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**Barriers that Women need to Overcome
to Become Boxers in Lesotho**

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Abstract

Barriers that Women Need to Overcome to Become Boxers in Lesotho

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Boxing has been known and categorized amongst the most masculine sport and the cultural practices in Africa do not favor women to engage in sport. Therefore, the focus of this study was to examine the barriers women overcome to become boxers in Lesotho and it also looked at the factors that motivate women to join and stay in boxing and from the perspectives of male boxers, coaches, officials from the main sporting organizations, even supporting documents from relevant sporting organizations to further find out the factors that motivates women to overcome barriers and stay in boxing. Collection of data was done via observation and in-depth interviews for national team, both women and male team (three women boxers and two male boxers) together with their

coach and official from the Ministry of Gender and Youth, Sport and Recreation which is the mother body of all sporting organizations in Lesotho. It was found that women who grew up playing and enjoying boy's activities tend to develop personalities that contribute in sustaining and overcoming challenges to become boxers; they enjoy the pain that comes with boxing and aggression. Moreover, they like to be associated with boxing.

The support from the coaches, male boxers contributed in making the environment conducive and adaptable for women boxers, they also got motivation and felt welcomed in a new family. The other support came from their families though it was not fully granted due to cultural practices their parents still expect them to execute household's chores and to be within their homes when the sunset. Similarly, the coaches were found to have more interest on coaching male boxers over female and there is no interest of taking initiatives to develop programs for women boxing. The other issue discovered was that when it comes to fans, they also preferred and enjoyed male boxer's bouts more than female boxers ones, there was no support from fans rather there was an interest that was brought by curiosity to see what and how much women can do in a male sport.

In terms of sporting organizations, it was found that there are policies in place that support and promote women sport in Lesotho, but there are no effective implementation programs that attract women to join sport or that motivates them to stay. On the other hand, There were very few women representation at both administrative and technical level, the majority of people within the organizations wen men but surprisingly, the three main sport organizations in Lesotho being the Ministry of Gender and Youth, Sport and Recreation, the Lesotho National Olympic Committee and the Lesotho Sport and Recreation Commission were being led by women. Just like in a situation of coaches, whenever there are international events that include women participation these sporting organizations always request national federations to prepare women team and sent it to such events. This was found to be one of the motivational factors for women as at least they are recognized, but even though women athletes are engaged in national and international events, there were no selection criteria of quota for both male and female teams and male athletes were always privileged and enjoyed a bigger share, again the same issue was found when it comes to team officials, there number of male officials leading the team was always huge as compared to women officials.

Keywords : Women boxing, barriers, Sport Organizations,
motivation

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Lesotho is a landlocked country which is totally surrounded by the Republic of South Africa. Its size is slightly over 30,000 km² with the population of also slightly over two million (United Nations, 2009). It is also said to be the only country in the world that lies entirely above 1,000 meters (3,281 ft) in elevation, the lowest point is 1,400 meters (4,593 ft) which could be the highest point of any other country (Alan Murphy, 2007) Furthermore more than 80% lies over 1,800 meters (5,906 ft) and the highest point reaches 3,482 meters (11,424 ft) (World F. Book, 2008).

This is a country whereby women were marginalized for quite some time just like in other countries and that has been cultural practices which still exist in some areas within the country. The activities that they perform are limited as compared to their male counterpart. In the year 2003, it was only when Gender and Development Policy was put in place which covers amongst other issues the gender inequalities; the policy was developed by the department of Gender which was established in 2000. The department further developed Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act 2006 which equalizes the status of spouses, before this law was enacted women married in community of property had no say except household items, they did not

even have the right or say in the guardianship of their children or domicile of their choice. Moreover Meier (2005) also argue that women's work is to provide food and be caretakers of the family and that is not considered "proper work". Household chores make it impossible for women to have leisure time.

The Act also amended other laws that discriminated against women and amongst them are the Administration of Estates Proclamation 1935 which denied women married in community of property to be administrators of deceased's estates, the Deeds Registry Act 1967 and in this case women married in community of property were denied powers to hold title to land and could not be appointed as curators, the Marriage Act 1974 treated women as perpetual minors, the Lesotho Bank and Development Act No. 8 of 1971 denied women to open the bank accounts on their own without the consent of their husbands and the Companies Act 1967 did not allow women married in community of property to be directors of companies, the consent of the husband was required before acquiring such positions (Ministry of Gender, 2014). This also further indicates that after the enactment of Land Act in 2010 women became free to access and control land as a productive resource.

Some studies that were conducted in Lesotho on gender issues also found the similarities as those mentioned above that under customary laws age or marital status means nothing for women as they are always minors (Kashindo, 1993) and as for Makoa (1997) the position of women was described as follows:

“Customarily women are perpetual minors and always under the guardianship of someone. When unmarried they are looked after by their fathers, on marriage by their husbands and on the death of their husbands they fall under the guardianship of their heir.”

In as much as effort has been made to protect women and promote women’s rights through laws, that has not changed their means of living because some people are not aware of such laws moreover the customary law and practices contradict with promotion of women’s rights and the cultural practices stand as an obstacle to go forward (Ministry of Gender, 2014). This disparity between men and women is also apparent in sports and development hence the crust of this research.

Problem Statement:

Boxing is one of the oldest sports into the Olympic program; only male boxers were allowed to participate at the Olympic level as compared to women boxing which was only incorporated in the 2012 London Olympic Games. Women boxing is not as popular as male boxing, even in Cuba

which is currently the leading country in the world at Olympic level in terms of medals for 50 years but still women are not allowed to take part in boxing, on the other hand; they are allowed to join other combat sport such as Taekwondo and Judo¹. As for African continent as a whole, the record at international level in boxing is very poor and this is one of the factor that makes a country not to favor a certain sport that performs poorly and for that matter a sport like boxing which is not even common as compared to other sporting codes such as football.



Figure 1. Medals by Countries from 1974 to 2013 at International Boxing Championships

¹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-32040924>

From 1974 – 2013 only seven African countries won medals at the International Boxing Championships and none of the countries from the southern part of Africa has won at least one medal at this event. In terms of Lesotho which is the focus of this study, there is no documented evidence about boxing in general and that include participation of women in boxing, however some of the clubs have had women boxers for quite some time, most of them joined boxing and quit even before they could get chance to participate at the boxing tournaments. The first women boxing tournament was conducted in 2013 while identifying the youth team for the 2014 Nanjing Olympic Games then the following year women also took part during the male national championships which was part of the selection of the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games, therefore Lesotho participated for the first time with women boxing team at international events in 2014 World Championships and 2014 Commonwealth Games. Though women boxers from Lesotho participated at the International level there is still very few numbers of women boxers as compared to their counterparts' male boxers and this is not a local challenge of only having few female athletes as compared to male athletes but it is a universe one. For instance the quota for women at the international competition (Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games and Asian Games) is far less as compared to that of male boxers,

only thirty six women boxers were allowed to participate at the 2012 London Olympic Games as compared to male boxers with a number of 250. This was the first Olympic Games whereby women boxers were allowed to participate and that marked the history of 116 years since the inclusion of boxing in to the modern Olympic program (Van Ingen & Kovacs, 2012; studies.centre@olympic.org, 2015).

Some scholars conducted studies about sport as being male dominated and some have gone further to define other sporting codes as masculine and among them, boxing is found to be one of the most masculine sport. (Csizma, Wittig, & Schurr, 1988). This is one of the factors that have made it very difficult for the inclusion of women in sport, in addition to this the gender stereotyping and structural and organizational barriers are some of the factors that are found to have influenced women taking part in sport. Although there are these challenges that affect women in sport, there are still some women who do join sport and especially sport like boxing which is seen as the most masculine one and they stay regardless of the gap between male boxing and female boxing. The number of women boxers participating at the World Boxing Championships has increased as compared to the beginning when the first women championships were held in 2001 with the number of 125 women boxers

coming from thirty countries and as compared to the last women boxing championships which were held in Jeju Island in 2014 which attracted 280 women boxers from sixty seven countries, (AIBA website). Not only did the number of athletes increase but the number of countries sending women boxers to this championship also double up as compared to the first one. Now that the number of women is seen to be increasing in sport and basically in boxing regardless of the factors that have been implied before, the current study would like to examine women boxing from perspective of athletes, coaches and administrators so as to find out how women overcome challenges to become boxers. There are no previous studies related to this current one conducted in Africa and as for other countries there are some studies which have been conducted about women boxing Cove and Young (2007) examine the ways coaches perceive women in boxing, and whether these perceptions influence coaches' decisions in training female boxers. This study though having similarities with the current one, its focus was more inclined from coaches' perspectives to find out how they perceive women that engage in boxing, and after the findings, it was recommended that there is a need for future research to continue to address the choices and constraints women face in their athletic careers from both gender and power perspectives. As for Mennesson (2000), the focus on the study was to

identify how women entered and stayed involved in boxing and the types of identities they forged in the process. This study was purely about boxing as a sport but other sporting codes were also categorized under boxing, such as mixed martial arts whereby some of the target group were practicing Tae boxing, kick boxing and some of them were into a soft boxing of which boxers were not allowed to be rough or hit each other in an aggressive way. Though coaches formed part of this study, their involvement was not from the perspective of what makes women boxer stay in boxing but their contribution was seen to be on the performance of the boxers in terms of technical-tactic way, and apart from that this study did not include male boxers and the perspective from the sport community of which the current study is trying to explore. Furthermore; the study that was conducted by Cove and Young (2007) only focuses on women boxers on to which extent women choose to invest in boxing and from the perspective of coaches, it explores the ways coaches perceive women boxing and whether those perspective influence coaches' decision in training female boxers.

When it comes to the continent of Africa, especially in the southern region where the focus of this current study is based, there is still not that much research conducted around women boxing, however; Meier and Saavedra (2009) conducted research in Zambia about women boxing, the

focus was around women as role models, that is how role models may function to encourage and sustain female involvement and also as to contribute to achieving altering gender roles and expectations. As for the one of the latest research that was conducted not very long time ago but in 2014 around the same issue of women boxing, its purpose was to understand the experiences of Korean women boxers, the perspective of the existing boxing community toward women's participation in boxing, and the influence of women's participation in boxing and interestingly, the athletes were found to be encouraged to join boxing because they wanted to lose weight and for appearance, gym convenience, encouragement from other family members and media influence (Kim, 2014). These factors that attracted women to join boxing are normally perceived in a negative way in, moreover her study was based only on recreational boxing, and therefore a further a recommendation was made that focus on athletes with international exposure (amateur or professional boxers). Lesotho, the cultural practices pressurizes women to be big boned and mostly the training facilities are not situated in an easily accessible place and there has not been much influence from the media as these current women boxers are the first ones to resuscitate women boxing in Lesotho.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the barriers women overcome to become boxers in Lesotho. In order to achieve this, the focus will not only be on the challenges that women encounters in becoming boxers but furthermore the fundamental aspect is to find out how they overcome such challenges to end up staying in boxing. In order to achieve this, the data will be collected via interviews with women athletes, male athletes, coaches and sport community and also by analyzing the available data related to women participation in sport in Lesotho.

