difficult situation and masks the complexity of the dynamics of gender and power (USAID, undated).

As the issue of sexual harassment becomes a crucial issue in our society in this 21<sup>st</sup> century, the need for a holistic, multifaceted and radical approach ought to be formulated to confront the predicament. Though gender still remains a key factor in sexual harassment, focusing on women/girls and leaving out boys/men in programmes

alleviating this issue only maintains the existing *status quo*. It is unfortunate that the assumption that men are always perpetrators and women victims still exists yet in the background, men have also been, and are still being sexually harassed. The incidences of men being harassed may be low due to several factors like not reporting when it happens for fear of being ridiculed by peers, or misinterpreting sexual harassment for signs of interest from the other party.

### **2.3 Sexual Harassment in Secondary Schools**

Generally, school violence is the exercise of power over others in school settings, by some individuals, agency, or social process that denies those subjected to it, their humanity to make a difference, either by reducing them from what they are or limiting them from becoming what they might be (Stuart, 2000). The global trend of violence in learning institutions has shown that sexual harassment exists in these institutions.

In a study of American secondary schools, a survey conducted in 1993 in a national representative sample of 1,203, 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> graders in 79 public schools showed that 83 percent of girls and 60 percent of boys received unwanted sexual attentions in schools (Lee *et al.*, 1996). A Massachusetts survey reported that: a) student harassment by peers was more common than by teachers b) girls were much more likely than boys to experience severe forms of unwanted physical attention; c) Sexual harassment was as common in comprehensive high schools as in vocational schools; and d) sexual harassment was as common in fully co-educational schools as in schools enrolling low proportions of female students (Stein, 1981). In another survey, a majority of female high school juniors and seniors reported that they had been sexually harassed in schools (Strauss, 1988).

Two recent surveys, designed and supported by advocacy groups, were aimed at gathering new public attention and sympathy for this problem in US high schools (USAID undated):

- a) The National Organization of Women (NOW), Legal Defense and Education Fund and the Wellesley College Centre for Research on Women developed questionnaire published in *seventeen magazines* (“What is happening to you?” 1992) and analyzed by Stein Marshall and Tropp (1993).
- b) The American Association of University Women developed a survey and published results in (*Hostile Hallways*, AAUW, 1993). Four findings emerged from these more scientifically valid estimates:
  - I. Sexual harassment is very pervasive in secondary schools;
  - II. Students consider sexual harassment unwelcome and problematic;
  - III. The behavior occurs in public places and
  - IV. Students have difficulty receiving help even though a majority in both surveys reported trying to talk to someone about the harassing behavior (USAID undated).

In another study in an educational setting in Ecuador, 22 percent of the adolescent girls reported being victims of sexual abuse (World Bank, 2002) and in a national survey in Israel, boys reported much higher levels of sexual harassment than girls, (Zeira *et al.*, 2002 in Leach *et al.*, 2003).

Many reports and studies conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa have also proved the existence of sexual harassment in schools (Akunga *et al.*, 2004; Hand & Sanchez, 2000; Leach *et al.*, 2003; Johnstone, 2003; Naylor, 2005 and Ruto & Chege, 2006). USAID (undated) attributes this to economic imbalances that are extreme, low literacy rates and the HIV pandemic which make sexual harassment a more critical issue that deserves proper attention.

Several researches illustrate the issue in question. For instance, a qualitative study in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia found that bullying and attempted rape were factors in low female enrolment rates, and high dropout rates from secondary schools (Terefe & Mengistu, 1997). In Cameroon, a study of sexual abuse in schools in the city of Younde’ revealed

that about 16 percent of the 1,688 surveyed students reported being abused (Mbassa, 2001). Approximately, 15 percent of findings in a study “Shattered Hopes” in Botswana that surveyed 800 students, including 422 girls aged 13 – 26 in 12 schools indicated that 38 percent of the girls questioned reported that they had been touched in a sexual manner without their consent while 17 percent reported having had sex with 50 percent of them saying that it was forced. Most of the sexual harassment came from peers (USAID undated).

In South Africa, a study published in ‘The Lancet’ found that 33 percent of rape survivors were girls who had been raped by members of the school community (Jewkes, 2002 & Naylor, 2005). A study in Ghana of 400 adolescents showed that both male and female students were equally exposed to forced sex, but the highest percentage (27 percent) was among girls in their junior secondary schools (Afenyandu & Goparajin, 2003).

In Kenya, both formal and informal evidence has shown the existence of sexual harassment in educational institutions (Erulkar, 2004; Johnstone, 2003 and Ruto & Chege, 2006). One incident that has received both national and international attention is the 1991 case in St. Kizito Secondary School in Meru of Eastern Province in which 19 girls were killed and 71 raped by fellow students in one night. This event opened a floodgate of questions that has led scholars in trying to unearth how deep sexual harassment and abuse is in learning institutions. Higher learning institutions have not been spared either with ‘sex for grades,’ a public concern in Kenyan universities.

It is unfortunate that many cases of sexual harassment in schools in Kenya go unreported or the authorities simply shelve such cases without proper investigations and remedies. This has made sexual harassment not well tackled in schools and other learning institutions.

Scholars like Johnstone (2003) and Ruto and Chege (2006) have further stated that schools are the second unsafe environment sexually after home, with the latter scholar showing that 27 percent of sexual harassment took place at home followed by school/classroom/ games at 24 percent and when children were returning home from school was 15 percent. This has been supported by Hand and Sanchez (2000) who observe that sexual harassment experience and tactics that children, adolescents and young adults carry into their adult settings are acquired in learning institutions.

Lee *et al.*, (1996) using the AAUW data found that the frequency and severity of harassment vary by gender, with girls in schools more frequent targets of harassment, views supported by Leach *et al.*, (2003) and Leach and Machakanja (2000). Furthermore, girls exhibit a more pronounced initial reaction to harassment and have more negative outcomes as a result of experiencing harassment. Another study (Hand & Sanchez, 2000) on adolescent sexual harassment indicates that although prevalence of harassment is relatively high for genders, girls hold more negative views. One other reason for increased sexual harassment is that secondary school students are in the middle of adolescence and therefore they experience accelerated biological growth and cognitive development. Hand and Sanchez (2000) say that these changes may promote exposure that if not checked can deteriorate to sexual harassment in schools.

From the reviewed literature, it has been proved beyond doubt that sexual harassment exists in learning institutions in general and secondary schools in particular. What remains to be investigated is the aspect of teachers being victims of sexual harassment in schools. Informal evidence shows that teachers who are in secondary schools have more often than not been victims of sexual harassment by their students, fellow teachers and education officers. This needs to be empirically proved. Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) and universities have overlooked the importance of preparing teachers in sexual safety and their relations with the students. This has incapacitated teachers in confronting

the issue of sexual harassment in schools both as counselors and as victims of sexual harassment.

The teacher curriculum should therefore be prepared in the training institutions to ensure teachers' sexual safety on the one hand and how they can effectively play a role in counseling and alleviating sexual harassment problems in schools on the other. This problem could even be worse for workers who are disabled and working in places where sexual safety is not a priority. Presenting sexual harassment as a problem that affects students only is a narrow way of tackling this phenomenal problem in schools. Kenyan scholars need to further investigate sexual safety of learners with special needs both in schools and in their out of school environment.

#### **2.4 Effects of Sexual Harassment in Schools**

Studies and reports (Naylor, 2005; USAID undated; Hand & Sanchez, 2000; Lee *et al.*, 1996; and Kibwana and Mute, 2000) have asserted that sexual harassment has negative impact on the victims highlight some of these effects that could affect students' psychological, health and academic life. Psychologically, a victim may lose self – esteem, be depressed may fear for personal safety, have anger and hostility towards the perpetrators and may even contemplate suicide. In health, Ruto & Chege (2006) reveal that violence and harassment can lead to damage of adolescent health and increase risk of HIV infections and other sexually transmitted diseases. Academically, sexual harassment will make learners avoid school (for example in case of pregnancy or embarrassment or fear), not want to talk in class, experience low performance, diminish in education and co-curriculum activities and lowers their dedication to academic pursuits.

Sherer (1993) observes that students who are victims of peer sexual harassment report a multitude of consequences. Students experience feelings of embarrassment, fear, anger, frustration, loss of self-confidence, powerlessness, and cynicism about education. Some experience retaliatory measures for not complying with the harasser's demand. She states that often the emotional responses manifest themselves in physical symptoms including

insomnia, listlessness, and depression which often results in a reduced ability to perform schoolwork, excessive absenteeism, and frequent tardiness.

Many students have also indicated that sexual harassment affects their ability to remain in the same environment. Sexual harassment has led students to transfer from particular courses or majors, especially in fields considered non-traditional for women, such as auto repair, carpentry, and plumbing, and, in some instances, to withdraw from school. When sexual harassment is allowed to continue, in addition to feeling "betrayed, discredited, or compromised by peers," victims feel "unsupported by school staff, seem less trusting of people in general, and less enthusiastic about pursuing their education." Lee, Croninger, Linn & Chen (1996) and Hand & Sanchez (2000)

The above consequences have been analyzed from the perspective of students as victims of sexual harassment. What needs to be investigated also is how teachers are affected by sexual harassment in schools.

## **2.5 Policy on Sexual Harassment in Kenya**

Sexual harassment needs a clear policy framework that defines, prohibits and carries penalties for acts committed by anyone. If this is not done, then all other efforts will pale into insignificance and fighting this problem will prove more challenging and fruits will take long to come. Unlike in developed countries, Omale, (2000) points out that in developing countries, sexual harassment guidelines either do not exist or are not reinforced as they should in school settings and work places. She emphasizes that while sexual harassment is receiving some official recognition in workplace, there remains a policy vacuum in education.

Several authors (Fleischman, 2003; Human Rights Watch, 2001; Leach *et al.*, 2002; Malmeli, Mabalane, Napo, Sibiyi & Free, 2000 and Omale, 2000) emphasize that regulations on gender – based violence and sexual harassment need to be developed, enforced and widely disseminated effectively. Leach *et al.*, (2003) have concluded that schools need to have in place a means of reporting and recording incidents of violent

behavior in schools and to hire counselors to respond to reports of sexual harassment. Access to avenues or redress for abuse and exploitation must be improved (Fleishman, 2003).

