



NORWEGIAN
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SAME SEX RELATIONSHIP:

A current Religious Challenge to the Methodist church in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Same sex relationship is a practice that has recently become rampant in Kenya. According to the empirical study, the practice has increased due to several factors namely: Internet and pornography in the media, poverty and exposure, peer pressure and social-environmental influences, family upbringing, curiosity, biological complexity, bad omen and other cultural superstitions, family dysfunctions, and drug abuse. This study also reveals the practice is not welcome in many faith and religious groups; as the practice is associated with moral and spiritual decay. Nevertheless, the Methodist Church in Kenya has taken a stern position against those who relate sexually with the same sex. The position of the Church is therefore implemented through pronouncing the deviants as ‘members under the Church discipline, and ‘defrocking’ of clergies who are found guilty of the practice.

This research shows that the Church’s position has highly been condemned by the members who relate sexually with the same sex; claiming that the Church lacks tolerance, and has no place for them. Moreover, the argument is that the Church has failed to embrace the teachings of Jesus Christ, besides initiating and founding the Church, welcomed people under all walks of life; both good and evil sinful and righteous . In this regard, the question of the Church being discriminative against the members of SSR is what is highly challenged.

Key words: Same sex relationship, moral and spiritual decay, members under the Church discipline, defrocking, tolerance, discrimination.

DEDICATION

This paper is a special dedication to the following special people:

First and foremost, to my beloved late Mama Esther Kaburi Kathenya, who died in January the 3rd 2003, following a brutal attack by a family cow, while milking. Rest in Eternal Peace Mama until we meet again in Eternity!

Secondly, to my loving wife, Susan Gatwiri and our lovely sons: Victor Kimathi, Prosper Karani and Joshua Mugambi.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|---|
| ACHPR | African Commission on Human and People's Rights |
| ACK | Anglican Church of Kenya |
| ARHR | Aids Research and Human Retrovirus |
| ATR | African Traditional Religion |
| LGBTI | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, inter-sex |
| KEMRI | Kenya Medical Research Institute |
| MCK | Methodist Church in Kenya |
| NACC | National Aids Control Council |
| NASCOP | National AIDS and STIs Control Program |
| NT | New Testament |
| NCCK | National Council of Churches in Kenya |
| OT | Old Testament |
| SSR | Same Sex Relationship |
| MSM | Men who have sex with other men |
| WSW | Women who have sex with other women |

Explanation of names and terminologies

'Defrocking

Defrocking in a nutshell means to deprive a person in holy orders the ecclesiastical status. It is a very popular terminology which is commonly used among the Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK,) clergies. It therefore refers to as the dis-continuity or termination of guilty pastors from the active church services. This is therefore decided by a certain disciplinary Methodist committee, following one's scandal especially on alcoholism, or any kind of immorality including same sex scandal. Those found guilty are contacted with immediate effect and warned not to continue serving the church.

Methodist Standing Orders

These constitute the Methodist Church constitution.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 General Introduction of the study

This paper sets to examine the response of the Methodist Church in Kenya on the question of same sex relationship, which is a current global concern. To begin with, it is worth introducing the topic that is of importance in this study. In a nutshell, same sex relationship (SSR), which is the topic of interest and relevance in this study, simply means a situation in which people of the same sex preference gets attracted sexually hence sharing their sexual feelings with each other; in order to satisfy their sexual desires and egos.

There are many on-going debates regarding this practice as some see the practice as not 'right' or 'abnormal, while still others think the practice is alright as long as the duo, (both parties concerned find sexual satisfaction). Still others like Christians argue that the practice is against the moral biblical order of creation. The study therefore makes an interrogation and intensive research among the Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK) members, on the issue of SSR. Nevertheless, the study aims therefore at this particular group of church although other references are made to other churches in Kenya where the issue is also a pertinent issue. It will therefore be evident in this paper that people who are either the victims of the topic in question, or have interacted with those in question for this study are the key informants.

The issue of same sex relationship (SSR) has currently raised a lot of concern and interest among many continents. In fact, in many countries, this topic has raised a lot of controversies as it has affected all people regardless of their age, culture, race, and even religious affiliations. Moreover, it has been noted by many that sex and sexuality is among major and current issues of interest, concern and debate in our present world, where some are supporting the practice while others seem to oppose. Religious groups have highly been challenged as some have different opinions regarding the practice.

Continents like Europe and America for instance seems to have laid out some strategic ways of handling and tolerating the practice even among faith communities. This means that unlike many continents, some faith communities in for instance Europe and America accept gay and lesbian marriages. Those who practice the same are allowed to become Church priests. This

perhaps helps include many other members who have similar sexual preference to join in the congregations.

However, on the contrary, this may be the opposite in many African countries where those who identify themselves as same-sex preference are viewed as the 'lost' and therefore condemned and stigmatized against by not only the Church, but also the community, despite the fact the belief that homosexuality and same sex relationship was long practiced among some certain areas; linked with adherents of a particular religion which often is/ and was thought to have been imported with that religion. According to Professor Abogunrin, those who practiced it kept it as a secret and sometimes used it as a seal of the covenant between the two men engaged in the act (Abogunrin 2006:12). However, although the practice may have existed, many hundreds of years ago, the practice lost follow-up hence not many talk or have a history of its existence.

After all, currently, homosexuality and lesbianism are only gradually becoming popular issues of debate in many African countries, with some individuals publicly declaring their sexual preferences as either gays or lesbians.

This is something that has not been popular as it is currently, considering the fact that in many African cultures, and Kenya in particular, sex and sexuality were/ and or are still matters which are rarely discussed freely. Issues of sex are only practiced and discussed in the bedroom with doors closed and in the olden days with lights off. Sex in this case has and is still perceived as sacred; hence discussing it publicly is deemed as a taboo and inappropriate. For that reason, many Christians and other church leaders, who are members of the society equally found/ finds it difficult even today to deal with sex issues. This is why in his introductory remarks on Biblical view of Sex and Sexuality from an African perspective, Rev. Prof. S.O Abogunrin argues that church leaders always pretend as if the various problems about sex do not exist in the Church and avoided discussing publicly, anything about sex as if it is a forbidden area or a sin to do so (Abogunrin. S.O, 2006:3).

Additionally, sex education is a rare subject even in many African public and private schools. However there are many publications which are both helpful and destructive concerning the subject. While many of them may be useful, several of them have not only compounded the problem, but they have left many leaders more confused than ever before. This is because, instead of giving teachings and explanations on sex and sexuality, the Internet portrays nude pictures of real life sexual acts; which all could indeed be very destructive especially to the young generation which lacks education and experience in this field. Public discussion on the

subject is avoided by all means since many think the topic itself is related or associated with immorality, which is evil.

By avoiding discussion on this crucial aspect of life, Christians and many Church leaders assume and ignore the reality of the problems therein related to the issue. This is indeed a great omission which is done naively. Therefore, it is for this reason this research seeks to explore the response of the Methodist Church in Kenya and their views towards contentious issues on same sex relationship.

1.1 Motivation and statement of the problem

There are several factors which have motivated me to explore more on this study on Same Sex Relationships (SSR). First, in the beginning of my pastoral ministry, there were two women; Joyce and Mercy (not their real names) in my home circuit. The two had a farm (*shamba*) problem. After talking to them for some time Joyce secretly disclosed to me that their problem was a sexual related and not about the farm. Mercy, was Joyce' sister-in-law (She was sister to Joyce' late husband), and she was single and a lesbian. After the death of her brother, Mercy wanted to introduce her brother's wife, Joyce to lesbianism.

However, this was not easy as Joyce was not used to that kind of sexual behavior. She secretly disclosed to me that at first, they had a lot of misunderstandings which led to a series of conflict regarding the issue of relating together sexually. However, she noted that with time, they agreed to have a secret sexual deal, which was later discovered by some curious friends who later reported the matter to the Church members. The rumor had a very negative effect as the dual, (Joyce and Mercy), were full members of the Church. Despite them being very active and influential in the church women group, they were expelled from the full membership of the Church. This incidence raised a lot of concerns and questions in my mind especially on the question on how the Church should relate to such people without compromising her faith as well as stigmatizing those who are the victims.

Secondly, I was shocked by a series of other related sex scandals among my fellow colleagues in the ministry; some who were caught 'red-handed' in the act. This was indeed a great disbelief as I thought that pastors can never fall into such scandals. After it was discovered, they were both expelled from active ministry of the Church. This was back in the year 2000, although since, the problem has really escalated with many members and the clergy (Pastors), leaving the ministry of the Church. The Church has continued to lose many of her 'once faithful' pastors and leaders because according to the Church constitution

(Methodist Standing Orders), if a full member is proved guilty of any abnormal sexual behavior, or homosexuality, he/ she should be terminated from their pastoral or church duties with immediate effect.

This is a great challenge to the future of the Methodist Church; since the accused or the guilty has no grounds to justify themselves, as long as there are evidences of such an act which is condemned as evil and immoral among the faithful. The reaction of the church towards these leaders and fellow pastors is now rampant in Kenya, posing a great threat to the future of the Church and many communities in Kenya. This implies that, the reaction of the Church towards SSRs may be detrimental to the future of the Church. In this case therefore, there is a dire need to urgently address it in order to save the future of not only the Church fraternity, but the entire society.

The third factor was a related same sex scandal in the Anglican church of Kenya. On the 10th of Sept 2015, a group of five (5) priests were expelled from pastoral duties for allegedly engaging in homosexual activity, in Diocese of Mt. Kenya West in Central Kenya where the Anglican Church expelled priests on the basis of their practicing homosexuality.

Additionally, the increase in incidences of homosexuality in Kenyan schools some which are also Methodist sponsored is worrying. For instance, in 2014, there was an incidence at Maseno High School where boys were sodomized to an extent of being hospitalized. This was a major concern. Homosexuality in many boys' boarding Schools has since become rampant. Lesbianism has equally increased in many girls' schools. In many girls' High schools, the victims are suspended from schools and directed to seek counseling services during the suspension period. Nevertheless, cases of sodomy in boys' boarding secondary schools are rarely addressed. However, parents who seek counseling in church claim that sexuality is among the issues that is mostly affecting the boy child.

Statement of the problem

Although sexuality is a God given aspect of human life, those who seek and have been seeking counseling in church are shying off to talk about it. This is due to cultural implications which define sex issues as 'matters of adults, who are married. Sex related issues are therefore not openly discussed in church settings, where many devoted Christians believe that they are not at all 'spiritual' matters. Nevertheless, even the adults would not be comfortable discussing them due to stigma of facing expulsion and perhaps being branded as

immoral. This again raises a great question and concern to the church which should offer spiritual help and counsel to all people, as the light to the world.

It has been noted that there is an increase in number of pastors and church members who are being associated and accused of having a relationship with a person of the same gender. This is an act that Cahn also condemns as “immoral sexual behavior” (Cahn, 2006: 17).

The problem of same sex relationship is indeed “new born” or perhaps something that has not “been heard” for many decades among many communities in Kenya (Hobley, 1910: 428). Both the Christians and non-Christians have been born and nurtured in heterosexual families hence believe that heterosexuality was legal and absolute. Unlike Europe and America, many Africans are socialized to believe that same sex affairs are a taboo, and are forbidden in the society (Stanton, 2004). This explains why in Kenya like many other African countries, the problem comes as a shock to those who hold their traditions. Additionally, the Holy Scriptures emphasizes on heterosexual relationship which should be between a man and a woman. The emerging trend of SSR thus brings confusion to many Kenyans who are bound by both traditions and teachings of the bible.

The SSR is not only a Kenyan problem; it is an issue affecting the church in the world. The argument in this study is based not only on views of Kenyans but also cases from literature review and media reports. Although a few of these cases have been reported through the media, no one would ever predict that the issue could soon be rampant among Christian leaders. These leaders are believed to be the custodians of Christian faith (Mbuggus, 2004: 176) and to a bigger extent, custodian of society morals.

In Africa, the debate is still live. According to the world News for instance, In South Africa, an Anglican priest Reverend Canon Mpho Tutu, was excommunicated from Anglican priesthood following her same-sex marriage, to her long-term Dutch girlfriend; Professor Marceline Van Furth (World News Africa, 2006). The reaction of Bishop Desmond Tutu represented the view of many Africa Christians; because although he loved his daughter, he attended the ceremony but held his stand on biblical position on marriage.

Among the Anglican Church in Kenya, there are reported cases of SSR among the church Priests. These like many in the Methodist Church also receive rebukes from various people. They are referred to as 'evil-minded', people who should not be allowed to associate with anybody in the church. For example, Archbishop Nzimbi has strongly spoken against admitting non-celibate same-sex attracted people into the Church. Additionally, in 2013, Archbishop Eliud Wabukala, then the Primate of the church, denounced a decision by the Church of England's House of Bishops to allow gay priests to become bishops. He also

opposed priests being allowed to enter into same-sex civil partnerships saying that the Church of England seems to be advancing along the same path as the US Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada which he accused of promoting 'a false gospel'.

The debate of SSR is common among the Methodists as well. The issue is spreading like wild fire; where church members and clergies have reported victimization based on their sexual orientation. This has similarly resulted to the expulsion of many from church leadership and pastoral duties. This study therefore shall also endeavor into finding out what can be done to save the church from losing her members. The church's spiritual growth and maturity seems threatened.

There seems to be compromises and loss of focus in various aspects, which therefore has provoked several questions regarding the existence and the reaction of SSRs among the Church fraternity. These questions include the following: What will be the fate of the church if majority of potential leaders are expelled due to SSR? What would be the future of the Methodist church? And, how can the Church integrate these people (SSRs); following Jesus' example of unconditional love, integration and inclusion of all sinners models in the bible?

1.2 Background of the Study

The escalation of same sex relationship globally is worrying in both African and Kenyan context; and in particular among the members of the Methodist church in Kenya. This phenomenon is a recurring trend, which may be linked to unresolved ethical issues in religious avenues and among the clergy members. The context of church governance and social-economic challenges is a failure to understand the dynamics involved in the secular states, which exacerbate tensions and jeopardize attempts to resolve the moral crisis related to same sex relationship. The aim of this study is to critically examine the response of the Methodist church towards SSR.

The issue of sexual relationship is touchy especially in Kenya where groups seem to be raising their voices on SSR debate, for instance research by KEMRI reviewed the need for protection for individuals in SSR (Aids Research and Human Retrovirus, 2014). Such groups are found in other countries and include the Soul Force, which does their advocacy openly. This protection may not move the stand of the Methodist Church in Kenya where the standing order defines and stipulates types of relations and particularly the heterosexual relationships. Other faith communities including the Catholics and the Muslim communities for instance, like the Methodist Church do not advocate for the SSR either. It is therefore, important to

recognize the importance of the SSR debate and the trend of events in terms of change in relationships that is inevitable. Both the Muslims, the Catholics and some Protestant Christians particularly are opposed to the practice of same sex relationships.

In Mahoney's view, that seems to be conservative and views SSR as deliberate, unnatural, abnormal, changeable and perverted lifestyle which God hates (Mahoney, 2012). The views of the Catholics like those of traditional Africans are that human bodies were designed for heterosexuality and that sex relationship is meant for procreation. Therefore, in their view, a marriage relationship that does not end in procreation is not valued. In the New Testament, this view is supported by the teaching of Apostle Paul. Although the Bible never says that sex must always be used only for procreation, there is evidence that sex forms a bond between people (1 Cor. 6:16) and is a marital responsibility (1 Cor. 7:3-5).

1.3 The main Research Question

The main research question is centered on how the Methodist Church in Kenya responds to SSR, which is a current global issue? The main research question will therefore be answered by exploring the following sub-questions below:

1.4 Sub-questions.

1. What are the MCK leaders' / members' views on Same Sex Relationship (SSR)?
2. How do the people victimized on the basis of same sex orientation; respond to the church's reaction to their preferred choice of sexual orientation?

1.5 Aims and objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to explore or rather examine and find out how the Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK), responds to the current issue of SSR. The objectives of the study are:

1. To explore the Methodist Church in Kenya's views on Same Sex Relationship.
2. To examine the SSR's views on the church response to their choice of sexual preference in (1) above.

At the end of this study therefore, the researcher and the reader will have a clear view of the response of the Methodist Church in Kenya regarding the issue of Same Sex Relationship (SSR).

Furthermore, the researcher and the reader will both understand the views of those victimized as SSR, regarding the response and the Church view on their same sex preference. The

findings will farther help in developing a strategic project for the Methodist Church in Kenya towards working on a 'Jesus integration of all models'.

Research outline

Chapter 2 (two) gives the geographical background of the area of study, and defines the context of study in relation to understanding SSR. This chapter also discusses the causes and consequences of SSR in Kenya as a national concern.

Chapter 3 (three), is the theoretical chapter.

The chapter endeavors to discuss theories relevant to SSR; gender role, social construct theory and queer theory.

Chapter 4 (four) focuses on the methods used in this study. The chapter presents the research strategies, research design and data collection methods. This chapter further presents challenges and limitations encountered during this study.

Chapter 5 (five), presents the empirical findings of interviews conducted.

Chapter 6 (six), focuses on the discussion of the findings as they emerged from the empirical data, research questions and the literature used in relation to the theoretical framework of this research. This chapter further discusses the factors leading to SSR, and how the church should respond to this problem.

Chapter 7 (seven), is the conclusion chapter of the thesis, which includes own views, and also suggests recommendations for further research and study areas. After the conclusions and further recommendations for the study, a list of research sources as literature review is attached together with internet sources which have been used as sources for this study.

The list of appendix is also attached in the last pages of this study.

Significance of the Study

After examining the response of the Methodist Church in Kenya, this study shall propose a strategy which will ensure that the SSRs are included in the Methodist Church fraternity without being discriminated against. This is by ensuring there is inclusiveness of all people; regardless of their gender and sexual orientations. The proposal is to have a 'Jesus integration of all Model Church', a church which knows no division and barriers. Like Jesus' life ministry on earth, the church needs to embrace Christ's impartial love which was evident in God through Jesus' death on the cross for all humankind. It is for this reason that this study is

aimed at bringing transformation of mind and world view among the members of MCK in relation to SSR and the entire Kenyan society.

Nevertheless, this study will help not only Kenyan Churches, but Africa and other Christian continents. I would also suggest that Love is a theme that cuts across all religions in the world. All human beings require to be loved. Therefore this love should be expressed to all regardless of their sexual orientation by the virtue of being human. Furthermore, this study will act as an 'eye-opener' and a light to the entire world, hence creating awareness to many who will read and study it, for the future benefit of all Churches, religious groups and the societies in general.

Scope of the Study

The study was carried out in Komarock Circuit, Nairobi Synod, in Kenya. The study was conducted among leaders of church groups; men fellowship, women fellowship and youth fellowship. The main reason of including all the church groups was of course in order to have a general view from all the representatives of various groups in the Church. In other words, it was a way of including all and ensuring different views are gathered from various Church groups.