1.3. Significance

There is a one study that has been conducted around boxing especially studies that focus on women boxing (Cove & Young, 2007). Moreover the studies that have been explored about women boxing were not focusing on how women overcome challenges to become boxers and they were not even taking into consideration other factors that play an important role in the development of sport being the coaches and the sport community of which this current study is also focusing on those areas so as to have a full understanding of women involvement in boxing. On the other hand, boxing in Africa is not as common as in other countries and it does not even

perform well at international level as compared to other countries. For instance Lesotho has never won a medal at the International Boxing Championships and Olympic Games either with male or female boxers. Normally a sport that does not perform well and is not even popular does not attract spectators and media exceptions are those sports like football which is almost popular in every continent, it is easier for the football fans to favor a team or follow a league that is being run in other countries than in their own country especially in those cases whereby the level of performance of their teams in their home teams is not high. It was found that in the year 2013 football was the most watched sport in France, Germany, Italy, Japan and South Africa (Robinson, 2015) It is obvious that probably the same thing was happening in Lesotho because as small country as it is and also being totally surrounded by South Africa it is easily affected and influenced by whatever that is happening in South Africa. Robison (2015) further argues that for the new sports to be known and be popular, the officials need to take an initiative of attracting new participants and spectators, and to monitor the interest and participation in their sport. With this current study, the purpose is to understand how women overcome challenges so as to be able to avoid doing the same mistake when dealing with new participants and also as to be able to develop sport policies that are

gender sensitives and that will take into concentrations the needs and how to deal with women.

The cultural practices also play an important role in sport and should not be generalized, In Africa generally a woman is considered to be beautiful when she is big and fat but on the other hand some studies showed that actually women were introduced in boxing just because they were concerned about their health therefore they wanted to lose weight (Yvonne Lafferty & Jim McKay, 2004).

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1. Challenges/ Cultural Perspective

The monarchy of sport has been labeled as masculinity and male domination. 'From a feminist perspective sport has been viewed for a long time as a sexist institution, male-dominated and masculine in orientation' (Bernstein, 2002). In addition, Dunning, Birrell, and Cole (1994) sport is 'traditionally one of the major male preserves and hence of potential significance for the functioning of patriarchal structures', and Oates (1980) argues that 'boxing is for men, and is about men, and is men'. She does not classify boxing as a sport but something on its own. Similarly, Joyce Carol Oates, cite it;

"...raw aggression is thought to be the peculiar province of men, as nurturing is the peculiar province of women. (The female boxer violates this stereotype and cannot be taken seriously— she is parody, she is cartoon, she is monstrous. Had she an ideology, she is likely to be a feminist) (1980p. 73.).

Cove and Young (2007) found that boxing coaches prefer to work with male boxers over the female ones, as women boxers do not commit themselves as they have family obligations, this makes it more challenging for women to find coaches. Moreover, Chaudhuri (2012) also argue that it became difficult for Maggie Fitzgerald, a woman boxer as her coach initially refused to coach her based on the background that he does not

approve women boxing, he only agreed to coach her after seeing her passion and being persistence, and as for “Wacquant (1992): “...The gym culture is a quintessentially masculine space (emphasis in original) into which the trespassing of females is tolerated only as long as it remains incidental. Barbara and Reskin (1990) Similarly, with Peterson and Pang (2006) demonstrate that few women participate in masculine sport due to personal issues and also because of cultural factors, and according to Dowling (2000) it is argued that coaches prefer to work with male athletes rather than female once as women cannot sustain pain and are less committed than men. As for the Zambian woman boxer, her coach and manager advised her not to get married as her career will end ‘that ‘I know she’s talented and she can make money from boxing. I advise her not to get married. Once a man gets in her life she could just become a housewife and that talent would go (Banda, 2008).

2.2. Sport Policy

On a study about women boxers in India Chaudhuri express that woman boxers do not only struggle against social issues that affect any other woman but there is a lack of recognition of women boxing. There have not been significant initiatives done by the state or the national boxing

federations to create programs for girls. Similarly, Van Ingen and Kovacs (2012) argue that in 1991 amateur women boxing was sanctioned in Canada and for the United States of America, amateur women boxing was only allowed in 1993.

When talking about sport, regardless of the type, athletes are the most important people because without them there would not be any game or activity going on, in this same issues the research has found that not only sport can survive with athletes only but there are other factors that has a direct influence in the way sport is managed and consumed. Media was found to be one of the factors that either way has a direct influence of the way sport is being run and it has further argued that without media sport cannot exist, especially when referring to professional sport (Nicholson, 2007). With the influence that media has on sport, it can either promote a certain sport or on the other hand eliminate it, women sport has not been developed to the same level as male sport because of the negative influence media has on women sport, women sport do not receive the same media coverage as male sport and they are also not portrayed the same as male even if they both engage in the similar sporting code (Miller, 2001). This same scholar has further argued that, “media sports have been staggeringly masculinist” (2001, p. 37). Women that are engaged in the sport that are

labeled as masculine are less privileged when it comes to media coverage. Even though women are not getting the same coverage as compared to male, Messner (2002) and after five years Messner (2007) found that when women are participating in the sport that are mostly labeled as feminine, they get more coverage as compared to those other sport that are labeled masculine.

It is argued that women's amateur boxing was only broadcast on the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in November, 2010; furthermore, women boxing have never been featured on Home Box Office (HBO) in the Northern American professional ranks (Van & Kovacs, 2012).

Some research done about women football, after the interview, it was found that women's participating in that sport agreed that football is considered a masculine sport hence they are living with the stigma of not being 'feminine'. (Pfister, 1999) and almost all women interviewed viewed football as masculine sport, and Chaudhuri (2012), in terms of boxing, women struggle not to break gender stereotypes, moreover religion is one of the challenges as it does not allow women to engage in physical contact with men and also the attire used in boxing is a challenge. however, some women boxers claimed to be confident about being boxers though they argued that they do not fight 'like girls', one of the twins says that she looks

into the mirror and sees a girl, but in the ring, she feels 'like a boy' and fights like one. The other support came from their mother after recognizing in them the satisfaction of a desire that remained unfulfilled in their own lives.

From the perspective of some boxers, the 2004 Athens boxing silver medalist and a current professional boxer Amir Khan is one of the boxers who was seen not to be supportive and in agreement about the inclusion of women boxing into the Olympic program and also in boxing as a whole, it was found that he is one of those people who think or believe that women are weak and cannot manage to handle or deal with the activities that has been labeled as masculine; Deep down I think women shouldn't fight. That's my opinion, when you get hit it's very painful. Women can get knocked out" (BBC, 2009). Women shouldn't be allowed to box because they need to be protected, because their bodies aren't "made" for the kind of violent bodily contact that boxing entails.

Women participating in boxing were described as mannish and were labeled as gays. Moreover, DAVISSE and LOUVEAU (1998) in their research find that sports that require heavy physical workload, physical contact, high level of aggression and tension are not only rejected by men but also women themselves.

Although there are many researchers conducted about women in sport, especially about the challenges women encounter while participating in sport that are considered to be masculine, there is still a need to further make a research that will cover the constraints women encounter while engaging in sport and how they overcome them. Van and Kovacs (2012) explore the extent to which women choose to invest in the sport of boxing, the ways coaches perceive women in boxing, and whether these perceptions influence coaches' decisions in training female boxers, it is suggested that there is a need for a future research to continue to address the choices and constraints women face in their athletic careers from both gender and power perspectives. The focus on this study is more on coaches perspective towards female boxers but with this current study the focus will not be coaches behavior and decision in coaching women boxers but the core focus is on women boxers, to investigate about the challenges women overcome to become boxers, how do women overcome the stereotype and discrimination moreover this study goes more broader about women boxing, and covers issues pertaining to women boxing from the perspectives of male athletes, coaches, sport administrators who are in charge of developing policies amongst their duties and the parents.

2.3. Women Programs

The number of events organized for women in boxing is far less as compared to male boxers, and until now women boxers only get chance to participate at the AIBA Open Boxing (AOB) events and the competition rules and some of the equipment used are different as compared to male boxers. The duration of a round for male boxers is longer than that of women boxers, male boxers round is three minutes while women boxers only take two only minutes per round. (Donnelly & Donnelly, 2013) On the other hand male boxers are more privileged as they participate in all AIBA events which are AOB, World Series of Boxing (WSB) and AIBA Professional boxing (APB) (AIBA website). This concept of WSB was introduced by the AIBA president in 2008, this marked a new era in the sport of boxing which provide a bridge between Olympic Boxing and a future professional program within the AIBA family. By that time when this concept was introduced within the AIBA, women boxing program was already established and running smoothly but they were not included in this new program, since that time until now there are no activities organized for women, this is solely for male boxers. Male boxers do get opportunity to participate in both AIBA Open Boxing events and also the World Series of Boxing. Male boxers also get chance to earn money as the World Series of

Boxers get paid unlike in AIBA Open events whereby the boxers compete without getting paid. The Pro Boxing just like World Series of Boxing only allow male boxers to participate in it, boxers competing also at this program are getting paid. Then this being the case, it can easily be noticed that the lifespan of male boxers as compared to female boxers will not be the same, as for male boxer can take boxing as a profession unlike women who would need to find means of surviving.

Before the inclusion of women boxing in the Olympic program, the International Boxing Association had already taken an initiative and hosting international women events. According to the boxing website (AIBA), the International Boxing Association declared boxing as unisex in 1994 and from that time countries started to cooperate women boxing program and the countries that had already recognized women boxing invest more on it and register to the AIBA. (Pfister, 2013a) also argue that history shows that women were even not allowed to watch the Olympic Games, but currently they are able to achieve and reach the same level male even while participation in those events that are known to be masculine and moreover they develop their own movement culture.

2.4. Women Representation in Sport Organization

The International Boxing Association with almost Two Hundred Boxing Federation has so many limited numbers of women within its executive committee and this implies that women decisions are not fully implemented moreover it contributes in male boxers having more opportunities as compared to women boxers, the AIBA website (2014) demonstrates that the executive committee should be consist of twenty people from different National Boxing Federations, on this similar issue it further shows that there are no women elected into the executive committee as all the elected members are men. There is only one woman who is member in the AIBA executive committee and such member does not have voting rights unlike other members that have been elected. For the fact that all the elected members are male and no female, this gives the slight picture of what is currently happening at the continental levels and down to the national levels as the executive members are elected by the National Federations, so there is a high possibility of not catering for women programs in the same way as male programs and that will contribute in making boxing male dominated sport and number of female officials is far less as compared to the number of male officials. Though only male AIBA members are the only one currently with the rights to vote, there is still an

improvement as AIBA established Women's Boxing Commission and with that idea of having women boxing commission, there might be positive impact on the development of women boxing, equality at the leadership contribute in bridging the gap between gender inequality (Donnelly & Donnelly, 2013).

The Olympic movement is currently against the idea of the father of modern Olympic Games Pierre de Coubertine, 1912 did not see women fit enough to join Olympic program "it would be would be impractical, uninteresting, and incorrect" (Donnelly & Donnelly, 2013). There has been a lot of change within the Olympic movement as currently women are represented in all sporting codes.

2.5. Women and Media

After the incorporation of women boxing at the Olympic program, that was really a great success in the sport of boxing and that attracted even more women to join boxing, the women boxers were amongst the people who needed to celebrate more but they were shocked as the International Boxing Association (AIBA) proposed that all women compete with skirts rather than normal boxing competition attire, amongst the justification given was that spectators will not be able to differentiate women boxers against

men boxers if they both compete with the same attire, it is in this area whereby media has been praised to have contributed and influenced the boxing to treat women equally when it comes to attire (Van Ingen & Kovacs, 2012; Donnelly & Donnelly, 2013).

The Pre-Olympic media coverage of women's boxing has often reported that the sport is "still in its infancy" though the involvement of women in boxing was seen since the eighteenth century (Dugan, 2012). Although the media industry contributed and influenced the AIBA in taking the decision to give women freedom of competing with the competition attire of their choice, on some occasions this comes the other way round, media is one of the factors that hinder the development of women sport as this industry hardly cover women sport and it mostly seemed to be having a negative side towards women in sport (Donnelly & Donnelly, 2013). It is found by others scholars that media portray women athletes in a sexualized in advertising and media coverage (Young & White, 1995; Messner, Duncan & Jensen, 1993). On the other hand, women athletes mostly get media coverage when participating in female appropriate sports (Lindner, 2012). This shows that those women athletes that compete in sports that are labeled to be masculine do face challenges towards media; some of the sports demand muscles development so as to be able to perform well, as in

the description noted above women athletes with muscular muscles face challenge.