### **Sexual Offenses Act of 2006**

The Sexual Offenses Act (2006) has had minimal impact on sexual harassment generally, and in secondary schools in particular (Njung'e, 2007). The Act is very categorical on issues of sexual violence and abuse like child pornography, rape, defilement, child trafficking among others. However, on issues of sexual harassment, the Act mainly deals with sexual offences related to position of authority and persons in position of trust.

Section 23 (1) states that:

Any person, who being in a position of authority, or holding a public office, who persistently makes any sexual advances or requests which he or she knows, or has reasonable grounds to know, are unwelcome, is guilty of the offence of sexual harassment and shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of not less than three years or to a fine of not less than one hundred thousand shillings or to both.

This limits sexual harassment to place of work yet this is experienced on the streets, in buses, and even among colleagues at the same level of authority at the workplace.

The burden of proof that is required of the victim as per the Act may also be too hard to provide. The act states that:

- (a) the submission or rejection by the person to whom advances or requests are made is intended to be used as basis of employment or of a decision relevant to the career of the alleged victim or of a service due to a member of the public in the case of a public officer;
- (b) such advances or requests have the effect of interfering with the alleged victim's work or educational performance or creating an offensive working or learning environment for the alleged victim or denial of a service due to the member of the public from a public office.

Though the Ministry of Education and Teachers Service Commission have policies on sexual harassment in learning institutions, for instance code of ethics, they have not been effective in teacher protection.

The policies and guidelines have not been prepared with the teachers in mind especially when harassed by students. There is very little (if any) that is said about how teachers can go about this problem when they fall victims. It gets even hazier in schools that cater for learners with disabilities. The Sexual Offences Act for instance presents vividly what should be done when teachers or school employees sexually abuse their learners in school thus:

Any person who being the head-teacher, teacher or employee in a primary or secondary school or special institution of learning whether formal or informal, takes advantage of his or her official position and induces or seduces a pupil or student to have sexual intercourse with him or her or commits any other offence under this Act, such sexual intercourse not amounting to the offence of rape or defilement, shall be guilty of an offence of abuse of position of authority and shall be liable upon conviction to imprisonment for a term of not less than ten years.

It is, therefore, clear on what disciplinary measures a teacher will get when he/she is a perpetrator but everything gets unclear in case he/she is the victim. This has rendered the war against sexual harassment in school a single edged sword.

Kenyatta University has deliberately addressed the issues of sexual safety through its Policy on GBV and Sexual Harassment. The policy acknowledges that the previous handling of the GBV has been *ad hoc* and this has not been effective. The policy comprehensively covers institutional framework like awareness creation, safety and security among others. It further outlines procedures for handling GBV and sexual harassment clearly showing the reporting mechanism, investigation procedures and disciplinary measures. The university however needs to incorporate this in the teacher curriculum to achieve more results in sexual safety outside the university.

The challenge in war against sexual harassment is that unlike sexual abuse that is easily detectable and punishable by law, sexual harassment is a complex, fluid phenomenon that

does not lend itself to precise legal definition. This dilemma puts policy – makers in a state of uncertainty when coming up with regulations and policies that would specifically address sexual harassment in schools.

## **2.6 Summary**

The reviewed literature in this chapter puts to rest the question of whether sexual harassment exists in learning institutions and particularly in secondary schools. What researchers have also brought to the fore is sexual harassment:

- (i) Is a global trend that affects both developed and developing countries and
- (ii) It affects both men/boys and women/girls but the latter are more affected both in number and impact.

Equally noted is the fact that in developed countries, radical programs have been put in place to curb the problem in schools unlike in third world countries where the problem is just beginning to get attention of educational and/ or feminist researchers.

One gap that glares at us is the fact that literature shows more on the prevalence, nature and impact of sexual harassment of students and not teachers. There is very little research about sexual safety in special schools. In Kenya, informal reports have highlighted cases of teachers, both male and female, being sexually harassed by either fellow teachers or students. This may have had a negative impact on the teachers' performance in schools. It gets more complicated as these teachers are rarely equipped with sexual safety skills during training hence are unable to handle sexual safety issues when need arises.

Sexual safety curriculum, therefore, needs to be developed in all teacher training institutions, diploma colleges and universities as this will go a long way in reducing and tackling sexual harassment in schools. The uniqueness of this study is that it does not just look at teachers as victims of sexual harassment but it goes further to investigate the effects of sexual Harassment.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the research design, discusses the variables and shows location of the study and target population. It further looks at sampling techniques and sample size, the construction of research instruments and where the pilot study took place. Finally, the chapter discusses validity and reliability, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques as well as logistical and ethical issues that were observed during the study.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study adopted a descriptive survey to determine effects and extent of sexual harassment of teachers in regular and special secondary schools in Central Province. Creswell (2005) defines survey research as a form of quantitative research in which an investigator identifies either the sample or the population, collects data through questionnaires or interviews and draws conclusions or makes inferences about the population. Gay, (in Mugenda & Mugenda 2003), defines survey as an attempt to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables.

The design was appropriate, as it helped the researcher to gather data from a large population of respondents, that is, teachers, students and education administrators in Central Province within a short time. The researcher also obtained both quantitative (statistical) and qualitative (attitudes and opinions) data, which made it possible to investigate how sexual harassment of teachers in secondary schools affected the teachers' performance. Figure 3.1 below illustrates the research design.

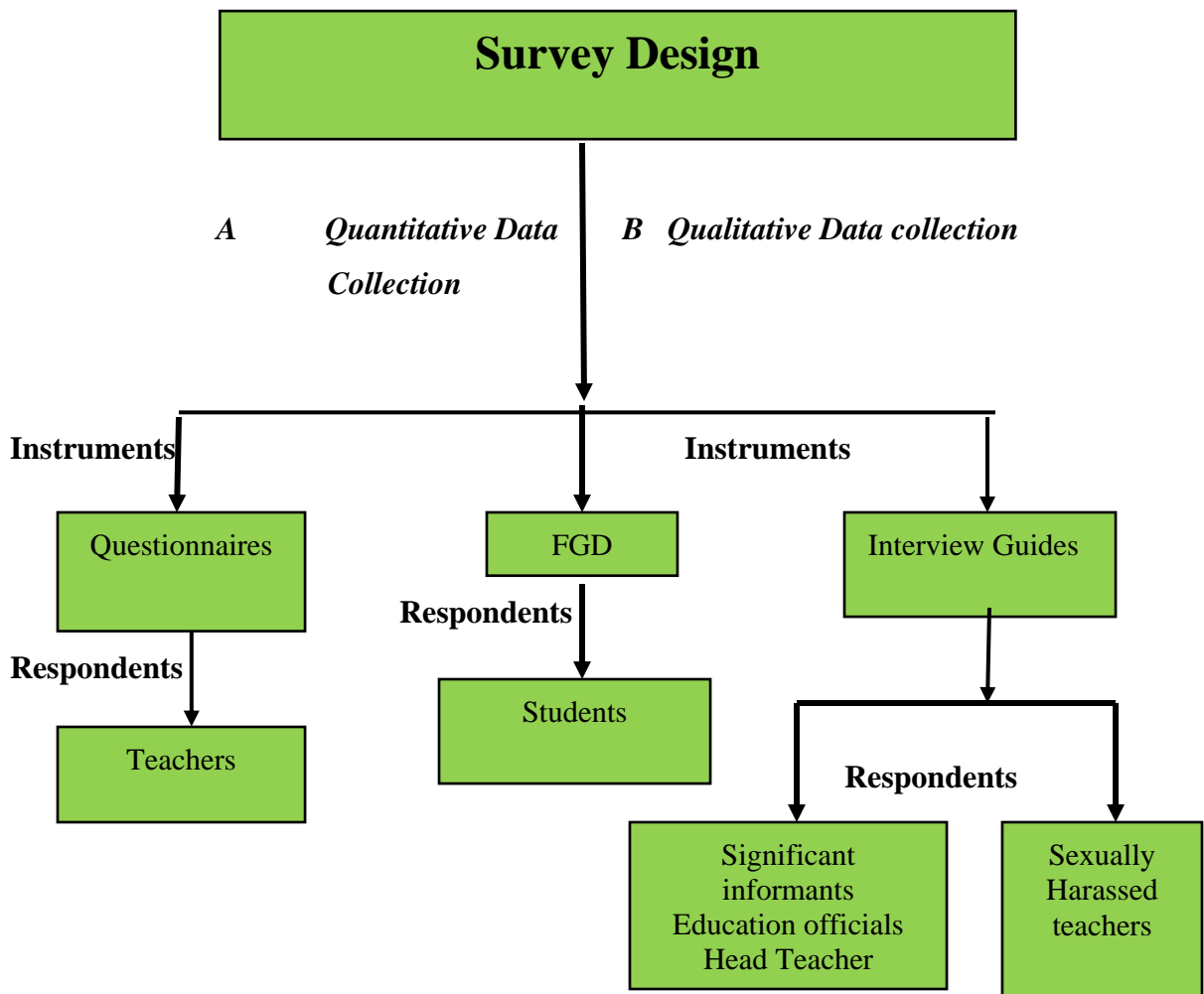


Figure 2 3.1: Research Design

Source: Author (2009)

### **3.2 Study Variables**

#### **Independent variable: *Sexual harassment***

This involves any unwanted or unsolicited physical, verbal, non – verbal advances that make a teacher feel sexually unsafe. Aspects on harassment included sexual comments, finger signs, displaying pornographic literature, whistling, and spreading sexual rumors about a teacher among others.

#### **Dependent variable: *Effects on the teacher***

This is when a teacher is academically, professionally, psychologically and socially affected to an extent that he/she is unable to take up the assignments in the school and perform them optimally as expected of him/her by the school administration and other members in the school

**Intervening variables:** These are factors that may influence sexual harassment of the teacher and may include whether the teacher is disabled or not, age, gender, years of experience and type of school for example whether boarding or day in rural or urban among others.