This also helped in gathering different views from various people in the Church, without necessarily, having to limit them to only one specific group. To ensure representation of independent views of church leadership, a church minister and a Bishop from the same Synod were also involved. Komarock circuit was also chosen in order to represent the fraternity of the Methodist Church in Kenya because it is at the city center, and also it is among the largest circuit with many congregations in the city.

Summary

This chapter gives a general introduction of the topic under review in this study. This of course means giving a clear understanding of what same sex relationship implies. In this chapter therefore, an introduction and explanation of same sex relationship is briefly made. However the motivation and the statement of the problem have also been discussed. This includes what really prompted the researcher to come up with such a controversial topic of research in mind.

The reasons given to this includes several aspects attached to his own experience as a Church priest hence being among the active observer and at times happened to implement the MCK

decisions contained in the Church constitution, witnessed related incidents which were brought to his table as a church counselor, eye-witnessed fellow colleagues in the ministry being victimized, read news from the Kenyan newspapers on the rampant spreading of the practice among many Kenyan schools some which are MCK affiliated, among others. The researcher therefore sets to find out more on the position of the Church towards the problem. Nevertheless, the chapter further explains and discusses on related problems attached to SSR in the country; without only looking at the MCK, since the problem is currently a great challenge to many Christians some who are related in one way or the other to the victimized. The statement of the problem therefore elaborates more on the problem. It explains clearly how the topic is a current challenge to the MCK where the church has been experiencing scandals with her potential members; hence leading to termination from the active ministry and service of the Church.

The study background in this chapter is relevant for it also discusses the topic in many other countries and in other contexts without necessarily looking at the Kenyan Methodist Church. Same sex relationship is a challenge to both believers and none-believers for many view it as an abnormal behavior, although a few others are now accepting the practice as part of Human rights.

The main Research question in this chapter is also explained. The main research question is therefore the main topic of concern and investigation. In this case, it is rather a question regarding what the response / position of MCK is, regarding the practice of same sex relationship. This question is further supported by some few sub-questions which will help in the process of the investigation namely: Investigating the leaders' and members' views and responses on same sex preference, and also finding out the victims views and responses regarding the Church's stand on their same sex preference. The sub-questions therefore acts as the investigation criteria for the main research question for this study.

Furthermore, the aims and objectives of this study is given as setting out to investigate how the MCK responds to the question of Same Sex relationship, and how the victims of SSR react to the response by the church. The objectives therefore help in setting an agenda and a target for the study, which in this case is to come up with a clear view of the church's response towards the practice. It will also be seen that at the end of this study, both the reader and the researcher will be able to have a clear understanding of the views or how the victimized MCK members reacts towards the church response to their behavioral change, which in this case is from heterosexuality to homosexuality.

Furthermore, this chapter also explains the importance of this study, giving clear and convincing facts that sets to make it a relevant and a significant study not only among churches in Kenya or Africa, but also others including none believers. This is by the virtue of considering all humanity as people who need to love and be loved not only by the religious, but by everyone whom they live, work or associate with; without necessarily being condemned or stigmatized on their sexual affiliation. The aspect of looking at SSR as the 'other different human being' is what this study is set to work against for the inclusion of all. This piece of study will therefore be an important resource to the MCK, but also to the entire world, which may not necessarily be of any religious affiliation.

CHAPTER 2.0 GEOGRAPHICAL, SOCIAL-CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the previous chapter one, a general introduction of the study is made. The motivation and the statement of the problem have clearly been defined. Furthermore, the background of the study is also discussed, together with other key areas such as the main research question, the sub-questions, the aims and objectives of the study. In this chapter, an outline of the entire study is also given together with the significance and the scope of the study. In this chapter 2, the geographical and historical background of the Methodist Church in Kenya before the coming of Christianity is lengthily discussed.

2.1 Geographical, Social-cultural and historical Background

This chapter presents a general historical background about Christianity in Kenya as well as the history of Methodist church in Kenya; and general views of same gender relationships. Geographically, Kenya is one of the East African Countries, which is located along the equator. It borders Ethiopia and Sudan on the north, Uganda on the west, Tanzania on the South, and the Indian Ocean on the Southeast.

Kenya has more than 42 tribes which are also understood as ethnic communities. There were certain ideas that were common among most tribes. Most of the tribes believed in a single creator, God, who was, and is still known by different names. The 'Kikuyus' of Mt. Kenya region for example use the word "*Ngai*" while Luhya of western region called him "*Were*" and the Luo of Lake Region referred to God as "*Nyasae*". Among the '*Meru*' community, of the Central region, God was and is still referred to as '*Murungu*' other tribes have different names depending on their geographical locations. The tribes living in central region believed Mount Kenya summit was the dwelling place of their God. Like other Africans, Kenyan people are known to be religious, a factor that John Mbiti refers to as "notoriously religious" (Mbiti, 1969: 30).

The people of Kenya had an indigenous way of worship long before the arrival of missionaries. Nevertheless, they had their own distinct beliefs which were believed to be sacred. For instance, marriage was and has always been viewed as a sacred union between a man and a woman. For this reason, the Kenyan people like many other Africans regard marriage in high esteem. This is explained in the entire customary or traditional marriage process, which starts with the two parties, (in this case, the boy and the girl), who introduces each other to their respective families, clans and the entire relatives.

This was and is still perceived as a form of receiving acceptance and approval for blessings in the anticipated marriage before any further arrangements were/ are made. In most cases, if the family members for instance, the parents of both parties disapproved the relationship of the two parties perhaps following a certain history of one of the parties, the best the parties did / or do is to call the relationship off in order to avoid future misfortunes and calamities in the family of the two (boy and the girl). This process is very common in almost all tribes of Kenya.

Among the 'Meru' people; for instance, there are and still are some particular tribes or sub-communities that people cannot marry or get married to. Such families that boys and girls were warned sternly never to marry from or get married to, are popularly known as the 'ngirani'. In case both parties became arrogant, or were ignorant about the belief, hence went ahead to marry from the ngirani families, the consequences were regrettable. Many experienced mysterious deaths which befell one of the couple after a short time of their union. If it was a girl getting married by a 'ngirani', she dies/ or died within the first year or 2 of their marriage, and if it was a boy who married a 'ngirani' girl or cohabited with her, the boy die/ died within a short time too.

It should also be noted that even to date, these traditional believes still counts, whereby the 'ngirani' still exist among the Meru tribe, and failure to adhere to the precautions set therein before choosing future partners; can lead to immense loss and regrets. The emphasis in this case therefore was/ is that heterosexual relationships were highly esteemed, and homosexuality was unheard off until recently. It has never happened in this case where the opposite happened; meaning a boy introducing a fellow boy as a prospective sexual partner or the vice versa.

The Methodist church in Kenya is one of the churches introduced by the missionaries. The Methodist Church in Kenya was started in Kenya by foreign Missionaries under auspices of the Mission Committee of the United Methodist Free Church of Great Britain. These missionaries arrived at the coast of Kenya in Tana River in the year 1862 (Nthamburi: 1982: 138). The Methodist Church later became autonomous in the year 1967 with 323 congregations. Currently, Methodist church is in Tanzania, Uganda and DR Congo.

When the missionaries arrived in Kenya, they found many Kenyans with different cultures from them. For example, the Kenyans like many African countries are notoriously religious, known for their distinct believes based on the African Traditional Religion (ATR). Although they did not gather in church buildings for prayers, they had sacred places like large or huge mountains (Mt. Kenya), which was commonly referred to as 'Kirima kia nyaga' or 'Kirinyaga'.

Others believed that God lived in big trees like Baobab trees, Big Rivers and waterfalls among the Meru people.

In times of calamities and droughts, people gathered together under those sacred places and slaughtered animals, poured out some of their foodstuffs, and called the name of their God's. Within a few days later, the rains poured down and they had plenty of food to eat as well as plenty of grass for their animals. In cases of deaths, they gathered in the same places and sacrificed as a form of pouring their hearts to God and pleading for mercies and forgiveness. That is how many maintained a strong and strict spiritual life.

After the arrival of the missionaries to Kenya, many things changed. Many claim that the missionaries condemned the African culture and their form of worship as 'demonic/ satanic / and a worship of idols. This is by the fact that they worshiped under huge trees, rivers as dwelling places for their God. The missionaries therefore introduced church buildings which they thought should be appropriate places for worship instead of gathering along the mountains or big rivers

Which they perhaps thought could be insecure and dangerous especially from the wild animals. Many Kenyans were also known to be polygamous. They married more than one wife due to various reasons associated with it. Many believed that it was insecure to have only one wife. Nevertheless, marrying many wives was associated with wealth. The more wives one had, the wealthier one was deemed to be. In this case it meant that when one had many wives, he would definitely have many children through those wives hence become like a 'king' in a palace. Besides that, when a man had many wives, he had a great assurance that the children would be inheritors of his properties even after he died. This procured his name in the society for many future generations.

When the missionaries therefore met these Kenya in this state, they had to find a strategy of incorporating them in the church despite of their situation as men with more than one wife, or women married to one man. This therefore discouraged them from abandoning or divorcing the other women in order to adhere with the new Christian standards. However, they warned them not to continue marrying more than one wife. Many Kenyan Methodist Church converts who later became pioneers were therefore polygamous, some of them who even became the first Methodist Church leaders, lay preachers, and even priests, despite of their polygamous states.

The Methodist in Kenya since then adapted and strictly emphasized on monogamy and many stopped practicing polygamy. They thus started embracing heterosexual relationship with great regard. Furthermore, the practice of heterosexuality was and is still regarded as

important as it fosters social support and specifically aimed at procreation, as the main goal of hetero-relationships. In the present world, sex and sexuality is one of the key issues of interest, concern and debate.

The map of Kenya showing locations of different counties, ethnic communities, with various neighboring countries.



2.2 Same sex relationship debate in Kenya

Same sex relationship is not only a debate but a reality that many Kenyans have taken time to accept. However, the situation appears to change with time. These changes are supported by arguments of the 2007 Pew Global Attitudes Project, where 96 percent of Kenyan residents believe that homosexuality is a way of life that society should be at peace with (Harrison, 2013:81). There is sufficient evidence to support the claims on SSR. In 2011, Kenya Human Rights Commission published a research paper on the legal and social status of LGBTI people in Kenya. In this publication, 89 of the participants reported that they were disowned by their own families. This is traumatizing and raises a challenge to Christians' on their duty of love and care. In the same publication, employees were reported to have been terminated or subjected to hostility, ridicule, humiliation, and discrimination when their sexual orientation or gender identity became known in the workplace.

Kenya is a religious country where traditions and cultural values play a substantial role in matters of relationships particularly meaningful intimate relationships. This is evidenced in the decisions of the religious leaders who are believed to be the voice of the people. Leaders within the three dominant religions in Kenya, Catholic, Anglican and Islamic condemn homosexuality and transgender-ism and regard it as signs of decadence, disease, and immorality as view that is upheld by the MCK (Methodist Standing Orders, 1997:23).

The debate on the SSR has been echoed by many researchers. For instance, the research on SSR by KEMRI for instance was welcomed in Kilifi, in Kenya with men who have sex with men (MSM). This research shocking as it revealed the perceptions of many Kenyans. The findings showed that, MSM requires ongoing community engagement to ensure safety and access to care of participants in terms of health issues such as HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (KEMRI, 2014). The same findings revealed that the society is ignorant about SSR and this ignorance poses a threat to human life.

On legal aspects, a lot needs to be done on SSR to bring out care for human life and clear the confusion that seems to exist on perceptions of different groups. Laws about same-sex sexual activity are clear on protection and responsibility of men and women on their sexuality and relationships. The statutes are clear on issues of sex and long term intimate relationships.

The laws of Kenya are clear on sexuality. Sex acts between men are illegal under Kenyan statutes and carry a maximum penalty of 14 years' imprisonment, up to 21 years in certain aggravating circumstances. Sex acts between women are not mentioned specifically in those statutes, although it is arguable that the gender-neutral term "person" in Section 162 of the

Penal Code includes women (Government of Kenya, 2010). The Kenyan Penal Code of 1930, as revised in 2006 takes into account protection each person has on the face of the law and. Section 162 stipulates the unnatural offenses as:

“Any person who has carnal knowledge of any person against the order of nature; or permits a male person to have carnal knowledge of him or her against the order of nature, is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for fourteen years”

Section 165 on indecent practices between males stipulates that:

“any male person who, whether in public or private, commits any act of gross indecency with another male person, or procures another male person to commit any act of gross indecency with him, or attempts to procure the commission of any such act by any male person with himself or with another male person, whether in public or private, is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for five years” (Government of Kenya, 2010).

2.3 The general Christian view on SSR

Different religious groups understand the biblical stance on SSR's in many different ways. The conservative Christian theologians for instance consider all Bible passages as instructive today (On religious tolerance. The conservative Christian theologians regard any same-sex activity condemned, and believe that this applies to all homosexual activities. To this group of theologians, homosexual behavior is sinful. According to these conservative Christians, homosexuality is a chosen, unnatural, abnormal, changeable and perverted lifestyle which God hates. On the other hand, the liberal Christians share a different view.

The Liberal Christian theologians tend to follow a wider variety of translations. They differentiate among various homosexual and heterosexual sex practices, treating some aspects such as rape, prostitution, temple sex rituals as immoral. According to the Liberal Christian theologians, homosexual orientation and behavior is considered as a normal human sexual expression among a minority of adults (on religious tolerance). It is interesting to note the view that, like other sexual behavior, homosexuality is regarded as a sin when it is exploitive, manipulative or when not carried out safely within a committed relationship.

There are various other groups of people involved in open SSRs. Soul Force is another group that has contributed to the SSR debate. Soul Force is committed to freedom for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people from religious and political oppression through relentless nonviolent resistance (On bible gay Christian). Soul Force openly appeals for

membership. This group holds that gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender Christians take the Bible seriously.

In their argument, they believe that those who love and trust God's word have never given careful and prayerful attention to what the Bible does or does not say about homosexuality. This group attempts to trace the origin of SSR from the Bible. They believe Jesus said nothing about same-sex behavior and Jewish prophets too are silent on the same. However, there is mention of punishment, death penalty for the behavior as cited in Leviticus 20:13. They argue that Sodom was destroyed not because of sexual sin but did not care for the poor, the hungry, the homeless or the outcast.

The voice of the MCK is not loud in the SSR debate as compared to other churches. The Catholic Church has taken a clear stand on SSR. The leader in the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Benedict, has long been concerned about homosexual behavior, taking the stance that there are various kinds of homosexuals. In 1975 the Pope issued the "Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics" which delineated a difference between transitory and pathological homosexuality. However, even in denouncing homosexual behavior, he called for empathy and compassion from followers. He denounced violence of speech and action against homosexuals in "The Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons." Currently the Roman Catholic Church has strict limitations on allowing homosexuals to become members of the clergy, and it also continues to fight the legal recognition of homosexual couples (Mahoney, 2012:30).

Both the traditional society and the church hold that human bodies were designed for heterosexuality and that sex is for procreation. Some people argue that procreation is a necessary aspect of sex, so that experiencing sexual pleasure in any way that is not open to the possibility of procreation is a sin (Mahoney, 2012:32). The Bible never says that sex must always be used only for procreation. In fact, the Bible makes it clear that sex serves other purposes, it forms a bond between people (1 Cor. 6:16) and is a marital responsibility (1 Cor. 7:3-5). Procreation is only one part of the reason for sex, and many couples have sex on a regular basis without ever conceiving sometimes by choice. However, sex between members of the same gender is forbidden in traditional societies that value procreation.

The Bible clearly demonstrates that homosexuality is sin. However, it is known by all today, both heterosexuals and homosexuals; it does not please God by neglecting the less fortunate in the community. When for instance, one forgets the poor and hungry, when one refuse to do justice or show mercies, when one leave strangers at the gate..., among other charity acts. According to homosexuals, God has called man to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly

with our creator. Therefore, sexual orientation has nothing to do with one's service to human kind.

According to Pablo et al (2012), the members of Friends Quakers hold that homosexuality is a sin that is condemned in the scriptures. Confirm this in Gen. 19:5, Leviticus 18:22-23, Romans, 1:26-27, 1Corinthian, 6:9-11, Ephesians, 5:3-5, Galatians. 5:19-21, 1Timothy 1:9, 10 and Jude 7. God's attitude towards homosexuality is clear that, He prohibits and condemns homosexuality. In Genesis, 19:5, for instance, when He destroyed the city of Sodom. It is evident that the homosexuality of the people of Sodom carried an uncontrollable lust that defied restraint so that even when the people were blinded they still tried to fulfill their lust (Genesis. 19:11). God outlawed all homosexuality and bestiality as sexual perversion that should not be tolerated. All sexual perversions were worthy of death, indicating their loath sameness before God.

The Quakers view homosexuals as individuals who deliberately deviate from what is normal sexual practices as God intended it to be as opposed to behavior that reflect sex changes and other gender perversions. Quakers are supposed to discern and have more knowledge than the gay people and therefore greater accountability is required of them. They hold that they cannot and will not give themselves over to sexual immorality. Instead, they urge those practicing immoralities to abandon and repent and change their ways so that the Lord can forgive them.

The Methodists views homosexuality differently and treat the homosexuals different from Quakers. Although the situation is changing, in the United Methodist, homosexuals can be members, but they referred to as 'self-avowed'. Practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as ministerial candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church. Ceremonies that celebrated homosexual unions were not be conducted by our ministers and not be conducted in their churches. However, it has yet to firmly resolve the issue (to stand with the Bible), and considered this a debatable subject.

This is the situation that Methodist church in Kenya seems to adapt. The United Methodist Church opposed homophobia and hetero-sexism. It provided a privilege status for people who identify as culturally defined heterosexuals; the status which the Bible promotes, and supports equal civil rights for homosexuals (the sexual practice of said persons the Bible criminalizes). Liberal activists within the church continue to promote acceptance of homosexuality, with conservatives opposing. This stance of the activists in Kenya is highly voiced and the impact of various groups seems to be felt in Kenya. This is a global challenge

in recent times, more and more people have come to acknowledge openly that they are gay (William Loader, 2016: 17).

Loader for instance, categorically argues that SSRs among them are highly respected leaders. Moreover he adds that they are committed Christians, and much-loved ordinary citizens. People who are gay many decades ago could not have spoken openly, as they do today (Loader 2016: 17). Similarly, there are many variations both physiological and psychological, in dealing with sexuality. This happens also that a person can feel male inside but look female outside and vice versa (Loader, 2016: 18).

Additionally, a number of scholars argues that Jesus in Matt 19:12 well referring to the three different types of eunuchs namely: those who were born that way, eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. In that respect there is a possibility to include those born with incomplete or ambiguous genitalia, which fall into the broad category of people who today might call themselves inter-sex. The saying does indicate awareness that gender identity can be complex (Loader, 2016: 33).