2.6. Boxing Training

The study conducted by Woodward (2004) note that women struggle to access male boxing gyms and in other cases, women are banned. Some have the understanding that it is easier for a man to lose focus when women are around as women distract them from concentrating on the tasks given. Moreover Pfister (2013b) argues that women in sport experience many challenges of which they contribute in not getting to enjoy the sport as compared to male athletes and these challenges are brought by the coaches as they discriminate them based on gender stereotype. Halbert (1997) further she argue that though women boxers were quite aware of the social interaction concerning boxing they were also experiencing some challenges during training and competition about sex discrimination and stereotyping, as the coaches would ignore them during the training and concentrate more on male boxers, during the practices and sparring, it was also argued that male boxers would be more aggressive while practicing with women so as to show them that they do not belong there, therefore some women boxers came up with a plan of exercising late when the training is over and the

male boxers had finished training and that was the only chance that they would be free to exercise without destruction. One of the women boxers while explaining about her experience at the gym noted that

I was the first woman to go to that gym, so I don't know it was just a macho thing. But nobody did train me. I was there on a daily basis, and you know they [they] said "well, we just haven't had a chance." I didn't even know what a jab was [before my first fight]. P.13

Closing the door for women into having an access in boxing facilities makes it difficult for them to have understating of the sport, it is not all of the people that follow or support sport because they are good at it, some join sport just because they like to watch it, so in this case of boxing whereby women are not just allowed to have access at the training facilities do not give them a chance to understand boxing, moreover it does not become easier for the society to approve this sport as convenient for women. Some of the strategies of attending boxing gymnasium when there are no male boxers training may be very difficult to execute in Lesotho as mostly of the facilities are shared with other groups or there is only a certain given time for boxers to have an access, apart from that training sessions mostly are done in the afternoon and there would be no coach to stay and train athletes at night.

2.7. Social Norms

Recently people seemed to be concerned about their health, and some of them including women are engaging in different sports for health related issues. In case of boxing the same thing applies, not all the women boxers joined the sport with the intentions of becoming athletes from the start, but they were more concerned about their health hence joining to live a healthy lifestyle and also for losing weight. Mennesson (2000) describes that women boxers said to have been encouraged by their fathers to join sport. Similarly, Halbert (1997) in her study found that amongst other factors that attracted women to join boxing were the influence from their parents who had practiced this same sport before and as for others their colleagues had programs for women therefore their male friends invited them to be part of the program so that it does not fail and for those who were married their husbands encouraged them to join boxing with the aim of losing weight. These factors that has contributed in bringing women into boxing may not easily work in countries like Lesotho whereby community expect women to have a huge body and those women that are big are considered as the family materials as compared to the slim ones, it is argued that they have what it takes to take care of the children and their husbands. Moreover Walter and Du Randt (2011) found that African women are

categorized in a different way “black girls are supposed to be nice and heavy” and in a similar situation to this; Mciza (2006) argues that black African women have a different perspective about their body as compared to white women. They feel and believe that a black woman body looks beautiful and attractive when it is big while on the other hand white women tend to prefer thin, lean bodies. Lack of education also contributes a lot in not having women in sport, with this believe some women then decide not exercise or practice sport just because they believe that they will look unattractive. This shows that in some places, the challenges are not just about the fact that sport is a masculine activity but more into stereotype. The challenges that the Republic of South Africa faces either way affect Lesotho country not because they are both situated in the same region but for the mere fact that Lesotho is a landlocked country which is totally surrounded by Republic of South Africa, so both countries share similarities. Hadas M. (2003) also cite that the manifestation of masculinity and femininity are not universal but are historically and culturally defined. This gives the notion that not all the things happening in life affect us the same way.

Some scholar found that even male boxers do not appreciate women boxing; they believe that it will be unattractive to see women practicing boxing. Wacquant L. (1995b) argues that ‘boxing is for men and is about

men, and is men'. Similarly, Halbert (1997) in her study boxing was described not only as violence but also as brutal, bloody and corrupt, and for men all these seem to be normal if happening to them, this scholar furthermore this same study it is argued that "Women who are real boxers are mannish and thus aren't real women, so they must be gay". Currently women still go through some challenges while participating in sport that are mostly described as machos and not all the challenges are the same, there are factors that contribute and they are constructed by the society. The participation of women in sport is perceived in a different way by different religion and countries, as in other countries people including women are encouraged to join sport due to health benefits, but some of the challenges that were found by other scholars that hinders participation of women in sport in Africa is that sport do affect and temper with menstruation and that may endanger the re-productiveness of women (Elendu & Orunaboka, 2011). Furthermore Manyonganise (2010) also describes that in Zimbabwe, there is still a misconception that women taking part in sport will not be able to have children as their fertility will be affected. These indicate that there is still a gap that needs to be closed in terms of educating people about the benefit of sport. The other point is that in some of the countries, sport is not yet taken as a profession or a career hence a lot of unqualified officials in

sport. With lack of education it becomes even more complex to accommodate or deal with women athletes. The stigma of HIV and AIDS still contribute a lot in Africa, whenever a person get to lose weight, she is classified as being sick and being HIV positive but this is not the case when male athletes engage in sport and lose weight. It therefore becomes difficult for even those who know the benefit of engaging in sport (Walter & Du Randt, 2011). Some women who are big also feel more comfortable and save as somehow they take that as a sign of living a healthy lifestyle and not being sick, especially not having HIV and AIDS infection.

2.8. Sport Facilities

Due to limited resources, sport clubs in most of the countries do not accommodate their athletes in an appropriate conducive environment. In Lesotho there are no sport centers to provide athletes with accommodation and meals so as to be able to execute their training sessions in a systematic and controlled way. As for thus, the athletes attend training sessions on a daily basis coming from their respective homes and they return back to their villages and homes every day after the training session, exceptions is when the country is preparing for mega events whereby athletes that are in the national team get the opportunity to stay at the training camp and that

mostly happens when the competition period approaches and generally they do not gather together at the training camp for more than a month. If there are no competitions nearby then even the national athletes train on a daily basis, whereby they attend training sessions in the afternoon and after that they go back to their respective homes. Some of the training facilities are situated in awkward places for some athletes and they need to travel a distance before getting home from trainings, their accessibility is not easy and it is a very few percentage of athletes that their parents have financial means to support them by giving them transportation fare so as to get public transport to get home after training sessions and as for the rest which are always the majority of the athletes, they normally walk to and from the boxing gymnasiums. It becomes very challenging for women to access and attend sport gymnasiums; it sometimes becomes a challenge even for those athletes that their parents are able to provide with bus fares as those athletes have to travel a long distance from the bus tops after getting off the bus. Due to these limitations, the parents normally do not allow their girls to be out on their own at night but that is not a big challenge for boys. This is simply because women are more vulnerable to violence which is found to be increasing with sexual violence dominating (UNFPA, 2010).

2.9. Violence and Women in Lesotho

As mention previously, the rate of violence is increasing in Lesotho regardless of the effort that have been taken into consideration to combat it, the study that was conducted in Lesotho demonstrate that 86% of women experienced some form of violence at least once in their lifetime, moreover 40% of men were involved in violence against women at least once in their life. Amongst the violence experienced by women include non-partner rape, sexual harassment and abuse during pregnancy, 8% of women were raped by non-partner in their lifetime and the rate of sexual harassment at work has been reported as high as 63% for women who had ever worked (Links, 2013). In this same study, one of the participant confessed that he has been involved in sexual violence and that was caused by the way his father used to treat his mother by always violating her, he would beat her for nothing, as a result that traumatized him and he also end up not valuing women;

“I grew up hating women of any kinds; I did not want anything to do with women and one day I saw a girl and I just felt that hatred and I felt like hurting her at that particular moment and finally I asked her to wait for me, but she refused. I did not take that very well, I became very angry and I wanted to hurt her immediately. I asked her again to wait and that time she did not reply she just ran away, I ran after her and I caught her, I was very angry when I got to her not because she did not wait for me, but because she was a woman. I could not ask her anything; I just put her down and raped her.

Table 1. Extent of GBV in Lesotho

Table 1: Extent of GBV in Lesotho				
Criteria	Prevalence of GBV in the survey			
	Women's experience in a lifetime (%)	Men's perpetration in a lifetime (%)	Women's experience in the past year (%)	Men's perpetration in the past year (%)
Prevalence of GBV	86	40	-	-
Prevalence of IPV	62	37	28	12
Prevalence of emotional IPV	52	27	20	8
Prevalence of physical IPV	40	26	12	5
Prevalence of economic violence	30	13	18	5
Prevalence of sexual violence	24	10	10	4
Prevalence of non-partner rape	8	16		
Prevalence of attempted rape	8	4	3	2
Prevalence of abuse in pregnancy	14	-	-	-
Prevalence of sexual harassment	63	-	-	-
Prevalence of sexual harassment at school	58	-	-	-
Prevalence of sexual harassment at work	63	-	-	-

The challenges women face are not within the sport fraternity but they are affected by the external factors also, the challenge for women is not only about their involvement in masculine sport its goes beyond that, attending the training sessions which are conducted in the afternoon is also a challenge as their lives will not be at risk especially after the training sessions when they have to go back home at night. Women boxers are mistaken for being lesbians and they are subjected to violence in the form of corrective rape. Men feel that if they rape them they will begin to confine themselves to parameters of being women. Currently there are no

alternatives of conducting training sessions during the day as most of the athletes together with their coaches will be busy at school or work.

2.10. Relationship between Men and Women

Generally, men are portrayed as assertive, aggressive, confident, and instrumental; on the other hand, women are perceived as nurturing, emotional, sympathetic, and fragile (Foldy, 2006; Ruble, 1983). Similarly, these influence the way men and women should behave (Eagly & Karau, 2002). On the other hand some scholars argue that women can perform similar task as men Huggins and Randell (2007). On the other hand, some studies found that women engaging in similar activities as men or those activities that are labeled as masculine were described to be gay and tomboys and Mennesson (2000) also describe that the majority of the female's boxers claim to be tomboys and they find women activities monotonous hence preferring playing with boys. For women boxer to be able to succeed and continue with boxing, they need to go extra mile and strategize so as to impress managers, they experience discrimination and stereotyping Halbert (1997). She further describe that though women professional boxing have been there for more than 100 years, still it cannot be compared with male boxing in terms of opportunities and competitions as

it is still marginalized, but competitive women boxing competitions on the other hand were found to attract more spectators, especially those who never believe that women can also demonstrate the same skill as male seemed to be liking it more, the women boxers who are more feminine seemed to be having more attention:

What makes it work [for me] is that I'm 100% woman, I noticed when I go to like the weigh-in, I notice how I'm treated by men, and how my opponents are treated by the men. It's different. I always dress very nice-of course, makeup, and my hair's done and everything. (Halbert, 1997 p.18)

With time things are changing and girls get chance to go to school, this is a time where they get to associate with others and play, but because of the tradition, parents still expect their girls to immediately go back home after school so in this case there is still not enough time to engage in sport activities and on the other hand some of the schools do not even offer physical education and sport program. So parents play a big role in influencing girls whether to stay in sport or not. When coming back from school they are expected to rush home so as to be able to assist with housework. The excuse that they get from doing housework is the time to prepare for school assignment. As described by Huggins & Randell (2007) the heavy burden of household chores and responsibilities are imposed on girls and women and that may affect hinder them from joining sport.

