

# **Right to the Back Page**

## **Media Coverage of Women in Sport by National Newspapers in Zambia: An Assessment of State Compliance to Women's Right to Sport**

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**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the Masters in Women's Law at the University of  
Zimbabwe**

**Declaration**

I, Lombe Annie Mwambwa do hereby declare that this thesis is my original work presented towards the Masters in Women's Law, to University of Zimbabwe, and has not previously been presented for any degree or other award in any academic institution.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This work is approved for submission towards fulfilment of the degree of Masters in Women's Law by the supervisor.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Abstract

### **Right to the Back Page - Coverage of Women in Sport by National Newspapers: An Assessment of State Compliance to Women's Right to Sport**

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This dissertation is based on the premise that sport is a fundamental human right therefore with state obligations to be met and that media representation is strategic in addressing some limitations of access to sport; I assert that by not actively addressing limited coverage of women in sport in state owned newspapers, the state is in violation of their obligation to respect, protect and fulfil women's right to sport.

In this study I have explored the attitudes and experiences of newspaper reporters and editors, corporate sector actors, sports women, academicians, as well as state departments in charge of sport, media, human rights and gender.

I investigated how decision making by reporters and editors and their interaction with sports institutions result in limited coverage and at times exclusion of women in the newspaper sports pages.

Engaging with a multi-pronged methodological and theoretical framework, I utilise processes and tools including feminist, media, development and human rights. I address three dimensions of the problem- the dynamics of limited coverage of women by newspapers, the normative framework of the right to sport and lastly interventions in addressing this situation.

I posit that due to the gendered society the media actors develop in, the way they perceive information reinforces that gendered reality in the guise of the media principle of 'newsworthiness' and 'public interest'. Further, because of the internal culture and the 'invisible surveillance', media actors regulate themselves to act and publish what reinforces the gendered societal norms, thus contributing to a process of legitimating stereotypes that do not promote women's right to sport. By not actively intervening in this process, through administrative and policy measures, the state has failed to use the newspaper as a resource to enable "preconditions for participation, facilitation and promotion" of the right to sport.

In my conclusions, this dissertation notes the oversight that the state and non state actors have over newspapers as an 'available resource' to promote the right to sport. Since media are in principle independent of the state in their operation, I have discussed the dynamics of this independence and raised concern on the fundamental media principles of newsworthiness and public interest. I also draw attention to the minimal investment by the Committee in holding states accountable to their obligations to the right to sport.

**Keywords:** Media Coverage, Human Rights, Government Obligations, Exclusion, Newsworthiness,

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-----

For the smiles and pats on the back

The cheering and celebration

For ensuring I did not lack

In support or imagination

Strength or insight

Laughter and surprises

For believing with all your might

For all your prayers

And Faith that I could do it

Well, here it is

**Dedication**

*To El Elyon*

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# Chapter One

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*“To be excluded from common facilities or benefits that others have can certainly be a significant handicap that impoverishes the lives that individuals can enjoy” Amartya Sen*

## 1.0 Headline (Introduction)

I intend with this research to bring to light the manner in which the newspapers contribute to exclusion of women in sport from public view and discourse therefore impacting on how they participate in sport, how limited coverage of women in sport by newspapers promotes gender stereotypes and advances the unequal access to services by women and their fulfilment of potentialities as relates to their human right to sport.

The underlying principle in this research is that fulfilling the right to sport is not just about facilitating physical access to sport but also about ensuring the facilitation process takes place.

Of course one could argue, as the media often does that, women in sport are not visible in the media because they do not participate in sport, therefore we should focus on increasing participation in sport and media visibility will follow.

However, addressing the issues of gender imbalance in the sport space needs to be done at more than the physical level it also has to be addressed at the ideological level; and what better instrument for propagating ideology than the media.

We should think of visibility in media as an end in itself as well as a means to an end; in this case access to sport.

So if, the media abscond from their responsibility as an instrument of human rights promotion then they become part of the system that sustains women’s exclusion from cultural life. They may be doing it passively, because it is an unintentional result of the principle of newsworthiness but none the less contributes to exclusion.

## 1.1 Location of research

This research project was conducted during the period of September 2009 and March 2010. The research sites included Lusaka the Capital City and Luanshya a mining town five hours from Lusaka in Zambia. I focused this research on the two state owned newspapers with a daily national circulation – the Zambia Daily Mail and the Times of Zambia Newspapers. For the purpose of contrasting and comparing, I also looked at one privately owned daily national newspaper- the Post Newspaper.

In this discussion I examine sport in general, because the human right to sport recognises sport for recreation, for professional engagement as well as for social and health benefits.

According to Woods (2007) Sport is defined as

an institutionalised, competitive activity that involves physical skill and specialised facilities or equipment and is conducted according to an accepted set of rules to determine the winner.

While recreational sport are;

those activities where the primary purpose of the activity is participation, with the related goals of improved physical fitness, fun, and social involvement often prominent. Recreational sports are usually perceived as being less stressful, both physically and mentally, on the participants. There are lower expectations regarding both performance and commitment to the sport in the recreational sphere. (FAQS.Org, 2008)

I take this broad view in line with (Pocciello, 1997) who uses three categories;

[E]ducational sport, which includes physical education in schools; leisure sport comprehended as physical activity for relaxation and leisure time occupation; finally, competitive sports managed by national and international sports federations.

## 1.2 Research objectives

The overall objective was to examine the state's service delivery through the State owned Newspapers in light of sport for women. In view of this I conducted the research with three broad objectives; first, to assess the factors affecting the way women in sport are covered in the national newspapers in Zambia; second, to assess the existence of international and national policies and laws that seek to promote fair media coverage of sporting issues

between sexes and third to establish the possible interventions by the state and non state actors to increase coverage of women in sport by the national newspapers in Zambia

### **1.3 Significance of research**

Media are recognised as a tool or platform for advancing or addressing stereotypes and providing information and propagating ideology. Women's coverage in media has intrinsic significance as well as instrumental value that can positively influence human rights fulfilment.

States have been called upon to address stereotypical presentation of women in media and also to use the media to present women in non-traditional positions to promote awareness and a change in attitude. (Beijing Platform, UN Gen Recommendation, SADC)

The stereotypes around women in sport border on what type of sport they can do and what level of sport is possible for women. (Meir 2005, NOWSPAR 2009) Coverage of women in sport becomes key to addressing these two stereotypes and Newspapers are a resource that states have so can be used to facilitate this obligation.

Newspapers in Zambia are an important part of the communication system; the benefit of newspapers lies in the potential to be read over and over and to be shared in libraries, in families and community spaces. Further, the three newspapers in this study have internet versions of the newspapers, increasing the demographic reach beyond borders and also reaching a population that is inclined to and has access to internet use.<sup>1</sup>

The value of this research lies in the additional perspective it brings to explaining the fundamental causes of exclusion from newspaper publications which contributes to women's right to sport.

### **1.4 Statement of the Problem**

Recent scholarship and gender advocacy work have produced significant studies demonstrating the underrepresentation of women in newspaper publications. Much of this work tends to focus on quantitative comparison of coverage by examining text, images, and

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<sup>1</sup> It would be worth studying the extent of readership of online newspapers as the publishers did not have enough information about this.

sources of news and page location with minimal investigation into the means and dynamics that precipitate this biased coverage in newspapers.

Such studies appear to be based on the assumption that media are an independent institution from the government and thus the government should not be held responsible for media behaviour. However, previous studies have not examined state owned media as a resource to achieve human rights therefore accountable for their service delivery that effects exclusion of a large group of citizens- women.

## **1.5 Assumptions**

1. News collectors and editors of national newspapers in Zambia do not consider Zambian women's engagement in sport newsworthy and so attach low priority to its collection and publication
2. Newspaper editors and news collectors do not appreciate the diversity of women's engagement in sport (e.g athletes, managers, coaches, doctors, administrators, umpires etc) therefore limit coverage of women in sport to athletes.
3. Women's sport programmes lose possibilities of corporate investment due to their lack of visibility in media therefore they are less attractive to the corporate sector
4. Limited visibility of women in sport in the national newspapers reduces the possibilities of more women participating in sport therefore infringing on women's right to sport and the resultant social, economic benefits of sport
5. Institutions running sport do not actively interact with newspapers to provide information on women in sport
6. State and non-state actors can undertake interventions for equitable coverage of women in sport to facilitate their access to the right to sport

## 1.6 Research Questions

1. What do news collectors and editors of national newspapers in Zambia consider newsworthy and to what do they attach priority in information collection and publication
2. Do newspaper editors and news collectors appreciate the diversity of women's engagement in sport (e.g. athletes, managers, coaches, doctors, administrators, umpires etc).
3. Do women's sport programmes lose possibilities of corporate investment due to their lack of visibility in media because they are less attractive to the corporate sector
4. Does limited visibility of women in sport in the national newspapers reduce the possibilities of more women participating in sport therefore infringing on women's right to sport and the resultant social, economic benefits of sport
5. Do institutions running sport actively interact with newspapers to provide information on women in sport
6. What interventions do state and non-state actors take towards equitable coverage of women in sport to facilitate their access to the right to sport

## Chapter Two

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*“Every obligation that a state has the means to meet, must be met” Rolf Kunnemann*

### **2.0 Political News (Background of research)**

#### **2.1 Zambia’s human rights commitments**

Since becoming a member of the United Nations, Zambia has become party to several human rights instruments, among others, the ones that relate to women’s equality, the right to information and the right to culture, recreation and sport.

Of significance are the United Nations Charter of 1945, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that officially recognise equality between men and women and the equality of all human rights.

Further, Zambia is party to the Convention on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (CSECR) as well as the Convention on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action, which was endorsed by UN Member States at the Fourth World Conference on Women: Equality, Development and Peace, held in 1995.

Zambia is also party to the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights in Africa on Women (Women’s Protocol), the Southern Africa Development Community Protocol on Gender and Development (SADC Protocol) and the SADC Protocol on Sport, Media and Culture.

As I have noted in a similar study (Mwambwa L. A., 2009), the processes, spirit and background of these three instruments was partial ‘regional domestication’ of global human rights instruments, especially CEDAW, that is considerate of regional realities and aspirations, considerations that are central to implementation and value of the rights by the state.

## 2.2 The Human Right to Sport

### 2.2.1 Human Rights Provisions

Within the human rights framework sport is categorised as a cultural right and is implied within the provisions on cultural life.

The Universal Declaration on Human Rights provides for the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community in Article 27, while it is provided for also in the Convention on Economic and Cultural Rights Article 15(1)(a) on which the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights elaborates;

13. The Committee considers that culture, for the purpose of implementing article 15 (1) (a), encompasses, inter alia, ways of life, language, oral and written literature, music and song, non-verbal communication, religion or belief systems, rites and ceremonies, sport and games,... Culture shapes and mirrors the values of well-being and the economic, social and political life of individuals, groups of individuals and communities.

The Covention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women also provides for the right to sport in Article 13 which says;

States parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular... the right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life.

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on Women in Africa has no provision for recreation and sport.<sup>2</sup>

At regional level, The SADC Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport recognises sport within the context of recreation which it defines as

‘leisure activities in which, through casual or organised ways, individuals or groups of people voluntarily participate.’

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<sup>2</sup> This may be an indication around the conceptualization of women's leisure and cultural participation- I raise this question in (Mwambwa L. A., 2009).

This protocol in Article 24(d) further expresses the need for corporation in view of addressing gender inequality through

Promotion of active participation by stakeholders in sport and recreation activities with special emphasis on women, children and people with disabilities

The instrumental value of sport is also recognised within the Human Rights framework; United Nations Resolution 58/5, adopted in 2003, calls on governments to use sports to promote education, health, development and peace. This demonstrates appreciation of all three aspects of sport and its use as a means to an end.

### **2.2.2 State Obligations**

At the beginning of this research, one of my concerns was the limited attention or lack thereof paid to the right to cultural life by the Commission on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as no General Recommendations had been made relating to the content and core obligations of states. However, this has changed since one of the results of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session held on 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2009 was General Recommendation number 21 on Article 15(a) which provides for the right of everyone to take part in cultural life, set out elaborate details. One limitation though, is even if the committee defines culture to include 'sport and games' the recommendation is more concerned with the part of culture that includes literary works and scientific progress. But it is still a useful framework for compliance assessment.

Within the framework of core content of human rights, the content of the right to sport was identified by the Committee on ESCR as Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability, Adaptability and Appropriateness.

The obligations of the state are, like for any other human right, to protect, respect and fulfil, in the instance of the right to cultural life. The Committee recommended that in order to demonstrate compliance with their general and specific obligations, States parties must show that they have taken appropriate measures to ensure the respect for and protection of cultural freedoms. The state must also show the relevant steps taken, in view of their maximum

available resources, towards the full realization of the right to take part in cultural life. The other significant aspect of these assessment criteria is the demonstration by states that they have guaranteed that the right is enjoyed equally and without discrimination, by men and women.