The National council of all churches in Kenya (NCCCK) has been debating on the issue of same sex relationships like many other churches all over the world. During one meeting, after a lengthily debate on the on-going homosexuality, National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCCK), came up with a press statement regarding SSR, as it was clearly reflected in 2012 statement by the general secretary of the National Council of Churches in Kenya saying:

“We are concerned that the direction the debate has taken is that of the recognition of homosexuality and prostitution; which are against African beliefs and more so our Christian principles. This is a matter that deserves reflective discussion by our society in recognition of our values and beliefs. This is a view that is also shared by our Muslim brothers and sisters in Kenya and many continents in the world. We do not however imply that those who practice them should be locked up, we believe they need assistance to change from these behaviors” (Secretary, NCCCK 2012 edition in Kenya Daily Nation).

2.4 SSR as a reality in Kenya

Sex and Sexuality information is lacking among young Christians especially those that are living in the rural areas of Kenya (Kangara, 2004: 2). The fact that the youths have to explore on their own regarding sex and sexuality, among many other causes may perhaps explain the reasons responsible for the current increase of SSR cases in the country. The Churches are

still hiding behind the veil of morality, sex issues in the church are regarded as sinful. This view is somehow related to the cultural value and view of sex in Africa as a whole. This therefore means that the cultural view of SSR is an issue worth considering especially in Kenya where culture and Christianity are intertwined and interdependent. According to a report by Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) in Kenya Coastal region, various stallholders' on SSR had various views regarding SSR.

During this training, various religious views were presented. The view of religions in Kenya were represented by a Catholic nun on behalf of all. During the presentation, she also confessed that although she had a preconceived mind and a negative attitude toward lesbians and gays in schools, she later understood that same sex relationship is real and that many who find themselves in the practice have no choice. These sentiments also supported KEMRI's press statement that the practice of homosexuality is not necessarily anyone's choice. Furthermore, it was reported that the practice has currently gained popularity in the country; although in the hiding.

In this report, it was agreed that those who are either gay or lesbians should not be always judged negatively; but should also be treated equally with heterosexual people. However, it should also be noted that some religious views did not necessarily come into consensus. For instance, in the same training, an Imam argued that God does not like what gays and lesbians do and insisted that God will punish them for their sinful acts. Nevertheless, it was later agreed by many that although SSR may be deemed as sinful and against the normal order, it is inhumane for the LGBTI communities to be subjected to violence and harassment. Religious groups were therefore accused of harassing the SSR members (KEMRI 2014, on religion and SSR in Kenya).

It should also be noted that there was landmark resolution that was passed by the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) in November 2013, on "Protection against Violence and other Human Rights Violations against Persons based on their real or imputed Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity," condemns violence and systematic attacks on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. The commission calls on member states to "end all acts of violence and abuse, whether committed by State or non-state actors, including enacting and effectively applying appropriate laws prohibiting and punishing all forms of violence" (ACHPR 2013, November edition, on Kenya Daily Nation).

The Kenyan constitution, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the many UN treaties to which Kenya is a state party, all provide for the protection of basic human rights, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. However, it is important to note that

the Kenyan law fails to provide protection for LGBTI thus making them a target of arrests in violation of international law. Kenyan law enforcement officials rely on sections 153 and 154 of the Penal Code, which prohibit respectively “living on the earnings of prostitution” and “soliciting or importuning for immoral purposes,” to justify arrests of male, transgender, and female sex workers.

Both offenses are defined as felonies, which carry a penalty of imprisonment of “three years or more.” Section 182 of the Penal Code on “idle and disorderly persons” empowers police to arrest “every common prostitute behaving in a disorderly or indecent manner in any public place” and “every person who in any public place solicits for immoral purposes.” Like the laws against homosexual conduct, these are colonial era laws. However, the more recent Sexual Offenses Act of 2006 reinforces prohibitions on sex work by consenting adults.

Nevertheless, the Kenyan government to some extent seems to respect the LGBTI activists’ right to freedom of expression, although there have been some efforts to stifle them. In 2014, “Stories of Our Lives,” a film made by Kenyan director Jim Chuchu about the lives of LGBTI Kenyans, was banned by the Film Censorship Board on grounds that it “promotes homosexuality (ACHPR 2013, November edition on Kenya, Daily Nation).

Additionally, the Ministry of Health, through NACC and NASCOP, has carved out a position in which it is perceived as an ally to the LGBTI community. For instance, in February 2014, when anti-gay legislators called on the government to arrest gays, civil society activists asked health minister to make a statement in support of LGBTI rights, the minister pointed out that criminalization of same-sex conduct inhibits access to health services, stressing the government’s responsibility to provide health services to all, and called for a soberer debate. Moreover, the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI), which is a government body, emphasized in an interview with Human Rights Watch that Kenya is making rapid strides on addressing HIV among men who have sex with other men (MSM), and that the simple fact that the government did not interfere in its work with MSM is already a positive starting point (KEMRI report on same sex relationship and HIV, Kenya Daily Nation, February 6th 2014).

Under the new system of devolved government, county governments will have a substantial role to play in upholding the constitution and ensuring the protection of all residents, regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity. Governors and other County officials could show strong leadership on LGBTI rights by demonstrating public support for the civil society organizations on the coast that are engaged in daily struggles to protect LGBTI people’s rights to health, security, and non-discrimination.

The daily Nation on “the Myth of Homosexuality in Kenyan Society” has also revealed that a number of people started practicing same sex relationships, long even before the year 2000. In this case, homosexual members may perhaps have existed even longer unnoticed. This is perhaps also due to the stigma and the implications attached in with the suspects. However, a few others disclose their status openly like Jared, a 55 year old , who works as a Casino manager and owns a house in posh Nairobi suburb. Although Jared goes to the church every Sunday “to pray for my sins,” he is unable to abandon his lifestyle. It is reported that Jared keeps framed love letters in his house and treats his male guests to sex videos for entertainment (Daily Nation Wednesday June 24, 2001).

A twenty -three year old Hassan has been married three times and although each time he had a complete dowry and wedding rings, Hassan appears feminine, pouting his lips and covering his face when laughing. When walking, he swings delicately while holding his Kanzu (robe) under his arm- much in the same manner as Arabic woman carry themselves. He wishes his marriage had been legal, so that he could claim his rights from the husband who abandoned him. Furthermore he claimed that the one in particular, who left him when he (the husband) was forced by his parents to take a wife, will come back to him. “I used to cook for this man, make and make his bed, but he left me,” Hassan says sadly. Daily Nation, Wednesday June 24, 2001).

2.5 Summary

In this chapter 2, the following has been done. The chapter presents a geographical, social-cultural and historical background of the country and the Methodist Church in Kenya before the coming of the missionaries. Kenya is a country with a population of about 47 million people. These people are divided into different ethnic communities which are about 47. However, the he country's national language is Swahili, a language that is spoken by my natives. This chapter further shows that Kenyans like many other nations believed in a supernatural being long even before the coming of the missionaries. They offered sacrifices and worshipped their God who was known in different ethnic names at different places.

They had a strong regard and value for marriages which were meant for social as well as for procreation purposes. These marriages were heterosexual, although many were also polygamous. This chapter also gives a general view of same sex relationship debate in the country which shows that different Human rights organizations like ACPR (African Charter on Human Rights and Peoples' Rights), gives a leeway, or in other words support same sex

preference as a human right, which should not be necessarily condemned. Furthermore the chapter also discusses the, general religious views on same sex relationship. In this discussion, it is also evident that many religious groups are also on the view that those who practice same sex relationships should not be condemned as the practice may perhaps be beyond their choice. Nevertheless, the chapter further discusses different incidences of same sex relationship showing that the practice has long existed in the country although it is not public.

3.0 CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

In chapter 2, a presentation and discussion of geographical, social-cultural and historical background of Kenya and the Methodist Church is lengthily discussed. Moreover, same sex relationship debate is also discussed together with a discussion of same sex relationship occurrences in the country, which makes the topic a reality. Furthermore, the general religious views, on same sex relationship are also discussed. In this chapter 3, a theoretical background of the study is discussed.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses three theories and their relationship with SSR. These theories are social construct theory, gender role theory, and queer theory. In this part therefore, the three theories will each be discussed.

3.2 Social Construct Theory

According to Alexandra Galbin's article, on “An Introduction to Social Constructionism”, the social Constructionism perspective argues that we never know what universal true or false is, what is good or bad, right or wrong; we only know stories about what is true, false, good, bad, right or wrong. The social Constructionism therefore abandons the idea of constructivist that individual’s mind represents a mirror of reality. The Constructionism is focused on relations and sustains the individual’s role in social construction of realities. For instance, “maps for the same territory” seems to be the essence of constructivist (Alexandra Galbin 2014).

In Alexandra's view, social Constructionism is not interested in creating maps. It rather surprises the processes that maps form by the claim that our maps are formed from our experiences and how we perceive them. In his view therefore, all our maps are differing maps of the same world, and each one of us creates our own worlds from our perceptions of the actual world. In such a view, the social Constructionism sees the language, the communication and the speech as having the central role of the interactive process through which we understand the world and ourselves (Internet source by Alexandra Galbin, December 2014).

According to Temple University Press, nowadays using the term 'social construction' is usually meant to convey that something that has been widely considered beyond the scope of social influence is actually the product of specific socio-historical or social interactional processes, hence social Constructionism thrives particularly vigorously among social scientists interested in the study of such matters as beauty, gender, morality, pathology, race, science and sexuality. However, it is also argued that social Constructionism has drawn great deal from the legacy of what is often referred to as micro-sociology (Temple University Press, on what is Social Constructionism?)

Moreover, most part of this social constructionist theory, stems from the American pragmatist tradition inaugurated by people like Charles Pierce, William James, John Dewey, and George Herbert Mead. These pragmatists tended to emphasize creative agency over structurally deterministic explanations of social events and to highlight how social order can be a product of egalitarian negotiation rather than exploitation and domination. Central to this theoretical program was the tenets that human experience of the world is always mediated by the socially inherited meanings actors actively confer on it (Internet source by Temple University Press-on what is Social Constructionism?).

Additionally, in Pate's view, social construction theories also claim that gender behavior is mostly due to social conventions. These theories posit that most children learn to categorize themselves by gender by the age of three (Pate, 2012:57). From birth, children learn gender stereotypes and roles from their parents and environment. Therefore, according to this description, children learn a lot from their peer or other children whom they interact with like in school, sports, church among other social settings. This point may in this case explain the existence and the development of homosexual behavior among school children even at an early age.

Candace West argues that in a traditional view, males learn to manipulate their physical and social environment through physical strength or dexterity, while girls learn to present themselves as objects to be viewed. Social constructionists argue that gender-segregated children's activities create the appearance that gender differences in behavior reflect an essential nature of male and female behavior (Candace West & Sarah Fenstermaker, 1993: 151). Gender role theory treats these differing distributions of women and men into roles as the primary origin of sex-differentiated social behavior, their impact on behavior is mediated by psychological and social processes.

Socially constructed gender roles are therefore considered to be hierarchical, and are characterized as a male-advantaged gender hierarchy by social constructionists (Woo & Eagly, 2002:21) Based on this theory, the consequences of gender roles and stereotypes are sex-typed social behavior both socially shared descriptive norms and prescriptive norms. It is important to note that masculinity and femininity differ in the social roles that are associated with the biological fact of the existence of the two sexes.

Masculinity and femininity refer to the dominant sex role pattern in the majority of both traditional and modern societies, males being more assertive and females more nurturing (Hofstede, 1986: 301). This is the view that is borrowed from Christian roles of both males and females. However, Femininity seems to create a society of overlapping gender roles, in which, both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.

In his attempt to describe development of homosexuality and heterosexuality in terms of masculinity and femininity, theorist, Albert Ellis in 1940s claimed that nurture matters a great deal more than nature (Fausto-Sterling, 2000). Later, John Money in 1950s carried out a study of inter-sex individuals. The study was to provide invaluable material for the comparative study for bodily form and physiology, rearing, and psycho-sexual orientation (Fauston-Steling, 2008). Money and his colleagues used their own studies to state in the extreme what seemed extraordinary for complete denial of the notion of natural inclination. This study concluded that gonads, hormones, and chromosomes did not automatically determine a child's gender role. Furthermore, Money and his colleagues coined the term 'gender role'. In his views, the term gender role included 'all those things that a person says or does to disclose himself or herself as having the status of a boy/ girl, or a man /woman' (*Money, Hampson, Joan, & Hampson, 1955: 301*).

Sexual orientation is developed based on the three components of sexual identity, sexual behavior and sexual attraction (*Epstein, Robert; Paul McKinney; Shannon Fox; Carlos Garcia, 2013: 260*). Each component is independent so no other conclusions can be drawn based on one another. Perhaps it is an attempt to reconcile this conflict that leads to a common assumption that one same-sex partner assumes a pseudo-male gender role and the other assumes a pseudo-female role. Sexual involvement with a person of the same sex could also be cultivated or encouraged by sexual attraction between the two.

This could perhaps also be caused by the fact that people of the same sex live together for long without the existence of any other opposite sex. It is therefore a trend that has been happening mainly in for instance girls' or boys' schools in which one sex is only dominant. In this case, many find themselves falling in love with the same sex; a character trait that could be irreversible to many.

This may perhaps also explain why, Mager Don argues that for a gay male relationship, this might lead to the assumption that the "wife" handled domestic chores, was the receptive sexual partner, adopted effeminate mannerisms, and perhaps even dressed in woman's clothing (Mager, Don, 1985: 12). This assumption is flawed because homosexual couples tend to have more equal roles, and the effeminate behavior of some gay men is usually not adopted consciously, and is often more subtle.

3.3 Gender Role Theory

It is believed that the term 'gender role' was first coined by John Money in 1955. During his study of inter-sex individuals, Money attempted to describe the manners in which these individuals expressed their status as a male or female in a situation where no clear biological assignment existed (*Money, Hampson, Joan, & Hampson, 1955:55*).

According to Encyclopedia of Communication Theory, Gender role theory is grounded in the supposition that individuals socially identified as males and females tend to occupy different ascribed roles within social structures and therefore tend to be judged against divergent expectations for how they ought to behave. Furthermore, as a consequence, it is also argued that the theory predicts males and females will develop different skills and attitudes and they will behave differently (Internet source, Encyclopedia of Communication theory on- Gender role theory).

Furthermore, Money argues that Gender role, which also refers to the cultural expectations as understood by gender classification, is not the same thing as 'gender identity', which refers to the internal sense of one's own gender, whether it aligns with categories offered by societal norms or not.

A gender role is a set of societal norms dictating the types of behaviors which are generally considered acceptable, appropriate, or desirable for people based on their actual or perceived sex or sexuality. Gender roles are usually centered on conceptions of femininity and masculinity, although there are exceptions and variations. The specifics regarding these

gendered expectations may vary substantially among cultures, while other characteristics may be common throughout a range of cultures (Same source).

Furthermore, Gender roles are also biologically determined or socially constructed, although some scholars like Connell criticizes gender role theory as suffering from logical vagueness and as problematic in terms of its application as a framework for social analysis (R.W. Connell, 2014:10). According to Connell, gender role theory has its roots as biological, not social, turning it into binary polarizing system. Similarly, he portrays how gender role theory seldom related to homosexual gender roles as a result of its polarizing approach.

Additionally, the World Health Organization defines gender roles as socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. Unlike World Health Organization, other systems provide more than two gender roles. Some societies have three genders man, woman, and third gender (Roscoe, 2000), while some individuals do not identify any gender at all.

In these views, some transgender people reject the idea that they are a separate third gender, and identify simply as men or women. However, biological differences between trans women and is-gender women have historically been treated as relevant in certain contexts, such as sport (Sheila L. Cavanagh, Heather Sykes (2006). However, to some individuals, gender roles may provide a positive effect, and their absence may prove difficult; while gender roles may be used as deleterious gender stereotypes, they can offer a clear avenue to verify and structure socially acceptable behavior. Additionally, fulfilling one's prescribed gender roles has been correlated with increased self-esteem, and vis- a -vis (Frome & Eccles, 1996). In this study, it was important to consider other aspects of roles especially when taking the society into account, in this case, social construct theory becomes crucial.

In Robert Crooks' view, cohabiting same-sex partners are typically egalitarian when they assign domestic chores. Furthermore, he argues that sometimes these couples assign traditional female responsibilities to one partner and traditional male responsibilities to the other. Same-sex domestic partners challenge traditional gender roles in their division of household responsibilities, and gender roles within homosexual relationships are flexible (Internet source by Robert Crooks,_2007). For instance, cleaning and cooking, traditionally regarded by many as both female responsibilities, might be assigned to different people. Carrington observed the daily home lives of 52 gay and lesbian couples and found that the length of the work week and level of earning power substantially affected the assignment of housework, regardless of gender or sexuality (Carrington, 1999; Cherlin, Adrew (2010).

However although the division of labor among the same sex cohabitants is not common in many African communities due to the influence of African patriarchal culture, the western culture is catching up fast and it is soon spreading like wild fire. This is true because culture is dynamic though the dynamism could take different duration of time. For instance as reflected in the interviews, those who cohabit as of same sex prefer it than with the opposite sex (See a nagging wife in chapter 5) of this paper.

Many may find it easier to share responsibilities in families than assuming the status quo whereby one partner is expected to do almost everything (this is very common among many Africans) for instance whereby the man is expected to provide food, clothing, shelter among other essentials for the family, while the wife only gives birth and takes care of the children at home. This is currently becoming a great problem to many families in Africa and Kenya in particular especially in cases whereby the man loses his job and there are no other means and sources of getting money to pay for the children fees, food, or pay for the house rent for those living in towns and cities.

This aspect may also explain well the existence of many single women in Kenya today, where some opt to live alone and take care of their children alone; than to live with an abusive and irresponsible man in the name of 'a husband'. In many cultures, gender roles, especially for men, simultaneously act as an indicator for heterosexuality and as a boundary of acceptable behavior for normal or straight people. In some cases, cultures where homosexuality is illegal and/or taboo, gender roles act as indicators of sexuality and boundaries of acceptable behavior.

Therefore, lesbians, gay men and bisexual people may be viewed as exempt from some or all components of gender roles, or as having different "rules" they are expected to follow by society. Heterosexual men and women who are not perceived as being sufficiently masculine or feminine, respectively, may be assumed to be, or suspected to be, homosexual, and persecuted for their perceived homosexuality. This therefore explains why most of the interviewees who were victims experienced rejection, condemnation among other accusations as many thinks their behavior is immoral, abnormal or evil as reflected in the presentation of data in this paper (see chapter 5 of this paper).

To sum up gender role theory, it is clear that gender role predicts the differences or similarities between males and females based on the degree of variations in ascribed roles and

related evaluations. Furthermore, gender role theory has also generated substantial research, academic debates and questions processes that seem likely to continue.

3.4 Queer Theory

The term 'queer' simply refers to necessarily indeterminate, taking of different and sometimes contradictory meanings in different articulations. According to the Encyclopedia history and dictionaries, sometimes queer is synonymous with lesbian and gay, for which it becomes convenient shorthand. Furthermore, it is viewed as referring to a generational or even fashioned-led distinction between old-style lesbians and gays and new-style sexual outlaws (Internet source on Encyclopedia of history and dictionaries).