### **3.3 Locale of the Study**

The study took place in two districts namely Thika and Nyeri of Central Province.

#### **3.3.1 Central Province**

Central Province covers the area around Nyeri to Southwest of Mt. Kenya. It is the ancestral home of, among others, the Gikuyu, Embu, Meru and Akamba communities. According to the 1999 Census, the province had a total population of 3,724,159 inhabitants for an area of 13,191 km<sup>2</sup> (Wikipedia 2009) and had 12 districts by 2008.

The climate of Central Province is generally cooler than that of the rest of Kenya due to the region's relatively higher altitude. Rainfall is fairly reliable, falling in two seasons,

one from early March to May and a second during October and November. The province is a key producer of coffee, one of Kenya's key exports and also home to a vibrant dairy industry.

During Kenya's colonization by the British, much of the province was regarded as part of the 'White Highlands' for the exclusive use of the settler community. Thus, it was prone to a lot of political activity from the local communities who felt that they had an ancestral right to the land. This culminated in the 1950s with the Mau Mau rebellion that saw the region placed under a state of emergency and the arrest of many prominent political leaders.

### 3.3.2 Thika District

**Thika District** is an administrative district in the Central Province of Kenya. Its capital town is Thika. The district is adjacent to the northeastern border of Nairobi (Wikipedia 2009). The district had a population of 645,713. The district is predominantly rural, but its urban population is soaring as Nairobi is growing rapidly. Kikuyu are the dominant tribe in the district. The district has four constituencies by 2008 Gatanga (consists of Gatanga and Kakuzi divisions), Gatundu South, Gatundu North and Juja.

*Table 3.1* Thika Administrative Divisions

<b>Division</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Urban pop.</b>	<b>Headquarters</b>
Gatanga	103,048	0	
Gatundu	113,699	0	Gatundu
Kakuzi	71,622	0	
Kamwangi (Gatundu north)	99,460	0	
Ruiru (Juja)	150,710	81,709	Ruiru
Thika municipality	107,174	75,893	Thika
<b>Total</b>	<b>645,713</b>	<b>157,602</b>	

*Source: 1999 Census*

### 3.3.3 Nyeri District

Nyeri District is in Central Province of Kenya. Its headquarters is in Nyeri town. It has a population of 661,156 and an area of 3,356 km<sup>2</sup> (Wikipedia, 2009). The district is located on the southwest flank of Mount Kenya. Local people are predominantly of the Kikuyu tribe. The district has six constituencies namely Tetu, Kieni, Mathira, Othaya, Mukurweini and Nyeri Town.

*Table 3.2 Nyeri Administrative Divisions*

<b>Division</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Urban pop.</b>	<b>Headquarters</b>
Kieni east	83,635	2,643	Naro Moru
Kieni west	68,461	5,017	Mweiga
Mathira	150,998	6,275	Karatina
Mukurwe-ini	87,447	1,525	Kiahungu
Nyeri municipality	101,238	40,497	Nyeri
Othaya	88,291	3,846	Othaya
Tetu	80,100	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>660,170</b>	<b>59,803</b>	

*Source: 1999 Census*

### 3.4 The Target Population

The target population for this study was a total of 881 (441 female and 440 male) secondary school teachers in Thika District and 1,594 (799 female and 795 male) in Nyeri District teaching in both regular and special secondary schools. The target population included teachers, students, headteachers and a District Education Officer.

### 3.5. Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

#### 3.5.1 Sampling Techniques

Multi stage sampling technique that requires two or more successive steps or stages was used to obtain the required sample size. Purposive sampling was used to select the province and districts of study and the special secondary schools. Central Province (Thika and Nyeri districts in particular) was chosen because of the existence of all the three categories of special secondary schools namely Thika secondary school for the

blind, Joytown secondary school for the physically handicapped and Rev. Charles Muhoro secondary school for the hearing impaired. The three special schools were chosen because they are the only special secondary schools in the province. Regular schools from Nyeri district did not participate in the study. The district was included in the study only because it hosts Rev. Charles Muhoro secondary school for the hearing impaired. All the schools in Thika district were grouped in either mixed or girls/ boys only and then the names written on raffle papers for random sampling of which five schools were chosen from each of the two categories. Teachers in every school, were put in strata considering age, gender, and years of experience among others before random sampling using lottery method. The next stage was to go through the questionnaires completed by the teachers and then identify those who had been sexually harassed for in depth interview.

Students were randomly selected, using lottery procedure, from form 2 to form 3 of four regular schools. These students then participated in focus group discussions. Students from secondary schools for learners with special needs did not participate in the study because initial findings in the teachers' questionnaires did not prove that they were among key perpetrators.

The significant informants who included head teachers of the sampled schools and the area District Education Officers (DEO) were purposively sampled. These significant informants were interviewed on sexual safety of teachers in secondary schools. Teachers who might have experienced sexual harassment were sampled from the questionnaires and thereafter interviewed.

### **3.5.2 Sample Size**

The study involved 3 secondary schools for learners with special needs and 7 regular secondary schools, 4 head teachers (1 from special schools and 3 from regular schools), 95 teachers (49 male and 46 female), 16 students (9 female and 7 male), the Thika District Education Officer (male) and head teachers (2 male and 2 female). The sample

size also included 4 (3 female and one male) teachers who were interviewed had filled in the questionnaire as having experienced sexual harassment.

*Table 3.3: Total Number of Respondents*

Respondents			Number of Respondents	Sampling Technique
	Male	Female		
Teachers	49	46	95	Stratified random sampling
Students	7	9	16	Simple random
Key informants (DEO, head teachers)	3	2	5	Purposive
Teachers who have experienced sexual harassment	1	3	4	Purposive
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>120</b>	-

### **3.6. Construction of Research Instruments**

The researcher used self – administered questionnaires for teachers, FGD for students and semi-structured interview guides for significant informants; and teachers who had experienced sexual harassment.

#### **3.6.1 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire is a research instrument that gathers data over a large sample (Kombo & Tromp, 2006) and is one way to elicit self- values (Sproul, 1988). Sexual harassment being a sensitive topic, a questionnaire guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity, and also encouraged honest responses to very personal questions.

There was one type of questionnaire that was designed to get information from teachers. The teachers questionnaire had six sections that comprised personal background information, sexual harassment, teacher and school characteristics that enhance sexual harassment, impact of sexual harassment, sexual safety training and finally sought to establish information on sexual safety policy in schools.

### **3.6.2 Interview Guide**

Semi – structured interview guides were used during the interview sessions with the significant informants. The instruments were geared towards meeting the specific objectives of the study. Interview guides enabled the researcher to get more in – depth information on the sexual harassment of teachers and its impact on their performance. The affected teachers who were willing to give more information on their experiences as victims of sexual harassment were personally interviewed by the researcher. Significant others were also interviewed.

### **3.6.3. Focus Group Discussions**

A total of four focused group discussions (2 for boys and 2 for girls) were conducted in regular schools. FGDs were not held in secondary schools for learners with special needs because data from the teachers' questionnaires indicated negligible incidents of sexual harassment by students. The students had focus group discussions which had discursive questions that sought to establish whether students harassed their teachers and how they executed the harassment. A total of four group discussions were conducted in which boys and girls participated separately but were mixed regardless of their class.

### **3.7. Pilot Study**

The pilot study was carried out in Mumias School for the Hearing Impaired and Myanga Secondary School which is a regular school. In each school, five teachers and four students were randomly sampled and then completed the questionnaires and had a group discussion with students. The headteacher from the school was then interviewed. The respondents were requested to ask questions on the items that were not clear to them which were then revised and adjustments made to the final questionnaires and interview guides.

From the pilot study, the researcher learnt that using questionnaires alone may not elicit the responses from the students due to complexity of the questions. It was therefore decided that FGDs be used instead of the questionnaires. The researcher also established

that teachers would be reluctant to discuss matters that dealt with their sexuality. The researcher therefore revised the questions and deleted those that were provocative to the respondents without interfering with the objectives of the study.

### **3.7.1. Validity of the Instruments**

The instruments validity was achieved by the researcher consulting experts and professionals in studies of sexual violence and harassment, and the multi disciplinary working group of school Safety Project, Kenyatta University. The multi – disciplinary working group comprised lecturers from various departments in the university who were writing various papers on school safety issues in the country. Some members of the group systematically went through the research instruments after the pilot study and advised on the changes (as mentioned in 3.7 above) required based on the pilot findings.

### **3.7.2. Reliability of the Questionnaire**

A measuring instrument is reliable if it provides consistent information after several tests (Frankel & Wallen, 2000). It must have the capacity to consistently yield the same results when repeated measurements are taken under the same conditions. The test-retest method was used during piloting of the study to test the reliability of the instruments. Re-testing of the questionnaires was done after one week of initial administration. A comparison of the answers obtained from both occasions of testing was done by calculating the correlation coefficient using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient formula. This produced a correlation coefficient of 0.84 denoting a strong positive relationship between the two tests.

## **3.8 Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher used self-administered questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and FGD instruments to collect data.

### **3.8.1 The Questionnaire**

The questionnaires were designed to meet the specific objectives of the study and had both, open – ended and closed – ended items. The questionnaires were administered to

the sampled teachers of one school at a time. Questionnaires for visually impaired respondents were brailled to enable them to answer questions independently. A cover letter asking for cooperation and honest answers from the respondents, and assuring them of confidentiality accompanied the questionnaires. Administration of the questionnaires to all the respondents in one school was done once to avoid discussions with those who had responded to the questions earlier on.

### **3.8.2 Semi-Structured Interviews**

The researcher first ensured that the questions being asked were in line with the study objectives and sought permission for the interviews. The researcher assured the respondents of confidentiality and any question not well understood was clarified farther without changing the intended meaning. Interviews for teachers and headteachers were conducted in schools while the significant informants were interviewed at their places of work. The researcher recorded proceedings during the interviews. The researcher thanked the participants after the interview.

### **3.8.3 Focus Group Discussion**

Four students were selected from each participating school (2 each from form 2 and 3). In case of a mixed school, gender balance was considered. The researcher set the recording devices, introduced himself and let the participants do self – introduction. The researcher then took the participants through the topic of discussion and let the participants talk freely.