Therefore most of the time girls are at home they spend on doing households and they do not get time to engage in sport which already is seen to be only suitable for men. In a research that was conducted in Zambia also found the similar issues regarding women and men duties that girls are expected to do the house work (L. S. Jacobsen, 2014):

We normally say that women are supposed to go and start doing house chores. Not go to the ground, they normally consider that every time, that a woman should be at home, working. then a boy, a boy child, should go and play around. Say that a girl child, when they tell a girl child to start doing some house chores: you are training that girl child to do what she is going to do if she gets married. That's what she is going to be doing. When she goes to the ground, she is not practicing the house chores, and she won't be doing sport things at home, with and for the husband (Melita) P.62.

The ways men are treated in other countries give them liberty to explore and engage in different activities, and that put women in a difficult situation as their husbands or fathers must approve first whatever they want to do but contrary the men normally act without seeking the approval of their wives or mothers, this was approved by the study that was conducted by Gender Links (2013) that demonstrate that 97% of women agreed that women should obey her husband and the same issue applied to men too with a 96% arguing that women should obey her husband too. Moreover, this same study found that 81% of women believe that they must seek permission from their husbands to do paid work and 81% of men also take it

that their wives must seek their permission before they could accept any paid job. This has form part of cultural practices and it has affected even the children too, the young boys are treating their sisters in the same way that their parents are behaving. The same practices within the families is spread and becomes social practice which end up having an influential factor during the sporting organizations which are mostly run by men as a result women somehow are bound to obey the coaches even if they are given the tasks that will affect them. As argued by (Halbert, 1997) that some trainers have negative thought about women and they always put them to spar with the experienced male boxers so as to discourage them from coming to the guy:

“At the beginning when, when I met [the trainer], he didn’t want me in the gym he was going to have me knocked out by one of his male fighters... to discourage me from boxing. And thank goodness that [the trainer] had a friend there with him...[the friend] tried to tell him, ‘oh, don’t be so hard on her. Give her chance...[the trainer] didn’t have me knocked or anything.”

For the coach this could have just been a mere sign of showing that lady that she does not belong to boxing, but people doing this kind of things do not take into consideration the damage that they bring into sport (Fox, 2003) argues that abuse may cause permanent damage to a woman’s physical health. The report further demonstrates that though there has been an improved to overcome barriers amongst women, there are still factors

that affect women and amongst them, it is stated that there is still limited understanding of human rights issues and capacity to promote and protect women's right in informal structures.

2.11. Relations of Coaches and Male Boxers towards Women Boxers

The male athletes do not have any problem while women are doing sport but they believe that boxing is too dangerous for women and they would not recommend their sister to join boxing and if they do join they will be very worried and on the other hand the some of the coaches find it that women are more patience than men boxers who like to show off when they spar and they always try to apply what they have been taught while in the ring. Though the approach was the same for both male and female, there approach was different for men as the training focused mostly on power and punching bag whereas for women it was more on easy technique to keep sport interesting, (Kim, 2014). On the other hand other studies argue that some coaches were not interested in coaching women boxers and the reason being that they are not committed into training due to household responsibilities including taking care of children, “female have to beg for their coaches’ time”(Cove & Young, 2007)

2.12. Motivation

If a woman boxer becomes a celebrity, this will attract more women into sport but this will take long time and it should be an outstanding achievement. For women to stay the coaches they need full attention and motivation time and again (Kim, 2014). Moreover in this same study it was found that women had join mostly because of health issues, they wanted to lose weight and so for Halbert (1997) the friends and family played an important role of introducing women into boxing, furthermore adrenaline rush, the moment of competition in front of crowd, the intensity of the training and the training demand while preparing for tournament were amongst other factors that made women stay. Participating at the Olympic Games and winning championship title too.

2.13. Education Safety

It was only in the year 2000, when the Lesotho government introduced free education from at the primary level, and that attracted more children to have an access in education. According to Ministry of Gender 2014, Lesotho boasts one of the highest literacy rates standing at 95.6% for women and 83.3% for men. Though the majority of schools do not offer physical education, the girls attending school get to have at least free time to

engage in physical activities and sport. The majority of the schools do have sport programs and this is where the girls get to be involved in different sporting codes. Unlike when they are at home where they will be expected to be doing housework day long. Unfortunately boxing is not a common sport in Lesotho and so far it is not one of the school sport program but for the fact that the majority of students are composed of girls, this makes it easier for them to experience sport and in this case it is even easier for the those sport that do not form part of the school sport program to approach the school and present their sport or scout talent.

The schools that take part in school sport programs are facing a challenge of qualified sport officials, as mentioned that the majority of schools do not have physical education program in their curriculum, the teacher who had an experience or understand certain sport seem to be the one in charge sport programs. The other challenges that affect the entire country could be sporting facilities and equipment. And this become even more difficult for women to engage in sport especially as it has been known as masculine activity. On the other hand the sporting attire is also a big challenge because there is yet enough support when it comes to sport, parents even if they support their children to engage in sporting activities, it is on a rear case that they provide with sporting attire and equipment. For

them support means letting their children to join sport, that free time that they give their children to practice sport is seen as a support enough. So athletes get to practice with their old torn clothes which make it even more difficult for some of the ladies to practice with the clothes that will show that inner parts and get embarrassed. If these challenges do not affect the majority in Africa, it seem to be a similar case round the countries surrounding Lesotho. For instance, the Republic of South Africa hosted 2010 Soccer World Cup and became the first African country to host such a magnificent event, but in this same country Andreassen (2012) reported the country as having major challenges when coming to equipment and facilities and that found to be the major barrier for girls and women who want to participate in sport. Similarly, , in a study conducted in another regional country in Botswana, which is still very close to Lesotho and both share some cultural similarities including the language Sayed, Meyer, and Monyeki (2005) argue that athletes including women are having challenges from participating in sport due to socio-economic and facility barriers. And the other study conducted in the in Zambia also revealed the similar challenges as in Botswana:

Pitches lacked grass, basketball and netball courts lacked concrete surfaces, goalposts were sold as scrap metal and organizations had constant battles against people who wanted to build homes and other structures on the playing area. Lack of vacant areas for play and

leisure activities might be an increasing challenge, especially in towns and bigger cities, due to urbanization (Lindsey & Grattan, 2012: 106).

Due to lack of well-defined sporting programs, in some countries like Lesotho, sport is still underdeveloped therefore the trainings or practices happens later after working hours when both coaches and athletes are free from their normal duties, and this is the time whereby most of the girls are expected to be at home to assist with housework, apart from that, the very few girls that can join and attend sporting activities at that time have a fear of being on their own at night, as normally the sport activities end when it is dark. So in a country that is not developed like Lesotho, when the sunset, it gets dark and there are no street lights. So women feel frightened to join sport. Even if they want to join their parents on the other hand do not want to see their children out on their own at night

2.14. Gender Equality

Halbert (1997) and MaCcaughey (1997) argue that the inclusion of women in sport that has been labeled as masculine threatens dualistic gender regime as they seem to be performing activities that require strength and aggression. Mennesson (2000) note that women boxers claimed to have gained 'identity building' after joining sport. On the other hand, women

who exhibit athleticism are described as to be challenging the “boundaries of femininity” (Blinde & Taub, 1992). Sport has the power to change and influence the society and gender roles and this is can also be used as a tool to combat stereotypes and remove barriers for both women and men in sport (G. Pfister, 2008) Amongst the challenges that women encounters while engaging in masculine sport, especially sexism, the female boxers do not recognize sexism to be one of the constraints, nevertheless these women felt that there was no support from public and also the boxing promoters were not having interest, and these were the people that could make women boxing even more popular (Halbert, 1997). Having no interest from the promoters means that there are very few women activities happening and that somehow kills it as promotion is the key to any boxers success, one would expect that it would be easier while having women as promoters who will be able to understand and pursue the promotion of women boxing, but in this same study it was found that women boxers argue to have been in a better position while working with men who understand them, they were able to go out and fight for their needs and this makes it much easier for them, on the other hand the woman promoter whom the boxers thought it would be even much easier to work with, came to have no interest in

assisting them, the main reason was found to be that she had to guard against believe that she, too, might actually “feminize” boxing.

Donnelly & Donnelly (2013) argue that though all women are represented in all sporting codes at the Olympic Games, there is still a gap concerning equality in areas such as sponsorship between male and female athletes, it was found that that the Japanese men’s team were treated in a special way of flying in business class and their female counterparts were given economy seats at the back of the plane yet they were the 2011 World Champions. male athletes are more privileged and they get more support than women athletes, moreover the competition rules for both men and women are different, in most cases women compete for short time or distance as compared to their male counterparts, there were different weight categories for men and women, differences in height and weight, size and spacing of equipment or venue. Another issue concerning only women athletes is “fem testing” whereby women athletes go through are tested in order to prove that they are really women but this never happen to male athletes., during the 1960 Olympic Games, women athletes were obliged to go through inspection to verify that they were not cheating and that process was done by male officials whereby women had to be naked in front of them.

2.15. Research Questions

RQ 1. How do women in Lesotho overcome challenges to become boxers?

RQ 2. What motivates women in Lesotho to practice boxing?

RQ 3. How does sport community perceive women boxing in Lesotho?

Chapter 3. Methods

This chapter presents the methodology of this study and how the data was collected in Lesotho. In order to execute this study and find out how women overcome barriers to become boxers. The qualitative method was utilized so as to get necessary information, the findings contributed to understand and get to know why women join this sport that has been classified as the most masculine of all and how they overcome challenges and still continue in such sport. This on the other hand, will contribute in women boxing development as the boxing officials would be quite aware about the factors that they need to consider while working with women boxers, with a well-designed program that meet the requirement of women, the number of women into boxing will increase because the environment will be conducive for them. As argued by Kvale (2011) that a research is qualitative when is curious about how something is done, said, emerged or developed and also tries to, interpret and describe the human experience. Therefore one on one session was organized with the selected interviewee through WhatsApp call due to distance between the interviewer and the target group and that was the only means of communication that the interviewee had access to. The previous study that has been conducted

around women boxing was reviewed and the research questions were formulated.

The researcher is not only from Lesotho but grew up taking part in boxing, since mid-90's. He has an experience from the perspective of athletes, and currently as an official, he managed to represent the country in various international games including the Olympic Games. Furthermore, he has been an active national boxing coach for more than seven years.

Therefore, it was easier for him to target and find the relevant people about this study and with his and the concrete and valid information was collected as the interviewees were quiet aware that the researcher was informed about most of the issues concerning boxing. On contrary to this, there was a fear that some of the participants would not feel free and conformable in telling the challenges that they might had gone through as they know the researcher quite well.

There was no need to involve the third person during the interview to interpret so with only one on one (interviewer and interviewee) the environment was quiet conducive for the interviewees and they were calmed and relaxed without hesitating about what other people may think about them.

3.1. Target Group

The initial target group was twelve participants but due to distance; only seven participants were reached and the other four from the governing sporting organizations did not confirm and only one of the women boxers could not be reached at all. There were three women boxers, two male boxers, a male coach, and a female official from the MGYSR, the aim at MGYSR was to get in details the policies and programs that are in place that attract participation of women in sport and boxing, the implementation plans that target both the officials and the athletes. Due to the history of boxing which was initially a masculine activity and the cultural practices, most of the sporting organizations from international level down to national and grassroots level are still being nominated by male in their executives boards; the international Organization has more than seventy percent of male president and the International Olympic Committee which is the mother body of all Olympic sport is not an exception in this case and in the 2012 London Olympic Games, though all women were represented in all sporting codes, the numbers of male coaches were far ahead as compared to women coaches, the men's team of all countries and forty three of the forty eight women's teams competing at those Olympic Games were completely men

(Pfister, 2013a). Similarly to this, the South African women national boxing teams are purely coached by male coaches (Fasting, Huffman et al. 2014).