Furthermore, queer has also been understood as a term that has often been used as an umbrella by and for persons who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, inter-sexual, and / or transgender, or by and for individuals who use the term as an alternative to LGBTI labels (Internet source on queer theory). It is also suggested that heterosexuals whose gender or sexuality does not conform to popular expectations have used the term 'queer' define themselves. Queer theory is therefore a framework of ideas that suggests identities are not stable to an individual's gender, sex, and / or sexuality. Queer theory is thus committed to critiquing and problematizing previous ways of theorizing identity. For instance, while hetero-normativity assumes that heterosexuality and the relations of the binary masculine and feminine genders expected within it are secure and constant, queer theory is a discourse model that destabilizes the assumptions and privileges of secure hetero-normative models of study and everyday life and politicizes and acknowledges the fluidity and instability of identities (same source).

Queer theory was first formulated by Teresa de Lauretis in 1991 (QT). Teresa is a known academic and critical theorist, who is accredited with coining the phrase, 'queer theory'. According to Thatcher, this theory has a profound influence in the realm of Scholarship, historical, and cultural studies (Thatcher A, 2015: 153). Additionally, queer theory has become an important part of the field of sexuality studies. It tries to combine elements from other theories as will be discussed later in other paragraphs.

Patrick S. Cheng also describes Queer theory as a notoriously difficult concept to define, as it exhibits a critical methodology that challenges the stability of identities, which rather include sexual and gender identities (Patrick S. Cheng, quoted in Thatcher A, 2015: 152). In fact, it

resists attempts which reduce itself to an essence or a core definition, a critical approach to sexuality and gender that challenges what is “normal” or “natural”. Specifically, queer theory contends that identities which include relating to sexuality and gender, are socially constructed across various times and places, and thus are fluid and not fixed (Thatcher A, 2015: 153). Additionally, queer theory acknowledges in most cases that identities are established through the deployment of social power, containing power of discourse and naming.

Queer theory has also been used by religious studies scholars and theologians mostly those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and inter-sex (LGBTI). These scholars have used queer theory in their work or rather in their studies since 1993 (Thatcher A, 2015: 154). This theory has therefore become a valuable tool in the field of sexuality studies. Similarly, queer theory has become the best way of expressing or rather describing people of different sexual orientation and minorities. Hence queer is often used as an umbrella term to refer to variety of sexual and gender minorities, containing LGBTI people. Queerness is less a “positivity” than a positionality vis-à-vis the normal (Opp. Cit 2015: 155).

Additionally, Adrian quoting other scholars like Eve Kosofsky, Sedgwick and Gerard Loughlin states that queer theory is not just a narrow or minoritizing topic of interest LGBTI-identified theologians alone. Rather, queer theory is also a “universalizing” topic of interest to all theologians (opp.cit 2015: 154).

Proponents of queer theory argue that it prompts the acceptance and understanding of a more complex reality in which we live (Internet source by Trinity College on, Queer Theory, January 2008).

In examining the word “queer”, Adrian gives an outline of four marks, or characteristics, of queerness as the identity without essence, transgression, resisting binaries and social construction. A brief description of each of these characteristics will be given in the following paragraphs:

(1) Identity without essence

The notion of identity without essence is at odds with these sexual identity categories in which rather than reaffirming such categories, queerness, challenges the stability and the naturalness of such categories. This view affirms the pop artist Lady Gaga and her LGBTI affirming anthem in which says: ‘Am Born This Way’. In this slogan, she asserts that: ‘I’m beautiful in my way, because God makes no mistakes... / I’m on the right track, baby /... I was born this way’ ... (Patrick S. Cheng in Thatcher A, 2015:156).

Currently, many people who prefer to relate sexually with the same sex claim to be born that way and there is less they can do. During the interviews presented in chapter 5 of this study, some people who were victimized for their sexual preferences, argued that their case can only be explained by God who created them the way they are. It therefore becomes very hard to judge someone who claims that he/ she has been biologically created different from what many think. Therefore, in this case, we see that the queerness here is about questioning and challenging identities, and not reaffirming them.

(2) Transgression

The connection between transgression and queerness arose in the 1980s and 1990s, when activist groups such as AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) and Queer Nation engaged in ‘confrontational and controversial’ direct actions to protest governmental and ecclesial apathy with respect to the HIV/AIDS pandemic as well as institutional homophobia. Michael Warner and Lee Edelman have written a lot on the connection between queerness and transgression. According to Warner, the fight by LGBTI activists for marriage equality is ‘a mistake’ and a ‘loss of vision’, particularly in light of queer culture’s historical affirmation of sexual autonomy. To him, queerness must resist the ‘norms of straight culture’ as the standard by which ‘queer life should be measured’ (Michael Warner 1999: 1, 88), quoted by Patrick S. Cheng, in Thatcher A, 2015: 156).

(3) Resisting Binaries

Queerness challenges the gender binary system in which there are only two options namely: male and female in respect to biological sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation. In this

system therefore, a person who is classified as a 'man' with respect to biological sex is automatically assumed to have a male gender identity as well as having a heterosexual orientation (that is, be sexually attracted to women). In the same way, a person who is classified as a 'woman' with respect to biological sex is automatically assumed to have a female gender identity and to be sexually attracted to men only (opp.cit).

In this concept therefore, queerness challenges the binary view of the world, because not all people can be classified as either 'men' or 'women' with respect to biological sex. Research also shows that approximately 1.7 per cent of all births involve inter-sex conditions in which a baby is born with ambiguous sexual organs or with genitalia that do not match the baby's chromosomal make-up (Thatcher 2011:12-13), quoted by Patrick S, Cheng, in Thatcher A, 2015:157).

Additionally, queerness also challenges the heterosexual/ homosexual binary. According to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, the binary is highly problematic because in his view, the concept of 'heterosexuality' is meaningless without the concept of 'homosexuality' to define itself against. In his view, heterosexuality is not so much set apart from homosexuality, but rather dependent upon homosexuality for its meaning. He therefore argues that the 'heterosexual'/ homosexual binary is 'irresolvably unstable' (2008:9-10), quoted by Patrick S. Cheng, in Thatcher, 2015: 157).

(4) Social construction

Queer theorists argue that there is nothing natural, universal, or fixed about contemporary categories of sexuality and gender, including the categories of 'gay' and 'lesbian'. In this view, these categories are fluid and are constructed by the societies and cultures in which they exist. Furthermore, it is also argued that these categories also result from the deployment of social power, including the power of discourse and naming (Thatcher 2011:24-28), quoted by Patrick S. Cheng, in Thatcher, 2015: 158).

This concept also argues that people have engaged in same sex acts throughout history, whereby in ancient Greece and Rome, for instance, men defined their sexuality in terms of being active (that is, the one who penetrates others) or passive (that is the one who is penetrated), and not in terms of their biological sex of their partners (Halperin 2002: 113-117).

In Michael Foucault's view, our contemporary understanding of homosexuality is an identity, which is as a distinct 'personage' 'life form', and 'species' of humanity; which only came into existence in the nineteenth century because of the classifying work of sexologists and the discourse of 'psychiatry, jurisprudence, and literature'. In his view also, before then, people who engaged in sodomy were viewed merely as 'temporary aberration'; and that they did not have an identity based upon their acts. Nevertheless, Foucault adds that ironically, as a result of the medicalization of homosexuality in the nineteenth century, homosexuals were subsequently able to organize around such an identity and demand the recognition of their 'legitimacy' or 'naturalness' (1990:43).

3.5 Summary

This theoretical chapter has presented and discussed the three theories which are used in this study. Furthermore, these theories are all somehow interrelated. The discussion gives various descriptions on why and how certain sexual behaviors come to be acceptable; while others are viewed as unacceptable in the society. The social constructionist theory, the gender role theory, and the queer theory, all exhibit common characteristic features which either critic, question and challenge the societal status quo or rather what has either been a set of societal constructed behavior, and what has been identified through the deployment of social power among others as norms.

In a society or community for instance, people behave the way they do due to cultural influences which are constructed or formulated by the surrounding environment. In this regard, societal norms for instance dictate the kind of sexual behavior which are or should be generally acceptable, appropriate or desirable for people based on their actual or perceived sex or sexuality. The description therefore helps the reader and the researcher in this case to understand why various sexual behaviors in this study have erupted.

Social construction theory similarly explains that the social surrounding or the environment in which people find themselves dictates the kind of social behavior that is preferred. The societies in which people are born in therefore play vital roles in shaping the kind of behavior and in this case the sexual relationship. Many African countries condemn same sex relationship as evil and unacceptable. Nevertheless, it is perceived as 'foreign' hence anything related to same sex is has to be judged and condemned by the standards of such society.

CHAPTER 4.0 METHODOLOGY

The previous chapter 3 has presented and discussed the 3 theories that have been used in this study. In this chapter 4, the methodology that is used in this study will also be presented and discussed.

4.1. Methodological Approach

This study employed a qualitative research strategy. In this approach, a semi-structured method of interviews, through a list of interview guide questions was considered. The interview guide questions were helpful as it provided relevant questions for the study. However, the format of questions was not necessarily asked as they appeared in the list. This was to give a leeway to the researcher to make follow-up questions.

Follow-up questions are the questions which are asked by the researcher following what the interviewee says. Sometimes, during the explanation, the interviewee may bring in something that is not very clear. Nevertheless, follow-up questions help in clarifying the point. Some questions which were therefore not necessarily on the interview guide question list were asked as follow up questions. This kind of interview gives flexibility to the interviewees on answering and explaining issues and events (Bryman, 2012:471). The entire process which involved recording of data and later transcribing into various relevant themes will all later be explained in this chapter.

4.2. Case Study, location and selection of informants

The data collection for this study was gathered in a 6 weeks' program which was conducted in Kenya between 08.01.2017- 19.02.2017. The data was gathered through the following methods: Focus group interviews which consisted of 5 people, and individual interviews which were a bit private, and consisted of the interviewee and the researcher. These informants who were the interviewees were all members of the Methodist Church in Kenya. The main reason for this kind of selection is in order to have the relevant information required for this study; as it is aimed at investigating the response of the Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK), on same sex issue.

In this regard, it was therefore deemed relevant and vital to deal with the informants who are Methodists. The data collection was specifically done among the members of 5 MCK churches which form Komarock Circuit. Komarock circuit is among the 5 circuits in Nairobi

synod. The main reason for choosing this particular circuit is that the researcher worked there as a superintendent minister, hence he has a wealth of experience and he is conversant with the members there. Additionally, it was deemed easier and more convenient to deal with one circuit other than researching on a wide geographical area.

The choice of Nairobi synod as a case study is also due to the reason that, it is the capital city of Kenya; and a cosmopolitan city.

From the 5 churches in Komarock circuit, there were 4 members who represented each congregation. These included 1 youth, 1 woman, 1 man, and 1 chairperson of the church. So in this case, there were 20 members from 5 congregations who were further categorized into four groups which consisted of 5 Youths, 5 women, 5 men and 5 chairpersons. All these 20 were interviewed into focus group of 5 people each as it is reflected in the appendix in the last part of this paper. There were also others who were interviewed individually.

These includes 1 synod Bishop, 1 Minister in- charge of the circuit (Superintendent Minister), 1 former church minister, who was defrocked from the active ministry of the church, and 2 former church members who were pronounced as being 'under the discipline of the church' (these cannot participate in church activities as they are viewed as sinners and breakers of God's commandments.

The period in which they are in this state varies from 6 months to a couple of years, (depending on the kind of sin one is guilty of). It should also be noted here that issues of same sex relationship are highly condemned among MCK, hence those found guilty are only ex-communicated with no possible re-connection (Revised Methodist Standing Orders 2006).

In total 25 Christians were interviewed at various times which were conducive to them. Some of the informants were selected through snow-balling sampling. In this approach, the researcher made initial contact with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic (Bryman 2012:202). The researcher in this case identified people who were conversant with the topic and the questions under review, while these people further helped in establishing contact with others who may have been involved in the topic under review, in one way or the other.

In this study, the key informants were the Methodist Christians in a specific locality (Komarock circuit), were people who either studied together with a colleague who was a gay/lesbian, or may have fallen victim of the topic under review. The church chairpersons, the circuit minister and the synod Bishop were viewed as the Church custodians of spiritual and moral justification of the Church in general. After all, they are the people who are conversant with the current issues affecting the Methodist church fraternity. Furthermore, they ensure

that the church law is implemented. They were therefore interviewed in this case to represent the position of the Methodist Church in Kenya.

4.3 The interview Process

In this study, interviews were guided by combining the main research question, follow up questions and probes. The purpose of using main research question, follow up questions and probes according to Rubin and Rubin is to ensure that the study covers all the major parts of research problem in a more detailed manner (Rubin & Rubin, 2005:129).

The interview process involved asking predetermined questions with the help of an interview guide. However, since the entire process involved a semi-structured interview, the interviewees had a great leeway on answering questions. The informants explained their answers in details and later followed up with questions which were not necessarily in the interview guide. It was also very interesting to hear a lot from the informers who explained in depth about what they thought was right in their view. This interview process also involved personal interaction through face-to face.

During the interviews, facial reaction to the topic under review were observed and noted. Sometimes the informants broke into tears as they shared their experiences in their community and the church who considered some behaviors as “against the norm”. During interviews especially on individual basis, informants were encouraged to explain more on what they felt for clarity purposes. Their answers were followed up with other questions which were not in the guide. It was therefore very interesting to see and hear different views and opinions of different informants and observe their body languages.

The choice of both focus and individual interview methods were considered due to the following reasons. Focus group interviews helped the researcher to understand the topic from different people’s perspective. Similarly, interview guides enabled informants to express their views in detail. Moreover, through focus groups, the researcher gathered a lot of information from the 5 members together at the same time. Individual interviews were also very helpful in this study because there were some informants who felt insecure and uncomfortable to express their views in public due to stigma and the other consequences.

A factor like public reaction was considered for example. Nairobi is known for mob justice as a way of eradicating what many perceive as “against the norm”. It is also unfortunate to learn that such injustices as mob killings through either stoning or burnings are done by the community under the cover of “justices”. This therefore may explain the reason as to why there is a lot of stigma in handling such sensitive issues as reviewed in this study. When

interviewed individually, some informants were more confident and courageous than when participating in a group.

4.4 Data recording and Storage

During the interview process, questions and the answers were recorded through a tape and the researcher's mobile phone. This was for the purposes of security in case the tape failed or was out of charge. The recorded information was safely kept. It is also important to note that some information was also noted down on a note book. This was in cases where clarification was needed and a later follow-up question on clarification was made. This was also important for it helped save time rather than keeping on interrupting the interviewees which could perhaps be time- wasting.

4.5. Data Transcription and Analysis

Most of the information which was gathered from the interview process was recorded and stored in audio format, which was later transcribed and formulated into relevant themes for this study.

4.6. Secondary materials

The literature that is relevant to this study, (SSR), was also reviewed with the purpose of interrogating other scholars' views as well as following the debate and trend of events, in terms of changes in relationships from the traditional to current aspects. The literature reviewed was also to point out to areas that needed scrutiny as well as recommendations by other scholars. The literature therefore included relevant books, articles, magazines and other internet information relevant to the study in review. At the end of this paper, a list of all literature sources for the study will be given.

4.7 Research Ethics

It was not only vital, but also ethical to explain to the interviewees before conducting this research study the purpose, aim and the benefits of the study. The informants were encouraged to participate voluntarily. Nevertheless, informants were treated with respect and were given sufficient time to express their opinions. Needless to say, sexuality in Kenya like in many parts of Africa is an issue which is not openly discussed in public. Therefore, the

informants were assured of confidentiality and that none of their names were to be disclosed. This explains why during the analysis, names such as Woman A, Youth B, Man W, and among others was used to mask or veil the right names of the informants for this study.

The participants were well informed about the reasons behind the research that was carried, and how they would be involved in this research. The informants were verbally taken through what the study was all about. They were shown the letter from the university supervisor which was a proof to show that the study was for a thesis paper; and allowed them to ask questions to clarify their position.

The participation was based on freely given informed consent of those studied. This implies a responsibility to fully explain as far as possible what the research is about, who is undertaking and financing it, why is it being undertaken, and how it is to be promoted (Bryman, 2012:139). The informants were at liberty to withdraw from the interviews if they never wished to be interviewed (Kvale, 2009: 70).

4.8 Study Challenges and limitations

Among the greatest challenges encountered during the process of gathering research material for this study was lateness or failure of keeping time and observing the time scheduled for meetings with the informants/ interviewees.

Time consciousness.

It is worth noting here that many informants had problems with keeping time. It was very hard for many informants to show up on the scheduled time since many were living in the outskirts of Nairobi capital, where they had to connect from one means of transport to another. The long known heavy traffic jam in the city, affected many whose efforts of rising early bore no fruits as they ended getting staked in the jam, hence arriving hours later than expected. Therefore, in many cases, the planned meetings started and ended late.

Nevertheless, to ensure that time was spent prudently, with no further wastage, the discussions and interviews were moderated appropriated, in order to allow all participants' adequate time and cover all the discussion questions. Additionally, in order to avoid further inconveniences in transportation, hence save time, other informants who were individually interviewed were confined either at their places of work, or their residential homes. In this case, the Bishop and the church ministers were also interviewed at their work places which were convenient for them.

4.9. Validity and Reliability

The data which was collected was and is meant to be reliable and valid. That means that it can be duplicated, and tested on what it was/ is aimed at (Oladipo, 2015:19). This data therefore was gathered from very reliable sources, which are first-hand information, gotten from the informants. This was on their views and experiences such as victimization, based on SSR. This data can therefore be considered original; as it was collected from primary sources. On validity, the process was conducted in a way that research procedure adhered to and both, research questions, focus group discussions and interviews were meant to collect information on SSR.

4.10. Summary

This chapter presents and discusses the study methodology that has been used to gather the data for this study. Details on the case study, the location and the selection of informants for this study are clearly analyzed. Furthermore, the interview process which is very vital for this study is also reviewed in which mainly qualitative interviews through the use of unstructured form of questions were used. Data recording and storage was also considered vital for this study, as it helped in saving the information collected safely for later transcription and analysis of the same.

Besides primary sources used for this study, secondary materials which included other reliable and useful sources such as Magazines, relevant books and Articles were used as sources for this study. Relevant Internet sources were also considered for this study. It is also worth mentioning that research ethics was among the most crucial thing considered before collecting the data for this study. This is because most of the information gathered was private/personal and sensitive, a hence required high level of confidentiality. This helped to gain confidence with the informants.

Nevertheless, the challenges encountered during this study are highlighted in this chapter. These were mainly a problem with keeping time. This was a problem due to the heavy traffic jam that is experienced along Nairobi city. However, though meetings commenced and finished late, the target set for the study was finally met.

It was also very necessary to consider the validity and the reliability of this study. These two were considered for this study as the data was collected from relevant people, for instance; the Methodist Members who are of concern to this study according to the main research question.

Furthermore, the informants were people who had direct contact or were close to the 'victims' who were the main topic of concern in this study. In this case therefore, the study is considered valid and reliable.