63. Violations of article 15, paragraph 1 (a), also occur through the omission or failure of a State party to take the necessary measures to comply with its legal obligations under this provision. Violations through omission include the failure to take appropriate steps to achieve the full realization of the right of everyone to take part in cultural life, and the failure to enforce relevant laws or to provide administrative, judicial or other appropriate remedies to enable people to exercise in full the right to take part in cultural life.

The above is the measurement standard I will use to check for state compliance in this dissertation.

### **2.3 Women's Participation in Sport**

Women's participation in sport remained low over the years, in Zambia and in other countries around the world. I speak of participation in this case to refer to the broad possibilities of women's engagement in sport including athletes, administrators, technical officials, academicians and researchers among others.

Participation for women in Zambia has been limited to recreational sports activities, and in sport conducted in schools such as football, netball, volleyball and in athletics. (Meir 2005, NOWSPAR 2009) Participation of women in sport leadership has also been very low; in Zambia women constitute less than 5% of Board Membership in National Sports Associations. (Mwambwa A.L, 2008)

There is of course a wide range of barriers ranging from institutional to cultural, social as well as economic. Recognised factors include limited availability of sports facilities, sport equipment, lack of coaches, time, information, cultural space, awareness and limited acceptability. (Meir 2005, NOWSPAR 2008, UNDAW 2007)

Various interventions have been proposed and implemented across the globe including enclosed sports facilities for women in Iran, redesigning of bathing suits in Asia, presentation of women in the media and at meetings to facilitate mentoring and awareness campaigns. (Change Makers: 2009, UNDAW 2007)

There is some progress in participation of women in male dominated areas of sport, such as in martial arts, national sport leadership and in professional sport. Within the last fifteen years, for instance, Zambia has had an active Women's Cricket Team, its first Women Professional Boxers, first Women Presidents of the National Judo Association and the National Olympic Committee and the first female vice-chairperson of the National Sports Council. But as found by NOWSPAR (2009) the sports space for women is still characterised by the continued struggle for recognition, infrastructural access limitations and the economic situation that influences decisions on how one spends their time and resources decisions that often result in sacrifice of women's time, needs and aspirations.

Although there are no apparent violations of women's right to sport such as legal or policy measures that prohibit participation, however, access to rights require a level of agency that is influenced by knowledge, attitudes, cultural expectations as well as the social economic environment within which women make their decisions.

In view of the media's self proclaimed role to inform, educate and entertain; they are aware that the stories and images presented in the media are active in opinion formation and therefore sustaining stereotypes or developing new attitudes and in influencing decision making.

There is general consensus among the sports practitioners, human rights and gender activists that the media has a significant role to play in presenting images and information that can positively influence society's perceptions and attitudes to women's participation in public life. (Beijing Platform, UNDAW, CEDAW, SADC Protocol) For example the UNESCO Charter on PE and Sport of 1979 Article 9 urges mass media to exert a positive influence on physical education and sport through their work by being fully conscious of their responsibility. It further provides that the mass media and sport practitioners must work closely to ensure the achievement of the right to sport.

The above is important as it frames the media's involvement as a responsibility, meaning the media can be called to account for their behaviour in relation to the achievement of the right to sport.

## **2.4 Newspapers in Zambia**

The media landscape in Zambia is comprised of print and electronic media institutions. There are state owned, private owned and community media institutions and publications. The reach of Newspapers is quite wide, according to Central Statistics Office of Zambia, Newspapers are read by about 37% of the population, with a recorded increase between the years 2000 and 2005 of about 8% of people who read newspapers at least once a week. This is attributed to the rise in literacy levels and widened circulation of Newspapers. (Banda: 2006)

This is significant to women in sport on two levels- the reach of the newspapers should interpret into a diverse audience with various interests and secondly the diverse interests should result in wider options for the news collector of the types and angles of stories.

## **2.5 How Newspapers work**

As a media institution, Newspapers operate on the global media principles of accuracy, balance and fairness. This loosely interpreted means ensuring information is correct, various angles or sides of the story are presented and that the story is just. This also encompasses the types of stories covered; the media are required within this standard to cover a diversity of people and issues.

In the Newspapers I studied, the flow of responsibilities and functions that result in a story is similar and basically involves- a diary meeting at about 09 am - here each reporter presents about three proposals of possible stories to a chief reporter who submits these to a desk editor (in this case the sports editor) to be presented in an editorial meeting. At all these levels there are acts of approval or disapproval, suggestions are given on what if any story or aspect of the story can be followed up.

Reporters go out to gather news and follow up on stories, a second editorial meeting takes place at about 3pm and 4 pm to approve stories that are deemed newsworthy and adjustments are suggested and more information requested where needed.

The editor also decides which story will be the lead- the main story and which one second and so on. These decisions are made in liaison with the production manager who advises on space availability based on adverts and other factors such as the space taken up by others sections of the paper. By about 7 pm the paper is ‘put to bed’ and sent off to the printer. (Djokotoe: 200)

Seeking an understanding of the decision making and environment in which the above process occurs can help us trace a path of how a story gets published or how women in sport stories get published they way they do, which in turn opens up opportunities for intervention.

## **2.6 Media Coverage of women in sport**

Studies of the media have demonstrated unequivocally that women’s coverage is still very low, (GMMP, GEMSA) and limited in areas of sport. This is not only prevailing in the Southern African region but in other parts of the world as well. For instance, study conducted in the United Kingdom by Women Sport Fitness Foundation found that on average, only 5% of sports coverage in national and local print media is dedicated to women’s sport. (Sportscotland: 2008)

Preliminary findings of a media monitoring project of the National Organisation for Women in Sport Physical Activity and Recreation in Zambia also found that less than 15% of all stories on the sports pages of daily newspapers in Zambia are about women (NOWSPAR: 2009). The project has found that most stories are less detailed than those about men and are often in the bottom section of the page. So far only one woman’s story ever makes the headlines – Esther Phiri, who is an embodiment of masculine newsworthiness – professional boxer, world champion with big sponsorship.

This requires a deeper look into the foundations of this phenomenon, since statistical evidence of exclusion is available.

## Chapter Three

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*"What women suffer, then, is more insidious than invisibility. It is deliberate erasure."*

*Louise Armstrong*

### 3.0 Features Page (Literature Review)

Media is both a site for social change and a reflection of the society, it therefore becomes useful to study it in order to track changes in society as well as in media. Over the years, considerable interest has been demonstrated in the study of media and women's representation- however very little is grounded in the concept of media as a tool for human rights fulfilment.

Media have been under study including TV, Radio, Newspapers, Magazines (Bishop, R. (2003), Berry, T. and L. Lauzon (2003) examined the stereotypes advanced by fitness magazines that influence exercise behaviour. Studies of internet sites and blogs have also been conducted. Cunningham, G. B. Explored coverage of non brand equity sport on university sponsored websites (2003). These studies proved the limited coverage of women in terms of space allocation, diversity of sport and variety of roles played by those covered.

Scholars have demonstrated the presence of bias in print media coverage by looking at coverage of 1996 Olympic Games (Vincent, J., C. Imwold, et al. (2003), Higgs, C. T., K. H. Weiller, et al. (2003) found similar results in their study of television coverage of the same event, a demonstration of the existence of bias in reporting of elite level sport.

Christopherson, N., M. Janning, et al. (2002) provide a content analysis of media discourse on the 1999 Women's Football WorldCup Tournament. They discuss how the media actively promoted or constructed certain gender ideologies and how these gender ideologies contributed to the popularity of the event. Duncan et al investigated coverage of women's athletics by four newspapers (2009) and found that bias in coverage but also that it is possible to cover women's sport thoroughly without loss of circulation or interest. Circulation loss is one of the factors in my findings that is raised by newspaper reporters and editors in relation to limited coverage of women in sport.

Research comparing coverage of male and female athletes at the same level of sport still found bias towards men (Reilly, R. (2003) this makes me think there must be other factors or at least a combination that results in this disparity.

Pedersen and Whisenant (2003) conducted a study in Florida USA, examining coverage of 'traditional male' and 'traditional female' interscholastic games and concluded that there is hegemonic masculinity in print media. This is a phenomenon present or reflected in Zambian print media considering the large space provided to women's netball as compared to women's golf or football.

Bernstein, A. In his study of past research on women media and sport participation reminds us that even though there are some shifts in media coverage of women, there is still a long way to go in the type of coverage women get.(2002)

Geographically, there is evidence in almost all parts of the world that bias is present in coverage of sport. In Australia, the Sports Commission conducted research in 1996 and in 2002 which showed the existence of bias towards coverage of men in sport by both print and electronic media. So this is not just in print, it cuts across media so there must be similarities in dynamics or environments of media work.

In Canada, CAAWS revealed bias in media, similarly, WomenSport Foundation in the UK, found bias as reported in their study of media coverage of sport (SportScotland: 2008)

In Southern Africa, the limited sports coverage has been discussed briefly in a study conducted by Gender Links in a cross sectional study of gender issues in media- covering print media (2004) also the various manifestations of media bias in coverage of women in sport in Zambian media have been highlighted (Mwambwa, 2009)

The Gender Media Monitoring Project conducted their second 'One Day in the World News' research project on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2009, in which Zambia participated, the preliminary report shows that women's coverage is still limited, in the sports pages only about 26% was on women. (GMMP, 2010) This research has still left room for further study on why these inequalities occur and how leading to more attention by the women's movement related to sport and media.

This year in particular I have noted increased activity in research and dialogue on gender, women, media and sport- presumably linked to the two mega men's football events - the Confederations Cup Tournament that took place in Angola last year and the FIFA World Cup to be held in South Africa in June this year which has raised concern for economic, social and cultural impact on Africa and of particular interest women.

Does this pattern that is similar across media, sports, geographic and economic level mean the problem lies in the way media conceptualise themselves, their role in society and relationship to the state? There is to be found in the almost universal principles upon which mainstream media operate – objectivity, value for press freedom, and their self assigned role of being the fourth estate- grounded in patriarchal values and a selective responsibility for what is going on around them.

The media institutions take credit for fostering democracy and freedom of expression. But not for their blind promotion or refusal to negate stereotypes as this would be “unobjective” or ‘biased”. The state must begin to hold the state media accountable for their behaviour- it has to be mutual or else the state can be seen to be conspiring against itself.

At present, the Zambian organisation I work with, NOWSPAR is in the process of compiling statistical evidence/data on the rates of coverage of women in sport in Zambia (NOWSPAR, 2009).

During the March 2010 54<sup>th</sup> Commission on the Status of Women review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, Gender Links is collaborated with other organisations to commission articles for a newspaper to be published during the conference on themes including “Gender and Soccer 2010 – Opportunities and Challenges” and “Gender and the Media – breaking glass ceilings, media monitoring, new media, media diversity, reaching diverse communities, etc” demonstrating the significance of sport as a cultural social and economic issue affecting women.

The CODESRIA Gender Institute for this year will be held under the theme “Gender and Sports in Africa's Development: Towards Gender Equality in Sports in Africa” (CODESRIA 2010) one of the areas of interventions the institute will look at is “Sports, gender and the media”

The 5th International Conference on Women and Sport taking place in Sydney this year also has a considerable part of its agenda focusing on media. (IWG,2010)

From the foregoing, I feel justified in focusing this project not on demonstrating that media bias is present in Zambian newspapers, as that is indicated already in other studies, but rather on exploring how coverage results in limited visibility of women in sport and the various contributing factors and dynamics which propagate it. It was also my aim to apply a methodological approach that would take various facets and perspectives into consideration with a view to unearth areas and issues for further research and intervention by academics, activists and practitioners and especially the government.

This will also be an opportunity to contribute to the dialogue and knowledge from a women's law perspective and from within Africa.

The significant difference this piece of research brings is the look at state media service delivery as an instrument to fulfil obligations to promote the human right to sport. By couching this as a human rights issue I hope to add to justification of why media need a transformation to become part of active women's rights actors.

In light of the above, this research is based on the premise that 1. There is limited coverage of women by newspapers in Zambia 2. The state newspapers are public services to be used to achieve the public good 3. Sport is a right for all 4. Media publications influence societal opinion, attitudes and decision making.

## *Chapter Four*

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### **4.0 How to get a news story (Methodologies)**

#### **4.1 Outline of Methodological Framework**

I use the grounded theory approach as my main framework, bearing in mind my experiences working in the area of sport and advocacy for media coverage of women. With this approach I could take into consideration the sources of the assumptions I made at the beginning, and the liberty to re-theorize based on the emerging issues. I was particularly interested in this framework because it provides for the use of a multiplicity of methods and tools in the research process. For instance initially, I only planned to use the actors and structures, women's law and human rights frameworks, however when I started research, I realized I needed a media framework since I was examining newspapers and the behavior of newspaper actors and stakeholders so I included media methodologies.