## **3.9. Data Analysis**

Data collected were organized and read through before the actual analysis. The researcher used both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques for this study because both approaches complemented each other well. To analyze quantitative data, the researcher read through the raw data in the questionnaires and edited all the answers before defining them into variables using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.5. Using the descriptive frequencies, the researcher generated figures using the Microsoft

excel program before interpreting the findings. Data were presented in descriptive statistics which included frequency and percentages tables, bar lines and bar graphs. To analyze qualitative data, the researcher transcribed the discussions of both the interviews with the teachers who had experienced sexual harassment and the FGD with the students. The researcher then read through the voices transcribed, used a coding frame to code the data, and linked them to different themes of the findings. The researcher used the qualitative data to reinforce/qualify the findings generated by SPSS.

### **3.10 Logistical and Ethical Considerations**

The researcher sought for a letter of introduction from the Dean School of Graduate Studies, Kenyatta University, which facilitated the acquisition of research permit from the Ministry of Higher Education. Appointments through prior visit to the respective schools were made at a convenient time; the respondents were assured of confidentiality by the researcher by not discussing information from one respondent with another or displaying it in any way to the public without permission from relevant individual. The students participated after the researcher had consulted them and their teachers so that they had informed consent. The interviewees were assured of their right to withdraw if they so wished and this would be respected. The participating institutions were promised to get the final copy of the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings of a study carried out in regular and special secondary schools in Nyeri and Thika Districts of Central Province, Kenya. The study was to establish the prevalence and impact of sexual harassment of teachers in secondary schools.

The chapter is divided into two main sections. Section one presents demographic data of the respondents while the second section presents the findings of the study which are presented thematically based on the research questions. The specific themes in the study include:

1. The extent and nature of sexual harassment of teachers in secondary schools.
2. Factors that influence sexual harassment of teachers in secondary schools.
3. Effects of teacher sexual harassment on teacher performance in secondary schools.
4. Mechanisms devised by schools, teachers and Ministry of Education in preventing sexual harassment of teachers in secondary schools.

#### **4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants**

This section offers demographic presentation of the study which highlights the categories of the schools visited, age of the respondents, respondents with disabilities, and the teachers' levels of training.

##### **4.1.1 School Categories and Gender of Teachers**

The study was conducted in ten secondary schools of which 35% were special schools while 65% were regular schools. Out of these schools, a total of 95 teachers participated of whom 46 (49%) were female and 49 (51%) were male.

### 4.1.2 Age and Marital Status of Teachers

The respondents' ages were put in a total of seven class limits with 24 years and below being the lowest class and above 50 years was the highest. The class limit of 30-34 years had the highest percentage of respondents, at 26%, while 50 years and above had the least, at 1%. Below is the age summary of the respondents:

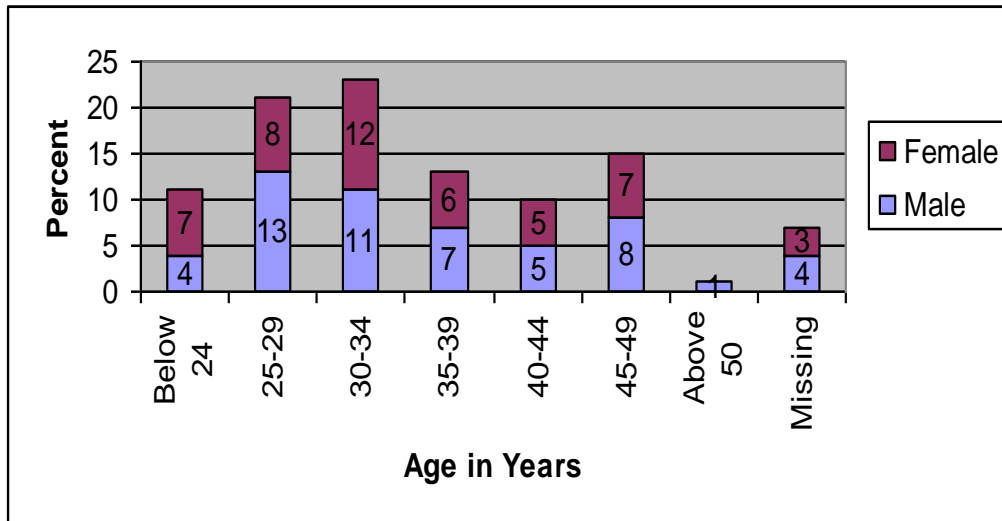


Figure 4.1: Age of Teachers

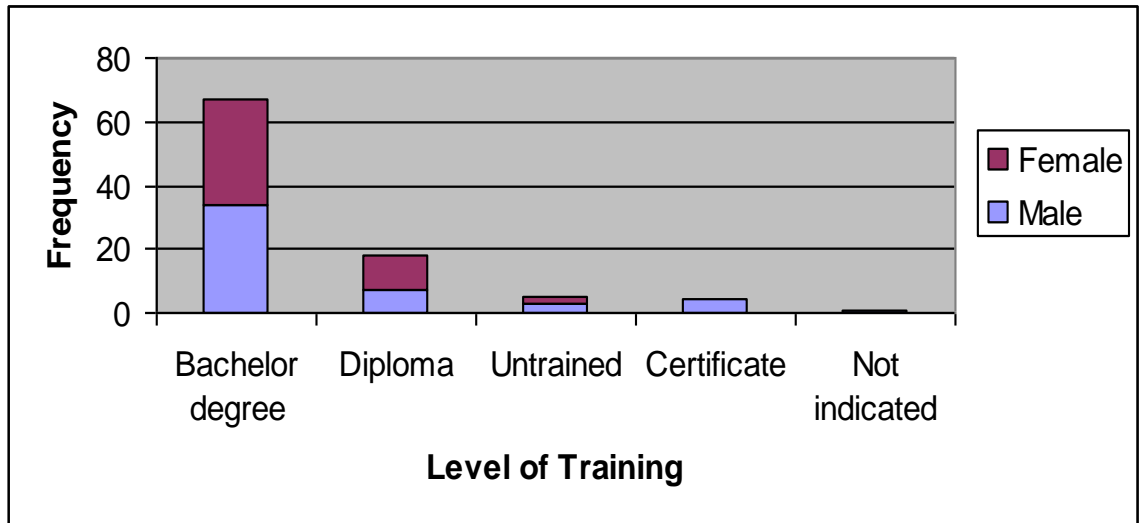
Out of the 95 teachers, 71% were married, 23% single, 4% divorced and 2% widowed.

### 4.1.3 Teachers with Disabilities

Twenty (21%) of the teachers who responded to the questionnaires had various forms of disabilities. Seventeen teachers had visual impairments (ten male and seven female), 1 female teacher had hearing impairment and 2 (a male and a female) were physically handicapped.

#### 4.1.4 Level of Training

Seventy one percent (34 male and 33 female) of the teachers had bachelor's degrees in education, 19.4% (11 female and 7 male) were diploma holders, 5.3% (3 male and 2 female) were untrained and 4.3% (4 male) had certificate in education while one male teacher did not indicate his level of training. This has been summarized in figure 4.2 below.



*Figure 4. 2: Level of Training of Teachers*

## 4.2 The Extent and Nature of Teachers' Sexual Harassment in Secondary Schools

The first objective of the study was to establish the nature and extent of teachers' sexual harassment in secondary schools.

### 4.2.1 The Extent of Teachers' Sexual Harassment

Studies in Kenya have shown the existence of sexual harassment in educational institutions (Chege & Ruto 2006; Erulkar, 2004; and Johnstone, 2003). It has also been established that schools are the second unsafe environments sexually after home with research indicating that 27 percent of sexual harassment takes place at home followed by

school/classroom/ games at 24 percent and when children are returning home from school at 15 percent (Johnstone, 2003).

It is further understood that sexual harassment manifests itself in many forms both overt and subtle which range from trivial and inoffensive forms of behavior bordering on social interaction, to extremely serious and offensive behavior. The different forms of sexual harassment include physical contacts for example touching one's private parts without consent; the spoken verbal conduct that includes unwelcome suggestions, comments and advances and non – spoken/ non - verbal conduct that comprises unwelcome gestures (such as middle fingers pointing up with sexual connotations). The subsequent sections give a summary of forms of sexual harassment as per the findings.

#### **4.2.1.1 Verbal Sexual Harassment of Teachers**

In this study, it was established that teachers experienced spoken sexual harassment. This is sexual harassment that is perpetrated by talking/speaking about sexual related issues that are not welcome by the listener. Both male and female teachers showed that they had experienced verbal sexual harassment. A total of 41 male and 42 female teachers responded to this variable of sexual harassment.

##### ***Unwelcome sexual advances***

About 19 of the male teachers (45.2%) had experienced unwelcome sexual suggestions, comments and advances while 24 or (58.5%) of the 42 female teachers had experienced the same. These had come in the form of either the teacher being persistently asked to have sexual affairs by colleagues or students making sexual comments made the teacher uncomfortable. One female teacher with hearing impairment and three female teachers with visual impairment explained that their colleagues had constantly asked for sex favors from them. One of the female teachers with visual impairment in a secondary school for learners with VI complained of how she had to tell a colleague she was married after '*he had become too persistent to bear*' (8<sup>th</sup> October 2008)

### ***Harassment via phone***

Teachers reported harassment via phone calls. About 35.7% of the male teachers indicated that they had received phone calls that were sexually insulting while 39% of the female teachers had experienced the same. For instance during the interview with one female teacher aged 28 years she observed that:

A male teacher described my walking style to me one evening that I found not likeable. He described my bottom so badly I could have smacked his face... (Visually impaired teacher in a secondary school for VI learners, October 2008)

### ***Rumor about lifestyle***

Out of the 41 male teachers, only 3 (7.3%) agreed that they had heard rumors being spread about their purported sexual lives. This indicated that spreading rumors about sexual lifestyle was the least experienced by both male and female teachers. This could be because the teachers' sexual life is private and the perpetrators may not know the details. A male teacher (21 years) on teaching practice in one of the girls secondary schools explained how it was rumored that he was in a relationship with a student and it spread like bush fire. A male teacher (aged 41) with visual impairment teaching in a school for visually impaired learners complained of how it was alleged by students that he was in a relationship with his female colleague who was married.