The participants targeted were all national boxers, both male and women boxers, one of the women boxers was coming from youth team and the rest were elite national boxers, all these participants were coming from different clubs even the national coach that was part of this target was coming from a different boxing club as all the boxers, but at national team, they managed to work together and some of the women boxers also had gone through a tournament where they fought against each other. All the participants had an international exposure both in Africa and out of Africa. Therefore, they managed to interact with other boxers and officials from other countries from all over the continents with different social and cultural practices.

The other target was from on boxing organization and in it was a national coach that has worked directly with these women and male boxers both at national and international level; it was easier for the researcher when analyzing the data collected all the treatment was coming from the same male participants, these male boxers started playing boxing even before the inclusion of women boxing in to the Olympic program and were not even recognized in Lesotho, and it was believed that their contribution in this

study would be effective, the same issue applied to the coach who has worked with both male and women boxers. Apart from that, coaches are the ones that are in charge of developing training programs for athletes, they are one of the most influential technical people within sporting organizations when it comes to technical issues that involves directly the wealth fare of athletes, also in charge of identifying or recommending the athletes to represent the country at international events, they are involved and interact with athletes daily. Lastly this coach has been involved in boxing even before the inclusion of women boxing in the AIBA programs.

Finally the official from the MGYSR has an experience of organizing national activities, is influential in making the decisions and developing sport policies. On the other hand, this official managed to attend an international event with these male and women boxers including the coach also.

3.2. Supporting Documents

There relevant sporting organizations (LeBA, MGYSR, LNOC, LSRC) documents were revised to see if there were policies in place or programs that contribute in the development of women in Lesotho.

3.3. Interview

A semi-structured interview was used to gather data, with this method, it was easier to make follow up questions so as to be able to get and understand the point raised by the interviewees. Though there were number of questions structured, it was still flexible and allowed additional questions for clarity as mentioned above. The identified target group went through an in-depth interview so as to get detailed information about the challenges that they encountered and how they overcome them. Moreover, this also helped to understand from the perspective of sport officials and coaches. With an in-depth interview, it was easier to get more detailed information, it provided a conducive environment for the interviewees as thus, it became easier to get information as they were relaxed, free and comfortable (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

All the interview sessions were recorded so as to be able to capture all the information from the interviewee as noted by D. I. Jacobsen (2005) that a recorder allow the session to go smoothly without interruption when taking notes and it was even easier to refer to on a later stage while analyzing data.

3.4. Reliability

Consistency in a qualitative research is quite a difficult issues and mostly other researcher prefer to use the term dependability; which has to do with the reasonability of the data collected (Pitney, 2004) The researcher demonstrates how the data has been collected. In this current study, the researcher identified a group that will be available during interview, though there are not many women boxers in Lesotho, this on the other hand exclude other women boxers and officials from other areas in Lesotho . Identifying a target group based on convenience may bring issues of avoiding to interviewing candidates that someone think or believes that they may give negative answers from those expected but in this case the athletes who were interviewed were not from one club though they train together while preparing for the international competitions, they spend most of their time at their respective boxing clubs. Moreover, the sport officials from sporting organization also are not limited to focus only on one area but they are in charge of developing sport throughout the country, they touch every corner of the country even the most remote areas. The entire ten districts in Lesotho have sport officers coming from the MGYSR and some of the activities are staged in those different districts, this makes it easier for the

head of the sporting organizations to have relevant information or knowledge about what is happening across the country.

3.5. Ethical Consideration

Like it was mentioned earlier that the interviews were recorded, this assisted during interpretation of data collected and mostly interviewing people that speak and understand English made it even more easier as the third party was not included for interpretation of the data as such person could omit some of the information while translating and the participants could also not feel conformable to reveal issues which they may feel that they were confidential to the third person.

Though the interviewer had plan to record all the session, this was done after the affirmation of the participants, their approval was supposed to have been requested. Moreover, the purpose of the interview was clearly explained to the participants before the interview could be conducted, the other import factor was confidentiality therefore during the explanation of the interview, discussion about issues that the candidates din not like to appear on the research were taken into consideration, for example; their identity/ names. In this case their results appeared from anonymous people.

The researcher being a citizen of Lesotho and mostly coming from the sport organization in Lesotho put him in an advantageous position of not having any discrimination through the interview process and this also made it even easier for him to identify the most significant candidates in this research. Moreover, the researcher has been within the sporting organizations for quite some time.

Chapter 4. Findings

In order to understand the challenges women overcome to become boxers, the interview was conducted and both male and women national athletes with an international experience were interviewed so as to have a brought understanding about issues affecting women in boxing in Lesotho and how they overcome them, moreover, the National coaches together with top officials from the three main sport organizations were also interviewed. The personal experience was also applied to further interpret the followings findings.

4.1. Barriers Women Encounter in Boxing

The concern was raised that the way male boxing is treated is far better than women boxing; women boxers need to squeeze within male tournament in order to participate. It was also mentioned that coaches and officials have a negative way of approaching women. One of the major challenges found was that there are very few women boxers as all the participants were the only ones in their respective boxing clubs. Mostly girls are expected to be within their homes around five pm doing households or even if there is nothing to do, a girl who is not home by then is regarded as not having discipline, respect and having a futureless life, moreover that is

done for safety purpose, women are found to be more vulnerable at night than men, due to this cultural practices these had to go through a daily accusations of arriving home late. They have to walk a long distance to and fro the boxing gym except only one boxer (Lizzy) whom the boxing gym was just few steps away from home but as for the rest, they reported having to go through the same quarrel with their parents about arriving home late almost every day.

Whenever I arrive home, I would always find accusations...this is not the time to come home...you probably you went out with boys...things like this...for sure you went to see boyfriends, they would think about those things that parents would normally say when their daughters arrives home late after sunset. (Jen)

And Kenny also who lives roughly around five hours' drive from where Ken lives also went through the same challenge, she mentioned that the distance from home to training is about forty five minutes and her parents always complain about being late;

The training starts at 4pm in winter and during summer it starts at 5pm which is the time that I am expected to be within the house by then and parents don't like it because they say I arrive home late and that's the time that I always start training. (Kenny)

4.1.1. Training Environment

The challenge experienced at national level was that due to lack of time, national athletes only used to be together during international

preparation events which would mostly last less than a month so it was a difficult for athletes to be together as one and that lead to individuality. As for Kenny the challenge at national team was how they treat them in terms of conducting training programs;

Technical gym is different from the guys and it's too different and for us we are given the basic and it affects us when we get to the competition.

She further mentioned that they are divided from male boxers during training when technical-tactical elements due to the strength and speed male have and when all are doing physical training, it is easier for them (women) not to do some of the exercises as they have the mind that those can only be performed by male but if training only with women boxers, they perform all the same exercises. Lizzy also experienced the same challenge at national level of being treated in a different way as male boxers, at club level she is being treated like others in a same way and she mentioned that in a national team;

They don't treat us [the coaches] like male boxers when it comes to aggressiveness, they become more aggressive on male athletes than on us and I prefer to get the same treatment as male

4.1.2. Sport Organizations

When asked about issues that they would like to happen, Jen mentioned that male boxers are more privileged than women boxers as the country does not seem to be supportive to women programs, there are no women tournaments, moreover Kenny also affirmed that there are no completions at national level for women, as a result they are bound to take part during tournaments that are scheduled for male and there are very few opponents that she gets during the tournaments.

The conditions of the training facilities in general were mentioned to be very poor though at national level the conditions were quiet better as compared to club level, so in case of Jen she was not free to change in front of other male boxers and even when it is time to check the weight whereby athletes had to take off their clothes and stay only with the inner ones. More over Kenny mentioned training facilities and equipment as a challenge and she was also the first woman to join boxing (name of school) she found it difficult for the male boxers as they were not used to change in from of any woman before and when it comes to training she experienced another problem;

They didn't know how to treat me, they were somehow spoiling / treating me soft because I was a lady and they never had an experience of working with women before, so it was more difficult on their side..., they didn't know how to treat me.. when I started, no one

wanted to spar with me because they were afraid that they will hurt me ...now that I am a senior boxer with experience, sometimes when I demonstrate things, they take it like I want to show power and they respond in an aggressive way, ”(Kenny)

4.1.3. Cultural Behavior

It was found to be a normal issue for the community to have negative comments towards boxing; one boxer recalled being told that she would not get married if continuing taking part in boxing, that was when one of the community woman heard that she was part of the national team “you will... you will never get married...no ways ... [boxing]... your face will be swollen”. She further mentioned that when she got married people were still saying negative thoughts that it was the end of her career in boxing. As for Kenny because of outstanding performance that she had while playing soccer, people did not understand why she changed a sport;

Most thought I was going to join soccer, so when they heard that I was into boxing, they didn't understand how comes and from there they change the way the approach me...that one plays boxing... be careful... she plays boxing and my friends would take advantage that they have a friend that plays boxing and they would intentionally provoke others knowing that they had a backup/ security.

She (Kenny) indicated that it will end up being difficult for her to socialize with people from outside boxing due to the way the perceive women boxers. Lizzy also experienced the similar challenge but in her case, boys would come to provoke her to see how she will respond. “Boys will be

like: I heard you practice boxing you.... Do you think you can challenge me?"

4.1.4. Health Concerns

All these women boxers do agree that boxing is an aggressive sport and most people probably do not join it because they are afraid they will get hurt and they have heard a lot already about people telling them that they will be injured, as for Lizzy she mentioned that she will quit from boxing in case she gets an injury that the doctors will advise her to stop from participating in boxing.

4.2. From Male Boxers' Perspectives

Two top boxers who are amongst the best in the country in terms of performance at both national and international competitions were interviewed and these boxers had been into boxing even before the inclusion of women boxers in Lesotho, so it was easier to get in detail the challenges that women encounter and how they overcome them.

Roy, who has been in boxing for the last ten years and is currently one of the national team boxers expressed that in his club, when they first worked with women boxers at club level was in 2007 and at national level it

was only in 2014 and at club level there was misunderstanding from some of the boxers and whenever the coach is not there they were making the training very difficult and making the women to execute very hard exercises so as to feel frightened and also as way of discouraging them. He further mentioned that some male boxers would be more aggressive while sparring with women. On the other hand Dan who come from a different club but still in the national team as Roy mentioned that it has been 8 years since he joined boxing but for him, he first encounter women in 2014 at national team and he believes that most of his colleagues do not appreciate working training with women boxers even though cannot pin point their reason behind that, he further mentioned that the environment has changed since the inclusion of women boxers in their program, and they also get tempted while women change their outfit or if they go and check their weights with only the inner garments but there is nothing that they can do as that happens during training camp where their minds has to focus on competition. On the same issue, he further mentioned that even officials get tempted and they come up with indirect ways to seduce women boxers though there has never been a case reported or heard concerning this.

4.2.1. Facilities

While asked about the conditions of the facilities and equipment, both athletes shared the same experience [Roy and Dan] that their facilities are not conducive to accommodate both sex but on their side, that was not a challenge as they had taken them as their sister though they could sense that some of the women boxers were not free to be changing their clothes in front of them.

4.2.2. Differences between Male and Female Boxers

The other issue that was raised concerning the two was that there is no much interest from the fans when women are fighting unlike when it is time for male boxers. Roy explained;

Mostly when women fight is going on fans don't pay attention, they start doing their personal thing, I think it's because they don't find it interesting, they don't see them too aggressive as male boxers, their fight is too passive.