#### **4.1 Research Methodologies**

##### **4.1.1 Sex Gender Approach**

Sex and Gender are a central factor in women's limited access to their rights; I wanted to examine how this particularly applies in the case of media and sport in order to propose relevant intervention. I observed newspaper publications and in combination with the media theories I assessed publications for themes that are related to gender relation and presentation such as images, type of sport and how it is presented among others. I also considered the sex of the newspaper actors in relation to their experiences as they work in sport and media.

##### **4.1.3 Gaze**

At the start of the research I used this approach to look into my theory that newspapers are written with the male audience in mind, this prompted me to ask the question 'what do men want to read about?' So, hypothetically, if we are to hold this as acceptable, then there is still a gap because I found that there are men who are

interested in reading about women's participation in sport. They are actually of the view that it does not exist that is why it is not covered much. This led me to inquire into how newspapers decided what the public would like to read or not.

#### ***4.1.4 Framing***

Initially I intended to use this only as an analytical tool, but as I became more aware of the powerful and strategic position of newspaper editors and reporters in determining 'public interest', the need for this approach arose to inform my identification of the conditions under which frames emerge and, more ambitiously, how they operate in decision making on what gets published and as a result (quite ambitiously) public opinion formation. This informed the questions I asked respondents relating to their perception and views of their work; this was also important to my observation of the newspaper publications and in raising questions about how decisions on what should be published is made.

#### **4.1.5 Grounded Theory Approach [main framework]**

It provided me with the framework to analyse the perceptions, actions, law and policy in light of the lived realities of women.

This method and the ensuing findings is what will differentiate my research from that done previously in this area.

One of the key aspects of this was the continuous process of data analysis and questioning of the results from respondents as the research progressed. Following my interviews with the Zambia Media Women's Association, I learnt that they where of the view that the key to increasing coverage of women is by having more women in editor position. I had earlier discovered that the sports editors of both state newspapers where women. It led me to re-think what else would influence their decisions if the rate of coverage is relatively the same- it is then I discovered their common experience with funding concerns which I explored further as I proceeded with the research.

Some categories which emerged which I could not explore due to access to information challenges include policy interventions and their outcomes, such as the directive from government for each media house to have a Gender Focal Person that has faced resistance and the media law and policy review process and the possible effects this will or is expected

to have in relation to exclusion and marginalisation of women in sport in media. This is important as it will add to a clearer or deeper understanding of the interventions and their effectiveness.

#### **4.1.6 Actors and Structures**

As Amartya Sen noted,

We live and operate in a world of many institutions. Our opportunities and prospects depend crucially on what institutions exist, how they function, and how inclusionary they are. Not only do institutions contribute to our freedoms, their roles can be sensibly evaluated in the light of their contributions to our freedoms. (2000)

This facilitated my examination of the structures and actors that influence media coverage and to determine which interventions to recommend. It enabled me to look beyond the woman as a subject of my research analysis by examining the structural influences and actors in the field of sports coverage. This approach was useful in my application of grounded theory approach as it became obviously important to me when Education Institutions came up in discussions around capacity of reporters to comprehend women's situation and the need for gender sensitivity. I was able to follow this emerging issue by looking at a training institution as a structure and influence in outcomes of the work of the newspapers. This method was significant in determining or classifying identified recommendations for interventions when I asked my research respondents to identify or recommend actions to improve the situation.

#### **4.1.7 Women's Law**

The aspect of Women's Law approach that I used was in the selection of my research sample- I used the methodological frameworks to determine who and what to study. Further, bearing in mind the 'dung beetle method' (Bentzon et al: 1998) I followed up on information shared by newspaper reporters, persons I interviewed within sports institutions as well as persons I encountered during sports activities and events. I was particularly interested in the women in media as well as in sport and those not in sports. Although I found that there were a lot of men in media who were also very informative especially in the sports desks and also most of the leaders of sports organisations are men.

For instance I interviewed newspaper reporters who came to cover events that the organisation I work with was hosting and the corporate sponsors supporting these programmes. It enabled me to use a multiplicity of approaches and methods to get optimum perspective on the issues.

#### **4.1.8 Human Rights**

The research is premised on the responsibility of the state to fulfil the right to sport as an entitlement to women. I looked at the state obligations relating to sport and representation of women in the media. This was done in my research design, the research interview questions as well as in my analysis of information as I used this as a compliance standard. Using human rights framework led me to obtain information from actors including Cabinet Office although I only accessed their report as the person I intended to interview was inaccessible.

### **4.2. Research methods**

#### **4.1.1 Desk review**

This was part of the process of the research design as well as in observing what was published by the newspapers I was studying. These were useful as I used some of them in discussions to talk about content and what respondents thought should be included or excluded.

I looked at newspapers over a period of two weeks to get a feel of the overall content and style, I also used events to compare among newspapers what story was covered and the emphasis that they each gave to stories.

#### **4.1.2 Interviews and Group discussion**

Most of my information was obtained using this method; it was helpful as it allowed me to follow up on the issues that respondents raised. To gain trust and access, I often introduced myself in my capacity as General Secretary of the Women in Sport Organisation as most newspaper actors are aware of the organisation. Then I informed the respondent that the research I am conducting is for the purpose of my school work but that I would also use the information within my organisation's programmes as well. I found that it was helpful to point out the use of the information.

It was also useful to inform that respondent that I am studying at SEARCWL in Zimbabwe, to have a brief chat about Zimbabwe's social economic situation and about the Masters programme.

In interviews I asked questions relating to practices, perceptions and beliefs. I focused also on the roles that various actors play and their suggestions for improving the situation.

Group discussions were also helpful; I used them to get views of people who were of different backgrounds to share experiences and thoughts. For example In Luanshya one group comprised of a Pastor, a Sales Lady, a Police officer and an administrator. The discussion helped raise issues and also as an awareness raising session on sport and media coverage. For group discussions the questions I asked sought to find out what people are interested in reading, what they think should be published in the newspaper.

#### **4.1.4 Open Ended Questionnaires**

I used this as a supplementary method to obtain information, mainly I used it to ask follow up questions to respondents I had interviewed or spoken with, so questions were specific to the respondent and the issue as opposed to one standard questionnaire. In some instances I used it to get information from respondents who had been physically inaccessible.

#### **4.1.5 Document Inspection**

In cases where I could not directly access persons to interview, such as at the Cabinet Office Governance Secretariat, I used information from their website and from reports they submitted to the United Nations. I then used the matters that emerged to ask questions to the related respondents who were available. I further used this to verify information although at times it was entirely possible as the information was not published.

#### **4.1.6 Observation**

I observed newspaper reporters as they interviewed me or other persons at my work place, at sports events and their responses to my communication to them in my capacity at my work place. In some instances I merely observed for example at some sports events I watched who reporters chose to interview and what they interviewed them about. In other instances I was involved, for example for some events and programmes I organised media notification, wrote

press releases and gave interviews. I found interesting the questions they ask and the resulting publications.

**Figure 1 Summary of Research Respondents**

Institution/Place	Role	Female	Male
NOWSPAR	Executive Director Advocacy	2	
Daily Mail	Reporter, Editor, Sub-Editor	4	3
Times of Zambia	Reporter, Editor	2	1
Post Newspaper	Reporter, Editor	1	2
Media Institute of Southern Africa	Information and Documentation	1	
Ministry of Information	Information and documentation		1
Ministry of Gender and Development	Information and documentation		1
Ministry of Sport Youth and Child Development	Gender Focal Person, Minister	1	1
Zambia Media Women's Association	National Coordinator	1	
Zambia Ladies Golf Union	Vice President- South	1	
Zambia Ladies Rugby Union		1	
Zambia Amateur Athletics Association	Technical Director		1
University of Zambia	Lecturer, Student	3	2
Zambia Communication Education Trust		1	
CFB Limited	Chief Executive Officer		1
MadMax Limited	Marketing Manager		1
National Milling Corporation	Marketing Manager	1	
Zambia Volleyball Association	President, General Secretary		1
Netball Association of Zambia	Committee Member	1	
Zambia Amateur Rowing and Canoeing Association	Committee Member		1
Zambia Body Building and Fitness Federation	General Secretary		1
Individuals	Athletes, Parents,		
Sport In Action	Director		1
EduSport Foundation	Programme Officers	1	1
Play Soccer Zambia	National Director	1	
Individuals	Marketeers, Taxi Drivers, Students	6	4
	Totals	25	23

### **4.3 Research Participants**

At the beginning of my research, I went to the obvious place to go when studying newspapers; to the newspapers. However, as I spoke with the respondents, they mentioned people or institutions that were of concern or related to the issue. For example, other players who I could engage with such as education institutions, whom I had not planned to look at initially.

My decisions on what information to seek at the start of the research was informed by the vast amount of research that found almost universal bias in media coverage of women in sport, my knowledge of media as an advocacy platform from my experiences at my work place and the course work within this Masters Program on Media conducted in the second term.

However, I went on to obtain other information with which I could explain emerging issues and questions.

I interviewed people in two main locations in the city of Lusaka and in Luanshya a small town on the Copperbelt Province. Individual respondents included people on buses, taxi drivers, and sales persons in shops and at markets as well as women in hair salons.

I interviewed some media actors, university lecturers and students at their places of work, some at my place of work or at events. Interviews sometimes were broken and spread over a couple of meetings while others lasted about half an hour in some cases even an hour and a half.

### **4.3 Evaluation of methods used**

First, methodological challenges arose in the scope of what to consider sports coverage- I considered looking at features or the entertainment page but decided to limit myself to the sports section of the newspapers. This was because very few stories on sport were covered in the entertainment section, some were presented in the Education Pages- a section targeted at youth. Some stories were presented on the Women's page- where stories were presented as features discussing women in sport from a gender perspective or development angles.

Second, I took great risk in utilizing frame theory as an approach considering as a theory and analytical tool it is still in relatively developmental stages, further my limited experience with media theories compounded the complexities I led myself into but eventually overcame by not treating it as the central methodology but as a part of a broad framework.

Third, the challenge lay in delimiting my focus to the right to sport, while examining media which raises the question of the right to Information and freedom of expression as well as the right of the media to press freedom.

The methodologies impacted on my theories, they provided a framework for theories- actually it was an interplay- theories influenced which methodology I used and vice versa.

#### **4.4 Outline of analytical frameworks and tools**

I employ a multiplicity of theoretical tools to work with the research findings, these tools are drawn from various disciplines of study including feminist, media, psychology, pedagogical and development. More specifically I utilize Capabilities theory as elaborated by Nussbaum to demonstrate the close engagement with personal abilities in achievement of human rights, Recognition and Redistribution as discussed by Nancy Fraser to highlight the process needed to remedy the current marginalization and exclusion, using the actors and structures framework, I outline the players and influences in this dynamic scenario, with Freire's theory I address the interaction of newspaper publications with the public, by engaging with Foucault's surveillance concept, sex and gender theory and De Beauvoir's Existentialist theory- I highlight the significance of environmental and personal perspectives in influencing actions and behaviour.

I use the human rights approach- in particular the concept of core obligations to highlight that it is possible for the state to address this right. In the end, by tying together three different but supplementary and at times conflicting theories, I demonstrate that the project of human rights, in order to move from political discourse and translate into actual human development level requires a multilayered and simultaneous application methodology.

I feel this in itself is significant because it demonstrates the many facets to and influences that result in the problem under study, more positively I think it is also an indication of the nature of the interventions that are possible including further research areas and theoretical foundations for policy and programme planning.

#### **4.5 Challenges and surprises encountered**

I was amazed to discover that contrary to my expectations, the editors of the sports sections of the two state newspapers were actually women. I had the preconceived idea that they were men. Further, I found the Government, had as an attempt at establishing an internal advocacy and monitoring process issued a directive to appoint Gender Focal persons within the media institutions. The responsibilities of this person, in addition to their job description of the position they hold, is on data collection and promoting implementation of recommendations on gender equality within their institution.

# Chapter Five

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*“We simply goes out, we gets the story and we writes it” Reporter in Parenti, 1993*

## **5.0 Dear Editor... (Description of findings)**

### **5.1 Outline of findings**

#### **5.1.1 Women in sport not newsworthy**

Newspaper news pages operate on the principle of ‘newsworthiness’. I found two similarities; firstly in the understanding of the term and in what reporters were looking for to fit into that framework, Newspaper reporter described newsworthy;

The interest of the public and national importance are what make stories newsworthy. Stories must be engaging. For example, we are aware that football holds national interest so we continue to provide information. We have the responsibility to cover all sport, but it has to be interesting, meaning those sports activities that are not marketing themselves and doing interesting things will not receive coverage on the sports pages.

In following this thread during interviews I found that there seems to be a relationship between ‘newsworthiness’ and ‘public interest’ this was what is felt the public want, or is in their interest.

This is perceived based on the reporter’s or the editors’ discretion, other influences such as the magnitude of the activity or issue and involvement of popular people or huge sums of money.

Newspaper actors are of the view that there is insufficient activity in the area of sport by women to make news. In many cases their participation does not fit the criteria of what is newsworthy. And when they are newsworthy, other challenges emerge such as access to information on them or to them for interviews.