I found it was even believed by some of my colleagues, this type of harassment actually happens but I didn't know it was sexual harassment... (October 2008)

### ***Whistling and use of sounds***

Whistling and making sexual sounds at teachers was mainly directed at female teachers more than their male counterparts. The findings indicated that 57.1% of female teachers had been victims of this form of sexual harassment as compared to 36.9% of their male counterparts who had faced the same.

### ***Sexual jokes***

Female teachers were more affected by sexual jokes at 54.8% as compared to male teachers at 9.8%. In special schools, 9.4% of female teachers reported that male teachers spoke insulting jokes that had sexual connotations like '*planting a seed in the river between.*' (See table 4.4)

### **4.2.1.2 Non-Verbal Sexual Harassment of Teachers**

#### ***Sexual gestures (Finger signs/ touching/ caressing their genitals)***

Teachers also reported that they had experienced non spoken sexual harassment during their day to day activities within the school. Approximately, 51.2% of the male teachers had seen display of sexual gestures like winking, female students touching their breasts or licking the tongue seductively or touching their body parts. The study established that there was sexual harassment of teachers in special schools. Out of the 32 teachers in schools for learners with special needs, 37.5% (7 male and 5 female) had experienced unwelcome sexual gestures. For instance, 5 (2 male and 3 female) out of 17 teachers who had sight problems in mixed day and boarding secondary schools had experienced unwelcome sexual gestures like a colleague being too close that made them uncomfortable. About 9.4% (2 male and 1 female) of the teachers in special schools admitted that they most often experienced exposure of body parts like thighs and breasts by students or fellow teachers. A total of 45.2% of female teachers reported to have experienced different forms of non – spoken sexual harassment. Others, 27.3%, of male students engage in sexual harassment acts that include finger signs (raising of the middle finger that has sexual connotation) or touching/ caressing their genitals in the presence of female teachers. Only 7.4% of male teachers harassed female teachers in this manner.

#### ***Sexual/pornographic materials***

About 50% of the female teachers and 41.5% of the male teachers reported that they had seen sexual/pornographic materials being displayed for them to see without the teachers' consent. These were in form of magazines with nude pictures and students'

autobiographies that had sexual messages. The main perpetrators of this form of sexual harassment were male students at 27.6% followed by female students at 22.4%. Approximately, 18.8% (2 male, 4 female) of the teachers in special schools had come across an unwelcome display of sexual/ pornographic materials during their lessons. The materials mainly included nude pictures of people having sex or drawing cartoons with their genitals on the blackboard before the targeted teacher came to class.

### *Sexual messages on phones/internet*

Other non – spoken forms that the teachers reported included being sent sexual messages on phones (49.8% male and 54.8% female) and on e-mails (29.3% male and 47.6% female). The teachers further revealed that 41.9% of male head teachers and 32.3% of male teachers were the perpetrators of this form of sexual harassment. This is a new form of sexual harassment that has come with the advancement of technology. About 18.8% of the teachers (all female) in special schools had received e-mails that had explicit sexual messages. The summary shows that there is more non – verbal sexual harassment of teachers in regular schools than in schools for learners with special needs. Table 4.1 below is a summary of non – spoken sexual harassment of teachers.

*Table 4.1: Non verbal Sexual Harassment of Teachers*

Forms	Special schools				Regular schools			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Unwelcome sexual gestures	7	21.9	5	15.6	21	51.2	19	45.2
Unwelcome displays of Sexual/ Pornographic materials	2	6.3	4	12.5	17	41.5	21	50
Exposing of body parts	2	6.3	1	3.1	20	48.9	20	47.6
Phone texts that have explicit sexual messages	-	-	-	-	20	48.9	23	54.8
E-mails that have explicit sexual messages	-	-	6	18.8	12	29.3	20	47.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>34.5</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>219.8</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>245.2</b>

### 4.2.1.3 Physical Sexual Harassment of Teachers

#### *Touching of Private parts*

The teachers experienced two forms of physical sexual harassment within the school setup. These included having their private parts being touched without their consent or being forced to kiss. A total of 16 female teachers (38.1%) in the study reported that they had had their private parts touched (by either male teachers or male students) without their consent while 4 of the male teachers (9.8%) had experienced the same. Two teachers with visual impairments and one with physical impairment (all female) had had their buttocks and breasts touched by their colleagues.

#### *Forcefully kissed*

It was established that 16.6% of the female teachers had been forcefully kissed as compared to 4.9% of their male counterparts. A female teacher with hearing impairment, in one of the special schools had been forcefully kissed by a colleague but was not ready to be interviewed by the researcher during the study. Table 4.2 below shows the summary of physical sexual harassment of teachers in secondary schools. The findings show that more physical sexual harassment of teachers occurs in regular schools than special schools.

*Table 4.2: Physical Sexual Harassment of Teachers*

Forms	Special schools				Regular schools			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Being touched private parts without consent	-	-	3	15	4	9.8	16	38.1
Being forced to kiss	-	-	1	5	2	4.9	7	16.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>54.7</b>

The fact that less physical sexual harassment takes place in schools could be the reason why few cases of harassment are reported due to lack of evidence that is required to sustain a case in either a court of law or the disciplinary machineries within the teaching fraternity (Ministry of Education or TSC). It is also noted that many people (read

teachers) have minimal knowledge about different forms of sexual harassment hence many incidents of sexual harassment go un-interpreted as such.

The findings show that both male and female teachers experience different forms of sexual harassment with female teachers being more affected than the male. The high percentage of female teachers being sexually harassed may confirm that women are significantly less tolerant of harassment, more likely to see these behaviors as coercive and harmful, more likely to perceive the harasser negatively than men. Turner, (1995) supports the views that gender roles encouraged by society are one explanation for the greater sensitivity of girls towards harassing behavior. Men and women are likely to experience and perceive sexually harassing behaviors differently because of engendering sexuality issues and culturally prescribed expression of sexuality. The study further proved that though there is sexual harassment in both regular and special schools, it is more rampant in the latter.

#### **4.2.2 The Nature of Teachers' Sexual Harassment in Secondary Schools**

To establish more information on the nature of sexual harassment in secondary schools, the researcher held a total of four focus group discussions with students. This was prompted after the responses from the questionnaires indicated that teachers were being harassed by their own students.

The reason for increased sexual harassment by students could exist in secondary schools because the students at this point are in the middle of adolescence and therefore, experience accelerated biological growth and cognitive development. According to Hand and Sanchez (2000), these changes may promote exposure that if not checked can deteriorate to sexual harassment in schools.

Though two FGDs were held with the boys, the participants were not active and willing to share knowledge with the researcher except affirming what had been indicated by the teachers in the questionnaire (for example finger signs and exposure of the body parts).

This may call to have a female researcher to explore this topic further as the boys may open up to share more information on sexual harassment with her. From the discussions, it emerged that students were involved in acts that could be interpreted as sexual harassment. Below is a FGD that took place in a regular private boarding girls school on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2008:

*Table e 4.3: Harassment of Teachers by Female Students*

<p><b>Q:</b> What are some of the things that you do which make your teachers be sexually uncomfortable?</p> <p><b>Student 1:</b> When we know that a teacher is coming to class we remove our t-shirts and braziers so that we put on just the blouses and open them to reveal the cleavage. When the teacher gets in class we pretend it's hot and we open our blouses but at the same time a girl(s) can then start touching her breasts, licking lips and having drooling and seductive eyes. Some know how to do it well that we even see the teacher get confused. It is fun...! (<b>Age 16 years in form three</b>)</p> <p><b>Student 2:</b> Sometimes girls write very obscene love letters and put them in the exercise books of the targeted teachers without any forwarding address. The intention of this is to have the teacher read this and this may lead to.....well even relationship. (<b>Age 16 form two</b>)</p> <p><b>Student 3:</b> I have seen girls who just want to be close to certain teachers and they keep following them without any serious questions or issues. Some even come in physical contact with the teachers and this really raises the status of a girl in the school. (<b>Age 15 form two</b>)</p> <p><b>Q:</b> Do you do such things to all of the teachers?</p> <p><b>Student 3:</b> It depends. If a teacher is strict then we don't try it because we may be reported. We normally do such to those who are young, tall and handsome, or those on teaching practice and even others whom we consider understanding of our needs. (<b>Age 15 form two</b>)</p> <p><b>Q:</b> And how do the teachers react when you do these things to them?</p> <p><b>Student 2:</b> Well sometimes it does not work but at times we see the effects. For instance the teacher will...uuhh erect (giggles) and this is really amusing. If he erects he stands behind the table, pockets, and stammers or even walks out of class. It is funny and we will talk about it in school! (Laughs) (<b>Age 16 form two</b>)</p> <p><b>Student 1:</b> We also hate those teachers who report us and we tend to make their lives hard. We can even make it look like it is him harassing us. (They laugh) (<b>Age 16 years in form three</b>)</p> <p><b>Q:</b> But why should you harass your teacher?</p> <p><b>Student 1:</b> In most cases it is just for fun but some girls do it because they are interested in a given teacher and want to have a relationship. A weak teacher may end up 'grooving' with the student. (<b>Age 16 years in form three</b>)</p>
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The discussions were lively and the participants were ready to share information with the researcher. From the discussion key issues emerged. These are:

- That students identify specific teachers (especially the young and those on teaching practice) to harass.
- They pre-meditate on how they will harass the teacher.
- The students' intentions of harassing teachers are to have fun, punish the teacher or be the beginning of a teacher – student relationship.
- Disciplined teachers are not harassed.