5.0 CHAPTER FIVE-DATA TRANSCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

In the previous chapter 4, a presentation and a detailed discussion of the methodology that is used for this entire study is made. In this chapter 5, a narrative presentation of data collected will be discussed in themes which were formulated and transcribed during the interviews. These themes were realized as a result of emerging issues which were presented and discussed by different informants. These themes were also relevant and linked to the main research questions for this study, as guided through the interview guide questions. Different themes were therefore presented together with narratives and discussed in subtopics as revealed by the informants. A presentation of these themes will be discussed in the following paragraphs that follow in this chapter.

5.1 Factors leading to the increase of SSR among the MCK members.

5.1.1 Media and pornography

Several informants revealed that media has a profound influence on SSR. Majority of the informants argued that through social media, a lot of information is disseminated to people all over the world. This information can both be harmful and helpful. In this case, the issue of same sex relationship; which is a ‘new comer’ among many African countries, has highly been marketed through the media. For instance, the newspapers and the videos which show people of same sex kissing, caressing, and even having sex are just overwhelming especially for the first timers. The impact is experienced through what many explained as ‘strong strange feelings’, which are hard to explain to other people. In most cases, they explained that by occasionally watching these pornography on the media, they slowly get trapped into the practice without knowing hence losing interest with people of the opposite sex. One of the informants, who was a young teenager noted:

“Wewe ukitazama hizo porno za hawa jamaa wakiwa katika hio hali, utatamani maana nikaa wako majuu sana mbinguni” (And if you watch pornography of boys/ men kissing and having sex with other men, you will definitely be drawn to love it because it sounds nice and cool, it’s like they are in heaven) Youth 1 lamented.

Media and pornography were the issues that were lengthy discussed as major causes of an increase in SSR. The members here argued that almost a great percentage of people who are living in the city have smart phones, hence they can access the internet and see all that is happening along the globe. Furthermore it was argued that both young and old elites are free

to access the media with no limitations. This of course means getting exposed to both good and bad, positive and negative information that is presented in the media.

Regarding the question of who should blame in this issue, as a follow up question, many thought God is to blame for the strange feelings and the abnormal sexual attraction which is contrary to the biblical teaching on sexual relationship. Youth 2 interrupted saying:

“Kama utalaumu kitu labda Mungu na tekinolonji” (If one is to blame, then perhaps God and technology are to blame” (Youth 2 added).

Some of the men interviewed in this research also argued that media has played a key role in enhancing the practice of same sex relationship in the area. Media has a lot especially when it comes to sex education. In Kenya for instance, where sex education has not been taught in schools, many people learn more about it as they grow up. This is mainly through media.

Making love is a silent and untaught education which many are required to learn on their own. In this view, after watching pornographic movies of people in the ‘game’, many are drawn to the unique styles which also portray people of same sex. To many, that sounds quite interesting to watch and perhaps try one day. Emphasizing this point, Man A, who was excommunicated from the full members’ list and placed under the discipline of the church after a sex scandal with a school boy said that pornography has such exciting new styles which are never taught in school. He argued that through them one gets enlightened on sex education.

“Nafikiri ndio tamu hata kuliko kwa mwanamke namwanamume”. (I think it is even sweeter when men to men do it than when it is done in the primitive traditional way of men to women). Man A defended.

Man A was interrupted by Man D arguing that media should not be blamed. He claimed that a Christian needs to choose what to embrace and what not to. After all, not everything that media present suits everyone. Nevertheless, the duo did not differ whole heartedly with the fact that media should blame, but rather cautioned against watching and embracing everything that is presented on the media. Emphasizing on this point, man D cautioned arguing that people should not do what they see others doing without taking a second thought. Furthermore, he cautioned his colleagues against imitating whatever they watch on the internet which could be dangerous.

“For me it sounds stupid and silly to start having sex with a man simply because after watching pornography on the media and see men doing it, I think it is also good for me. Not everything people do is right or suits everyone” (Man D said emotionally).

5.1.2. Poverty and exposure

Many informants also thought that poverty could increase same sex relationships. It was argued that currently, there is a lot of joblessness and many people have moved to the city in order to look for a greener pasture there. Besides walking in the streets of Nairobi in search of anything to keep many going, many encounter with different people from different parts of the country and perhaps even from other nationalities. It was discussed that after meeting many people from different nationalities, the perception changes due to exposure and influence. Nevertheless, due to poverty and a state of desperation, many fall victims of any available possibility of making ends meet in life. This may also influence falling into the traps of SSR partners who happens to be their 'saviors' and answers to their long prayers.

This is because many are drawn to the practice through poverty and the desire to get their daily bread. Some confessed that due to poverty at home, they got to learn more about same sex relationships, and that is how many were introduced to it as a form of earning their daily living. A few also argued that at times it can be very difficult in cases where one is living in the city far from home, has children in school and perhaps she is a single mother with no one to help pay for rent, school fees, and food; and coincidentally he/she lose a job. Life then can really be very hard and one can do anything to earn their daily living. Woman B confessed how poverty led to her being hooked into lesbianism. A practice she had no clue about before as she grew in a Christian family.

“I had not known anything about same sex relationship with a fellow woman which is now commonly known as lesbianism, until I was introduced to the practice by one rich woman who helped me pay for my house rent and other house bills after I was thrown out from the house for failing to pay the house for 5 months. Although this woman helped me a lot, she also introduced me to the practice which I also came to like so much” (Woman B confessed).

The youths also noted that at times they have no choice especially those who are in school, where they require pocket money which their families may not be able to raise. It was discussed that in many schools, especially where it is only boys or girls, same sex relationship is very common. During a heated debate on this issue, many informants testified that through poverty, having less or no basic needs at all in school can lead the youth to same sex relationships. This is by relating to their fellow colleagues who act as their ‘saviors’ in times of financial crisis.

Nevertheless, it was also noted that due to poverty in many homes, many students try to save as much as possible to have something that they can use at school as their pocket money, while still others give in to anything in order to get some money which they rarely get from their poor parents. On the same issue of poverty, a 20-year-old youth recalled how through poverty and lack of family support, he fell in the hands of a homosexual man when he was barely 15 years old, and when he started receiving some gifts from his client in the nearby shop. It all began with sweets and eventually grew to be a strong relationship which saw the young boy complete his high school education; through the help of the same man who paid school fees and other essentials in school.

“He even promised to pay for my school fees, which he actually did (nodding his head in affirmation). This man is still my great friend as he has helped me a lot. My mother does not know what this man has been doing behind the curtains. If you ask her, she will tell you that the man is sent by God as an angel to his son”. (Nderitu, - not his real name testified).

5.1.3. Curiosity

To some informants, curiosity is also a driving force into the practices of same sex activities. During the discussion, many informants argued that what could also drive many to same sex relationships or acts is nothing other than the desire to learn new tactics. Human beings are adventurers in nature, as they like trying even the most purported, difficult and unusual things. In most cases, people like trying new things including enticing sexual methods. Some would wish to try what it feels to relate sexually with someone from their same sex. Interestingly, this may turn out to be a very exciting experience and that is how many take it as an option. For those who are already married, it becomes very hard to continue relating sexually with the opposite sex after one gets oriented to the same sex. Indeed, that is how many end up divorcing to marry the same sex partner. Man X confessed that he started having the desire to have sex with his fellow men long even before he married his current wife. He had this to say:

“It is a long story, a very long one, but I will be brief (he said demonstrating with his hand). I am the kind of man who likes adventuring to discover the undiscovered. I have all along been thinking of how it felt to have sex with another man. This day I decided to try and see what could happen. So, I shared with a close boyfriend and we both agreed to make a trial. After our first trial came the second, third and we were in it.” (Man X testified).

This man also confessed that later, he decided to try the normal order (heterosexual) marriage with a woman, but it never lasted for long, and he had to divorce her. This is what he further said:

“Ndathuganirie gucoka njirene iria nkuru, indi ku, kathi ikwaurirwe guticokeka? (I thought I should just get back to the normal track, traditional norm. I was mistaken, and the habit was irreversible). Man X regretted. Things got worse when I also tried to use the back-door style with my wife whom I had married. I did this to satisfy my ego since I imagined her as a man. You know I really love men (he emphasized). I therefore started meeting men secretly whom we occasionally had sex with. ‘This was overwhelming’ (He said smiling). Eventually I divorced my wife and decided to build a stronger relationship with my boyfriend”. (He confessed).

5.1.4. Biological complexity, bad omen, or superstitions e.g. witchcraft

Several informants who were asked why and how they came to identify with various sexual orientations, they could not really explain. It seemed hard to know when and how the feelings just erupted. Some thought it could be a kind of congenital deformity acquired through birth, while others thought it is a bad omen. Some informants requested to explain more on their views on treatment communities gave to those perceived to have “strange’ biological make-up. Man B said:

“In many African societies, when a child is born with abnormalities, they think it is a bad omen and in the olden days, when for instance twins or triplets were born, they were immediately killed as it was believed to be a bad omen to the family. Likewise, if they noted some abnormalities with the child’s sexual organ, immediately after birth, the child was killed to prevent the bad omen from affecting or spreading to other family members”.

Woman G explained that in case a girl or a boy notices that they have some strange strong feelings for the same sex, they do not share with anyone for fear of being victimized and perhaps face the cultural consequences. Some of the victims think they are either bewitched, or there could be some abnormality of the kind which was not noticed immediately after birth or during the growth process.

One Youth W testified her abnormal experience as she grew up which she somehow associated with witchcraft. She confessed that as usual she grew up knowing she was a girl as

she used to play with other girls in school. She said that the normal puberty signs showed up as she had her normal menstruation periods, breasts, hips among other physical signs of adolescence. However, she said that along with all these signs, she also noticed that her voice cord broke like a male, while other male symptoms also arose during the adolescence stage. These features brought a lot of mixed feelings as people around her thought she was either a ghost, abnormal, or may have been bewitched. In most cases she detached herself from others due to stigma and feelings of rejection.

“I felt disoriented and with no one to associate with. To make the matters worse, (she said shyly), I started developing some strong erotic feelings towards small girls. (*‘Shida yangu haieleweki, haijaanza leo....Labda Mungu ndiye anaijuavyema’*). My situation started long. It is mysterious and complicated to explain; only God knows...My entire situation is a complete mystery.’ (Victim A agonized).

On the same note, woman Z, who was still under the church discipline following a related sex scandal defended herself arguing that sexual attraction to the same sex partner is an act that is hard to explain because no one really has a clear explanation of the reason behind it. She blamed either God or nature for erroneously creating people with such defects.

“It is not always easy to explain why some things happen in life. *‘Ningemuona Mungu,ningemuuliza maswali mengine’* (I wish I can see God or whoever is responsible for creating humanity with such an incredible defect and ask them endless questions). I have long wrestled with this situation and sincerely have no explanation for it. I cannot explain why I never imagined or ever had erotic feelings for men. I just love kissing and cuddly fellow women and young girls. I mean it’s a fantastic experience though” (Woman Z confessed).

5.1.5. Peer pressure and social /environmental influence

In the focus groups, several informants were of the view that peer pressure and different social environments that people find themselves in may perhaps influence one’s choice of sexual preference and future sexual partner. During the interviews with some informants who happened to be victims of same sex relationships, it was revealed that some were introduced to the habit either by their siblings at home, or were influenced by their colleagues in primary or High school. These social influences included: being born amidst siblings who are of the same sex, thereby getting introduced to the sexual act with same people. For example, in instances where girls grow together in the same family with no boy, the probability is that they may relate sexually with each other, since they have no boy around.

This of course also happen to siblings of the same sex, who are born together in some families. In cases where siblings of same sex grow together, there is a high probability of engaging in same sex relations as one youth, a former High school student narrated a story on how her colleague was oriented into lesbianism explaining that in their family, they were 6 girls who were all born within a one year age difference of a year. The colleague further narrated that she inquired to know what really drove her classmate into lesbianism.

The 6 siblings grew up together and were alone most of the time as their single mother worked until late at night at the grocery shop; which operated both day and night. The girls therefore got into the habit of sleeping together in one bed since that is the only bed their poor mother could afford then. Youth A further narrated that she has been observing the 6 girls since they grew in the same neighborhood, and funny enough, none of the 6 girls have ever been married. The girls even confess that their being married is none of their priorities. Furthermore, they also said that they have no sexual feelings for men.

“Until, now, none of these girls has ever been married. They confess that they have no interest in men and that to them, being married to men is not of any importance, and furthermore; they argued that it is not a priority in life” (Youth A narrated).

Youth C and D also echoed similar words with A; above emphasizing that sexual orientation when one is young plays a vital role in one’s life. Youth C gave a narrative on the impact sexual orientation has on children as they grow to be adults, arguing that at one point in his life, he got mixed up. He confessed that he had a girlish face and structure which made his parents dress him like a girl when he was only 6 years old, he also had very long beautiful hair which his siblings used to admire and play with. He said:

“Until the time when I grew up and I thought I should behave like a man and never like a woman anymore. I tell you before then, I really struggled to let go the girly feeling in me. The shy look amidst men and other feminine characteristics had started taking root. I started having some strong feelings for small boys whom I thought were handsome. Generally, I started thinking of myself as a woman. Now I am above that, never think of me as a girl again. Don’t ask me how I managed, but it was a real struggle though” (he said shyly).

Youth E echoed similar words with C above adding that sex orientation especially when one is young, play a vital role in the future of all humanity. Citing her own experience, confessed how she had developed self-hatred since she was a young girl, after having been brought up and growing among other siblings who occasionally told her that she possessed male characteristics, hence doubting her femininity. However, she confessed that this problem grew

more when she went to High School and like other children and siblings in primary school, she found it too hard to cope with her fellow girls, though later she found comfort and refuge from the Christian Union patron who happened to have undergone the same experience when she was a young teenager.

“At one point, I felt I should behave like a man because I felt something wrong should have happened. I therefore started having sexual attraction for young girls”.

She confessed.

In other instances, children who relate to same sex get the orientation from schools where they study together. Such cases of lesbianism and gay start as early as in High School, where children of the same sex study together in boarding schools which are not mixed. Other possible places that influence same sex relationships are prisons where people of the same sex share same rooms and live together for a period while they are detached from either their male or female colleagues. Work environment was another factor for SSR.

It was expressed that this could happen with men in the armed forces, who happen to travel and live far from their families and homes to keep peace either in their countries, or within their countries. On the same issue of sexual orientation, some youths also noted that being in a girls’ or boys’ boarding schools can be a contributing factor to same sex relationship, especially where people of the same sex live and share boarding facilities together for an extended period; hence getting oriented into the practice by their colleagues.

5.1.6. Family Dysfunctions

Although many have pre-conceived thoughts that Christian families are the ideal families, it was revealed during the interviews that many Christian families are currently suffering family dysfunctions. This means that many Christian families like none-Christians are also experiencing family problems. Family misunderstandings between a wife and husband also affect children as this may lead to the abuse of children as projections from the couple's quarrel. It was lengthily discussed and agreed in this group that some children who live and grow in abusive families get the orientation to sex when they are still too young. However, through such abuses, many develop and choose the kind of sexual partner depending on the experience and the situation they grow up on.

For instance woman U explained that children who are abused at childhood may get to engage in a revenge mission later in life hence falling into inappropriate sex patterns.

Echoing the words of Lady U, lady D interrupted narrating her own experience which led to her choice and identity with same sex partners. Lady D therefore gave a narrative of how she was introduced to same sex relationship when she was barely 12 years old. She recalled that it was indeed only a year after her mother died and she was left under the custody of her alcoholic dad and a brother, who later turned against her.

She was abused by her elder brother who was then 15 years. She had no one to run to as her father came home late drunk and sometimes he even beat them in their sleep. This woman confessed that one day she decided to run away to live with her aunt though it wasn't the best solution for her problem either. The husband to her aunt also started abusing her sexually.

“All those experiences made me hate all men including my own sibling and my dad. I have since developed a very negative attitude towards men and I must confess that I have no feelings for them at all” (Lady A testified).

Some informants noted that current family problems can also led to same sex relationship. Family problems not only affect the sexual behavior and life of one partner, but in essence, both parties are equally affected.

Like with the group of ladies (women), the men who were interviewed in focus group had also related issues. They also argued that various unsolved family problems between a husband and wife may trigger the idea of relating to same sex among people.

Furthermore, they agreed that family wrangles may evolve from very trivial issues in families which are mainly associated with people of different sex orientation. For instance, the wife and the husband may quarrel following a nagging wife which may become a daily routine and a habit leading to separation and divorce. Some men in this category blamed women for being too nagging in marriages instead of being submissive as required by culture and the Bible. Some informants therefore blamed women as the main cause for many men to choose the unusual sexual partners (relating to other fellow men).

“Even before you take out the jacket or shoes, she will start complaining that there is no sugar, salt, no food and so on and so forth. She will continue nagging for long. In bed it even gets worse, because she may start nagging you for the things you haven't bought for her like a new dress, new and nice hair makeup like so and so that she saw in church and the list is endless” (Man B said scratching his head).

On the same point, man D added that women almost nag and complain about everything therefore making men feel insufficient and less men. He said that he finally decided to remain single since he could no longer cope with his abusive wife, who occasionally threatened to kill him.

“I have finally decided to remain single until further notice. Why should I live with a woman who always fights me like a small boy, and instead of apologizing, she runs to the kitchen, comes back armed with a knife and a rolling stick, threatening to kill me? (*Ti maheni ndingi hotanie,...ninguikara huu nie kana ncerie mwanake ta nie...munjingatie kanitha*’.) “It’s not a joke; I cannot tolerate that I will remain unmarried or find a male friend...and am ready to face the church expulsion consequently” (Man D emotionally retorted).

The other men A, C and E in this group echoed similar words with B and D supporting the view that nagging women contribute immensely to family problems which may perhaps lead to many other problems. However, on the contrary, they differed slightly saying that Christian marriages should be founded in prayer and forgiveness, without focusing on some trivial issues like. This is what they said:

I think we all understand that as Christians we need to forgive others as God forgave us. In marriages, we too need to forgive our spouses and not to build on past mistakes.

They are also human like us and no one can claim to be perfect (Man A cautioned).

Man E also added saying that no marriage is perfect and that through prayer and forgiveness, marriages are founded. He shared his own experience saying that when he first married his wife, it took them a while to understand each other. He further said that occasionally they used to disagree on many issues, leading to lots of arguments and quarreling at home. Furthermore, he confessed that they used to even fight and the wife occasionally packed all her belongings and went back to her paternal home. Nevertheless, man E confessed that he was transformed through a certain gospel preacher he had been watching on the Television who preached and taught about “forgiveness in marriage” as a strong virtue in sustaining marriages.

“Many times, my wife packed her things and went back to her parents swearing never to come back. I also found myself at the verge of giving up on our marriage (taking a deep breath) Man E confessed.

Man, C who had been a silent and a keen listener finally broke the silence arguing that no marriage is perfect. Furthermore, he added that as human beings, we all struggle daily with our wives because we too are not perfect. He elaborated while giving his own example. He explained that everyone has problems or wrangles although they do not imply that, humanity should change from what they are created to be.