Secondly in the shared view that this can not change, it is fixed, it is the story that has to be changed as was emphasised by the University lecturers, students and some reporters.

I found that the stories about women in sport which are mostly treated as human interest stories are allocated more space in the weekend supplements and women's pages.

### **5.2.2 Limited Coverage of the diversity of women in sport**

I found that similar to the findings of research in other parts of the world, the coverage of women in sport by the three newspapers mainly focused on international competitions and high level women such as the Olympic Committee President, The Executive Director of the Women's sports advocacy organisation, Esther Phiri the boxing champion, Olympic athletes and golf champion.

There is recognition among reporters, editors and sports practitioners that limitations are also around knowledge and information on the technicalities of some of the sports and games. As a result, journalists are uncomfortable going out to look for stories about these sports. An editor said:

Our journalists have to be honest,

There is a problem with knowing how to cover sport- for example I don't know how Cricket is played so I can't go and cover it. If I go I'll probably just ask for the scores and that's it.

Some newspaper reporters expressed challenges in accessing women as news sources, they high light factors including the women's unwillingness to give stories and unavailability. As an editor at a state paper said:

Women sports organizations should be more pro-active and easily accessible in terms of information flow to the media. Even when they are not covered during a particular sports event, they can bring information or send it through via electronic mail. The media is usually kept in the dark about women sports programmes and activities and their campaign to be noticed is under achieved as compared to the male fork

Reporters pointed out facing the challenge that, women in sport are not known and are inconsistent. Due to irregularities of women's sports activities it is hard to follow up and establish relationship with sources. One reporter said;

In some cases the women are in low positions where they can not say anything newsworthy- for example the women in the FAZ executive, we do not know them because they are not in influential positions. The people

we deal with are the media liason, the general secretary and president. Even about women's football, they do not say anything they refer us to other people.

“Women in sport are hard to get stories from, we have to sell the paper, so...” -  
Reporter Times of Zambia

Women in Rugby for example we write about them because when you talk to them they will give you a story for example about their competitions or fundraising or other programmes

The challenge also seems to arise when prioritising stories in view of space limitations. As an editor responded when asked if reporters demonstrate interest in writing about a more diverse engagement of women in sport such as women athletes, leaders, umpires, physicians;

Reporters are interested, but space is limited and there are priorities. The sports page is for professional sport, other issues can be human interest stories and features. Newspapers are a business; we are in it for the money.

### **5.2.3 Limited coverage leads to loss of corporate investment**

In my discussions with some sports institutions, I found that they are of the view that sponsors are happy to see media coverage of the programmes they support, it is an added advantage to sponsoring.

This not only applies to competitive sport run by National Sports Associations but also sport programmes run by Non Governmental Organisations. For some grant making donor organisations, part of the due diligence process includes attachments of proof of media coverage such as newspaper clippings or links to internet sites.

The media are seen as an endorsement or witness to a programme, providing reassurance that this programme actually exists. This is also seen as an accountability measure, since some grant makers use public or shareholders funds, it is a way of giving feedback on their investment.

Yes it does because it's important for corporate sector to market themselves, those who sponsor sport drive publicity to show their contribution

I further found that the coverage was one of the factors considered when corporate decide who to support. For example focus is on football, golf, rugby.

The cultural practices that go with certain sport also determine which corporate institutions sponsor them for example, that lots of people meet in bars and clubs to watch football boosts sales of beverages. Beverage producers therefore invest in sponsoring this type of sport so that the practice of watching football or rugby is connected to beverage consumption. For example the Mosi Cup or Castle 7s in the sport of rugby.

Companies also sponsor sport that is participated in by their staff, shareholders and clients; this is used as an incentive, and a mechanism to strengthen ties and to establish relations with potential clientele.

I have to assess what kind of mileage my company will get out of the sponsorship, for us, we invest on sport which we can use to advance our business. For example Golf, some of our shareholders play golf, our staff members and we also have opportunities to meet and secure new clients.

Sport that provides advertising opportunity is preferred, the corporate respondent said;

When we cover corporate sponsored events, the companies are the ones who will call us to tell us about the event and also to give details, press releases, speeches. They are concerned about their coverage so it's easier when they are involved, the sports associations don't appreciate media coverage.

On the other hand the issue seems cyclic, as the newspapers pointed out that it is more likely to publish a story of an activity that involves money or prizes. A reporter at the Daily Mail said;

Sponsorship of women's sport is a problem, for example teams in the men's soccer league are competing for a prize but what is the women's league competing for? So the women's league is not much of a story.

#### **5.2.4 Limited participation opportunities due to limited coverage**

Sports leaders shared their experiences in getting sustained participation of girls in sport, one of the main challenges is gaining parental approval of girls' participation in sport. Through dialogue and information the parents are encouraged and give their approval.

This process is positively influenced when parents see stories of girls in the media who are playing sport. This makes it acceptable.

One of the youth coaches said, the community she lives in gave more approval and encouragement to her when a story was published in the newspaper about her girls football team and how two of them were selected to be part of the national team.

Previously I would go and beg them to let their girls come and play soccer, but now it is them who even come to ask me if their child can join. I don't have enough balls and now the number of girls has increased to over hundred, so I have put them in groups. Some parents even come to watch once in a while.

One of the youth I interviewed is a sports coach, she runs girls youth sports leagues, she said;

It is a good feeling to be in the newspaper, friends are happy to see and parents also —they encourage you to keep on playing. It's like proof that you are really involved in a good thing.

One parent contacted me to inquire about the procedure for registering his eight year old girl with a Karate club we work with. This is because she saw a story on one of the girls in my organisation's programme who is the youngest participant at some of the Karate competitions and wanted to join the sport as well.

The other influence happens at institutional or community mobilisation level, through the awareness raised of what is possible, an increase is noted in the development of programmes for women and girls. For example, in an interview during applications for membership in the National Organisation for Women in Sport Physical Activity and Recreation, a women's self help community group said;

We have seen in the papers what the women in other areas are doing; we have also organised ourselves and are starting sports activities. We would like you to help us.

### 5.2.5 Limited Interaction between National Sports Institutions and Media

I found that the interaction between Newspapers and Sports Institutions is very limited. This is one of the challenges resulting in limited coverage. Communication with the media is done in form of press briefings, press releases, phone calls, letters and emails inviting or informing the newspapers about events associations are holding.

I found that most of this is based on events and activities, and rarely about issues. Very few organisations give media stories based on issues [e.g environment, gender, policy etc]

The state Newspapers said they do not have enough resources to move around as much as they would want to. Therefore they will get stories from sources that are more accessible and in some cases would ask the sports event organisers to arrange for transport.

Further, they rely on the state news agency Zambia News and Information Service (ZANIS) for stories from the places where they have no offices, For example in small towns and the rural areas. This facilitates access to stories that the newspapers reporters may not access;

We do cover the rural areas, we don't have offices everywhere so we rely on ZANIS to supply stories for us.

Accessing information proves a challenge as sports institutions do not have specific contact persons for the media.

They don't have a person in charge of information, you call one person he refers you to another who also refers you to another, so it's expensive and frustrating. They should have a liaison person like the Football Association.

Institutions do not have the capacity in terms of communication facilities such as phone, internet access and physical offices at which to administer their affairs. By 2008, less than 20% of the National Sports Council Affiliates had offices with communication facilities. (NSCZ, 2008) Some did not even have lists of media contacts, or specific people in the media who they are in touch with regularly.

Further the limited capacity of personnel in charge to deal with media relations and communications work. One reporter expressed the limitations of the sports institutions media engagement;

They do not market themselves, or stay in touch with us. They do not know how to write press releases. They just send you a letter with very little information that is not very useful.

An the Minister in Charge of Sport was of this view;

They [newspapers] cover women a lot, Esther Phiri<sup>3</sup> [Professional Boxer] and the women's national football team. You can not blame the media if organisers of sport are media shy and they don't have reporters at their events. We all know where the media are so they can go there and give their stories.

Newspapers also felt that the sports institutions are inconsistent as news sources, as one reporter complained;

They only provide information when they want to, when we ask them at another time they do not cooperate fully if for instance I want to follow up a story they want to give information when it suites them.

One of the editors said the sports people have got unnecessary fears of suspicions about the media the fear that 'the media will misquote you' But that it is not the case, as newspapers try to publish stories that are true and fair.

We contact the sports institutions through email or phone but some of them are not easily reachable. We work with deadlines.

Interestingly, one of the respondents involved in administration of a National Sports Association argued that some sports institutions do not want to engage fully with media because they have corrupt practices they want to keep hidden. She said;

It is an issue of being transparent, but they do things that they do not want any one to find out so they limit who in the Association can give

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<sup>3</sup> Esther Phiri holds five international belts - the Women International Boxing Federation (WIBF) intercontinental Super featherweight, WIBF world junior lightweight, Global Boxing Union (GBU) intercontinental super featherweight, GBU world lightweight and the Global Boxing Council world lightweight.

interviews and only talk to the media about events once in a while, instead of consistent information flow in case the reporters get too close and start asking other questions.

### **5.2.6 State and Non-State Actors' Interventions**

By examining the roles of the state and its instrumental institutions I found that there have been interventions relating to the media and the right to sport. For a start, there is a law that provides for the establishment of the Newspapers as independent media bodies, secondly the Information and Media Policy of 1996 grants editorial independence to the two newspapers.

The constitution provides for equality of all persons and non discrimination on any basis. At policy level, the Vision 2030 includes training of specialised media persons in sports reporting and to promote awareness of sports and recreation activities.

In the Fifth National Development Plan there is an aim to provide a conducive legal and institutional framework for the development of the sector with a target to make gender sensitive the 1996 Policy.

At present, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting are undertaking a review of the National Information and Media Policy to ensure that gender concerns are integrated and compel the media to provide a balanced picture of women's diverse lives and contributions. According to Zambia Cabinet Office (2010) the review is further aimed at ensuring that the programming that is violent, degrading, or reinforcing women's traditional roles, and negatively affects their participation in society, is discouraged.

I did not have access to the draft, when I requested to see it from the Ministry of Information I was informed that it is an 'internal document', I therefore could not examine its content for provisions that relate to advancing human rights, monitoring and accountability of the media for their role in human rights fulfilment.<sup>4</sup>

However, the editor of the Daily Mail pointed out the lack of financial support by the state;

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<sup>4</sup> Most reporters said they are aware of the process but they don't seem to know about the content.

The paper is state owned but the government does not give us a grant, we rely on advertising. This affects how much space we can allocate to stories.

While the editor at the Times Newspaper was not aware how much the grant they receive is, however she said they receive a grant for operations but most of their resources are from advertising and sales.

However, an official at the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting said;

We give them [the newspapers] funding, last year we gave them equipment worth over ... , we pay for salaries. It is all in the yellow book<sup>5</sup>.

The Ministry of Gender budgeted for media awareness activities for this year, these are aimed at gender sensitisation and training of media persons. About 130 million Kwacha equivalent to about thirty thousand United States dollars for the year. The GIDD official interviewed said;

This year our M and E work is looking at what has been achieved so far and what else needs to be done in the priority areas of government. We are preparing for input in the Sixth National Development Plan We are at present conducting gender audits for Ministries of Agriculture, Lands, Community Development, Education and Justice. Sport and media are not in the plan yet.

However the Gender Policy does not include dealing with inequality in media coverage as a priority nor as a major intervention in addressing gender inequality in other areas or sectors.

The Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development 2009 National Sports Policy recognises the significance of media coverage for overcoming stereotypes and attitudes that limit women's engagement in sport, however since the implementation plan has not yet been developed it is difficult to determine the efficacy of the Policy in this area.

There is some interaction with GIDD in relation to monitoring and data collection, as highlighted by the Gender Focal Person at the Ministry in charge of sport;

We submit information bi-annually that they [GIDD] say they use for

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<sup>5</sup> The official publication with details of the national budget

country reports to submit to the UN Committees on CEDAW, Beijing Platform etc but they are mainly interested in the information on Children and Youth not sport. But sport is also important— we have to invest to improve women's access to sport. GIDD has not conducted a gender audit of our Ministry yet, I don't know when they will.

Similarly, the Human Rights Commission has not looked at the right to sport;

We do not focus on recreation and sport— at present we are looking at housing and prisons. We do not conduct research in this particular area— when monitoring we only look at recreation for children in correctional facilities.

Surprisingly, the government had directed that each media institution should have a gender focal person. However, this has faced resistance and not been implemented in the two newspapers

There are three main institutions offering education qualifications for journalists and media practitioners- the University of Zambia through its Mass Communications department, the Zambia Communications Training Trust and Evelyn Hone College of Applied Arts.

The University of Zambia delivers a curriculum which has a gender course in the third year of the programme.

However, as the lecturers pointed out the aim of the course is to make the students aware of the gendered nature of their societies and the environment they have to work in; however there is a conundrum in the emphasis that the journalist or editor should disregard the gender dimensions which disadvantage women and remain objective;

Gender issues are covered in the Broadcasting courses, however media is taught to be objective, not to be biased or discriminatory.