Interviews with teachers revealed several forms of sexual harassment. Below are some of the verbatim reports by teachers during interviews expressing different forms of sexual harassment that teachers said they had experienced in various categories of secondary schools. The table below shows different forms of sexual harassment of teachers in schools as discussed during several interviews on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

*Table 4.4: Forms of Sexual Harassment of Teachers*

**Male Teacher:** I was alone in the staff-room, I think on a weekend, doing my work when a form two girl walked in and....oosh...I sensed trouble! She is showing all her ....how do you call it...this upper part next to breasts...yes and in a tight short skirt! I was so embarrassed and behaved like I was already on my way out! I knew it was not an assignment.....yes she has been in and out of school because of indiscipline cases. **(21 year old teacher on teaching practice in a mixed regular secondary school)**

**Female Teacher** ...yes he was a lecturer in a local university and husband to my principal. ...a very disgusting fellow...I tell you I hated it...yes even at night drunk and wanting to kiss me even before ...you see he asked for us to go out but he was not my type...you know what I mean...so he could come in my house at very odd hours without any specific reasons.... The boss found out *akajijazia* (made wrong conclusions about me) I had to get transfer....ha ha ha...she was willing to let me go away from her school! I hate that man up to now! **(28 years old female teacher and single in a regular girls' secondary school):**

**Female Teacher three:** Oh it happens all the time! Don't laugh...you say a statement innocently and it is turned into a sexual joke... I just said 'my breakfast was good and heavy' then one of my male colleagues commented (she is amused) 'did it comprise of one sausage, two eggs and a glass of milk?' at first I didn't realize

it until everyone was in stitches....I was so embarrassed. ...I have learnt to be careful when saying anything for the fear of such jokes. **(34 year old female teacher in a mixed special secondary school)**

From the above excerpts, it can be observed that sexual harassment in schools is not incidental but planned. Most of the victims do not know how to address sexual harassment when it occurs and they resort to escapism by avoiding areas that can expose them to the vice, seek transfers or ignore the act altogether. Very few teachers are willing to confront the issue when it happens because of the technicalities involved in sexual offenses cases both in the Ministry of Education and even in the judiciary systems.

### **4.3 Perpetrators of Sexual Harassment in Secondary Schools**

The study findings indicate that the key perpetrators of sexual harassment in schools include male headteachers, male teachers, female teachers; students (both girls and boys), support staff and education officials

#### **4.3.1 Male Headteachers**

About 5.3% of female teachers indicated that they had been forcefully kissed, 9.5% had been sexually touched without consent, 41.9% had received E-mails and short texts on their phones with explicit sexual messages and 6.3% had heard insulting sexual jokes from their head teachers. Approximately 4.2% had seen pornographic literature and pictures on the phones of the male headteachers.

In special secondary schools, 12.5% of male headteachers had made phone calls that had unwanted or explicit sexual messages like persistently asking teachers for sexual favors. It was further established that 9.4% of the male head teachers had kissed female teachers forcefully or sexually touched them without their consent.

#### **4.3.2 Female Teachers**

About 16.3% of the male teachers reported that female teachers harassed them by exposing their body parts especially thighs and breasts.

### **4.3.3 Male Teachers**

Approximately 32.3% of the teachers said that male teachers had made phone calls that had unwanted or explicit sexual messages while 29.5% said they had heard insulting sexual jokes and 13.7% had received e-mails and phone texts with explicit sexual messages from their male counterparts.

### **4.3.4 Male Students**

The study established that 16.1% of the female teachers had received unwanted sexual messages from male students, 27.6% had seen sexual materials/ pornographic materials displayed by male students. About 23.2% of the teachers reported to have heard cat calls and whistles from their male students, 27.3% said the male students had made the sexual gestures like the finger signs and 13.7% had exposed or touched their sexual organs for example chests and genitals. In special secondary schools 6.3% of female teachers also exposed their body parts like chests for fellow teachers to see.

### **4.3.5 Female Students**

A high percentage of male teachers 31.8% reported that the female students had exposed their body parts particularly the breasts and thighs while 31.1% indicated that the students had made unwelcome sexual gestures and signs like touching their breasts and seductively licking their lips. About 13.4% and 11.1% of the teachers reported to have heard whistling and cat calls and insulting jokes from the female students respectively. In special secondary schools 15% of the male teachers reported that female students had exposed their body parts like breasts and thighs for teachers to see.

### **4.3.6 Female Non – Teaching Staff**

It was reported that a 3.2% (one male teacher in a special secondary school) had received phone texts with explicit sexual messages from the female non – teaching staff.

#### 4.3.7 Male Education Officials

A total of 7.3% of the female teachers in regular schools and about 4% in special schools had been asked for sexual favors by education officials especially when the teachers were seeking transfers.

#### 4.4 Places Considered Unsafe

From the responses of the teachers, it was established that 16.8% (6 male and 9 female) of all the teachers considered offices in the schools to be unsafe followed by distance to and from school at 12.6% (6 female and 5 male). Play fields were seen to be 34.7% (19 male and 13 female) dangerous. Approximately, 35.8% (12 male and 21 female) felt that the staff quarters were dangerous.

The offices in schools could be the most unsafe places for teachers because they are private and therefore, a perpetrator may find it more convenient to ambush his/her victim. Playfields may be dangerous for teachers because of the high level of interaction between teachers and students on one hand and interaction among teachers themselves. The perpetrators may take advantage of the sporting activities to sing obscene songs or do other activities (finger signs) that may sexually embarrass teachers.

*Table 4.5: Places Where Teachers Are Sexually Harassed*

Areas	D (%)		M D (%)		MST D (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Classroom</b>	3.7	11.0	-	1.1	-	-
<b>Playfields</b>	20.3	14.4	-	1.1	3.1	<b>3.2</b>
<b>Offices in school</b>	4.0	5.5	-	2.1	7	<b>9.8</b>
<b>On the way to and from school</b>	8.4	20	7.3	3.2	5.3	<b>7.3</b>
<b>Dormitories</b>	17.1	10.3	3.4	5	-	<b>3.2</b>
<b>Laboratory</b>	4.2	-	-	3.2	-	<b>7.4</b>
<b>Staff quarters</b>	13.4	22.4	3.2	10.5	-	<b>9.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>71.1</b>	<b>83.6</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>40.4</b>

**Key D-** Dangerous    **M D-** More Dangerous    **MST D-** Most Dangerous

#### **4.5 Factors That Influence Sexual Harassment of Teachers in Secondary Schools**

In this objective of the study, it was established that several factors influence different forms of sexual harassment of teachers. These include status of employment, age, mode of dressing and the hiring of teachers.

##### ***Teaching Practice***

It was noted that teachers who were on teaching practice and /or single were very much targeted for sexual harassment. About 67.4% (38.3% male and 29.1% female) of the respondents said that being on teaching practice exposed one to much of sexual harassment while 64.2% (29.3% male and 34.9% female) said that being single contributed much to sexual harassment. During an interview with a teacher on teaching practice in a girls regular school, he observed that:

Immediately I was introduced on the assembly, the murmurs told me I was in for some trouble...later the girls would do everything including drawing naked cartoons on the blackboard before my lessons. The boys thought I was getting more attention from girls and they could retaliate by being rude... the power game was in play, (4<sup>th</sup> October 2008).

##### ***Age***

About 58.9% of the respondents (31.2% female and 27.7% male) also pointed out that young teachers were targeted more for sexual harassment as compared to the old teachers. A female teacher in a mixed regular secondary school commented:

Everyone is always doing it... the students, teachers, principals... I was not seen as a teacher but either a prospectus girl friend or wife. The pressure can be too much and you may end up not even teaching, (October 2008).

##### ***Mode of Dressing***

Approximately 58.9% of the respondents (41.7% male and 18.2% female) further indicated that teachers' ways of dressing influenced a teacher being sexually harassed;

this view was mainly held by male respondents. It is important to note that the issue of mode of dressing has been contested as to whether it is a factor or an excuse for sexual harassment. For instance, perpetrators and abusers of this vice have targeted babies (both boys and girls) and old women who have had little to do with the way of dressing. On the other hand, putting on a short skirt and straining to write at the high point of the blackboard in a classroom is likely to arouse cat calls and whistles in the class. Perhaps what is critical is to establish how environment enhances sexual harassment. This will be more inclusive and a wider approach on addressing environmental issues that accelerate sexual harassment than limiting the focus on safety and missing out on the larger picture.

### *Hiring of Teachers*

It was further noted during the interviews that there was sexual harassment of female teachers during hiring of the teachers. The Board of Governors (BoG) and head teachers asked for sexual favors from the candidates who wanted to be employed. One female teacher (28 years old) in a girls' secondary school in an interview observed:

...They (BoG, MoE officials) will ask for anything including sex...when he asked me for a night out I said a big no...of course I lost the job but retained my dignity. (October 2008)

The findings suggest that the most targeted teachers for sexual harassment are the young, single and those on teaching practice. This may be due to the perpetrators' hope that through harassment, the victim may relent and give in to their demands. Teachers on teaching practice may be targeted because the perpetrator takes advantage that the teacher is not permanently in school and therefore s/he may not be willing to report the incident to the relevant authorities. The students may target these teachers because they view them as peers and want to exercise control over them especially during supervisions by their (teachers) lecturers from the universities. If they report, the students will also frustrate the teachers when being invigilated. The table below gives a summary of the factors.

*Table 4.6: Factors That Influence Sexual Harassment of Teachers*

Influencing Factors	Very much (%)		
	Male	Female	Total

Above 35 years	4.1	3.2	<b>7.4</b>
below 35years	27.7	31.2	<b>58.9</b>
Single teacher	29.3	34.9	<b>64.2</b>
Married teacher	6.1	5.5	<b>11.6</b>
Permanently employed	3.2	7.5	<b>10.5</b>
Teaching on board	21.2	13.5	<b>34.7</b>
On teaching practice	38.3	29.1	<b>67.4</b>
Way of dressing	41.7	18.2	<b>58.9</b>
Level of students' discipline	18.5	27.8	<b>46.3</b>
<b>Teacher's disability</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>33.7</b>

#### **4.6 Impact of Sexual Harassment on Teachers**

##### **4.6.1 'I am now very careful about making statements...'**

In the study, 44.2% (27% female and 17.2%) of the teachers indicated that they had been affected socially. Some of the social effects cited during the interview included the inability to interact freely with a person who had harassed them, they were stigmatized and withdrawn from colleagues for fear of further harassment and also kept off from opposite sex because of fear of harassment. They further stated that they lost face/ status in the society especially when their sexual life was talked about unnecessarily.