Even Dan expressed the same that “*fans would even go out when it's a fight for women*”, he argued that male boxers are more privileged than women boxers as they are more exposed to competitions that women and he further showed that all the members are to be blamed in this case ;

Some of female boxers do not attend train on a regular basis and some are being lazy during training and that discourages coaches to concentrate on them and even the official's end up only focusing on

staging male competitions only. The Lesotho Boxing Federation has to do with this, it doesn't come up with programs that are targeted only for women so as to encourage them to join or stay in boxing.

When asked about why the number of women boxers is too low as compared to male boxers, Roy explained that amongst other factors that contribute, women themselves are to be blamed, they do not take boxing as a sport but as a fight; *I will not join that that... and take it as a sport yet it's a fight* "I can't fight and take it as a sport. Moreover, some women are afraid that they will be told to spar with the strong and experienced male boxers during their first day and they will be knocked out. About the competition time given to women which is two minutes while male boxers the round is three minutes, Roy said it is ok like that way as women would struggle to go beyond two minutes and apart from that they are now used to fight for two minutes.

4.2.3. Society towards Boxing

Dan explained that the community does see women boxers in a negative way which might affect them when they want to get married;

Our culture is too stereotyped...she [woman that practice boxing] is classified as another man....they say how can I get married to another woman.

4.3. Motivation and How Women Overcome Barriers in Boxing

In order for these women to join and stay in boxing, they came up with different ways on how to overcome barriers in boxing, though they all came from different clubs and communities, they somehow share similar experiences here and there.

Jen explained that for them to get the same treatment as male boxers, they have to go extra mile and prove a point that they have what it takes to become a boxer, and it is only through then that people get to appreciate and accept them as boxers and in terms of officials that seem to be distracting them by seducing them, she also mention that people who were close to her showed an interest on how the coach was giving her special attention, and she said she overcome that by ignoring the behavior of the coach;

I just ignore them and always remember what brought me to into boxing and what I want... I want to know boxing... become a champ not for only a year...having affairs with coaches will destroy my sport career.

4.3.1. Training at Club and National Level

The challenge of arriving home late had put Jen in a difficult spot as she was told that she would not be allowed to attend trainings anymore if she keeps arriving late. Kenny also experienced the same challenge of being accused that she arrives home very late but they got support and motivation

from their colleagues (male boxers) at club level who had one spirit and they would accompany them home after finishing training so that they will not be on their own at night though Kenny mentioned that in her community, she does not find it to be a challenge for a woman to be out on her own because the area is safe. also did not encounter any challenge while joining boxing for the first time at her local club; she mentioned that she was invited by one of the male boxers in that same club and at her arrival there was another woman boxer though she did not stay longer due to school commitment, she went to [name of country] to continue with her studies. As the training sessions start at the time when women have to be doing households, Jen would make sure that she does all the work earlier before going to boxing, even after being called for national team, she would still continue doing the same and as the only girl amongst boys, she had to do all the households by herself but she also showed that her brothers supported and motivated her to continue with boxing, they would encourage her to go for training even while feeling lazy and tired and even on weekends when there were no training sessions, they would encourage her to do some training at home and they would join her. The other factor that motivated her when she first joined boxing was the fact she was taught the basics before she would be put to spar, which is one of the issues that makes

women to quit from boxing if they spar without knowing the basic punches and defenses.

Yeah... I guess my coach was not putting me to spar with them but after sometime then I started doing sparring with them (male boxers) and they were not taking it easy at me, I understood that they wanted me to be more stronger... and also to identify the mistakes” (Jen)

They were surprised (Male athletes) to see how committed I was while training and they liked it and motivated that and encouraged me to work harder and I felt welcomed in a new family... I liked it, they train hard and treat me like a man and I enjoyed and liked that. It gave me chance to prove a point that women can also perform like men” (Lizzy)

Lizzy further explained that she enjoyed being treated the same as male boxers and that helped her improve her boxing skills faster, she emphasized that though the training is aggressive they still know that they are working with a woman. She also enjoyed the fact that she was the only woman and had to spar with male boxers;

Men are aggressive by nature, and the challenge of practicing with men is what I prefer rather than practicing with women boxers because they give me pressure and I want to be like them...I want to be aggressive when I'm boxing, I want people to ask is that a woman or a man.

When it comes to discrimination and harassment all women boxers stated that they never experienced any kind of discrimination or harassment both at club level or national level. While asked about the support from the main sporting organizations, Jen mentioned that at national level, the

country is not doing enough to support women programs in sport but she is using that as a motivation hoping one day the country would see and appreciate their commitment in sport. due to poor training facilities and the fact that only men were the one practicing boxing, she found it difficult in terms of changing training attire and she opt to go to training wearing the training attire already from home as the boxing gym is within her village where she stays but when she was called to join national team, she had to travel a longer distance and she still found the training hall also used as changing room for both male and women boxers and in this situation she spot a corner that was behind the pillar to hide and used it to change and wear training attire and also after training.

Unfortunately we didn't know that we will have to change in the same room with male boxers....but when the reality came... it wasn't that easy for me to quit as I had come long way to get to that stage At least we would only be with women boxers, unfortunately we don't have women coaches... it's a challenge too but within this you end up making it easier for you by bringing up a motivation in it.. For the fact that my coach is here.. You end up saying he is my coach who is older than me... and I think he won't think like those boys, these are the things you end thinking. And you don't think he could be one of those who can turn up behaving and seeing you in a different way and also for the fact that you will be in an activity that you like.. You don't think of those things. (Jen)

As for Kenny and Lizzy this was never a challenge for them

Taking off clothes in front of men; I don't mind, that's me, I don't mind, even if its male officials operating at the weighing, I don't mind as long as they don't misbehaveI was from football where I used

*to play with boys, I was used to the issue of changing amongst boys.
(Kenny)*

Having to share (change amongst male athletes) was never a challenge as I had experienced the same while I was in soccer, and then I told myself that it's the athletes life and these are athletes and I have nothing to fear. (Lizzy)

The challenge of changing within other male boxers was only a challenge for Jen but when it comes to Kenny; she did not see that as a challenge on her side but at the local club that she had joined while attending school, she found that male boxers were having a challenge to change while she was around therefore she decided to always wait for them to change their outfit and she would change hers after they have left, she would also wait for them to go before she stepping on the scale to check her weight and because they did not know how to treat her, they were even afraid to spar with her thinking that they would hurt her, so she mentioned that she had to wait until she had like four tournaments before they could accept sparring with her. On the other hand, when she joined national team, she said the environment was conducive as male boxers did not have any challenge in changing around women boxers and they were changing everything together, she said in that way she felt comfortable and also welcomed. It became easier for her to adopt fast and fit among the male boxers who had known each other for several years.

Changing clothes in the same room with male boxers could be a challenge but for the fact that I was from football where I used to play with boys, I was used to the issue of changing within boys.

The international exposure is one of the factor that motivated women to stay in boxing, they were not only glad that they became the first women to represent the country at international level but were also interested and motivated while seeing the facilities that other countries have.

Jen mentioned that simple things like “mirrors” motivates a lot to have inside the training hall and when seeing that one does not need to travel a long distance when there is a need to use a restrooms, she further mentioned that Lesotho does not have those fancy facilities that cannot her from continuing practicing boxing,

For the fact that I love rough sport, it's not that easier for me to quit... I am a person who don't just quit... Boxing is a very difficult sport; you need a lot of concentration. Moreover in the next future, I want to set a record in boxing and a very good one. “Not just that I was a boxer ...i was just a boxer...just..i was just a boxer, no I don't want something like that one I want have a record in boxing and a very good one....Very good one. That's what I want. I like boxing, I want to be like a star so that when I look back at my record I would say when I came to boxing I was a novice without knowing anything about boxing but now I know that I am star because of boxing.. I am who I am because of boxing or I have got this because of boxing. That motivates me to push and push harder in boxing no matter the challenges.

4.3.2. Cultural Practices

When it comes to households issues, it was obligatory for women to do households and they mentioned that they would dedicate time for that before attending training, the exception was Lizzy who mentioned that her family would understand that she comes back tired from training and she was not excused from that, she would only dedicate time for that on weekends when there are no boxing activities going on.

The media themselves find that objectivity gives their own news product a higher and wider market value.

4.4. Personality and What Brought Women into Boxing

Women boxers though coming from different boxing clubs and districts, they shared similarities in terms of how they grew up, Jen is the only girl and all her siblings are boys and she used to play taekwondo before joining boxing, ,as for Kenny, the second born in a family of four children (two boys and two girls) she mentioned that she used to play soccer and she joined boxing in 2011 and her parents did not have a problem because they knew that she grew up already having an interest on the other side and as for Lizzy, there are only two girls from here family, she could not remember the exact year in which she joined boxing and the researcher had to remind her

about the boxing activities that were happening during that time, she mentioned that she joined boxing early 2012 and just like Kenny, she was also come from soccer and she just liked boxing even before joining it, she used to watched it on television and boxing videos. they all mentioned that they grew up doing “boys” activities and they did not grow up playing with other girls or doing girls activities, therefore their parents and the people who knew how they grew up were not surprised while join boxing.

*My friends support me but they were worried that I will get hurt... My parents already knew that I was already in love with boxing so they easily supported me from the beginning, they used to see the way I was interested in following boxing channel program on TV. I would spend the night watching boxing on TV so they knew, apart from that I never played boys activities, I would play by myself as we were with my sister and from there I met boys and I was always with them.
(Lizzy)*

I was attracted by...I think I'm a person who doesn't have friends... and most of the time I like to do something that will put me on the spotlight. So boxing is a difficult sport...I wanted to do something very difficult that it won't be easier for other women to do it... not every woman can do it. Again, I had a role model (name of foreign model)...I like her she motivates me. (Jen)

They were also asked if they would change boxing for another sport of their favorite and they all say they would not quit boxing to join another sport, Kenny further mentioned that she would try to try basketball but as a form of hobby not that she can quit from boxing.

(Laughing)... I like boxing...may be basketball but I like boxing, I have watched basketball and it looks interesting. But that doesn't

mean that I would quit boxing for basketball, only that I would like to experience it. (Kenny)

4.5. Motivation and Support from Male Boxers

The male boxers shared similar thoughts about women boxers; they mentioned that they were personally happy and it was interesting to have them training together, Roy had an experienced of training with women boxers from club level but as for Dan, it was his first encounter with them at national team but he found the environment to be very interesting although he felt that other male boxers did not feel the same.

I think It's more interesting when they are around, we are able to share a lot together, we are able to share ones which was lacking before they join us apart from that I am one of the boxers that understand promote gender equality. (Dan)

Roy mentioned that he was happy to have women joining his club though he still considers boxing as a masculine sport; he personally does not have any problem when women join boxing.

I think It's more interesting when they are around, we are able to share a lot together, we are able to share oneness which was lacking before they joined us apart from that I am one of the boxers that support and promote gender equality.

While asked about sparring with women boxers, Roy showed that there are individual who were being very tough to women but the majority of male boxers seemed to have a different approach towards women, they

treated them in a way that they will feel welcome and as for Dan, he believes that all male boxers in the team were treating the women boxers in a very easy and soft way, for him, no one was rude or trying to show power or aggressiveness.

I used to spar with them (women boxers) and I never take it negative, even when she connects a strong punch, I never take it personal, I always knew that we had different strength so I was taking it as their time and chance to practice. (Roy)

I have practiced with women but I knew that they will not undermine me if they connect with a strong punch, for the fact that I know that we are practicing and there is no where we can fight together, it makes me take it easy and concentrate on what I'm doing. (Dan)

The coaches also were reported to have a support when dealing with women boxers at club level and even at national level as they are treated equally and when it comes to changing training attire and weighing Roy explained that he had a feeling that women were not that free amongst men but as for them, they did not have a problem with that as they were treating them like their “sisters”. They further explained that they have never experienced or heard about any incident of violence amongst women boxers in boxing.