One of the students in the programme confirmed this

Our programme has a course on Gender, and also we learn about it in Ethics and several courses- we have to be objective when reporting.

I found that there are civil society institutions that do work towards improving coverage of women by newspapers and media in general. These included Zambia Institute of mass Communication Educational Trust (ZAMCOM) which conducts media training for journalists as well as non media personnel. Further, through its research, ZAMCOM is instrumental in advocacy for improved quality media services and progressive media policies. As relates to improving coverage of women in sport in particular, ZAMCOM, has in the past partnered with corporate institutions to train media personnel on coverage of sport. However, like the other courses, it did not have the particular aim of enhancing diversity, as one of the lecturers who was involved in this programmes said:

When I taught sport I just taught it as sport- not as women's or men's sport. News is news. In any case, it is rare that women's stories in sport compete with men's stories.

Interestingly, the Zambia Media Women's Association (ZAMWA) are more concerned about the welfare and advancement of women working in the media. Their strategy is promoting training of more women journalists, networking and advocating for increase in their participation at decision making levels of media institutions. The Coordinator of ZAMWA is of the view that;

If we have more women as sports reporters it will be helpful, but it will be even more effective with women as editors of the newspapers. We need female editors in newspapers, and then they can do internal lobbying for editorial policies to ensure women's coverage.

The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Zambia Chapter is also engaged in promoting education and gender training of media persons, research and advocacy development of and through media and for media rights. However, MISA is membership based and the two state Newspapers are not members. This is a disadvantage as highlighted by my respondent;

We have greater influence on our member Radio, Magazine and Newspapers who we support with funding, equipment, training and policy development. Our influence on non-members is minimal.

The National Organisation for Women in Sport Physical Activity and Recreation (NOWSPAR) is also a membership organisation. It has recruited among its members some media persons.

Our strategy is to include the women and men who work in media in our organisation's programmes. Not only as reporters but also as part of consultative meetings, event planning and workshops on gender equality in sport with our member sports institutions. We also facilitate press briefing when our member organisations have activities for example the Volleyball, Basketball and many others. We also continuously lobby the media to cover women more, we send them press releases, we send them reminders, we call them and have included them on our email lists and where necessary facilitate their transportation to our programmes.

I found that sports institutions that often have their stories published mobilise media coverage of their activities using more than one method. These include press releases, phone calls and letters of invitation to sports events and a common strategy utilised by many who get coverage is the hosting of media events such as cocktail parties, press briefings, media breakfasts and event launches. This I noted is mainly the case with institutions that have a higher capacity of organisation and management.

Often this is connected to corporate sector involvement, the corporate institutions facilitate media coverage by utilising their marketing and publicity resources, and for example sponsors of sport make appearances at media events to draw media attention and of course they sponsor some of the events.

Most of the sports institutions interviewed issue invitations to the media as and when they have events and want coverage. They seek coverage for event such as national tournaments or when they are calling attention to their need for funds to meet event or travel costs.

Media awards for sports coverage are also presented by the corporate sector, by sports NGOs such as Sport In Action Sport for Development Awards for best coverage of sport for development initiatives presented every November and the recently introduced Women in Sport Media award for coverage of women in sport. According to NOWSPAR this is in order to

... re-inforce and highlight good practices; we have to demonstrate that it is possible for women in sport to be covered and that there are media persons and institutions that are gender sensitive and so work hard to dig beneath the surface to find when and where the women in sport are.

At regional level, the Gender Media Monitoring Project, Gender and Media in Southern Africa and Gender Links conduct research and advocacy for equitable coverage. Research includes media content, media capacity, audience surveys and on women employed in media.

Recommendations for improvement included training for editors and reporters in gender issues, focus especially on editors since they make decisions on what is published. Although this was seen as still not effective by a respondent at MISA;

Reporters and editors have been in so many workshops learning about gender and gender mainstreaming and but they are still not convinced women in sport stories can sell the paper

An editor at the Post Newspaper recommends interventions for a change in the culture of both readers and publishers' culture, to shift from focus on one sport, and men's participation in it. Also to have a public that engages with the media to participate in setting the agenda of media content.

One lecturer was of the view that it will take a while to bring about change in the newspapers' practices, she suggested that

the immediate solution is to find other platforms or forums through which to cover women in sport if they do not qualify to be part of national newspapers

In the discussions I inquired of my respondents if they would consider the idea of setting a quota or minimum quantitative standard of media content to be allocated to women's stories. Some editors, reporters and civil society persons thought it could be worth trying. However, some did not think it is a practicable intervention.

The criticism was that it went against media principles and human rights, one University lecturer argued;

that is against press freedom principles, and violation of media laws; media should not be controlled or directed by external players. You can lobby but that's all. Lobby the ethics committee, directly lobby editors and management of newspapers

The use of the Human Rights framework as a mechanism for advocacy and standard for achievement was seen as useful by some respondents in civil society because it is not confrontational, however one media practitioner felt it is ineffective;

We do not want to go by these human rights targets as there is no mechanism for follow up, so we feel they are not practical. We would rather look at internal weaknesses and deal with those.

## **5.2 Discussion of findings**

### **5.2.1 Factors affecting women in sport coverage by national newspapers in Zambia;**

At the start of this research I assumed that newspapers do not find women in sport newsworthy, however as I interacted with the various respondents and the information they provided I am of the view that that is not entirely true. The problem is not that women's sport is not newsworthy, that is just a symptom, and the challenge lies in the conceptualisation of what sport is and the framework of newsworthiness both of which have a gender background.

Further due to limitations in space and the need for advertising, which is related to the limited resource input from the government, the prioritisation of what gets published leaves women's stories on the margins and in many cases they are excluded.

My findings challenged my initial assumption that limited media coverage leads to loss of corporate sponsorship for women in sport. They reveal that the two variables media coverage and corporate sponsorship are interrelated to the extent that media coverage can attract corporate sponsorship and that corporate sponsorship attracts and facilitates media coverage. This relationship is of course subject to several factors including the type of sport and the level of sport being played.

Just as other studies in the past have revealed, editors play a key role in deciding what gets published, in addition to this what I found was that the process and environment in which they make their decisions is gendered and subject to the current economic and political priorities.

Also significant in my findings is the awareness of some media persons including editors and reporters that their way of working often excludes or marginalises women, however common to all of them is the loyalty to the protection of their principles including objectivity and the principle of public interest coupled with the priority of keeping their newspapers financially viable.

### **5.2.2 International and national policies and laws relating to fair media coverage of sporting issues between sexes**

The International and national legal and policy infrastructure provides for the right to information, the obligations of state parties to ensure equal coverage and non-stereotypical representation of women. These provisions are however, not used as a yardstick for evaluation and policy decisions. I perceive this to be a result of the interaction between prioritisation of rights which relegates the right to sport to the bottom ranks of the human rights agenda and the caution around prejudicing press freedom that muffles the call for accountability that the state places on all its arms and its citizens. This is apparent in firstly the focus of monitoring data collected as highlighted by the Gender Focal Person at the Ministry of Sport and secondly in the perception that remedial action such as quota allocations on newspaper content would be violation of press freedom as argued by the University lecturer. There appears to be a divergence in national strategy for gender equality in media and the views and perceptions of the various players.

During the period of the course of the year 2009, the National Sports Policy had been revised and launched while the National Information and Media Policy was undergoing review. However, there was very little public dialogue around the two Policies. Perhaps because the focus is on the Press Freedom Bill that is controversial due to the potential impact it has on the media atmosphere in the country. Relating to the Sports Policy, the content of the policy is not radical enough to spark debate or interest, considering the budgetary allocation for the sports sector is minimal. This speaks to the value placed on the right to sport at policy level which reflects on the priorities at service delivery level.

Of further interest in budgetary allocation is the inconsistency in information on whether newspapers receive a grant or not. The Ministry of Information say they provide a grant while one state newspaper says they do not receive any grants, another said they do receive but are sure of the amount as they rely mostly on adverts and sales. The gap is further widened because I was unable to get the figures from the Ministry of Information and they are not listed in the published national budget.

### **5.2.3 Interventions by state and non state actors to increase coverage of women in sport by the national newspapers in Zambia**

There have been active attempts to intervene in the situation most of it based on liberal approaches with the assumption that adding women into the media space will result in gender sensitivity and women's coverage will increase. This seems to be a denial of the very objectives of the women's rights movement to transform society into gender sensitive and at some point equal society. But this approach is an 'each-one-to-his-own' method, a polarity that is unsustainable and ineffective considering the dynamics which still result in exclusion of women story despite presence of women reporters and editors in the institution.

Interventions such as appointment of gender focal persons who are usually women, I am yet to encounter a male Gender Focal Person in any institution, which seems to say gender inequality is a women's issue and not a national or human rights issue.

Non state actors including advocacy organisations have focused on training and sensitisation basing their interventions on the assumptions that the media practices are fine but the gap is in the capacity of media persons to understand gender and or sport issues.

However, I am of the view that this is a 'new wine in old skins' approach which does not question and seek to transform the foundation of media practice - principles such as objectivity and newsworthiness which are rooted in patriarchal ways of seeing and have developed into a tool for hegemonic masculinity followed reverently by the millions of media persons churned out of media schools.

Strategies such as separate women's pages further demonstrate the 'othering' process and the refusal to accept women's stories into mainstream knowledge and reality.

# Chapter Six

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## 6.0 Editorial (Theoretical analysis of findings)

As pointed out by Lemish in Ross and Byerly (2004)

Media texts are perceived to be one of the prime cultural sites through which it is possible to study the position of women in society. This is an area within which our society presents itself publicly, defines our identity for us, establishes the parameters of consensus and relegates what is perceived as unconventional to the margins.

Using the various theories below I now examine how the setting of ‘parameters’ results in exclusion of women from the newspapers and consequently does nothing to alter or transform the gender subordination of women that we read as unfulfilled human rights.

## 6.1 Media theories

### 6.1.1 Gaze

As I mentioned earlier, the strategy of having more women working in media as reporters and editors is inadequate in itself for as long as these women are not gender conscious and committed to actively and deliberately address the gender imbalance in coverage, the situation will not change much.

When a story is published two perspectives immediately come into question- the person who ‘looked’ at the occurrence or issue and wrote the story – the reporter, and the person who will ‘look’ at the occurrence or issue through the story- the reader.

Considering the objective of the reporter or the newspaper, in terms of content, is to write stories that will be of interest to the public, the reporter uses her concept of public to determine what will be ‘public interest’, in the interest of objectivity; the reporter does not think of what interests her but of what would interest the public.

Since the reporter more likely than not has a College or University qualification, she has learnt from the book what constitutes a newsworthy story; her own socialisation, coupled

with the ‘internal culture’ of the newspaper she is working at and the inclinations of the editor she has a template in her mind which she uses to identify stories.

So whose perspective is used when looking for news/stories? That of the public as constructed by the principle of newsworthiness, a principle which maximises on all characteristic of hegemonic masculinity – big money, prominence, action, scandal among others. If this is newsworthy then the assumption is the public is masculine or at least that the masculine interests are above others so should take pre-eminence in media publications. A reporter for a State Newspaper placed the blame on women’s sport for not meeting the standard of newsworthiness:

The structure of sports associations or programmes is also a problem- women's sport are usually social or non competitive thus receive no coverage. Competitiveness is a key factor in coverage of sport.

Therefore, whether the reporter is male or female they use the same gaze so results are similar. This gaze is made hegemonic by the continued practices of sports news reporters. Due to the gendered nature of media work and sport, the sex of the reporter as a ‘looker’ is made irrelevant by the application of a male ‘looking process’.

The resulting story is published therefore reinforcing the stereotype that this is indeed what is real, it is reinforced by the editors by approval and legitimated by the unquestioning consumers; the ‘looker’ (the reporter) repeats this way of seeing and the cycle keeps on.

The male gaze seeps through and is reinforced in the process of framing, it is further evident in the influences and behaviour of actors and structures of media as discussed below.

### **6.1.2 Framing**

The work of the newspaper person is about packaging numerous amounts of information to fit into the space available in one edition of her Newspaper. A process of selection and prioritisation is applied to facilitate this process. By using measurements or standards ranging from ‘national interest’, ‘wide impact’ ‘proximity’ and so many other media indicators of newsworthiness the news is selected and packaged. This is achieved by a process of framing as defined by Gitlin (1980).

Frames are principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters.

I apply Gitlin's theory of framing here because his view is that framing is an unconscious process. Based on this it can be argued that Newspaper sports reporters and editors do not set out not to cover women in sport, their daily objective is to cover sport but because of their conceptualisation of newsworthy sport (conceptualisation developed in a gendered space) the outcome of their work largely excludes women.

Perhaps in this manner we can absolve the State Newspaper sports reporter who said;

In our Newspaper women in sport are covered enough, we try to cover them as much as possible but there is not much sport that women are involved in.