##### **4.6.2 'I hop from one school to another...'**

About 37.9% (28% female and 9.9% male) of the teachers had been affected professionally. The most common phenomenon that the teachers expressed as a professional setback was unnecessary transfers from one school to another of which they felt that it greatly undermined their professional growth. They further expressed their reservations on how it was hard to go and seek promotion if the bosses were the perpetrators as this will be turned into an opportunity for more sexual harassment. Young teachers who experienced this form of harassment from students also feared going to classes (or even school). They feared assisting the students (read perpetrators) in their class work for fear of being victimized by these students. The teachers also tend to get

confused in class any time sexual harassment occurs hence compromising their performance.

#### **4.6.3 'Am always hounded by these acts...'**

Approximately 53.7% (34.7% female and 19% male) teachers had been affected psychologically. The psychological effects expressed by teachers included frustration and depressions, low self – esteem, self – pity, being hounded by the act and also the teacher spends most of his/ her time debating on whether he/she should report the case, give in to the harassment or simply assume all that is happening around him/her. The sexually harassed teacher becomes disgusted and lose concentration in academics, lose focus in schoolwork, develop negative feelings towards the perpetrators, sometimes spends his/her teaching time thinking about these experiences and in the process fail to meet the academic targets.

It is indicated that both women and men suffer sexual violence and harassment but current statistics show that women are more disadvantaged than men and with more consequences respectively, (Akungu *et al.*, 2004; Blackstone & Uggen, 2004; Hand & Sanchez, 2000; Johnstone, 2003; Oldadepo & Brieger, 2000 and Ruto & Chege, 2006). Some of these effects could affect one's psychological, health and academic life. These consequences (in previous studies) have however been analyzed from the perspective of students as victims of sexual harassment. This study investigated how teachers' performance is affected by sexual harassment in secondary schools.

The findings indicate that there is negative impact on teachers when they encounter sexual harassment in schools. This may lead to students' not being taught well and teachers may seek other alternatives (transfers, withdrawal, and denial) to be away from the perpetrators. This affects the teachers' career growth.

## **4.7 Policy Awareness and Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Teachers in Secondary Schools**

Finally, the study sought to establish the level of awareness of existing policies and prevention of sexual harassment of teachers in secondary schools.

### **4.7.1 Awareness of existing policies**

Sexual harassment needs a clear policy framework that defines, prohibits and carries penalties for acts committed by anyone. Unlike in developed countries, Omale (2000) points out that in developing countries, sexual harassment guidelines either do not exist or are not reinforced as they should in school settings as they sometimes do in the workplace. She emphasizes that while sexual harassment is receiving some official recognition in workplace, there remains a policy vacuum in education.

Out of the 91 teachers 66% (39.6% of male and 26.4% female) admitted that they were not aware of any sexual harassment policy in schools that would protect them from sexual harassment while none had read the Sexual Offences Act of 2006. This was further confirmed by headteachers and education administrators during interviews. The officers were of the opinion that there are no clear policies protecting teachers when confronted with sexual harassment in schools especially when the perpetrators are students. However, some of the aspects of existing documents, like code of ethics, prohibited teachers from having sexual relationships with students or fellow teachers in schools. Teachers are mainly guided by code of ethics in relating with colleagues and other members within the school. Teachers reported that the only way to deal with students who harassed them sexually was to punish, ignore or counsel them.

All schools need to develop individual and clear sexual safety policies that address the issues of sexual harassment which will protect all actors in the schools from the perpetrators that are within and without the schools. This should be done in line with the existing policies at MoE, TSC and also involve the provincial administration.

#### **4.7.2 Dynamics in Reporting Harassment**

Leach *et al.*, (2003) have concluded that schools need to have in place a means of reporting and recording incidents of violent behavior in schools and to hire counselors to respond to reports of sexual harassment. Access to avenues or redress for abuse and exploitation must be improved (Fleishman, 2003).

In the study, it was noted that 64% of the teachers (41% female and 23% male) were ready to report any form of sexual harassment but were not sure to whom or where. Most teachers especially male prefer to ignore the harassment because they will be considered to be less manly. Teachers on teaching practice fear reporting sexual harassment due to being 'frustrated' by the students when lecturers come for assessment. *'...you report them to the head teacher and they will not participate in class during the teaching practice assessment...'* (A male teacher on teaching practice in a regular girls' secondary school). Only 18% (12% male and 6% female) said they would not report it when it occurred. This makes the fight against sexual harassment in schools more complicated. Reporting incidents of sexual harassment is critical in solving the problem.

#### **4.7.3 Prevention of Sexual Harassment**

As much as the MoE and TSC have policies on sexual harassment like gender policy sexual offenses act and code of ethics, their effectiveness in teacher protection from the same has been ineffective. The policies and guidelines have not been prepared with the teachers in mind especially when harassed by students.

From the interviews conducted, it was revealed that teachers have also come up with their own ways of preventing sexual harassment in schools. These include being on night duty with a colleague, having an open door policy where a teacher leaves the door open when in company of a student or colleague, dressing decently, and fostering professionalism during relationship with students and colleagues and self respect. Teachers were also of the opinion that there is urgent need to expand the curriculum in teacher training

institutions to include courses on sexual safety in schools. They also expressed the need to have sensitization seminars and workshops so that they are in touch with issues and trends of sexual safety e.g. Kenyan laws and acts governing sexual safety of the citizens.

#### **4.7.4 Information Sharing**

On the issue of whether the teachers were aware of any information regarding to sexual harassment and safety, the majority of the teachers (67% - male 17% and female 50%) indicated that they had got information on sexual safety either in seminars, workshops, from colleagues and friends or through media. The findings suggest that female teachers are keen on getting information which can assist them in the fight against sexual harassment than men. The information was mainly on how to avoid sexual harassment when on duty.

In summary, the study indicates that sexual harassment of teachers exists in secondary schools and there is need to have a holistic approach in tackling the problem.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the summary of findings and their implication, conclusion, general recommendations and recommendations for further research.

#### **5.1 Summary of the Findings**

The findings have been summarized based on the extent and nature of sexual harassment of teachers; factors that influence sexual harassment of teachers; the impact of sexual harassment on teachers and policy awareness and prevention of sexual harassment of teachers.

##### **5.1.1 The Extent and Nature of Sexual Harassment of Teachers in Secondary Schools**

In regard to the extent and nature of harassment, the study established that about 45.2% had experienced unwelcome sexual suggestions, comments and advances while 58.5% of the female teachers had experienced the same. About 35.7% of the male teachers indicated that they had received phone calls that were sexually insulting while 39% of the female teachers had experienced the same.

Approximately 57.1% of female teachers had been victims of whistling and cat calls as compared to 36.9% of their male counterparts who had faced the same and female teachers were more affected by sexual jokes at 54.8% as compared to male teachers at 9.8%. About 51.2% of the male teachers had seen display of sexual gestures like winking, female students touching their breasts or licking the tongue seductively or touching their body parts.

Out of the 32 teachers who were from special schools, 37.5% of the teachers had experienced unwelcome sexual gestures. A total of 45.2% of female teachers reported to

have experienced different forms of non – spoken sexual harassment. About 27.3% of male students do sexual harassment acts that include finger signs (raising of the middle finger that has sexual connotation) or touching/ caressing their genitals in the presence of female teachers. Only 7.4% of male teachers harassed female teachers in this manner.

About 50% of the female teachers and 41.5% of the male teachers reported that they had seen sexual/pornographic materials being displayed for them to see without the teachers' consent. The main perpetrators of this form of sexual harassment were male students at 27.6% followed by female students at 22.4%. A total of 18.8% of the teachers in special schools had come across an unwelcome display of sexual/ pornographic materials during their lessons.

Other non – spoken forms that the teachers reported included being sent sexual messages on phones (49.8% male and 54.8% female) and on e-mails (29.3% male and 47.6% female). The teachers further revealed that 41.9% of male head teachers and 32.3% of male teachers were the perpetrators of this form of sexual harassment. A total of 16 female teachers (38.1%) in the study reported that they had had their private parts touched without their consent while 4 of the male teachers (9.8%) had experienced the same. It also indicated that 16.6% of the female teachers had been forcefully kissed as compared to 4.9% of their male counterparts.

During the FGDs with students, it emerged that students were involved in acts that could be interpreted as sexual harassment (showing their breasts and touching genitals).

From the discussion, the following key issues emerged:

- Students identify specific teachers (especially the young and those on teaching practice) to harass.
- They pre-meditate on how they will harass the teacher.
- Their intention of harassing teachers is to have fun, punish the teacher or be the beginning of a teacher – student relationship.

- Disciplined teachers are not harassed.

### **5.1.2 Factors That Influence Sexual Harassment of Teachers**

Some of the factors that influence sexual harassment of teachers in secondary schools include status of employment, age, mode of dressing and during the hiring of teachers. Approximately, 67.4% of the respondents said that being on teaching practice exposed one to sexual harassment while 64.2% said that being single was a contributing factor to sexual harassment. About 58.9% of the respondents also pointed out that young teachers were main targets of sexual harassment and 58.9% indicated that teachers' ways of dressing really influenced their being sexually harassed. It was noted that the Board Of Governors and head teachers asked for sexual favors from the candidates who were seeking employment.

### **5.1.3 The Impact of Sexual Harassment on Teachers**

The study indicated that both male and female teachers suffer consequences of sexual harassment. About 37.9% of the teachers had been affected professionally due to experiencing sexual harassment in schools. They expressed their reservation that it was hard to go and seek promotion if the bosses were the perpetrators as this will be turned into an opportunity for sexual harassment. The psychological effects on teachers include frustration and depressions, low self esteem and being hounded by the sexual harassment acts.