“I think we miss the point as we try to lay blame on women as cover-up for the current issue of sexual relationships with the same sex. Women are only helpers and I think

though they may be troublesome at times, we should never attempt to change God's original plan for marriages". Man, C cautioned.

Though in this group not everyone agreed with what all said, it was noted that marriages can be difficult to run especially when the couples don't understand with each other. Nevertheless, as argued by the first man in this group, some marriages can be like hell on earth and tolerance in such may cost one's life hence leading to an urgent exit, and a complete change of mind as the only remedy.

5.1.7 Drug abuse

Most informants also argued that the misuse of drugs or the abuse of substance may also affect the sexual life of some people. Since drug abuse affects the mental stability of human beings, this may equally lead to sexual instability. The members interviewed in focus group cited known incidences of people who turned to be gay following excessive misuse of drugs such as Heroin, Cocaine, and Marijuana among others. They said:

"My brother in-law used to be a straight family man; until he was introduced to taking drugs by his old High school friend....He had worked as an engineer with one company until he was later retrenched due to his reckless behavior at work. Things got worse when he started raping young boys and occasionally caught red -handed in the act with men whom he claimed were his close friends. He later confessed to his wife that he no longer felt the same sexual attraction for her as before. After some years he divorced his wife and since he has never remarried though he is occasionally seen hanging out with other men". Leader A narrated).

The words of leader A were echoed by Leader D who also argued that the misuse of drugs affect the normal functioning of the body and especially sex libido. She explained that when her husband started taking drugs, his sexual performance changed drastically.

"He started wetting the bed like a small boy and when I asked him what was happening, he could not explain. Nevertheless, he stopped demanding for his conjugal rights claiming that he was too tired for it. Few months later, he was accused of raping 2 school boys and he was jailed. He was later released on a cash bill of 100,000 Kenya Shillings though sadly enough, a few months later, he tried to rape his own son" ...I therefore strongly think that these issues are somehow related. (Leader D lamented).

The leaders in this focus group therefore agreed that there could perhaps be a connection between the misuse of drugs and the sexual behavioral change leading to the practice of SSR.

Moving farther in the following paragraphs, a presentation of the church views towards the problem will be discussed.

5.2 The Church's response to the idea of SSR

Leaders, members and pastors from different Methodist churches in Komarock circuit of Nairobi aired their views on what they think about SSR victims. The victims who were under the discipline of the church following sex scandals were also interviewed on their experiences with the church following such incidents. Different subtopics of their narratives will therefore be presented in the following paragraphs:

5.3. SSR as against the bible and marriage ethics

Among the leaders interviewed, many condemned same sex relationships as unnatural act which is not biblical hence against the teaching therein. To many, Homosexuality and lesbianism is an abnormal and unethical act which are deviation from the original creation order. To many, relating sexually with the same sex is an act that must be condemned as immoral and un-ethical because God created male and female so they may complement each other. Furthermore, it is viewed as a sinful and offensive before God.

“Furthermore the sexual organs that God created are different for both yet they are meant for a special purpose (he said shyly). *Huu ni upotovu* “! (This is indeed crazy!).

Leader D said nodding his head.

Leaders A, B and E echoed similar words with D emphasizing that same sex relationship is against the natural order that God intended adding that the practice also sounds a bit weird as it is a negation from God's original idea of procreation and childbirth; associated with Satanic act of deception to mankind. Many also thought it sounds weird to relate sexually with the same sex.

“This is truly unnatural, awkward and weird. How can one relate to the same sexually?

This is satanic and unheard of” B retorted.

Others in this group claimed that the idea of same sex relationship is a completely misrepresented or a misleading idea. It is a practice and idea that leads many Christians to sway from the biblical truth about God and creation. Nevertheless, a conclusion was made that the devil is at work in the world today blindfolding God's people and bringing a lot of confusion to many Christians; hence deceiving them.

5.4. End times or Last days

For the staunch believers in church, same sex relationship is a result of moral decay in the society; which could also be associated with the end times mentioned in the apocalyptic literature and the gospels. During the interviews, quoting Luke 17:28-30, some leaders mentioned that as in the days of Lot in the Bible, the current church is living in sexual sin, where the church is living in the last days mentioned in the New Testament, where none cares about God's word. It is like the city of Sodom and Gomorrah. Leader A in the group argued that the current trend where people have started relating sexually with the same sex could be manifestations of Satan in the world.

“The church should take precautions and act fast against this problem that is spreading fast like cancer and slowly killing our members” Leader A lamented.

Leader C also added that it is very sorrowful for the church to lose very potential and key people to homosexuality or lesbianism. He emotionally narrated how he lost his only son to homosexuality a few years ago, even though his son was a youth leader in the church.

“My son Mutegi, (not his real name); was a staunch youth leader until 2 years back when everything turned upside down. This was after he joined the university, after the first year. We noticed that he stopped going to the church. Before we knew, he was already relating sexually with a fellow boy from the university. It is really very sad and unless the church goes into prayer and fasting like Jesus, the church will sooner or later be no more”. (Leader C lamented).

A few others also noted that currently the church is facing a lot of challenges related to family breakups due to related issues. However, they agreed that it is indeed very difficult to come up with a lasting solution without stigmatizing the victims of SSR. They also noted that there is a lot of influence from friends around the society who happen to practice SSR though secretly, and some happen to be very close family members. They therefore agreed that the church should also engage itself into the mission of prayer and fasting especially to get rid of these evils.

5.5. The Perceptions of MCK members on the current sexual evils in the church

According to the members and the leaders' views on SSR, many argued that the practice of SSR could be a learned behavior in which people learn either from the internet, from their friends in school or social places like churches among others, they suggested that the parents must be careful on the schools they take their children, and the kind of people they interact with in order to avoid the influence of peer pressure.

Many also noted that this may also happen in churches where people meet and socialize with different kind of people. Some of the informants therefore expressed various issues relating to strange and evil experiences that occur among friends who are church members. One of the youth member expressed his opinion saying:

“I have always been trying to avoid this seemingly funny youth leader in our church because I doubt whether he is a boy or a girl....He keeps following me young men and touching them.... Although he is a potential leader, I think the church should try to help him to shun from the behavior, otherwise, he will influence many others.I also suppose that such character can be a great threat to the church. Furthermore, the victims should be identified and immediately 'uprooted' from the faithful”. (Leader C argued).

On the same issue, leader E who is the leader of the youth had a similar view arguing that victims of SSR must be dealt with instantly before they influence and spoil other faithfuls in the church.

“If the victims are identified, they must be approached and asked not to attend the service or mingle with our youth. This will protect our fellow youths from the victims’ evils” (Leader E cautioned).

The circuit minister also had a similar view regarding the church response to SSR and those practicing the act. According to this minister, such immoral acts of relating sexually to same sex must be condemned and gotten rid of from the church. He lamented that such evil in the church must never be condoned and should be fought against by hooks and crooks.

“As much as we would wish to welcome and encourage all people to come to the church as Christ did, the church should be revered as a holy place and not a den of immorality and prostitution....There is an urgent need to deal with this problem.... The church must be the church and not a night club!” (The pastor warned.)

The Synod Bishop also seemed to have a seemingly a negative view on SSR members. In his view, tolerating such weird behavior will eventually destroy the future of the church. In his

view like many others, the evil practice must be dealt with instantly without delay. This is what he said to me:

“We need to take a 'whip' like the way Jesus did on the temple, against these immoral behaviors that are slowly creeping and taking shape in the church of Christ” (demonstrating with a pen in his right hand). The Synod Bishop signaled.

According to the church leaders, the circuit and the synod Bishop's view, something urgently needs to be done to counter the current immoral decay of the church members. To them, the current change in the original order of relating sexually is affecting the church in a negative way since the practice is an-biblical. In this case, the recommendation is to get rid of the practice by dealing with the perpetrators. Among the ways of dealing with such is excommunication through loss of full membership in the church, as a church discipline.

5.6. The victims' responses to the Church's reactions toward SSR

The victims of SSR were also interviewed to understand their views regarding the church's view on their course of action. Many however condemned the church as being unjust in the entire process and the course of action. They condemned the church for failing to fulfill its mission calling; as it is called to nurse the 'spiritually sick', 'weak' and 'wounded' members in the society, and that on the contrary, the church is rallying at pinning down them. To them therefore, the church has failed to practice Jesus' teaching on love for all sinners in which he embraced all sinners and welcomed them at the table to dine with him. Instead the church condemns and gets rid of any member who is sinful. Furthermore, they also pointed out that the church's course of action lacks tolerance for its members.

“I am condemned and excommunicated by the church, and I cannot partake the Holy Communion since I am branded a great sinner... (Sobbing as he tries to reach out for a handkerchief) When I am sick, no one from the church including the pastor comes to visit me (He said wiping his eyes with a small tissue paper in his right hand). And if I die, I cannot be buried by the church. I am left to die like an outcast” (Victim B lamented).

Informant C who was a former church pastor accused the church for not practicing what they preach. He argued that the church preaches water and drinks wine by the fact that it preaches about love and forgiveness, while doing literally the opposite. To him, the church has lost its track. While opening the bible, he said:

.... *Ntigukira nkiuga Kanisa ya nandi neetere njira*) I am not afraid to say openly that the current church has totally failed and lost her calling"! (Informant C lamented).

On a similar incidence, woman B who was under the church discipline also accused the church for failing to be the shepherd to its flock. She complained that it was some years since she was pronounced to be under the church discipline, yet no explanation was made to her the length of time she would be in the situation. Additionally, she Informant C who was a former church pastor accused the church for not practicing what they preach. He argued that the church preaches water and drinks wine by the fact that it preaches about love and forgiveness, while doing literally the opposite.

“But why must I be dissociated from all my friends, while the priest himself cares less about me? I think this is quite unfair” (Woman B lamented).

Woman B further explained that although she was the chair-lady of the women fellowship before the scandal, she lost all her fellow women friends including her prayer partners. She emotionally said that now that she has no one to pray with, the church has deserted her to die in her sinfulness; as she painfully recalled an incidence in which she innocently sent her neighbor with 2 kilograms of beans to take to the church as a thanksgiving. She was shocked to hear that the church rejected her thanksgiving arguing that God does not need anything from her as a sinner.

“Does it mean God has also rejected me like he did to Cain?” Reverend Minister, kindly tell me the truth... (She said to me while tears running down her cheeks.... Why is the church so unkind? What have I done to deserve this? I am treated like an outcast...? But what exactly have I done to deserve all this?” (She asked emotionally).

5.7. Summary

In this chapter, the views of different informants has been presented and highlighted as they appeared during the interviews. It is therefore clear that majority of the church leaders who were interviewed either as a focus group, or individually, condemned the practice of same sex relationship as evil and a threat to 'the faithful' Christian community. The decision and the proposal of many including the MCK bishop and the pastors interviewed is that those practicing the act should be dealt with urgently through church discipline. This is as per the MCK church standing Orders, which is less tolerance to any other kind of relationship besides heterosexual.

This course of action among the MCK sounds discriminatory and judgmental. The church decision is therefore wanting as it lacks the Christian value of love, forgiveness and inclusion

of all to the body of Christ. Furthermore, the decision has been criticized and questioned by many who have fallen victims of SSR. Although they were once devoted members who played important roles in the church, they are excommunicated and their names extinguished from the membership list, after the church learns of their behavior change.

This act of expulsion from the church activities and membership may look weird among Christian fraternity, where love and forgiveness is an expectation. The interviews therefore revealed that there seems to be an elevated level of ignorance about SSR both in the church and in the community.

This ignorance has led to immense sufferings among many Church members. These are people who were once very active and on the forefront especially on the issues regarding church growth and development; though now condemned and discriminated members. The victims in this chapter therefore cry foul as they 'await eternal condemnation with no-one to shepherd them at their death-beds. Furthermore, they appear to be like outcasts discriminated both by the Church and the society. On the contrary, the leaders and other group who seem to be better or 'holier than though ' (more holy than others), hence are full of condemnations as they view the SSRs as the 'lost' and 'evil' who may spoil the faithful in the church.

Nevertheless, in this chapter, the views of many are different regarding the main factors leading to such behavioral change. To some they are either created that way, blamed media, they are out for adventure, are bewitched, poverty and social exposure, influence of drugs, and family dysfunctions, while to some other devote Christians, such kind of behavioral change are linked with the possible believed signs of the world / or the end times, second coming of Jesus Christ, or the last days spoken of and written in the holy scriptures.

6.0. CHAPTER SIX –DISCUSSION

In the previous chapter 5, a presentation of the data as it was collected from the interviewees and the informants is made in different themes. In this other chapter 6 that follows, a detailed discussion of the themes that arose in Chapter 5 will be made. Furthermore, the themes will be discussed in relation to the theories that are also presented and discussed in Chapter 3 of this study.

6.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of various themes that arose from the data gathered in the previous chapter 5. The themes are drawn from the interviews which were conducted among informants, as already presented and discussed in methodology chapter in this study. These themes shall further be discussed in this chapter in relation to the theories given in chapter 3 of this study.

6.2. Factors responsible for same sex relationship

The interviews and groups discussions exposed several factors which contribute to the rapid increase and the practice of SSR in Kenya today. Among the main factors include:

1. Media and pornography

In this study, it was revealed that media has a lot of information which may have both positive and negative impact to those who are exposed to it. Among them is pornographic literature which in this case inform a lot about the practice of same sex relationship that is our topic of interest in this study. It was therefore clear that despite the fact that same sex relationship has not been a common practice among many Kenyan communities, through media, the practice is now becoming rampant among many people both you and old.

2. Poverty and exposure.

In this study also, it was lengthily discussed that through poverty, many people are introduced to same sex relationship through gifts and other incentives as a way of enticing them to join in the practice. This could be true because the practice is done in secret and sometimes hiding places due to the stigma attached with the practice. In some places, those who were suspected were stoned to death by the community mob commonly referred to as 'mob justices'.

Additionally, recruiting members could also be a great challenge; hence the members use possible means of recruitment including giving gifts and money to the poor boys and girls who are daily 'tarmacking' in search of jobs at the streets of Nairobi. Nevertheless, many come into contact with different people from all over the world who expose them into different things that are happening in the world.

3. Curiosity

Curiosity is a factor that featured in the both the group focus and the individual interviews as a cause for same sex relationship. It was discussed that in the world today, many people both young and old like to explore different things including sex and sexuality. Many are curious to learn new different sexual acts and feelings in order to feel nice. Many therefore confessed that by being adventurers, they fell in the trap of same sex relationship, as many came to like the new sexual practice compared to the former.

4. Biological complexity

Considering the biological complexities, many confessed that though biologically, some have particular male or female organs, the feelings may not necessarily match the sexual organ. This is because it was revealed that many feel attracted to the members of same sex and not the opposite sex as the tradition. During various discussions, it was hard to actualize this possibility although it was evidenced by the informants who were victims. The victims therefore defended the act by arguing that 'they were born that way', hence they had nothing to do.

5. Superstitions (which includes belief in witchcraft, and bad omen)

During the interviews different views came up since the practice is seen as awkward and abnormal. Some still felt that the practice may perhaps be associated with the use of witchcraft, magic and sorcery. However there are not facts supporting this argument, although it is a mere cultural superstition.

6. Peer pressure and social influence

Same sex relationship is a practice that has spread fast through influence from other people who practice it. According to the informants in this study, it was revealed that many learned this behavior either in school through their school-mates, close friends, or families. Those who learn the practice introduce it to others and that is how the practice is socially learned. Perhaps this also explains the reason as to why the church decided to defrock and excommunicate those who practice same sex relationship due to fear of influencing others in the church.

7. Drug abuse

Abuse of drugs was discussed as a possibility of enhancing the practice of same sex relationship. After all, the practice is viewed as abnormal and 'not straight', hence some of those who practice it are mainly under the influence of drugs. It was therefore revealed by some that drug abuse may have a negative impact on sex and sexuality, including the change of sexual behavior (for instance, from heterosexual to homosexual), as already revealed in chapter 5 of this study.

8. Family instability or dysfunctions

Various family problems are also likely to cause changes in sexual desires. In this study, it was revealed that marriages which are unstable due to occasional conflicts may result to the practice of same sex relationships. It was revealed in this study for instance that quarreling and nagging in families may affect many; hence they prefer a different sexual partner than either a quarrelsome, or nagging partners. This they do as a way of looking for a solution to the problem.

9. The practice may be linked and associated with the biblical signs of the last days.

Some church leaders who were interviewed on what they think causes the practice of same sex relationship in the current generation, linked the practice with the biblical teaching of the last days. The bible gives a lot of information on what is likely to happen towards the last coming of Jesus Christ on earth. The bible reckons that the last days will be characterized by many evil practices and falsehood among many Christian believers; as many will turn away from the biblical truth, and embrace that which is evil in God's eyes. Homosexuality/ or the practice of same sex relationships and marriages, is among the evils spoken of in the

scriptures. To many Christians, Jesus is coming soon as there are many evidences of evils in the world today.

6.3 Culture and faith orientation as the main motivating factors towards the MCK members' reactions to SSR.

The views of participants on responses of church's reaction to SSR in this study are equally varied. Culturally, particularly in Africa and in Kenya, sexuality and issues relating to SSR were and are still treated as taboos and in some cases as sacred. This is evidenced in the cultural and Christian beliefs, which revealed common aspects such as purpose of sex in the family. Besides companionship and sharing of roles, heterosexual relationships are meant for procreation, which in this case is a fact that SSR challenges.

Nevertheless, most of the Kenyan cultures like many Africans; culture is mainly based on the heterosexual relationship, which in this case is a sexual relationship between a male and a female. Same sex-relationships have been un-heard off among many African and Kenyan communities, until recently when things started turning upside down perhaps due to global influences. Although culture is dynamic, there could be gradual dynamism which in this case never happens instantly. The problem of same sex relationship has not taken roots in many African communities, although it is slowly but surely creeping in and becoming a threat to many. This may perhaps explain the reasons as to why many informants in this study argued against the practice as either a sign of abnormality, witchcraft and sorcery, among others. The informants reviewed that the practice of same sex relationship is something that sounds abnormal among the African view of sex and marriage.

On the other hand, with the coming of Christianity and even before Christianity, Kenyans like many other Africans strongly believed in God and they strongly upheld issues related to marriage. As mentioned earlier in the study, the missionaries brought with them what they viewed as 'decent' and ideal Christian living. This is when many Africans were taught on the value of heterosexual marriages.

However, many Kenyans before the coming of the missionaries were polygamous. They married more than one wife, though later, they observed the Missionary Christian view of one wife. It is worth mentioning here that due to all that the Kenyans learnt from the missionaries, many have always valued heterosexual monogamy marriage as an ideal Christian relationship, and never any other. To them therefore, same sex relationship is not ideal hence the practice is

associated with the events and occasions mentioned in the bible like end-times, Sodom and Gomorrah, last days, manifestations of the devil/ Satan among others.