However, we may not absolve her entirely, as an alternative approach to framing asserts that framing is a conscious process. Entman (1993) posits that;

[t]o frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation.

It is this ability that enables or facilitates the 'agenda setting' function of the media. It is this process that results in the use of story headlines such as "*ZABF<sup>6</sup> picks 8 females to prepare for 2012 Olympics*" (Post Newspaper, 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009) in order to draw attention to the fact that the athletes are female. This is to promote the uniqueness or abnormality of the occurrence yet these athletes are intended to be national representatives, but in cases of men's teams the selected teams are just called 'teams' or in this case 'boxers' and not 'male boxers' in the headline '*ZABF Shortlists boxers for 2010 AIBA<sup>7</sup> championships*' (Post Newspaper, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2010).

In comparison to a headline about an International Netball Tournament "*Zambia bow out*" (Daily Mail, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2009) in a story about the Netball National Team leaving the tournament after losing to South Africa. This headline presents the team as representatives of the country without mentioning that they are women because Netball in Zambia is played mainly by women – the normal situation; however there are some men's teams.

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<sup>6</sup> Zambia Amateur Boxing Federation

<sup>7</sup> International Association of Amateur Boxing

The above is also true for football, (the most popular sport in Zambia at all three levels- educational, recreational and competitive levels) the men's national team is presented as 'Zambia' while the women's national team is presented as 'Women's national team' a result of 'othering'<sup>8</sup> during the framing process.

The frames<sup>9</sup> presented in newspaper publications can be instrumental in shaping societal attitudes, beliefs and practices. This is one of the underlying principles of the role of the media in challenging or sustaining negative stereotypes about women.

The *consequences* of framing can be conceived on the individual and the societal level. An individual level consequence may be altered attitudes about an issue based on exposure to certain frames. On the societal level, frames may contribute to shaping social level processes such as political socialization, decision-making, and collective actions. (Vrees)

For example the young girl who requested to join a Karate club; three things possibly happened here, first the girl was inspired and knew it is possible to do Karate by seeing her peer involved, second there was a discussion with the parent about sport and participation, this is important for decision making and the approval removes a barrier that some girls face, third the parent took a step to facilitate her access to the sport, because he also has proof that it is possible and it is ok for girls to participate in a martial art.

Secondly, at societal level, the women's group mentioned on page 37 above serves as an example. Another occurrence is the role that media coverage plays in decision making that results in securing corporate investment in sports programmes. A Marketing Manager of one of the companies that supports sports programmes as part of its CSR programme said;

It helps if you receive coverage of your activities in the media. Then we the people in the corporate world are aware of your existence and the programmes you are doing. When approached, we can feel more confident about supporting your cause than if we had never heard of it before.

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<sup>9</sup> Tankard (2001, p. 101) suggests a list of 11 framing mechanisms or focal points for identifying and measuring news frames: 1. headlines, 2. Subheads, 3. Photos, 4. photo captions, 5. Leads, 6. source selection, 7. quotes selection, 8. pull quotes, 9. Logos, 10. statistics and charts, and 11. concluding statements and paragraphs.

Framing is inevitable when considered in view of the fundamental journalistic principle of ‘objectivity’. The newsperson selects information that they fit into a ‘space’ and measure as acceptable or not. If objectivity was really a functional principle, then the opposite would prevail, we would not see biases, but more variant views, perspectives and issues raised in sport pages. But there appears to be a perception that gender sensitivity is parallel to objectivity and yet not taking into consideration the reality of an occurrence is not objectivity. As a lecturer at the University of Zambia Mass Communication Department pointed out;

Gender issues are covered in the Broadcasting courses, however we teach media persons to be objective, not to be biased or discriminatory.

But this principle is difficult to implement, considering the multitude of variables and influences on the reporter- how does a reporter know he is objective? Objectivity remains a myth because of the influences that affect the actors and the process of news production. Applying Parenti’s observation of USA media coverage of politics to the sports coverage situation, I agree that;

Reporters carry along their past conditioning, schooling, and ~~political~~ *cultural* socialization. Before they ever leave the office they are influenced in what they will report by (1) the assignments given them by their superiors, (2) anticipatory responses to the reactions of superiors and public officials, (3) career considerations, and (4) the general ~~political~~ *sport* climate and dominant ideology (sustained partly by the media itself). Then they observe events and report to their editors who, responding to the same influences listed above, run the stories... [my edit]

In light of the above, of media principles neither objectivity nor fairness, nor diversity are in use when the sports pages have a near black out on equestrian activities<sup>10</sup>? None of the papers mentioned that Alison Hawk finished first in the Gauntlet held in Kitwe, on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2009. The following day none of the national Newspapers carried the story on the event. A week before that, the Zambian Team finished third in the FEI World Dressage Challenge held in Zambia with six Southern African countries participating, no matter the international dimension this still did not make it into the National Newspapers.

Is it objectivity that results in the silence around the individuals that make up the Women’s National Football Team and their technical team; where as we are shown a picture of the

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<sup>10</sup> Equestrian activities are sports and activities involving horses, in Zambia this is administered by the Zambia Horse Society

male coach of the Men's National Football Team several times a week thus giving him character and presence and maintaining the female coach as an idea or a concept.

The Newspapers facilitate popularity of sports persons by casting them in a certain light, or by merely writing about them frequently. By not writing frequently about women in sport, they contribute to the lack of popularity- a criterion the newspapers apply to determine who should be covered.

Further, sports men are treated as important in their individual capacity as they are presented in the Newspapers in stories about them as individuals. However, sports women are more frequently presented as part of teams or are spoken about in reference and rarely quoted.

One of the most written about woman in sport in Zambia, Esther Phiri, is rarely quoted; her images are presented often and the headlines refer to her but the story is usually told from the point of view of people around her- her coach or her sponsor.

A reporter at a state newspaper who often writes articles about Esther Phiri said there is not much that she says that can be used to write a story; but when her sponsor speaks, he always has a lot to say so the reporter gets the sponsor as a source even though he is writing about Phiri.

For instance, during the period October 7th 2009 to November 30th 2009, six stories about Esther were published in one of the state newspapers, this is the period she was preparing for a match contesting for Women's International Boxing Federation (WIBF) light welterweight world title, however only one of these stories had her voice in them, a short sentence about how she felt about the fight she won against Terri Blair. The stories were about her preparation for matches, her performance at matches and about sponsorship, the two main voices in these articles were her coach Mr. Mwamba and the Director of the Company sponsoring her Mr. Peter Cotan. In a few articles one of her opponents from the United States is quoted and as well as the Manager for the Hotel which provides accommodation for Ms. Phiri's and her coach.

Can we then say the coverage is really about her? Or is this about her as a subject or object, the 'other'?

## 6.2 Sex-Gender theory

The long and patriarchal history of the public/private dichotomy is still weaved in the fabric of our society and newspaper definition or development of the principles of ‘newsworthy’ are crafted by men since the media space has been dominated by men.

This domination can be traced as far back as Athenian times, which I recall from my undergraduate history class, when the public/private dichotomy was apparent and justified as natural<sup>11</sup> Scranton and Flintoff point out that this dissection of space threads through the industrial revolution (2002) and its consequences are still prevalent today as seen in cultural beliefs and practices relating to which sport women can play and what roles women can play in sport.

It is evident in the coverage and the perceptions of newspaper actors on what is acceptable as sports news, the consistently present concern that coverage of women in sport will cause sales to drop as the public is not interested in women in sport. One of the editors said;

...even if we want to promote women, we have to do it in an intelligent way or we may discourage people from reading our paper, it may not be interesting to the public

The challenge of coverage of women in sport is faces a double dose of gender bias because sport and media are public spaces and subject to the perceptions of who belongs in this space- first relating to which sport women may participate in and at what level. This poses a limit as to how many can be involved, but in any case they are women playing sport at various levels.

For example, some of the criteria for attaching importance to sports stories are impregnated with masculine values as a reporter at one of the state newspapers said;

Sponsorship of women's sport is a problem, for example teams in the men's soccer league are competing for a prize but what is the women's league competing for? So the women's league is not much of a story.

However, the women’s football league has not received much sponsorship as the investment in terms of time, corporate relations and marketing by the Football Association is minimal

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<sup>11</sup> In Athenian society citizenship was for men as the responsibilities that went with the right of citizenship were seen as too hard for women to bear, since women had the higher purpose of reproducing and socialising the young to be good citizens – women to be homemakers and men to be part of the public life.

compared to the men's league. This is also related to the recognition of what level of sport is acceptable for women to be involved in or for them to be taken seriously by the corporate sector and sponsored.

Women's sport is thus kept out of the newspapers and only presented when it suits the template such as international tournaments while men's sport is kept in the public space everyday thus affecting and reinforcing what the public accepts as sport.

So as Prenti notes, the press may not be telling us what to think, but they are telling us what to think about (1993) this is confirmed by newspaper editors who said they decide what is important and should be published based on what they think. So it is this thought process which results in the decision that we are concerned about because it is rooted in gendered values and perception.

### **6.3 Existentialist Theory**

The 'othering' process is evident in two ways; first the treatment of women in sport stories as not significant and secondly the presentation of men's teams or sport as 'the' sport. For example as highlighted in the framing process discussed in 6.1.2 above, in football when they say Zambia lost the tournament they mean the men's national team, where as if it's a women's national team the title always points that out.

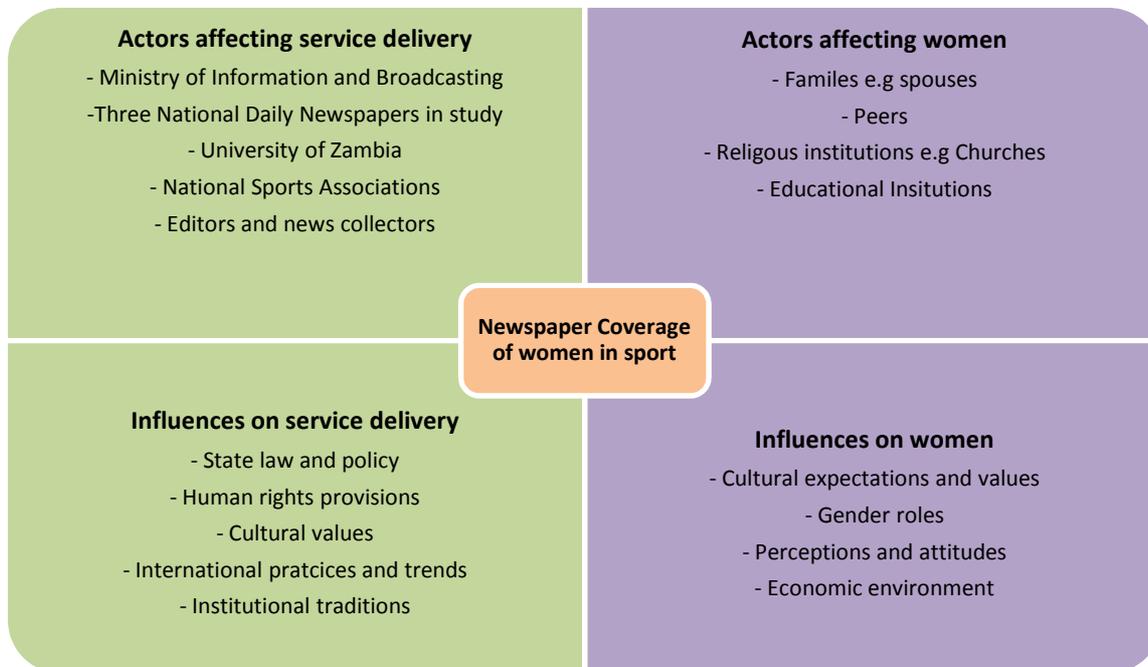
I read this as a lack of recognition and failure to legitimate women's engagement in sport. It appears 'real sport' as constructed by the media and us the consumers [for having not questioned this] is that which is competitive, high expenditure, mass crowd puller, man governed, prominent. As one female reporter at a state newspaper stated;

In our paper women's sport is covered enough, we try to cover them as much as possible but there is not much sport that women are involved in

This is evident in the choices of stories the reporter looks for and the stories that the editors approve for publication as discussed in my discussion of sex gender and of actors and influences below.

## 6.3 Actors and influences

**Figure 2 Actors and Influences**



### Actors

The actors in the Newspaper are instrumental to what finally gets published, from the reporter who gathers the news, the editor who approves or assigns a story each has an idea of what the public should know or read about.

Because the interaction or engagement with the readers is minimal, the Newspaper reporters and editors use their discretion. This arrangement seems to leave too much in the hands of a few, which is contradictory to principles of media operating within a democratic framework or human rights promotion framework because it means the public is not participating in its own determination.

In Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Paulo Freire posits that real education is a dialogical process between learners and teachers as opposed to a bank process where the teacher deposits knowledge into supposedly ignorant learners- a process he argues is oppressive.