### **5.1.4 Policy awareness and Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Teachers in Secondary Schools**

The study established the level of awareness of existing policies and prevention of sexual harassment of teachers. Out of the 95 teachers, 66% of them were not aware of any sexual safety policy that would protect them against sexual harassment. Only 13% knew about Sexual Offences Act 2006 though none had read it. A total of 64% of the teachers were ready to report any form of sexual harassment but were not sure to who or where and only 18% said they would not report it when it occurred.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

From the summary above, several conclusions can be made from the study findings:

1. Teachers are victims of sexual harassment in secondary schools and the main perpetrators of this setting are students, fellow teachers, headteachers, education officers and people within the community. This problem needs to be addressed urgently by the relevant authorities.
2. Teacher awareness on sexual harassment and how to seek redress is low.
3. Young teachers, single teachers and teachers on teaching practice and teachers with disabilities are the most vulnerable groups when it comes to sexual harassment.
4. There is sexual harassment of teachers in both regular secondary schools and special secondary schools.

## **5.3 Key Recommendations**

Key recommendations based on this study are:

### **5.3.1 To Policy Makers**

TSC and the MoE should sensitize teachers on policies that protect teachers' sexual safety within and outside the school. Teachers should have clear understanding of guidelines on the preventive measures and how they can handle sexual harassment wherever it occurs. The Sexual Offences Act of 2006 should be more inclusive, protective of other victim-parties beyond what it focuses on at present especially on issues of sexual harassment.

### **5.3.2 Teacher Training Institutions**

Teacher training institutions should review the curriculum so that courses/units on sexual safety can be offered to teacher trainees as a way of preparing them to be proactive in matters of sexual harassment and violence. Although Kenyatta University has a policy on gender – based violence and sexual harassment, it has not been entrenched in the teacher training curriculum.

### **5.3.3 Schools**

Secondary schools should strengthen guiding and counseling departments to guide both teachers and students in dealing with sexuality issues. They should implement the already existing policies on sexual protection (gender policy, sexual offenses act 2001 among others) that are reinforced by the schools management. There is need for the school administration and education officials to come up with clear guidelines on the reporting of sexual harassment without more victimization of the affected.

### **5.3.4 Media Role**

Kenya's media and NGO movement is vibrant and forceful on policy directions in this country. There is need for them to sustain the campaigns addressing sexual safety in learning institutions. This should be done objectively and be more inclusive in the approach since men/women and boys/girls can either be victims or perpetrators.

### **5.4 Suggestions for Further Research**

1. There is need for a study to be carried out to establish how young and single teachers cope with sexual harassment in secondary schools.
2. A national study on the prevalence of sexual harassment should be carried out, including harassment of teachers and non-teaching staff.
3. There is need to conduct a study on why the perpetrators of sexual harassment and violence engage in these heinous acts.
4. A study should be conducted to gauge actual impact of teacher harassment on teacher performance.
5. Further research is needed to establish the kind of schools (that is boarding versus day, mixed versus single sex and urban versus rural among others) that experience high levels of sexual harassment.

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## **Appendix One: Letter to the Respondents**

Dear Respondent,

I am Edwin M. Buluma, a student in the Department of Special Education, Kenyatta University pursuing Master of Education Degree in Special Education. I'm currently carrying out a research project titled **Nature and Effects of Sexual Harassment of Teachers in Special and Regular Secondary Schools in Central Province, Kenya**. I therefore request that you kindly fill this questionnaire.

Note that **ALL** information will be treated **CONFIDENTIALLY** and feel free to communicate to me on Phone No. 0721 579 954 or [dottybuluma@yahoo.com](mailto:dottybuluma@yahoo.com) or [embuluma@gmail.com](mailto:embuluma@gmail.com) in case you have more information on the subject at hand.

I thank you for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Buluma M. Edwin.

## Appendix Two: Questionnaire for Teachers on Sexual Safety

(Please tick (√) the options appropriately.)

### Section A: Background Information

1. Gender: Male  Female

2. Your year of birth \_\_\_\_\_

3. Your duration of stay in the school \_\_\_\_\_

4. Your Marital status:

Married  Single  Divorced  Widowed  Separated

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

N/A

5a. Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

b). E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

c). Postal Address

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you have any problem with your:

Hearing  Sight  Walking

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

7. What is your level of training?

Degree  Diploma  Untrained

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

8. Your other responsibilities in school:

Head of department  Coach  Patron of drama, music etc

Class teacher  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

9a. Category of your school:

Boys Boarding

Girls Boarding

Mixed day and boarding

Mixed and day

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

9b. Is your school

Regular  Special  ?

**SECTION B: Sexual Harassment**

10a). How often do you experience the following in your school?

**1. Never 2. Less often 3. Often 4. More often 5. Most often**

		1	2	3	4	5	The exact place in the school where you experience the actions e.g. classroom, dormitories etc
10a	Unwelcome sexual gestures e.g. finger signs						
10b	Unwelcome displays of sexual/Pornographic materials						
10c	Exposing of body parts						
10d	E-mails that have explicit sexual messages						
10e	Sms that have explicit sexual messages						
10f	Unwelcome sexual suggestions, comments and advances						
10g	Phone calls of sexual nature						
10h	Rumors about your sexual life						
10i	Insulting sexual jokes						
10j	Sexual assault e.g. rape						
10k	Being touched private parts without consent						
10l	Being forced to kiss						
10m	Whistles and sexual sounds						
1on	Other (specify)						

10b) Describe any incident(s) that happened to you of which you consider was a form of sexual harassment. (Consider among other factors where it occurred, who did it, how it was done and why you think it was done to you).\_\_\_\_\_

11. Which category of people has done the following to you? (Indicate whether Male **M** OR Female **F**).

1. Students      2. Fellow Teachers in Your School    3. Your Head Teacher  
4. Non-Teaching Staff      5. Education Officers

No.	Nature of Sexual Harassment	1		2		3		4		5	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
11a	Sexually assaulted you										
11b	Kissed you forcefully										
11c	Sexually touched you without consent										
11d	Made phone calls that have unwanted or explicit sexual messages										
11e	Spoken Insulting sexual jokes										
11f	Unwelcome display of sexual materials /Pornography										
11g	Exposing body parts e.g. thighs, breasts, private parts										
11h	Sending E-mails that have explicit sexual messages										
11i	Sending Sms that have explicit sexual messages e.g. about your private parts										
11j	Spreading rumors about your sexual life										
11k	Unwelcome gestures e.g. finger signs										
11l	Other (specify)										

12. Which areas do you find especially unsafe for your sexual safety?

		1.Not Unsafe	2. Less Unsafe	3. Unsafe	4.More Unsafe	5.Most Unsafe
12a	Classroom					
12b	Office					
12c	Staff room					
12d	Laboratory					
12e	Staff quarters					
12f	Dormitories					
12g	Play fields					
12h	On the way to and from school					
12i	Other (specify)					

**SECTION C:**

**Teacher and School Characteristics that Predispose Teachers to Sexual Harassment**

13. Do the following factors predispose a teacher to sexual harassment?

		1. Very much	2. A bit	3. Not at all
13a	When you are above 35 years			
13b	When you are a young teacher (below 35 years)			
13c	When you are a single teacher			
13d	When you are a married teacher			
13e	When you are permanently employed			
13f	When teaching on board			
13g	When on teaching practice			
13h	Your way of dressing			
13i	Your gender			
13j	level of discipline of students			
13k	If you have a disability			
13l	Other (specify)			

**SECTION D: Impact of Sexual Harassment**

14. How does sexual harassment affect you?

		1. Very much	2. A bit	3. Not at all	Explanation
14a	Academically				
14b	Socially				
14c	Professionally				
14d	Psychologically				
14e	Other (specify)				

**SECTION E: Sexual Safety Information and Self Protection**

15a. Do you have information on sexual safety?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

15b. If yes from:

1	College	
2	University	
3	Your present school	
4	Other (specify)	
99	Not applicable	

15c) What type of information?

---

16. (a) Do you think such information is/has been helpful?

Yes  No  N/A

b) If yes, how?

---

c) How can training of teachers on sexual safety be done best?

---

17. Give suggestions on how you can help change behavior of sexual harassment perpetrators. \_\_\_\_\_

### **SECTION F: Sexual Policy**

18 (a) Can/do you report about sexual harassment when it happens to you?

Yes  No

(b) If yes to whom? (Tick appropriately)

<b>No.</b>	<b>Perpetrator</b>	<b>Tick</b>
1	Fellow teacher	
2	G & C teachers	
3	Deputy H/M	
4	Head Teacher	
5	Education Officers (specify)	
6	Union officials e.g. KNUT/ KUPPET	
7	Other (specify)	

19. Are there any policies in your school that protect you from sexual harassment?

Yes  No

If yes, please give more details.

---

20. What else needs to be done to improve sexual safety of teachers in your school?

---

21. Make any general observation/conclusion about sexual harassment/safety of teachers in schools that may not have been captured in this questionnaire.

---

**Thank you for your cooperation.**

### **Appendix Three: The Interview Guide for Sexually Harassed Teachers**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Probe for...</b>
For how long have you been in this school?	Year of entry, reasons for transfer, interpersonal relations with other teachers etc
How do you consider sexual safety of teachers in Kenyan schools?	Cases of SH, sexual safety policies
How has your sexual safety been compromised before?	when and where it occurred, who were the perpetrators, whether he/she sought for assistance, reasons for SH, how he/she protects against SH etc
In your own opinion how can this problem be alleviated?	Teacher curriculum, school environment, sexual safety policies

**Thanks for your cooperation.**

#### **Appendix Four: FGD for Students**

What are some of the things that you do in school/class which make your teachers sexually uncomfortable?

Do you do such things to all of the teachers?

How do the teachers react when you do these things to them?

Why should you sexually harass your teacher?

**Thanks for your cooperation.**

### Appendix Five: Interview Guide for Key Informants

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Probe for...</b>
For how long have you been in this capacity as a teacher/ education officer?	Interpersonal relationship with teachers, incidents of SH in school/ area of jurisdiction etc
How do you handle cases of SH?	Frequency of occurrence, procedures and penalties, etc
What do you think should be done to curb sexual harassment in schools?	sexual safety policies, disciplinary procedures, etc