Moreover, the Christian view of what is good or evil, right or wrong, is defined by how people act or behave as guided by the bible. The bible in this case has various teaching and stories of events and happenings especially after people either acted against the will of God. The story of Sodom and Gomorrah is commonly quoted by many Christians as an event that befell God's people after sexual sin. Nevertheless, besides that, it is important to realize that one's character ought to be grounded in the example of God through Jesus Christ, who is our true Christian role model of 'Love for all humankind'. Although there are still evils in the society as in the biblical times, love for all must be explicit. If the character of God forms the basis to measure behavior, then it is easy to determine what conforms to God's character and what does not. Therefore, the MCK will not base their judgment on SSR on emotions and biased approaches but on knowledge as presented in the word of God.

According to the informants for this study, many people have continued to suffer in silence owing to the cultural expectation and failure of some communities in addressing issues of gender and orientation aspects. The MCK therefore, can echo the words of Maria Miller MP, UK Parliament that "it is important we treat people fairly; it's what most people want whether they are gay or whether they are straight". There is need for the MCK to explore more on "fair treatment" in relation to SSR and this will address the suffering of those who are stigmatized and discriminated based on their sex orientation of sexual behavior. It is easy for the MCK to undertake such exploration because the church has the biblical concepts of equality, non-discrimination and fairness as well as morality (goodness, decency, integrity, godliness).

6.4. The influence of culture on SSR in the MCK

The seriousness of SSR debate is evident in Kenya, as both the traditional and Christian role of procreation has been challenged, although the traditional roles in any community change with time. The 2007 Pew Global Attitudes Project claims that 96 percent of Kenyan residents currently believe that homosexuality is an ideal way of life that the society should be at peace with (Harrison, 2013). These statistics are alarming and therefore they cannot be ignored. Similarly, in 2011, Kenya Human Rights Commission published a research paper on the legal and social status of LGBTI people in Kenya, which clearly implies that there is a dare need for teaching on responsibilities such as self-care as a way of prevention of HIV/AIDS, an aspect that SSR does not seem to address. The MCK therefore needs to interrogate views of

the queer theorists (Michael Warner 1999: 1, 88), quoted by Patrick S. Cheng, in Thatcher A, 2015: 156) who argue that marriage equality is actually 'a mistake' and a 'loss of vision', particularly in the light of queer culture's historical affirmation of sexual autonomy. These arguments can form basis of interrogating various views of those in SSR particularly in the light of SSR and HIV/AIDS.

Moreover, the Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK), among many other churches should recognize that SSR has little to do with marriage and procreation. In fact, SSR seems to pose a great challenge to both Christian ethics and the Africa cultural values. When interrogating the SSR, it is important to bear in mind that gay or lesbian orientation claims not to be a matter of choice, but simply the way an individual is. A person is born gay and lesbian and grows up this way; it is not a matter of decision.

Additionally, this aspect was also evident among the interviewees in this study, where some claimed to be born either as gays or lesbians; and there was very little they could do about their situation (In Chapter 5 of this paper, one informant for instance said that 'if there is anyone to blame, it is God). This is a view that has been adopted by many gay theologians (Gay Marriage theology). This is what queer theory refers to as 'identity without essence' discussed in Chapter 5, page 41 of this paper. This characteristic feature of queer theory challenges the stability and the naturalness of such categories such as 'I was born that way...I am beautiful in my own way...among other seemingly related queer sexual behaviors.

The Church should therefore not be ignorant of the fact that people are created differently and not necessarily the way they think. There are some with diverse sexual feelings which may appear to be abnormal. Some may exhibit physical features of both male and female, which are hard to formulate. For instance, a biologically seemingly man male speak like a young girl. He may have breasts that resemble a breastfeeding mother. He may also experience the normal menstruation like a normal woman, whilst he has a male sexual organ. This to me is a queer kind of sexual feature. This is something that one cannot understand except the creator Himself. Therefore when we see some queer behaviors erupting in people, I think the best we can do is not hurriedly condemn anyone, but try to study the occurrences and accept that there could be some certain deformities which are hard to explain.

With this view in mind then, the church has to recognize that there will be co-existence of various sex orientations, and MCK has to shepherd all in the most appropriate manner guided by Christian ethics. The MCK cannot therefore be ignorant of the postmodernist thinking, the realm of atheists and humanists, which upholds that ethics are culturally and socially; and that

there are no universal or absolute values. The postmodernist believes that whatever a cultural group approves of is deemed right, and whatever the group disapproves of is wrong.

It is therefore very crucial for MCK to note that other arguments such as moral, and cultural relativism, are set by a majority of citizens who accept that something is right or wrong (seeking truth in gay marriage). This perception could also be based on social constructionist theory, whereby certain societies dictate the kind of sexual behavior of the people who live in certain settings. In fact what the society constructs to be the norm remains as a standard of judging their behavior. The position of the MCK on SSR therefore does not seem to understand or support SSR. Nevertheless, majority of Kenyan citizens do not seem to have a common stand on the acceptability of SSR in the country. However based in this stand, the MCK therefore, needs to boldly address the suffering of those victimized based on SSR and consequently, interrogate the cultural stand on sex orientation guided by the word of God.

6.5 The challenge of SSR to the Church (MCK), and families

The MCK is among the many churches which did not approve on same sex marriage and abortion during the revision of Kenyan Constitution in 2010. This may perhaps be explained by the fact that the Church follows the biblical teaching on marriage in genesis 2 as the ideal Christian norm. The SSR which is against this Christian view and teaching therefore becomes a great challenge to the Christian Church. Same sex preference is viewed as against the bible teaching, hence branded as sin against God. This therefore explains why those who take such a stand are discriminated against by the church. Among the challenges faced by the church therefore include the following:

6.5.1 Loss of church membership

It is very clear in this study especially from the informants that following the stand the church takes regarding people who identify with same -sex, there are high risks of losing very potential leaders and members of the MCK on the SSR scandal. This was revealed in chapter 5 of this study where potential church members including members of clergy (pastors), were defrocked from the church services. Instead of adding great number to the house of God as reflected in the scriptures, there is a danger of losing members of God's flock. The research therefore reveals that in the near future, the SSR will claim a great number of church members if nothing is done to counter the problem.

6.5.2 Apostasy

Apostasy can best be understood as backsliding from former faith and believe, or simply a loss of faith. Since SSR is not acceptable among MCK Church, it could be viewed as a threat which may mislead many faithful hence resulting to loss of faith and unbelieving on heterosexual marriages. In this case, SSR poses a major threat to the Methodist church in Kenya. SSR is viewed as a falsehood belief which is highly condemned in the bible. This could perhaps be the explanation for the stand taken by the church on SSR, as a way of counteracting the problem and ensuring that the problem does not spread among other church members. In Chapter 5 of this study, one informant for instance argued that those identifying with SSR which immediately be rooted out from the faithful to avoid spoiling them (see Chapter 5 of this study).

However on the contrary, the church could also be in dilemma and perhaps may face the guilt of not following Jesus' example of exceptional love for all people. Jesus embraced all both faithful and sinners alike. His love for all was evident in the bible. The Church therefore may suffer the guilt of discriminating against SSR who in this case are viewed as great sinners. Besides the MCK fraternity, the Christian families are mainly affected by the presence and the occurrences of SSR.

A family is a place in an African context where one gets protection, care and love. In families, people also get companion especially among many Africans who live in villages as one community. To be discriminated from one's family is like being declared an 'outcast' especially among the Meru community of Kenya. Discrimination implies that one has no physically contact with the victim. In the olden days among the Meru community, one was taken to the bush or the forest and words of curses were declared on him. He or she was excommunicated and exposed to the hands of wild animals with no shelter, food or clothing. Moreover, an evil spell was called upon them. This was in cases when one had committed a serious crime like murder, or witchcraft. However, this is no longer practiced among many communities in Kenya, although it used to be some decades ago.

Currently, when a member of the family declares him/ herself as either a gay or a lesbian, he/ she is not only disowned by his/ her church, but also the immediate family members see them as lost and demon possessed. Many Kenyan families would not even wish to associate with such people as they are viewed as either evil, harmful dangerous or abnormal. In this case therefore, the SSR are not necessarily welcome among many families in Kenya today and they may suffer rejection and discrimination. In 2011, Kenya Human Rights Commission

publication on the legal and social status of LGBTI people in Kenya showed that 89 of the participants reported that they were disowned by their own families. The aspect of being disowned by one's own family could be very traumatizing for it lowers one's self esteem and dignity in the community.

According to the informants in this study, family conflicts may also result due to SSR preferences. One informant claimed that rather than living with a nagging wife, he would rather remain unmarried or find a male friend and confessed that he was ready to face the discipline from the church. This view challenges communication and the place of forgiveness in marital relations. Marriage is based on forgiveness and not on power, thus the couple should be aware of sacrifices to be made in a marital relationship which applies to SSR as well. Skills in relationship making were also echoed in the focus group where members expressed that forgiveness is an issues Christians have to work on.

Nevertheless, although the informant argued that his desires for same sex relationship was due to his nagging wife, we are not told why the wife kept nagging and after all, there could be more underlying issues which made the wife complain. Perhaps the wife lacked some conjugal rights due to the desire and the urge for SSR preference of her husband.

In many Kenyan schools, students continue being stigmatized and discriminated as evidenced in the rising cases of sodomy in boarding schools. There seems to be confusion in understanding SSR among many stakeholders. I therefore concur with Cahn who argues that to a larger extent, SSR is considered as an immoral practice (Cahn, 2006). The immorality therefore, has consequences which seem to cause human suffering. To support the social construct theory, children learn and imitate others. In this regard, students in boarding schools with same gender were reported as one of the factors for developing SSR.

The Bible emphasizes on heterosexual relationship, between one man and one woman (International Bible Society, 2007). This seems to be the views held by majority of church leaders in Kenya. There seems to be issues of relationships and those advocating for SSR face opposition. In the African culture, relationships took a different path, polygamy was acceptable in which case, a man could have multiple relationships (many wives). This view is equally challenged by the dynamic of relationship evidenced in the society. For instance, in Kenyan some people believe that homosexuality is a way of life that society should be at peace with (Harrison, 2013). The change in relationship patterns was revealed by many informants who said they have experienced challenges in their relationship particularly what the Kenyan society/MCK perceive as abnormal.

6.6 SSR and Socialization

Considering SSR and socialization, gender role theory helps the reader and the researcher by giving information on the identification and the stand that is taken by the SSR preference members in this study. Regarding the roles and responsibilities, purported by the SSR, gender role theory debate plays a significant role. In Money's views, gender roles, socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes are socially appropriate for men and women (*Money, Hampson, Joan, & Hampson, 1955*). This definition is therefore inclined to feminine and masculine aspects. However, the argument by Roscoe, 2000, supports the idea of SSR in that societies have three genders, namely: man, / woman, while some other individuals do not identify with any gender at all. Among the traditional roles of men is the provision of basic needs.

In this paper, it was reported by majority of the respondents who were informants arguing that poverty contribute to SSR in Kenya. This was reported both in schools and colleges, where some youths had to give in to sex in exchange of financial help (Chapter 5, presentation of data in this study).

Additionally, the social construct theory that is discussed on this paper, describes in depth, the characteristic feature that SSR exhibit. Pate argues that biologically, an individual gains awareness of his or her gender by age three (Pate, 2012). Nevertheless, socialization also plays a role in gender issues and that social learning and cultural expectations seems to challenge SSR where cultural values are regarded important. The issue of maleness or femaleness therefore is no longer important. Sexual orientation is developed based on sexual identity, sexual behavior and sexual attraction (*Epstein, Robert; Paul McKinney; Shannon Fox; Carlos Garcia, 2013*). However, the issue of binary, being men or women with respect to biological sex is also crucial and being born with ambiguous sexual organs or with genitalia that does not match one's chromosomal make-up (Thatcher 2011:12-13), quoted by Patrick S, Cheng in Thatcher A, 2015:157).

This needs to be taken into consideration by the MCK in terms of interrogating information on SSR. When addressing the binary or heterosexual relationships, MCK need to realize there are individual who by nature of body make up may not fit in marital relationships, yet they need to fit in the society. This may bring in the issue of healthy single life to some. As a result, the MCK then needs to bring out the biblical understanding of single life; and particularly the purpose it serves in the ministry, and how it can fit in the African context. For

example, in African context, those who have defects in sexual system have their sexual needs addressed, they could marry for companionship and adapt for lineage purposes.

During the interviewing process, it was noted that media plays a crucial role in SSR. People learn from other cultures, imitate and rehearse roles that are new to them. However, it was clear that media and the internet provide useful information and skills that are necessary in life. Thus, need for people to be encouraged to exercise self-control and live a balanced life. In terms of social learning, an informant reported that his SSR started out of curiosity. He needed to satisfy inquisitiveness and having someone available; the practice continued and became a pattern that could not be controlled or reversed.

Curiosity may explain why in Kenya, majority of those in SSR are in ages below 60. Other factors for SSR includes environmental conditions such as housing and the dominant gender where a child grows, for instance, girls experimenting with other girls in boarding secondary schools. Families with substance abuse problems and intimate partner violence also contribute to SSR; in that the youth should find consolation in patterns that may not be Biblical or culturally acceptable. This was supported by views of Woman U, who expressed that children abused at childhood get to engage in a revenge mission where they get to inappropriate sex patterns. This view points to SSR patterns.

6.7 Social Power and sex orientation

The queer theory acknowledges social power and is popular with the theologians in interrogating individual's identity as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and inter-sex (Thatcher A, 2015). It is important to note the key concepts in this theory and interact with these concepts in Kenyan context. The concepts are 'identity without essence' as discussed in page 41 of this paper on the characteristic features of queer theory. In this view, one is born the way they are; transgression meaning that how one appears is not a mistake.

Resisting binaries implies that biology plays a role in maleness or femaleness; and social construction, which implies that a society plays a great role on how people expected behavior. It therefore becomes a great challenge to understand SSR in relation to the biological sexual perception, because the two may not necessarily come into terms. This therefore explains the reason why, in this paper during the interviews, there were mixed views from different informants on the relationship between SSR and biology. Some informants argued that the practice is natural; while others said it is as a result of cultural practices such as results of witchcraft and curses.

The MCK has to recognize the views of those in SSR, for example, LGBTI affirmations such as “one is born that way, and that they are beautiful in their way, because God made no mistakes” (Patrick S. Cheng in Thatcher A, 2015:156). The role of the MCK is therefore to work with those people who have embraced the seemingly unacceptable sexual orientation, by first welcoming them in the Church and slowly and patiently understand their behavior trying not to condemn, but to show them God's impartial love for all. It is through the message of God's love for all that the Church will help to address these practices that seem queer; instead of condemning the whole issue whole handsomely.

6.8 The responses of MCK towards SSR

The study which was conducted among the church groups shows that SSR is a threat to the Church and the society. Incidences of SSR have been occasionally reported among many Church members and also key leaders like the clergies, who are supposed to be the custodians of morality in the society. Moreover, increasing incidences of the same are reported provincial and National schools. In the families, villages and neighborhoods where sexual relationships rarely mentioned for they were perceived as sacred among communities considered to be notoriously religious (Mbiti, 1969). It is therefore clear that the trend is increasing as evident by defrocking of church pastors and other active church members. The Methodist Church in Kenya among many other Churches in the country has taken a stern stand against the practice. This is evidenced in their cause of action against those who are guilty as it is reflected in chapter 5, on the leaders' views on same sex relationship of this study.

The Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK) therefore does not tolerate or condone this branded 'evil' behavior among her members. The research shows that the victims are dealt with through excommunication and defrocking of pastors from the ministry, an act that is believed to discourage other members from copying and falling as victims later due to bad influence. Although this study is limited to the Methodist Church in Kenya, this does not imply that same sex relationship is not a problem among other Churches.

In fact it is a problem and a social concern to many other Churches in Kenya too. For instance it was reported that among the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), five clergies (priests) in the Diocese of Mt. Kenya West in Central Kenya, were recently expelled following the same sex scandal. The Pentecostal Churches among other charismatic Churches

and movements in Kenya too have raised their concern against the spreading social evil practice among their faithful and the surrounding communities.

Many Kenyan schools have equally been affected by the scandal. In Maseno Boys' School for instance, sodomy has been reported, while lesbianism in many Kenyan Girls' schools is becoming rampant. A few years ago, when lesbianism was detected, the girls were punished by expulsion from school. However, they resumed back later and some still continued with the practice. The problem of same sex relationship is now no longer a "new born" like it used to be, among many communities in Kenya. It is spreading faster than it was expected. Furthermore, it is a concept that the church finds difficulties coping up with.

A lot therefore needs to be done if the church needs to understand and come in terms with the concept of same sex relations. Preston M. Sprinkle suggests, that a full-bodied understanding of homosexuality demands that we dig into the ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman context of the Bible, study the perspectives on same-sex relations in Judaism and early Christianity, and consult recent works in psychology, sociology, and biology (Preston Sprinkle, 2016:9).

Halperin also argues that people who engaged in same sex acts in ancient Greece and Rome, for instance, men defined their sexuality in terms of being active (that is, the one who penetrates others) or passive (that is the one who is penetrated), and not in terms of their biological sex of their partners (Halperin 2002: 113-117). The MCK needs to explore the history and implications of SSR in African context. There is a possibility that the SSR existed, an argument that can be supported by lack of literature on the same and the fact that sexual issues were never freely discussed.

The responsibility of the church therefore is to love and care for anyone including giving unconditional love to those condemned by various systems of the society. This is further seen in the Kenyans constitution, which states that no one should have carnal knowledge of any person against the order of nature; or permits a male person to have carnal knowledge of him or her against the order of nature, is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for fourteen years. SSR is regarded as like other sexual behavior, homosexuality is regarded as a sin when it is exploitative, manipulative or when not carried out safely within a committed is required, so is the accountability of SSR. They hold that no one should give themselves over to sexual immorality such as SSR.

Interestingly, the views of the MCK Church leaders concurred with those of Christianity and African culture, in which sex relationships are viewed as sacred and aimed at procreation, and not just for companionship. SSR is considered not only unethical but sinful in this regard. Although the bible mentions some incidents of SSR as in Lot's case, the practice is not acceptable in many Kenyan communities. In fact, the practice is viewed as an immoral sexual sin at its highest order, and an abomination against God, hence the SSR debate is termed as "signs of end time" and 'signs of the last days', to the end of the earth.

Besides that, it is important to note that the church has a greater role to play in SSR. This is true because, those who are involved in such relationships are God's own creation. They too need to experience the love of God through the Church. They need to hear God's voice of 'forgiveness', and that 'it is well'. The Church therefore has a great challenge of incorporating and including these people who may appear 'abnormal' to be part of their Christian community, instead of discriminating against them. The challenge therefore is whether God still loves the SSR? God's love has no boundaries or limitations. The scripture gives emphasis on God's inclusion of all people just as they are. Is love for sinners is evident in Jesus' ministry here on earth.