4.5.1. Factors that Motivates Women to Stay in Boxing

The male boxers expressed the support that comes from them as one of the factors that attract women to stay in boxing, they get same treatment, they approach them in a positive way that goes with respect and also the time they dedicate sharing the skills and also kindness and lenience.

They are in love with the sport; they get support from the boxers and officials. They believe that they can go further if they stay for longer. They see us as their role models. Boxing is somehow different from other sport and women want to be part of boxing community. (Roy).

Dan explained that the existing women boxers find the “boxing” to be attractive, they see male boxers as their role models and they get motivated and want to be like them, moreover they want to become the pioneers in boxing.

4.5.2. Cultural Practices – African Body

When it comes to African women body, Dan agreed that it might be a challenge form women engaging in boxing as they will have to reduce their weight and avoid being fat, yet the community believes that a family woman should be huge and big but on his side he mentioned that he is ready to marry a woman boxers and it will even be easier to live with such a woman as she will understand the suffering and pains that he goes through

as a boxer. They further mentioned that they do not have a problem even when their sisters/ siblings join boxing, they will support them.

4.5.3. Women Personalities

Male boxers were also asked to give their thoughts about issues that might have contributed in attracting women to join boxing and Roy explained that the women that had joined seemed to be having the masculine lifestyle they are aggressive and do not have a fear of getting hurt, he further mentioned that not every woman can join and stay in boxing but it needs someone who is aggressive and not weak, just like for men, not all of men are macho some of them are weak and they cannot make it in boxing.

These boxers who showed that they accept training with women boxers further mentioned that they can support their sisters/ siblings if they want to join boxing. Roy from a family of 3 children and as the only son explained that;

If they (her sisters) choose to join boxing I would not have any problem in that, I would encourage and support them. If they attend training and have to do households, I would support them and let them attend training, I would do households to allow them have time attend training.

Dan also is the only boy but amongst six girls, he explained that he support fully the issues of gender equality and he will do all to support

women boxers, and he would also do the same to his sisters if they join boxing. In terms of women boxers having to change in the same room as male boxers, he showed that those women boxers that they have seem not to have a problem with that as they are always free.

Women boxers behave like male boxers, they don't mind about that "they go and step on the scale to check their weight having bra and panties only". That's normal from both sides.

4.6. Coaches Perspectives about Women Boxers

One of the coach that worked with these women boxers was interviewed so as to get in depth understanding about what kind of challenges the overcome and how the coaches motivate women boxers to join and stay in boxing, from the perspective of coach it became easier to identify the gap between the women boxers and them the coaches and also their relationship with other members such as male boxers.

Rocky started boxing since 1996 and he has been in the national team ever since the year 1999 until 2010, and he started coaching in 2009, it was in 2014 where he was given the chance to coach the national team that was preparing for the 2014 Commonwealth Games, the team was composed of seven male boxers and two women boxers. He mentioned that in 2013, it was the first time to have women boxers at his club when the researcher brought them but he never got to work with them.

I was afraid of them and I never interfered with them, I just used to see them as boxers training and never bothered with their behavior or what was happening with them, because my mind was only on the people that I always worked with (male boxers). As ladies were novices without knowing anything about boxing.

For the fact that I had no experience working with them, I was afraid of, it was my first time to experience that in boxing, I was afraid that they would feel like as I was oppressing / violating I wouldn't train them like as male athletes, I thought they would feel violated if giving them the same training as male athletes and they would quit because of that.

While describing the women boxers that she coached at national team, he mentioned that the other was too sissy and weak (she was behaving like a woman) as the other one, he mentioned that he could see that she was used to training and she was laddish, she did not care and trained like a “man”. He further mentioned that the lady that looked and behaved like a man was so much into boxing and she was mostly talking about boxing issues and as for the other one who was too womanly was always enjoying relationships conversations.

4.6.1. Interaction amongst Boxers

Rocky motioned that he would spent most of his time with male boxers just because he was used to them and as for women boxers, they would only meet during the training sessions. He further mentioned that at the training camp, the only woman boxer that he would spent time with

during free time was the one who behaved like a man as the other one would be gone with other boxers, but if there was enough time to train together before attending the competitions, that would help to understand each other in a much better way but currently the team only meet during the competitive period and the time is not enough to get to understand and know each other.

4.6.2. Training Sessions

He explained that one of the women boxers approached him showing concern about how the training sessions were conducted, raising the issue that they were not given the same treatment as male boxers and he explained that he had thought that those women boxers could not perform the same tasks as male boxers hence having different training programs, as a result women only used to work together without practicing with male boxers.

I would always have male boxers practicing together without including women boxers their performance (male boxers) would be affected in a negative because women don't posse the same strength and speed as male boxers.

The other issue raised by the coach was that it became difficult to conduct training session for both male and women boxers at the same time

at their completion time is different and the training was supposed to be different so as to meet each boxer's needs.

I was only used to work with male boxers only, I had to divide and give different tasks to each group and that was a big challenge and it became difficult to control and focus on both side at once, It would be easier to work with another coach so as to focus only on one group. It was like having two sessions at once”.

4.6.3. Preference and Competition

After the experience he had working with the two groups, Rocky showed that he preferred to train with male boxes over women boxers because he is used to work with male boxers and it becomes easier to understand each other. When it comes competition time allocated to women, he mentioned that he believed it would be difficult for women if their time is changed from two minutes per round to three minutes just like male boxers, and if there is no way to increase the quota for women boxers to be the same as male boxers, he would rather leave it like that because of the different standard that they posse and the fans do not enjoy women boxing as much as male boxing and the influence could be that this sport has been only known as masculine sport and may be in four women fights only one would be somehow close to male boxing fight.

The way male boxers fight is different from women boxers, even the supporters enjoy much about male boxers, whenever there is a competition whereby both women and male boxers are fighting, the

fans don't concentrate on women fights, they always keep themselves busy with something or even go outside of the competition venue until they are done and will come back when they are done to watch the male boxers.

4.7. Motivation from Coaches Perspectives

The male boxers were described having an influence on attracting women into joining boxing and even those who have joined still identify their role models after joining. This was described by the coach while asked about the issues that attract women to join and stay in boxing regardless the challenges, on his side Rocky also explained that he motivates the boxers by talking to them about how they can improve their skills and performance, and because he does not put them to spar or practice with male boxers, he spend a lot of time with them on boxing pads and punching bags practicing the technique and combinations, he further mentioned that he has never received any complained or a report concerning harassment from those side (male or women boxers).

I have never heard about such cases, may be the meeting that you (researcher) once held for all the boxers concerning sexual harassment behavior and respect towards one another contributed a lot in not experiencing such behaviors.

On the other hand the international exposure was mentioned by the coach as one of the contributing factor in making women to stay in boxing and when asked about what could have brought the existing women boxers

in to boxing, the coach explained that some women enjoys and like aggressive activities.

Some would come and quit after experiencing the training, they would say hhhmm.i will never come again here, they are afraid of the intensive training, but for others that's what they like about boxing, they really want to experience that aggressive intensive training.

4.7.1. Relationship

Though he mentioned that he would spent most time with male boxers, he also mentioned that one of the women boxers used to join them at the training camp during their spare time and that brought a positive impact on the team which has never experience to be with women during their training or camping period.

4.7.2. Facilities

Sharing the same training room was mentioned to be a challenge on the side of dividing training sessions but in terms of changing attire, Rocky mentioned that both male and women boxers seemed to be free to change attire amongst each other without any problem and they were behaving like a family but during the competition he mentioned that he would leave the women boxer in the changing room to change and wear competition attire and would join after they had finished changing.

The coach explained that now understand women boxing and he appreciate it, but though he cannot allow his wife to join and compete, at least he can allow and support his daughter if she joins. The reason about his wife is that she is old to be competing with girls who could be their mother but in a situation where she just join boxing without attending competitions then there will be no challenge in that circumstance.

4.8. Perspective from Sport Organizations

The ministry of Gender and Youth, Sport and Recreation is the mother body of sport in the country and one of the officials was interviewed to get the understanding of how women sport is perceived and what are the policies and programs in place to motivate women to join and stay in sport. KB explained in the interview that she grew up playing taekwondo and women football. From her personal experience she mentioned that before she joined those mentioned sporting codes, she used to play with boys and she enjoyed a lot of boy's activities and apart from that there were no sporting activities available at her village and the only sport that was available was taekwondo.

From the perspective of the ministry, she explained that the ministry as the policy maker does recognize and appreciate the participation of

women in sport; it creates enable environments so as to attract more women in sport. The policy is being implemented by the national federation through the Lesotho Sport and Recreation Commission together with the Lesotho National Olympic Committee but she mentioned that there is no reliability in this as most of the sport federations seem to be more inclined on masculine sport and there is little that is being done for women sport.

4.8.1. Challenges

She mentioned that there is still a long way to go as the national federations do not have clear policies and programs for women and the other issue is that sport was initially portrayed as masculine activities for quite long time and that is still remains in some people. The other issue mentioned was the financial support that comes from the ministry is allocated without having the plan on how women programs will be tackled so if women do not show interest then no one cares about them.

There are no criteria selection while identifying team that will represent the country at international level and that was mentioned as one factor that demotivate the few women who have interest in sport.

4.8.2. Support and Motivation

Sharing the same training room was mentioned to be a challenge on the side of dividing training sessions but in terms of changing attire, Rocky mentioned that both male and women boxers seemed to be free to change attire amongst each other without any problem and they were behaving like a family but during the competition he mentioned that he would leave the women boxer in the changing room to change and wear competition attire and would join after they had finished changing.

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4.8.3. What Brings Women into Boxing

Internal purposes, the good feeling of participating in such sport because it gives perspective that one is stronger and that is what some women like and enjoy when they are portrayed as different from normal women. The availability of sports facilities in their area and also the

exposure to such sports in their community also contribute in attracting athletes.

4.8.4. Sexual Harassment

KB explained there is a big challenge concerning sexual harassment and some of the athletes do not report it and on the other hand there are no strong measures of controlling it, especially when it is done by the officials. She experienced it in one of the event whereby two officials were caught and they were expelled from the team. Most of the athletes do not report it as they believe that it might cost them their sporting career especially when it is done by the official.

4.9. Documentations

The three leading sporting organizations were exploited to find out if there are documents talking about women in sport, even the Lesotho Boxing Association and the LSR (ACT 2002) and Constitution (LSRC 2011) indicates that the LSRC has amongst its function *“To promote sport amongst the disabled, and disadvantaged members of the community”* apart from that the Act further shows that there are members within the executive committee which have the responsibility of dealing with women in sport.

Talent identification terms of reference (LSRC 2013) and Strategic Plan (LSRC 2013) also stipulate that it has the function of promoting the number of women participating in sport (2013). Article 3: stipulate that there will be none discrimination of an affiliate, a group or a person for religious, political ethical or gender reasons is strictly prohibited and punishable.

Chapter 5. Discussion

5.1. Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to describe the barrier women overcome to become boxers in Lesotho. Moreover, the factors that motivate women to practice boxing were also exploited. Through this study it was found that women boxers in Lesotho started representing the country at international events in 2014, the inclusion of women boxing at the 2012 London Olympic Games could have influenced many countries to develop and promote women boxing. All the women boxers confirmed to have grown up inclined into masculine activities and they never enjoyed girl's activities, they joined boxing coming from taekwondo and soccer which also have the aggressiveness element. In addition, the study conducted by (Mennesson, 2000) finds the similar as this one that women who join boxing grew up practicing and enjoying masculine activities. The male boxers on the also describe a woman boxer as someone that has male characters, a woman is not afraid of pain or a woman that behaves like a man.