I apply this to Newspapers because they all explained that their role is to inform, entertain and educate the nation. If we are relying on this process to promote human rights, then we ought to examine how this institution carries out this function.

This is particularly concerning because none of the Newspapers have ever conducted research to determine what the public are or are not interested in reading or what content compels them to buy the Newspapers. As an editor said;

What we feel is important will be published, we do not have the time to conduct research, although we get some feedback through letters to the editor, phone calls even when we personally interact with people.

Now, in deciding what story to publish, reporters feel they are at liberty to decide what to write about. All reporters interviewed said they were all free to determine what story to write. However in practice, bearing in mind the framing process and the resultant gaze employed, I see the need to question this freedom or discretion.

Ideally, this level of discretion should foster creativity and broader sources of news.

Foucault (1977) in looking at the body as a site for the exercise of power<sup>12</sup> he suggests the existence of

an inspecting gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself. A superb formula: power exercised continuously and for what turns out to be minimal cost.

In the above Foucault is discussing the use of gaze in institutions such as prisons or the clinical gaze in how medical knowledge wields power to direct our behaviour.

I take the liberty of applying Michel Foucault's concept of invisible surveillance and the inspecting gaze to the behaviour of Newspaper actors.

I ask, why does a reporter who is free to write any story she wants choose the stories that she does- in this case the ones that do not cast a spotlight on women. Because the reporters and the editor even, are under invisible surveillance- surveillance from themselves at that.

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<sup>12</sup> See Fox (1993), Petersen and Watson (1997) for detailed discussion of Foucault's theories on Power

This is my interpretation of the expressions that reporters have relating what they cover, once or twice the 'unreal' sports news is discarded (punishment) and soon enough one learns to fit the mould and seek stories that they think will attract least punishment or negative feedback(minimal sales).

As one Mass Communication student who had just completed attachment at one of the state Newspapers said;

There is no written rule stuck on the wall that says '*don't publish this or that or else you get fired*' - its unwritten

And another reporter said;

It is difficult to write a story about a non-entity even more difficult to convince an editor to publish. Questions like - what have they done? Arise- it is dependent on the editor

From the above the reporters operate with self surveillance, so the Editor can rightfully say;

I can not work with stories that I have not received from the reporters

## **Structures**

The role an organization plays in fostering media coverage of women is closely linked to its strategic focus, the people in leadership and its internal culture. For instance the institutions place importance on meeting targets or setting trends in development issues or going against the grain or ordinary practice.

In Newspapers, I look at editors collectively as a structure as they are 'gate keepers' and oversee the collection and publication of news. If a Newspapers' leaders call for extra work and achievements the rest of the players will go out of their way to do so, they will be innovative and find new and exciting angles to what would be considered a non-story.

Commitment to public service and the media principles of diversity and fairness in practicality is also a factor. However all this are based on very personal practices and perceptions and vary form person to person. As one reporter complained about his Editor;

The current editor knows very little about sport- he was recently moved from hard news to sport- its difficult to convince him about stories. The editor before was better, he made things easier for us.

The ideological standpoint of media persons and institutions affects the outcomes and the process of conducting their business. Their positions in relation to women's rights, media representation will influence the position an editor attaches to women in sport and its classification as 'public interest' and in comparison to one's personal interests such as fitting-in in order to survive and progress in one's career.

However, there is another dynamic that influences the operations or is at least the most identified among the reporters and editors- the limitations in resources thus reliance on advertising.

There is a lack of cogency in this argument, because even if the space available was two columns, commitment to fairness, diversity would reflect in the distribution of these two columns. It is actually in this type of situation that we can see the real value placed on the principles of objectivity and their role to entertain, inform and educate.

There is a further lack of consistency in practice of the Newspapers, in their responsibility to inform on what is of government and national significance and to reflect government policy focus and interest.

Has the same state not expressed interest in women's engagement in sport by signing the various instruments, by including sport in the long term plan of the country, in the sports policy. So how does the same government then fail, through its structures /instruments such as newspapers to reflect these commitments by equitable coverage of women in sport?

In order to move forward the state actors must open up dialogue on media behaviour<sup>13</sup>, this will provide perspective and raise possibilities for interventions that will align with the media's interest- to sell newspapers and to write about public interest.

## **6.5 Recognition and redistribution**

Using this approach I notice that an interaction of misrecognition at two levels resulting in a resource distribution pattern that systemically excludes women.

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<sup>13</sup> The Review of the Information and Media Policy is a good opportunity, but I am not certain whether this has been utilized.

Firstly, the ‘universal’ template of ‘newsworthiness’ fails to recognise the differences, not in capacity but the gendered historical, and social factors that have resulted and influence the way women do sport.<sup>14</sup>

For example, the fixation on coverage of sport that is professional and involves high amounts of money, in contrast to coverage of sport that is exercised for social or health reasons.

The choice to invest cultural meaning, newspaper space and public readership in this aspect of sport without consideration of the impact on a part of the society that is not being included should be re-looked at from an exclusion perspective.

Gibson (Economic and Social Research Council, 2009) debates the concept of intrinsic value and instrumental value as applied to sport as a basis for investment, she posits that this dichotomy is too simplistic to base decision making on as it does not enable grounded critical thinking that should lead to cultural policy development.

We should then not only look at the economic and health benefits but also at benefits such as fun, happiness and enjoyment- aspects that may not be easily quantifiable and not so much of a focus considering the preoccupation with survival and existence of people that governments are focused on.

As Gibson points out, it is important to raise the issue of intrinsic value in sport and media content discourse- however the challenge is fostering instrumentalism without negating intrinsic value of the services delivered. (2009)

In relation to the interventions employed internally by newspapers, the framework of redistribution aligns with distributive justice on which equity measures are based. Equity measures such as allocation of specific space to address limited access in an identified area as pointed out by one of the state newspaper editors;

[A]part from occasional coverage of women sports issues in its daily newspaper; [the Newspaper] has introduced a four-paged special supplement edition in its Saturday edition specifically to tackle women issues, and has dedicated the back page to cover women sports personalities and issues.

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<sup>14</sup> Lenskyj has done comprehensive work on history of women’s participation in sport.

So we see that the redistribution based on misrecognition or lack of recognition leads to and is also caused by an ‘othering’ process; as a provisional measure, this is a positive action that provides space for women’s presence in the newspaper. This has occurred because there has been distribution of physical resources –the newspaper space, but the redistribution of value has not occurred because it has not been recognised. If value had been recognised fully the redistribution would not have occurred based on sex, it would have perhaps been based on types or levels of sport; the main page would cover both men and women and other criteria used to pick what should be in the supplement.

Therefore this measure does not address the real issue of why women are largely left out of the main sports page. In any case, it is re-enforcing the perception of women and their activities as ‘other’ or as unreal sports persons so do not deserve to be classified as sport.

But bearing in mind that this action is a result of a negotiation process, it is a step forward and negotiations should be carried forward while raising awareness and gender consciousness of decision makers until the newspaper covers men and women equitably within the specific pages.

#### **6.4 Capabilities and Entitlements**

Play is listed on Nussbaum’s provisional list of central human capabilities. I apply the capabilities approach to the problem of unequal access to the right to sport by women by arguing that providing sports facilities and laws that provide for non- discrimination is not sufficient to ensure fulfilment of the right to sport since access is dependent on several factors including availability of sports programmes, value of sport and recognition of sport as beneficial or important, as Nussbaum (2000) points out that

Unequal social and political circumstances give women unequal human capabilities.

The current focus of newspaper sports page articles is on men’s sport thus reinforcing stereotypes around what is acceptable or possible for women.

The capabilities approach centres on what a person is able to do and to be by converting goods and opportunities. Within this framework, I can argue that the nature of the service provision at present limits what women are able to do in terms of the sports activities. It also limits what they can be to the extent that if the notion of ‘real sport’ is ‘men’s sport’ leading

to limited coverage by newspapers, women lose opportunities such as corporate sponsorship for those involved and the information and societal approval of women's engagement in sport that is important in a gendered society.

According to Sen, a person must not only be prevented from doing or becoming, but must also have the resources with which to do so. (Nussbaum 2000) The role of newspapers is one of facilitating information, symbolic societal approval that women can and are free to play sport.

Cultural space and approval facilitated by media and information on availability and options are some of the resources needed to fulfil the capability of play, the question may arise- can this information not be provided by someone else? Of course it can, but in alignment to the state responsibilities, the obligation to facilitate an environment that enables access to sport lies on the government, besides since the public pays tax, and have delegated the government to provide these services, they must be provided through public facilities such as newspapers.

The construction of an environment that enables access to entitlements by women- of the newspaper as a resource is antecedent to the achievement of women's capabilities.

Within the framework of capabilities, the principle of agency is central. Agency refers to the ability or the power to determine and act on one's own behalf (Nussbaum: 2000). Facilitating information flow plays a key role in developing agency of women in and out of sport. The process of decision making requires information; this information must not be stereotypical.

At another level agency is exercised by media persons who seek alternative ways of covering women, albeit it can be interpreted as a result of 'Othering' but in this framework it can be perceived as steps by media persons to allocate space to women.

The approach of progressive realisation and prioritisation of rights aligns to the aspect of the capabilities approach which allows for prioritisation based on a community's consensus about what is valuable.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Nussbaum's approach lists capabilities while Sen refuses to commit to prescribing a list as this is dependent on peoples realities and aspirations, this approach is elaborated in detail in Nussbaum and Sen (1993) and Drezen and Sen(1995).

However, this raises or assumes agency in decision making at a level of resource distribution, for example, the existence of a dynamic and vibrant democratic process in the national planning, in policy development, constitution making as well as budgeting. (Nussbaum: 1988) In view of the decision making process of what gets published, the authority lies in editors and reporters as they newspapers as one editor said are too busy to conduct research.

## **6.6 Human Rights**

The right to sport is a freedom, it therefore requires non-interference from the state and also requires the state to take positive action “... ensuring preconditions for participation, facilitation and promotion” (General Recommendation 21). This means crafting an environment that does not hinder access to sport, a physical as well as ideological or cultural environment. In developing this environment, newspaper as mass media are a useful tool to communicate and challenge gender stereotypes, their role of stimulating or directing discourse is significant.

The approach of human rights as a policy and program philosophy demands the cooperation of the government and its people because claim of rights in discourse will not bring tangible change in a woman’s life unless it is translated into action.

The process of achieving action will require consensus at policy making level, for instance demonstrating that limited or non-recognition of women’s engagement and entitlement to sport is a human rights violation. This provides a basis for state action such as resource allocation to address the situation; this could be in form policy processes, budgetary allocations, research and development of programmes to meet needs of women and girls.

For instance, the significance or appreciation of football as a sport in Zambia is reinforced and sustained by its daily presence in media thus fostering societal value, this is evident in the centrality it takes in sports discourse, this value has translated into policy action, sustained budgetary allocation and even time allocation in parliamentary committee sessions.<sup>16</sup>

As elaborated in the Limburg Principles, there is recognition that meeting the obligations of SECR can be achieved progressively; key considerations however are that progressive

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<sup>16</sup> The Parliamentary Committee on Sport, Youth and Child Affairs was discussing the development of football in Zambia from 15<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> February 2010

achievement is not dependent on increase in a state's resources, it is about effective use of available resources. (1987)

Of the SECR, it is evident that the right to sport is among those to be achieved progressively, and often calls to invest more in this right are often met with an emphatic claim on lack of resources. This appears to be as a result of the conceptualisation of what resources are; often this is perceived as financial, human or material resources. However, I am of the view that resources include the intangible such as values, attitudes and cultural space; as these are also vital to access to rights aside financial and material resources.

The Limburg Principles further recognise that progressive implementation can be affected not only by increasing resources, but also by the development of societal resources necessary for the realization by every one of the rights recognized in the Covenant on SECR.

I posit that in view of the instrumental function of newspapers in setting the agenda for public discourse and stereotype development, it is possible to develop the societal resource of value of sport in women's lives and positive attitudes towards women's sport participation. Nussbaum (1988) notes that

Just as people can be taught not to want or miss the things their culture has taught them they should not or could not have, so too can be taught not to value certain functionings as constituents of their good living.

Part of the progressive realisation occurs through positive action in policy making such as allocation of land for sports facilities and at societal level by developing consciousness and value of sport. This societal resource will contribute to development of agency among women to claim their right to sport as well as to hold the state and its instruments (such as newspapers) accountable.

In holding the state accountable, the Limburg Principles provide that determining whether adequate measures have been taken for the realization of the rights recognized in the Covenant, attention shall be paid to equitable and effective use of and access to the available resources (1987).

Since equity is about remedy, it requires recognition of unequal structures and systems such as gender relations; it thus follows that the action towards compliance should target

investigation into the true nature and root of inequality, to avoid misapplying equity actions as discussed in 6.5 above.

With due recognition of press freedom as a vital component of democracy which is a foundation for human rights respect; the unintentional exclusion that results from application of certain media principles affects access to the right to sport. So promoting equitable media coverage is a justifiable action that the state can take.