The Church's role as the salt and light of the world is therefore challenged in this paper. This is evidenced on the response and the stand the church has taken in dealing with the members with same sex preference. Reflecting from Nthamburi's arguments, the church is positioned at the best place in fighting the injustices in the society and help to alleviate human suffering (Nthamburi, 1981). This claim is relevant to the MCK. It is only the church who can be the voice of the voiceless such as those stigmatized owing to SSR. Additionally, the church has a duty to equip those in SSR with the word of God which reveals what God requires of mankind.

The church seems to be judgmental in treatment of SSR. The sex orientation in many cases appears to be perceived as sin and mistreating people rather than causing them to understand their situation and address abnormality if any. The findings revealed that the church is condemned for being unjust. The church is accused of failing to fulfill her mission calling – the mission to nurse the spiritually sick, weak and wounded members in the society. However, the church seems to be rallying at pinning down those in need by judging and condemning, rather than helping them find their way out of the perceived situation.

This may perhaps be seen as a great challenge and a failure to the church which needs to practice and embrace Jesus' teachings on love for all sinners, in which he embraced all sinners and welcomed them at the table to dine with him. Instead the church condemns and gets rid of any member who is sinful. An informant, who was victimized on basis of SSR claimed that the church has double standards in that church preaches water and drinks as seen in the preaching about love and forgiveness but practically doing the opposite of the preaching.

This confusion is evidenced in some church members losing friends owing to their sex orientation. Others are isolated as if the SSR problem is infectious, for example and informants reporting that even her gifts to the church are identified with her sexual orientation and branded sinful gifts. In terms of MCK's perception on SSR, it is not clear that the church is objectively defining what sin is. There seems confusion between gender and sexual sin. Sexual and gender identities (Thatcher A, 2015: 152) are totally different. Subsequently, sexuality and gender brings out the issue of normal or natural behavior. The church is therefore, not addressing the issue but continues causing pain to some society members yet gender and sexuality are socially constructed across various societies and time, are fluid and not fixed, a change that MCK need to embrace.

6.9 The General views on SSR

The presence of evils in the church was expressed by several informants. A youth leader E argued that "victims of SSR must be dealt with instantly before they influence and spoil other faithful in the church". This urgency seems strong and judgmental. This leader did not elaborate how infectious SSR are, an idea that is not clear to many informants. One of the ministers referred to the practices of SSR as immoral and those practicing it must be 'gotten rid of', from the church. Leader E further insisted that "if the victims are identified, they must be approached and asked not to attend the service or mingle with other youth. This will protect their fellow youths from the victims' evils".

This leader used the word "victim", a term that gives one of SSR a label. According to leader E's argument, SSR is not only evil but a disease that can be infectious. This leader, however, does not see the need for transformation, but rather recommends the 'cutting of' one from the fellowship of believers. Romans 12:8 "do not be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by renewing of your mind". Mental health services could create awareness both of those practicing SSR and the Christians in churches.

Views of several informants pointed to the perception of the MCK that SSR are evil in the church and this evil has to be gotten rid of. It appears like this evil is tangible and infectious as expressed by those victimized on the basis of their relationships. According to those victimized, the evil has to be promptly uprooted by identifying those in SSR else they spoil the faithful Christians. The question to the church is should be, has the church fully equipped her members that members can withstand any evil? Is the problem those involved in SSR or the lack of information by the members of the church and well as the lack of appropriate guidance by the church?

SSR were also portrayed as prostitution and immoral behavior that is slowly creeping and taking shape in the church of Christ. The views of the clergy revealed the urgency of the solution to the SSR issue. The Clergy viewed current change in the original order of relating sexually as affecting the church in a negative way because the practice is not biblical. However, their recommendation to get rid of the practice by dealing with those practicing it is does not portray biblical teachings. For example, excommunication of those in SSR practice and denying them full membership in the church, as a church discipline may demand more follow-ups because the affected person is a member of the society who may carry the practice to the society and other community groups.

The MCK has to adapt Jesus' examples; He was close to those condemned by the society, showed them love but did not affirm their sinful actions. An example is when He told the woman caught in adultery to go and sin no more. Informants who were under discipline lamented that they lost their friends as well as their prayer partners, an issue that shows the MCK needs to separate the sin and the sinner.

The sinner needs unconditional love and the sin needs to be processed for the sinner to be pure and acceptable before the righteous God. The MCK therefore, has to apply the biblical teachings on SSR and in the context of Africa culture which shows love for life and isolation an individual from the rest of the community meant psychological torture. In African context isolation was a punishment and not an intervention for improving a bad behavior. It seems that the MCK has a duty not only to care for her members accused of SSR, but also to go out and minister to the non-Christians who are under distress in the community as a result of their sexual orientation and behavior.

6.10 Summary

This chapter discusses the main issues that were revealed by the informants during the course of data collection in relation to the theories given. It is therefore worth noting that major

causes of same sex relationships have been pointed out and therefore discussed in this chapter. The research also reveals that there is a connection between the purported causes of the problem in this study, with the 3 theories attached therein. Similarly, it is also noted and discussed that the church has a stern and strict stand against the SSR members. In other words, SSR is a problem that is not welcomed in the MCK. It is viewed as a sin against God. The victims are punished by excommunication, discrimination, and defrocking in order to prevent them from influencing other members.

The research on the response of SSR among the MCK is evident that the church has equally been challenged by the presence and the occurrences of SSR which is against the biblical moral ethics and teachings on heterosexual. The Church in this case has a lot to work on considering the fact that it is highly affected by the pandemic. The loss of staunch church members and the members of clergy, through SSR and the consequences therein is something that poses a great threat to the future of MCK. Therefore, a clear and progressive decision taken by MCK is something that will save the future MCK in this study.

This stand by the church has been criticized by many who happen to be victimized in this paper. The victimized informants claimed that the church does not exhibit a Christ' like Character of forgiveness and inclusiveness of sinners. Instead of embracing all, the church has been accused of discriminating against sinners. This is against Jesus' teaching in the gospels. Nevertheless, considering the 3 theories discussed in chapter 3 of this study, it is clear that there are people with different body or biological make-ups, hence making them very difficult to identify with their biological sex. For many; such feelings of not wanting to relate with what the community expect in relation to their biological order may sound abnormal and 'not straight'. This chapter therefore reveals that the church and the society has a lot to learn from the global same sex pandemic.

7.0 CHAPTER 7 (SEVEN) – OWN VIEWS, GENERAL CONCLUSION, RESEARCH FINDINGS AND FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE STUDY

In the previous chapter 6, a discussion of various themes formulated during the data collection in chapter 5 is made. In this chapter 7, own views, and the general conclusion of the study will be made. This includes all that is presented and discussed during the course of this study. Furthermore, the research findings will be discussed in this chapter together with the recommendations for further studies.

7.1 Own views

As a researcher, I have noted a lot of issues that needs to be addressed by the MCK in order to save the future of the Church and society. I suggest therefore the following that the MCK needs to work on:

Sex education curriculum

I propose that the Methodist Church in Kenya needs to come up with a curriculum which will address issues of sexuality. This is because, the churches like many Kenyan and African communities do not talk about sex. In fact issues related to sex are only discussed in bedrooms with doors closed and when the children are a sleep. According to the research in this study, many Kenyans need to understand a lot concerning sex. This will help many to understand why some people have different sexual preferences.

Furthermore, the study will also help the church to learn ways of including them in the church other than discriminating them from the church. The curriculum also will be helpful to the society through many schools. According to the informants for this study, it was also revealed that in many schools, children are punished through expulsion from school. This will not help much unless the cause of the problem is known and dealt with. This will be perfectly handled through learning more about sex and sexuality hence unveiling the 'unveiled', and exposing the truth about sex.

The community also needs to learn more about different sexual dynamics that have remained unknown for many decades. Through this, the society will understand why different people behave and act differently on issues regarding sexual preferences, besides mere condemnation

and discrimination of individuals. This can be done through open crusades and public county meetings organized at county levels.

Jesus' model church

In this paper, the informants who are victims of SSR have highly blamed the church for lacking Jesus' aspect of shepherding the flock. In this regard, many argued that the Methodist church in Kenya seem to embrace a different teaching instead of following the example of Jesus who embraced all sinners. In his life ministry on earth, Jesus welcomed and dined with sinners. He not only forgave their sins, but also ministered to their physical and economic needs. He healed the sick, nursed their wounds and gave them food by welcoming them at his table to eat with them. This was an act that was questioned and condemned by many of his followers who accused him of interacting with sinners. However, Jesus' stand on this view was that he came to save the sinners and look for the lost. This is exactly what the MCK and all churches and Christians who are the followers of Christ should embrace. The Church needs to recall her calling to be the shepherd to all God's flock (people), both rich and poor, sinners and holy. People of all walks of life today require love and compassion.

People need to have someone who will show them kindness and love like Jesus. Jesus is not physically in the world today, but the Christians are his true representatives here on earth. They therefore have the challenge of presenting Jesus Christ to all sinners. This will be possible only by including them in our worship and showing them love and kindness, expressing tolerance rather than expelling them from the church. After all the Church does not comprise of people who are 'holier than thou'. It comprises of people who are forgiven sinners by the grace and mercies of God. Paul argues that Christians are only saved by the grace and the mercies of God, and never by their good works.

Nevertheless, the church is called to show love for all people just as God showed His love for all humanity by giving Jesus Christ as a sacrificial lamb to all. We who were sinners were made God's children through the dying and resurrection of Jesus Christ on the cross. Jesus Christ did not therefore die for the faithful Christians but he died for all people in the world. The Church today is therefore called upon and challenged to follow and present the example given by Jesus who is the author of the Church.

7.2 General Conclusion of the study

This study is aimed at investigating the response of the Methodist Church on SSRs. In this case, the general background of the problem which discusses the topic in depth has been discussed in Chapter 1. The motivation to the study is described explaining the reasons which motivated or led the researcher to choose this kind of topic. The statement of the problem which has discussed the problem in Africa and Kenya in depth is also important for the reader to understand the situation in the country and area under review. The geographical description of the country which provides the case study for this research is equally important as it provides the geographical, and the cultural information all that influence the kind response by the church.

The history of the Methodist Church in Kenya too informs this study a lot on the type of religious beliefs and the culture that existed in Kenya before the coming of the missionaries. This too is very important as the reader will understand why the church and communities in Kenya have taken such stand against the SSR.

The three theories which have been used for this study are relevant for they help the researcher and the reader to understand the behavior and the topic which is reviewed in this paper. Furthermore, they also explain why different people have decided to choose different sexual preferences. The theories in this study therefore are highly informative especially for this study.

Besides the primary data collection, this study has also involved some secondary materials like various relevant books and literature on the topic reviewed therein. This has also helped the researcher to gather extra knowledge and materials from other relevant authors and writers on the same topic. This is because a lot has also been written on the same. The Internet sources were also vital in this study, as they provided links to the relevant information for this study.

The information given by both the victimized members and the MCK leaders and members reveals that there is a gap between the two in which the members of SSR are victimized and condemned by the church as sinners concerning the topic under review. On the contrary, the victimized members (SSR), sees nothing wrong with their practice hence creating a bridge between the two groups. This therefore implies that there should be a clear way forward and a lot needs to be done to bring the two together, in order to ensure a cordial and harmonious co-existence between them.

7.3. Research Findings

This study has revealed many issues related to SSR which is the topic of discussion in this paper. According to the informants, African and Kenyan culture prohibits same sex relationships. This is clearly revealed through many informants' views that the practice is seen as a taboo and therefore unacceptable among many Kenyan communities. The Methodist Church also prohibits same sex relationship on the bases of the bible which in this case is presumed to be a Christian and spiritual guide. An investigation on the response of the Methodist Church in Kenya as the main research question for this study therefore has revealed the following issues namely:

First of all, it is clear that people who identify themselves with same sex- preference in this case are discriminated upon either by the church or by the family and their communities, as the practice of Same sex relationship among Christians is viewed as immoral and sinful as they violate the order and the importance of creation stipulated in the bible.

Secondly, the church action against the SSR is a punishment through disciplining and defrocking from the active ministry of the church. The period though which the SSR members are in that situation is not clear as many fall sick and die without any spiritual or pastoral help from the church.

Thirdly, the SSR members who were interviewed expressed their discontentment which they viewed as a failure of the MCK. Furthermore, the research has revealed that those victimized for same sex preference condemn the church and society highly for discriminating upon them and viewing them as 'great sinners'. Nevertheless, the SSR expect to be treated with dignity, and respect like any other human being. In this research therefore, they have blamed the church for failing to love and accommodate them in the church the way they are.

After all, the same sex members have also experienced loneliness due to such discrimination. They see nothing wrong with their practice; as many confessed that the practice and their change of sexual behavior is nothing of their own making. Many therefore blamed God for creating them 'that way'. In this case therefore, the church's perception of SSR members as 'the great and lost sinners' is what many SSR members who are victimized in this study seemed to criticize. For instance, during the interviews, one informant who was under the church discipline following a same sex scandal expressed her frustrations following the rejection of her thanksgiving offering to the church. Despite of her being under the church discipline, one woman sent her offering to the church through a neighbor, although it was later rejected as an acceptable before God.

The discrimination is not only within the church and among Christian believers, but rather it is a punishment that is also evident in the society where individuals have no one to associate or relate with as friends. This is due to the fear of being stigmatized by their families. For the victims who are clergy in the church, immediately they are proven guilty of the practice, they are defrocked and denied access to the active ministry of the church. This is seen great sin and an abomination before God. In this case, there is a strict order to immediately stop conducting services in the church. This also applies to the church leaders. The community on the contrary looks at SSR members as people who are not straight. They are therefore discriminated against by their own families hence suffering loneliness and frustrations for a lack of companionship.

Fourthly, it is also clear that many Kenyans have different views on the causes of SSR preferences in the country. Many have therefore laid their blames on either the following: internet/ media, family misunderstandings, witchcraft/ sorcery, abuse of drugs, last days or apocalyptic literature on the happenings in the last days, self-adventure, peer pressure and influence among students of same sex studying together, nature of family bringing-up where children are born and grow up together being of the same sex, hence developing a tendency of having sex together with their colleagues who are of the same sex, while still others have blamed God the creator 'for creating them the way they are', hence claiming that there is less to be done to reverse the behavior.

Finally, this paper also reveals that the church and society in Kenya do not tolerate people who have same sex preferences. The Methodist Church in Kenya therefore has a great challenge of failing to accommodate all people under all walks of life including sexual identification. Like Jesus, the church which is expected to accommodate and embrace all people, has actually been blamed to have failed to do so. Moreover, the society has also failed to read times and the changes brought about by the global world. Instead of discriminating against the SSR individuals, they too need to understand them and live with them the way they are. They need to bear in mind that there are some people who are created sexually different from them, and there is nothing they can do. For instance, there were informants who claimed to have the male sexual organ, yet possessed other feminine biological features like menstruation, adolescent breasts, and hips among others. In such a view, it becomes very hard to negatively judge them.

7.4 Further Studies Suggestion

The research findings presented and discussed in this study, triggers further questions which are in need of further inquiry by both the readers and the researcher. These include the following:

How can the church accommodate the members who are SSR without compromising its Christian faith and teachings presented in the Holy Scriptures? Furthermore, what should be a guiding norm to Christians today on the issues of sex and sexuality? Is it the word of God on the scriptures, or the current issues happening in the society and the world in which the church lives? In this regard, I see a challenge where the church is called upon to be the light and the salt of the world. Furthermore, how can the church be a light and a torchbearer to the world in issue of same sex pandemic? Nevertheless, what role should the church play in this topic?

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8.2 A list of interview guide questions that was used during the process of gathering the data for this study.

Questions to the MCK leaders and members on their views regarding same sex relationship.

(A) Questions to the Church representatives (the youths, women, and men fellowship.

1. (a) How do you understand same sex preference?
(b) Have you ever interacted with people who identify themselves with the same sex preferences?
(c) Do you have fellow Church members who identify themselves with same sex preferences?
(d) How do you know or can tell that one is either a gay or a lesbian Church member?

2. (a) Do we have Church leaders who also identify themselves with same sex preferences?
(b) What do you think are the causes of same sex preferences among MCK?
(c) How should the Methodist Church in Kenya handle same sex preference members?

(B) Questions to the synod Bishop and the Circuit minister

1. (a) How do you tell there are incidences of same sex preferences in the circuit?
(b) How do you deal with the Church members who identify themselves as either gay or lesbians?
(c) Why do you think members identifying themselves as gay or lesbians should not be included in the church leadership?
(d) What do you think should be the fate of SSR members who are sick or die in that state?
(e) Why do you think they do not deserve pastoral services?
(f) How and why do you think the Methodist Church view and stand against SSR is right?

2. (a) How do you compare and contrast the Methodist Church in Kenya's response to SSR with 'Jesus' inclusion of all model' in the bible?

(b) What can the Church (MCK) do in order to save its future members from same sex preferences?

(C) Questions to MCK members who identify themselves with same sex preferences.

1. (a) How and why are you a gay/ lesbian?

(b) What exactly prompted you to become a gay/ lesbian? Were you born that way or you just decided later to become one, or it just happened?

(c) Is your sexual preference acceptable in your community and the Methodist Church in Kenya?

(d) How has been your experience with your friends, family, or colleagues in the Methodist Church in Kenya as a gay/ lesbian?

(e) Explain how and why you think your social and spiritual life has been affected by (b) above?

(f) How does the Methodist Church in Kenya think and regard people who have same sex preferences?

(g) What can you say about the Methodist Church in Kenya's stand on the members who relate sexually with the same sex?

(h) How do you think the Methodist Church in Kenya should regard and treat the members who have same sex preferences?

(i) Why do you think same sex relationship members should be treated equally with other members in the Church?

(j) In your view, why do you think it is right to identify with same sex preference as a Christian?

8.3 Attached list of appendix

Focus groups

Focus group 1 (Circuit Youth representatives)

This group consisted of 5 youths who represented the entire circuit. They were ages from 15-25years.

Focus group 2 (Circuit Women Representatives)

In this group, there were 5 women all representing 5 different churches in Komarock circuit. They were from different age groups from 35- 55 years. Their views on same sex debate also differed due to age differences.

Focus group 3 (Circuit Men representatives)

Like the women representatives for this debate, men also differed in their views regarding the debate.

Their ages also differed hence this explains the differences in views. They were from age 35- 60 years.

Individual interviews

Individual interview 1 (The synod Bishop).

Sex: Male

Age: 55years.

Individual interview 2 (The circuit superintendent minister).

Sex: Female

Age: 48 years

Individual Interview 3 (Defrocked MCK minister).

Sex: Male

Age: 38 years

Individual Interview 4 (Member 1 under the Church discipline following same sex scandal).

Sex: Male

Age: 40 years

Individual Interview 5 (Member 2 under the Church discipline following same sex scandal).

Sex: Female

Age: 45 years.

Note:

It is worth noting that none of the informants' actual name is used in this study. The names hereby used are therefore mere nicknames which are coded as informant A, B, C.D, E, F...etc. This is ensure the security and privacy as part of the study ethics which is already noted earlier in this paper.