It was also found that women boxers enjoyed being treated the same way as male boxers during training and sparring with male boxers, they agree that male boxers are stronger than them in terms of power and they believe that their performance will increase faster while practicing with

male boxers. The other factor that contributed and attracted them was that boxing is a complex sport, of which most women cannot afford to join and sustain its training and pain; these women like to be associated with aggressiveness, strength or uniqueness. They experience complete internal satisfaction only in boxing; they enjoy the pain and thrill that is brought by the aggression in boxing.

The conditions of the facilities both from the club level up to the national team were reported not to be conducive to accommodate women boxer and they had to change their training attire amongst male boxers but due to the respect and support that they got from male boxers, sharing the same changing room was not an issue to them at national level rather they took it as “sport life” that athletes live like that but surprisingly at club level though there was a challenges of changing at the same room with male boxers and they had to come to training putting on the training attire from home or wait for male boxers to change first.

Studies by Halbert; Chaudhuri; and Cove and Young found that women boxers were experiencing challenges as the coaches who would ignore them and focus more on male boxers during training and sparring (Halbert, 1997; Chaudhuri ,2012; Cove and Young, 2007). Moreover, male boxers were also reported to be treating women boxers in an aggressive way

during sparring so as to demotivate them from joining boxing, but in a case of women boxers in Lesotho, it was found that male boxers were happy to train with women boxers and they were treating them like their sisters with respect and they were taking it easy and soft during sparring with women boxers. This gives women boxers to relax they improve their skills as they are not thinking about getting hurt but the focus is on doing the correct task given well. The coaches were also taking into consideration while planning training session for male and women boxers, the focus on the pads and punching bag was found to be one of the motivating factors for women boxers.

In terms of programs designed for development of women sport in Lesotho, there has not been any significant initiatives taken into developing and promoting women boxing and women sport as whole by all the sporting organization in the country but there are policies in place. The study that was conducted by Chaudhuri 2012 similarly finds the same challenge that there are few women boxing programs as compared to male programs. In Lesotho due to unavailability of women boxing programs, women boxers end up competing in the events that are staged for male boxers but on their side, the understanding is that it happens due to the fact that women boxing is a new program in the country and it is their responsibility to work harder

so as to prove a point that women can still perform like male boxers and also to take it to the next level, the other issue that motivate them is that all the governing sporting organizations do have policies that support women sport and they take into consideration women sport though there are no clear implementation programs. On the other hand there are very few numbers of women representatives at managerial positions and most of the decisions taken do not favor women boxers. But surprisingly, the main sporting organizations are being led by women and they are Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sport and Recreation, the Lesotho National Olympic Committee and the Lesotho Sport and Recreation Commission.

Some studies suggest that parents played an important role in influencing women to join boxing, though the motive was only to lose weight and keep fit (Halbert, 1997; Kim, 2014; Mennesson, 2000). In Lesotho, though sport is not a cultural practice and parents there is no inflectional support to join sport from the families and a woman is seeing to be nice and beautiful while having a big body, as a results women boxers who joined boxing in Lesotho were not attracted by the external benefit of losing weight but their aim from the beginning was to become boxers that will go through sparring and tournament. The society in Lesotho just like in other African countries prefer a woman who is big over a slim woman as

big and fat woman is seeing to be having a potential of being a good family material. (Mciza, 2006; Walter & Du Randt, 2011) that African women are nice when they have a big body. The women that choose to join boxing were aware that they would not gain weight while practicing boxing and the negative influence from the society was not enough to make them quit, they were having more support from their families, coaches and male boxers.

The rate of violence against women is very high in Lesotho and that could be one of the factors that contributed when parents accuse their daughters when arriving home late after sunset, the study that was facilitated by the (Gneder Links, 2013) .indicates that women are vulnerable to violence. Furthermore, (Fasting, Huffman, & Sand, 2014) argue that sport organizations are aware of violence in sport but there is a need for prevention by developing programs, policies and code of conduct. In Lesotho, it was reported that some of the women athletes do not report violence especially when it is done by their officials, the athletes are afraid to be exposed and also that those officials might take them out of the team. But inside boxing, there has not been any case reported about violence against women boxers either by male boxers or officials. This is one of the positive impact that motivated women boxers to stay in boxing and also

there is no fear from the parents when their daughters are in the boxing programs, moreover there is a trust from boxing officials and male boxers.

5.2. Practical and Theoretical Implications

The inclusion of women boxing in the Olympic program was a great achievement in sport, as women are now represented in all sporting codes at the Olympic program but there is a still gap in terms of number of women representatives both at administrative and technical level including athletes. For instance in the southern part of Africa (Fasting et al., 2014) found that there are no women coaches and women boxers are being coached by solely male coaches. What was found to be a surprising issue was that, these women boxers in Lesotho did not grow within boys only, there was one of them who only had a sister and without boys in her family, but still they chose masculine activities from their early stage of their lives. Furthermore, in case of male boxers, they are the only boys amongst all girls in their families. It is obvious that the siblings are not the contributing factors for girls to choose male behavior or vice versa. For the fact that these women boxers were already inclined into masculine activities, they all grew up playing boys games and they never enjoyed girl's activities, before joining boxing, they were playing soccer and taekwondo but never get to enjoy the

that feeling that they get in boxing which is associated with aggression. Moreover, their experience in those sports contributed in a positive way to adopt easily within boxing, with male boxers and coaches, it was even found that they preferred to be given the same treatment as male boxers in terms of training and sparring. With a personality of a woman that is more into masculine behavior, it becomes easier to overcome the barriers to become a boxer and issues that may be negative for women in boxing such as aggressiveness are the ones that these kind of women who are into masculine behavior like to be associated with, and this has attracted not only to overcome the barriers in boxing but also to stay. They enjoy being perceived in a different way from other women, that being strong, unique and that they enjoy the complexity of the boxing, the pain and the thrill that is brought by the aggression of boxing complete their internal satisfaction of which they cannot find in another sport. The study by Oates (1980) argues that boxing is the most masculine sport of all. The way in which “boxing” is, makes it more enjoyable to these women. A combined training sessions with male boxers also motivates them and they enjoy the same treatment that as male boxers. The negative behavior of male boxers and coaches demotivated women boxers and they drop because they feel welcomed, in Lesotho the boxing family (officials and male boxers) play an important role in

making the environment conducive and adaptable for women and that is motivation and support women boxers get from both male boxers and coaches. The special attention and support which include pads, punching bag and extra care from the coach motivate women boxers and also the way male boxers control their aggressiveness and power while sparring with them gives women boxer to get to practice and develop their skills. Although the coaches do take into consideration and plan the training sessions in a way that it will accommodate women boxers, they prefer to work with male boxers over women boxers, and they do not take initiatives to develop programs that will attract women in boxing and also that will contribute to overcome the challenges that women encounter in boxing. Moreover the study that was conducted by (Dowling, 2000) finds that coaches do prefer to train male boxers over women boxers.

The programs that target the inclusion of women at all levels from the administrative level until the technical level would contribute in women boxing development and bridging the gap between male and women boxing. Women who grew up into male activities overcome barriers in boxing easier than normal women who grew up inclined on girl's activities. The talent identification programs that focus on women may contribute in the increase of women participation in boxing rather than expecting women to take

initiatives of joining boxing and also campaign which involves the society and the parents also can attract more participation of women in boxing and eliminate the negative issues that comes to be barriers for women who want to join boxing. Code of conduct policies and educational programs might keep the good standard of respect towards women in boxing and minimize chances of violence.

Lesotho is not a culture of sport, the society does not see the benefit of being involved in sport, and boxing is even the worst sport that the society approves for women, there were negative comments from the society about women joining boxing but as mentioned earlier, the boxing family motivated and supported them very much, apart from that their parents also played an important role of allowing them to join boxing, but just like other parents, they were still expecting these women boxers to be doing the household chores and also there was a challenge about training time and the time that girls must be at home.

There are clear policies from sport governing organizations which support development of women sport, these attract women to join and stay in sport. However, there are no clear programs on monitoring implementation of these polices, otherwise there would be equal representation of women in boxing competitions.

There is different way in which women boxers are treated from club level and when they get to the national level, club level coaches treat the women boxers as the same as male boxers and at the national level, the training is divided and this is a challenge as they are now used to be receiving the same training especially when it comes to technical-tactical aspects, the other difference is that male boxers at national level are more open and flexible than as club level, changing in front of women boxers was not a challenge from the male boxers and that makes it easier for women boxers to adopt and feel welcomed.

There is no significant development in terms of programs that involved women sport and there are no clear procedures on how to combat violence in sport, there is a challenge about violence in sport.

5.3. Limitation and Future Research Direction

The women's boxing is very new phenomena in Africa as a whole and there are no previous studies conducted in Lesotho around women boxing. This study was only limited to national athletes and coaches there is a need to go further and include other boxers who are not national boxers and also from club coaches, also the inclusion of media in sport may assist in getting into details the barriers women overcome to become boxers.

Moreover, the inclusion of the parents and the point from the perspectives of the community would also give a broader picture and understanding of issues related to women boxing.

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국문초록

레소토 여성이 권투선수가 되기 위해 극복해야 될 장벽

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체육교육과

아프리카에서 권투는 가장 남성적인 스포츠 이고 문화적 관습상 여성이 권투에 참여하는 것을 좋아하지 않는다. 따라서 본 연구는 여성이 Lesotho 권투 선수가 되기 위해 극복해야 될 장애요인, 여성이 권투에 참여하고 싶게 하는 동기 부여 요인, 그리고 남성 권투선수, 코치, 주요 스포츠 관계자, 관련 스포츠 단체로부터의 자료를 통해 여성이 장애요인을 극복하고 권투를 계속 하게 하는 동기 부여 요인을 찾으려 한다. 자료 수집은 국가대표팀(3명의 여성 선수, 2명의 남성 선수, 코치, Lesotho의 모든 스포츠 단체의 모체인 Ministry

of Gender and Youth, Sport and Recreation의 대표진)과의 심층 인터뷰를 통해 하였다. 남성활동을 즐긴 여성들이 권투선수가 될 인격을 가지게 되고, 권투와 공격으로부터의 고통을 즐기는 것을 찾아 내었다.

여성 권투선수들은 코치와 남성권투선수들의 도움으로 환영의 느낌을 받으면서 동기부여를 얻었다. 또한 그녀들의 가족들의 도움으로 가능하였다. 코치들은 여성 권투선수들에게 남성 권투선수들보다 더 많은 관심을 가졌고, 그녀들에게 맞는 프로그램설계에도 마다하지 않았다. 또 다른 발견 점은, 권투 팬들이 남성 권투시합에 더 많은 관심을 가지나 여성이 남성 스포츠인 권투에서 얼마나 할 수 있는 호기심을 보인다는 것이다.

스포츠 협회에는 Lesotho 여성 스포츠를 지원하는 정책이 있으나, 여성들이 스포츠에 참여하고 유치하기 위한 프로그램 구현이 없음을 발견하였다. 그러나 놀랍게도 스포츠 협회에 대다수가 남성이고 여성은 매우 적으나, Lesotho의 3 주요 기구를 여성에 의해 주도되고 있는 것을 발견하였다. 그리고 여성을 포함하는 국제적 스포츠 행사가 있을 때 마다 스포츠 협회는 여성 운동선수들을 행사에 참가시켰다. 이것이 여성 운동선수들이 동기부여를 받는 요인이다. 그러나 남성 운동선수는 여성운동선수들에 비해 항상 더 많은 특권을

받게 된다.

주요어: 여성권투, 장애물, 스포츠 단체, 동기

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