State obligation to respect and to prevent non-discrimination can not be masked under the argument of scarce resources as (Kunnemann, 2002) argues:

Two norms are always incumbent on states. These are the obligation to respect and the principle of non-discrimination, because neither is affected by resource constraints. Any breach of the obligations to respect or any case of discrimination can be identified immediately as a violation. In addition, states have breached a positive obligation if they do not demonstrate within a reasonable period that they are unable to take the required measures because of lack of resources.

The state has resources in form of Newspapers, to address barriers to participation such as lack of information, gender stereotypes and limited resources which result in women's exclusion from sport. By not effectively using this available resource the state is not meeting its obligation by facilitating fulfilment of the minimum standard of the right to sport - availability, acceptability, adaptability and appropriateness.

## **6. 8 Changing the rules: an integrated framework approach**

One of the limitations of the Human Rights approach is its basis on the assumed control that the state has over itself, considering the concept of 'state' is in reality undergoing shifts and changes based on the power relations between the government and the people. So it is possible for the state to take steps towards human rights compliance but still face challenges or resistance from various players within its system.

This is even more apparent in the case of media institutions such as state owned newspapers; the state perceives itself as in charge of all that has to do with protection and development of its people, so through sanctions and incentives ensures compliance to its directives. On the other hand, the media perceives itself as the 'watch dog' ensuring the state does not self obliterate or oppress its people.

State ownership of media is justified as part of the promotion of democracy and human rights, but the challenge is media want ‘freedom’ to function outside state regulation. This becomes a conundrum in that the people pay tax to fund the government for services including the state owned newspapers and the government accounts to the people for the services it delivers. So how do we explain that impact and quality of state services such as water, education, security among others can be accounted for while newspaper services on the pretext of press freedom, non-interference are not accountable?

I recognise that since this situation has interlocking rights, freedoms and conflicting yet mutual aims, what we need is a way of seeing and a foundation for action that takes into consideration all these facets while maintain the principle aim to overcome exclusion of women from the right to sport.

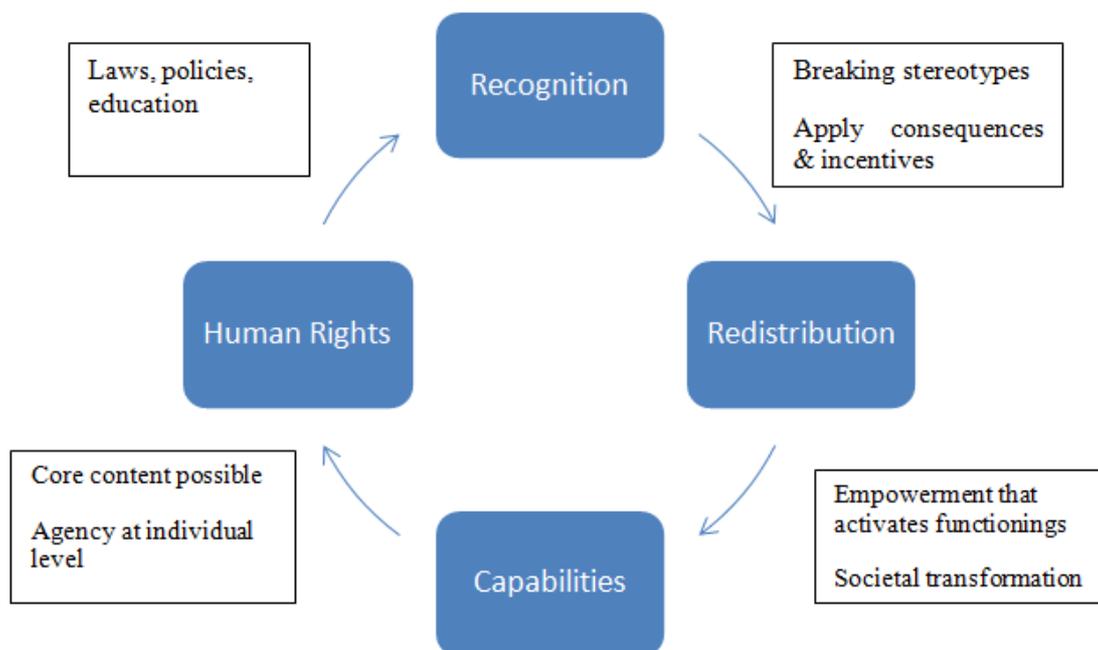
Drawing the theoretical principles and frameworks of human rights, capabilities and recognition and redistribution together in a cyclic process enables us to see the various intervention opportunities and advocacy strategies that can be enabled and applied. It also helps us open up the ideological space to utilise as much as possible of the theories that underlie development planning and policy making.

Considering the lives of women go beyond looking at “this is my right therefore the state owes me” it helps us see a little bit more clearer that enabling women’s rights can be both a means to fulfilling lives and an end in itself. As I proposed in another discussion (Mwambwa 2009)

the human rights framework is in itself insufficient as a development framework, but that a combination of capabilities, recognition and redistribution approaches can provide a process and principles for policy and political progress towards achieving the vision of the human rights provisions.

I think of this approach as the ‘stew’ approach, ingredients are added according to their cooking time and the flavour required, while adjusting for heat and stirring as one goes on to ensure nothing sticks to the bottom of the pot or lumps together- the result a wholesome and filling stew. The ingredients or parts of which could have been cooked separately but the flavour would have been different and one would have used more pots of course.

**Figure 3 Stew Approach to Overcoming Exclusion**



In this scenario, the human rights framework is focused on what kind of environment is established or maintained by the state, so as to enable women consume or absorb the right to sport. While recognition is about the qualification or framing of women's situations within the concept of rights or in this case the aspect of exclusion, this process is antecedent to redistribution of resources, resources or entitlements which enable them activate their capabilities; achieved capabilities will result in agency to utilise or access the provisions of the human rights core content.

This process is continuous, considering the capabilities are dependent on a society's environment and values and as the human rights are progressively realised more possibilities or lack of possibilities are recognised and consideration for redistribution made and more capabilities developed. In terms of time this may happen over various generations, as of scope this can occur at personal or national level and neither is this a rigid pattern as the cycle may begin at any given point.

In the case of women's right to sport for instance, as a core obligation the state must make sport available to women by ensuring physical facilities. In Lusaka, the government has

provided a public swimming pool, so to this extent they have met this minimum standard. However, the barrier to access is not availability it is in intangible requirements such as awareness of the facility, awareness and perception of the activity of swimming as possible and available for women, the attitude towards the activity of swimming and the value placed on sport participation as a part of ones life.

Stereotypes around certain sports activities such as swimming relate to who can participate, some perceptions are that this is a sport for children and youth, for men, for whites or for professional sports persons. Fulfilling the right to sport in this case will require going beyond availing the facility, the state has to address accessibility both physical and cultural.

Since access is determined by awareness of the availability, acceptance that the activity is of value and culturally appropriate – these are aspects that are enshrined in stereotypes, the media becomes relevant as an instrument to address these challenges as most of them are ideological and the media's self proclaimed role is to inform, educate and entertain.

...because what women strive for contains a plurality of irreducibly distinct components ... [I]t is focused on capability or empowerment, even as the women's own thinking is focused on creating opportunities and choices, rather than imposing on any individual a required mode of functioning.

This approach is an attempt to conceptualise the clockwork beneath the hour and minutes hands of 'advancing women's rights' – the interlinked structural gears of cultural, historical, political and economical realities that need to be lubricated in order for the clock hands to move in the right direction.

# Chapter Seven

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*“The media’s job is to interest the public in the public interest”.* John Dewey

## 7.0 Sport Briefs (Conclusion)

At this point I am convinced that the fundamental problem of limited coverage of women in sport by national newspapers is a problem of gender inequality. By framing it as a human rights issue, we draw urgency and justification however the solution lies in wrenching the newspapers from the clutches of patriarchy.

This transformation of a gender system will not be achieved by a human rights approach only, because it manifests and propagates in at many levels and in many facets hence the need for a conceptual and theoretical framework that recognises the intricate connections and opportunities and thus strategies for intervention that are required.

This is not to say these things are not happening, they are happening only in isolation of each other for instance allocation of specific space for women, gender sensitisation efforts without tackling the major patriarchal principle of news publications- newsworthiness.

We should engage more with the media actors and their practices in order to more actively contest the boundaries of media practices.

A starting point could be the recognition by the newspaper actors of their limitations and shortcomings, as in Alan Rusbridger’s famous confession (WACC: 2009):

I would like to see us [newspapers] say over and over until the point has been made...that the newspaper that drops on your doorstep is a partial, hasty, incomplete, inevitably somewhat flawed and inaccurate rendering of some of the things we heard about in the past 24 hours...distorted despite our best efforts to eliminate gross bias by the very process of compression that makes it possible for you...to read it in about an hour. If we labelled the paper accurately then we would immediately add: But it’s the best we could do under the circumstances, and we will be back tomorrow with a corrected updated version...

Advancing coverage of women is dependent on the convictions of media actors. There is room to cultivate this by developing a critical mass of men and women in media, policy making structures, civil society, education and training institutions.

We must channel efforts towards developing skills and consciousness among actors and consumers of media to be proactive and committed to human rights and to determining what they consume- we ought to make public media more public. In as much as the media have an agenda setting agenda, consumers should contribute to the formulation of this agenda.

Explore the use of accountability mechanisms such as lobbying, withdrawal of approval or consumption or advertising.

Following research findings for example the Gender Media Monitoring Project there must be consequences of the outcomes or findings- so what if coverage is low? Who does anything about it? We must implement a system of incentives for positive actions and sanctions for negative ones.

We must be aware of hiding gender and reality/experienced inequalities under concepts such as objectivity- if objectivity is not working can the notion be transformed or evolved.

The problem can be located in the structure and culture of media – the underlying principles upon which they operate facilitates a culture of ‘objectivity’ which hides inequalities and turns a ‘blind eye’ or puts inequalities in the ‘blind spot’.

The application of the concept of core obligations to the right to sport is a relevant strategy to providing guidance to states to the minimum standard that they should strive for.

The indivisibility of rights is a reflection of the indivisibility of human life- with work arises leisure, exercise the mind- exercise the body and so many other dialectical spheres. By states striving to meet the core obligations women can have a chance at a dignified and fulfilled life.

The step by the committee to actually get round to setting out the minimum obligations of the right to culture [which encompasses the right to sport] is a positive one and can be seen as an indicator towards actually holding states actively responsible. It provides clear guidelines for state action and also for reporting.

I find my application of a spectrum of theoretical perspectives in this discussion as an indicator of the multi-dimensional nature of the issue and the consequences for policy making.

### **8.0 In the Next Edition (Recommendations)**

the key to ending gender discrimination and structural inequality is accountability. Women must be empowered to hold policy-makers (and other relevant actors) answerable for their promises, and if they fail to deliver, to call for corrective action

**Education institutions:** Gender should not be considered only as a news issue, but the education of media persons must result in gender analysis skills, consciousness of the reality of men and women as they carry out their daily work. Gender sensitivity should be seen as part of accuracy and fairness in reporting.

**Corporate Sector:** Joint action; advertise in the Newspapers or media that are committed to gender sensitive and equitable coverage. Since the adverts are a major source of income, the corporate do have leverage over the press. Of course this can be perceived as ‘interference’ or against the goal towards an ‘unfettered press’.

**Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development:** Closer Corporation with ministry of information to ensure achievement of the right to sport.

**Ministry of Information and Broadcasting:** the Policy review process must take into consideration mechanisms for ensuring sex and gender equality not only in human resource but also in publication content of newspapers.

**National Sports Associations** should make available information and knowledge on their respective sports disciplines and programmes. This can be done through inclusion of media persons in workshops, training programmes and provision of publications.<sup>17</sup>

The area of media representation of women though studied extensively still remains an area of concern with several unanswered or unclear why’s and who’s. Feminist research must continue to delve beneath the news print to uncover the political, cultural, economic and

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<sup>17</sup> I am part of the team at my workplace that has initiated a Women in Sport Resource Centre services include a repository on information and publications on sport, physical activity and recreation that media persons can have access.

historical structures that determine and result in women's invisibility in sports section of newspapers.

**Sports and Media NGOs:** Should continue carrying out research, but to take the quantitative research a step further.

I propose the following research

- I. A longitudinal study on the influence of media representation on sport participation of women, further a comparative study of media representation of sport, perceptions and ideologies in electronic and print media in Zambia and the region.
- II. A study on public expenditure /budget tracking in sport and recreation for men and for women and a study on corporate sector investment in sport and recreation in Zambia
- III. A case study comparing the development of sport men and women from recreation sport to elite level sport
- IV. A longitudinal study of influence of gender training on reporters' performance and newspaper publication of women in sport stories.

Feminist studies or research must look into the very nature of media as an instrument of patriarchy, shrouded in the language of objectivity and on a pedestal of being the fourth estate.

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