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# Expressing Our Gender Freedom: Radio Drama as advocacy for Freedom of Expression for Lesbian Women in Lesotho

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Wits School of Arts

Drama for Life

Masters Research Report

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RESEARCH TOPIC: Expressing Our Gender Freedom: Radio Drama as advocacy for Freedom of Expression for Lesbian Women in Lesotho

SUPERVISOR(S): Dr. Sibongile Bhebhe







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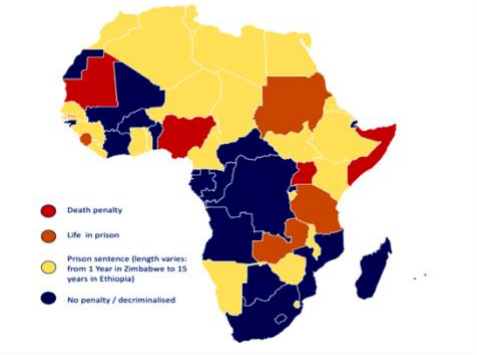
# Chapter 1

## 1.1. Background to the study

This study is about exploring forms of freedom of expression for lesbian women and how they define freedom of expression for themselves. The research explores the stories of how lesbians in Lesotho were enabled to express themselves or not regarding their lesbian status and identity through the medium of radio drama in a Practice as Research approach. Radio drama was used as an advocacy tool to allow lesbian women to voice out their concerns regarding the stifling of their freedom of expression. Freedom of expression is, arguably, the pleasure to show or express one self's preferences, emotions and feelings and desires regardless of sexuality. Emerson, (1970:3) explains that freedom of expression is the basic human right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of boundaries, either orally, in writing or in print, in an art form or any other media of choice without fear of discrimination or violence.
Carlos, (2017:34) states that "Conservative opponents of LGBT equality often express their resistance in claims of free speech, free association, and religious liberty".

LGBTQI+ and homosexuality are one and the same thing and often used interchangeably. Elliot and Kassel (2019) state that homosexuality refers specifically to romantic or sexual attraction between individuals of the same sex while LGBTQI+ is an umbrella term that includes homosexuality (lesbians and gays), bisexuality (attraction to both men and females), transgender identity (gender identity differing from assigned sex), queer identity (non-heterosexual identities) and intersex individuals (born with both reproductive/sexual anatomy that does not fit typical male or female classifications). According to American Psychological Association (2020), homosexuality is a type of sexual orientation and individuals who identify as homosexuals are part of the larger LGBTQI+ community. American Psychiatric Association (1973) further explains that homosexuality is not a mental disorder, but a normal variant of human sexuality.
In other words, homosexuality is the key aspect of the broader LGBTQI+ community that includes diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.
This study will be through investigating how radio drama can be used to explore the freedom of expression for lesbian women.

**Figure 1**




Red means death penalty

Orange means life in prison

Blue means no penalty/decriminalized

Yellow means prison sentence (length varies from 1 year in Zimbabwe to 15years in Ethiopia)

A map of Africa with the representation of the level of criminality placed on lesbianism in each country

Looking at the map above, African countries such as Botswana and South Africa approve the existence of homosexuality and same sex marriages. Some countries like Uganda, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Tanzania, Swaziland and Nigeria have established strong laws that work against everyone who practices homosexuality. It is shown that people who practice homosexuality face either a death penalty or life-time imprisonment or prison sentence (Institute of Security Studies. 2023 and Maunganidze & Cohen 2023)

Lesotho is not an exception to the issue of disapproval of the homosexuality. The communities and the people are highly against the legalization of same sex marriage with the reasons that it is against the Basotho culture, God's creation, the Bible and their beliefs, (The Other Foundation, 2017). These mentioned factors have led to the hindrance of freedom of expression.

Smith (2023:245) states that the violence and challenges to which LGBTI persons are subjected to when they exercise their right to freedom of expression, access to information and participation in political life, are rooted in gender-based violence and hurtful gender stereotyping. Both women and LGBTI persons are harassed or violently attacked because of these root causes that attack their gender, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

Everyone, including LGBTI individuals (lesbian women), should have the right to freely express themselves and access information under the same conditions as others. However, due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression, are frequently excluded or erased from public discourse.

The LGBTQI+ community is excluded in the constitution of Human Rights in a way that, it does not protect it (LGBTQI+ community) against any form of abuse or action that is against human rights or in a way that LGBTI+ community human rights are violated regardless of how minor or major those rights are. Governments often justify censoring LGBTI individuals (lesbian women) and content on the grounds of morals and child protection. Evidence shows that this approach is discriminatory and causes more harm. It develops an environment of intolerance toward LGBTI people, perpetuates stigmatization, and prevents LGBTI youth from accessing accurate information about their rights, including sexual and reproductive health, (Outright Action International, 2021).

In Lesotho, the law does not address sexual orientation. However, a law prohibiting consensual same-sex sexual relations exists but was not enforced. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTI) persons face societal discrimination and official insensitivity to this discrimination. LGBTI rights groups complained about discrimination in access to health care and participation in religious activities. Same-sex conduct is forbidden in society and not openly discussed. Violence against LGBTI persons occurred but often went unreported by victims due to their fear of being identified publicly as LGBTI. Matrix, an LGBTI support group from Lesotho, operated freely and had members in all 10 districts. Matrix engaged in public outreach through film screenings, radio programs, and social media but unfortunately, the group did not last long. Matrix was restrained to promote LGBT legal rights due to fear of provoking societal backlash and preferred a modest, gradual approach of sensitizing the public to LGBT issues, (UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, 2012).

As mentioned earlier, I will be using Practice as Research as my method of research to explore the concept of freedom of expression for Lesbian women in Lesotho. Barrett & Bolt, (2010) states that Practice as Research (PaR) incorporates creative practices with scholarly research, emphasizing the generation of new knowledge through artistic methods. It values experiential and performative approaches, allowing practitioners to explore, document, and theorize their creative processes. Therefore, using Radio Drama as my data collection method will not only help in generating new knowledge for me as a researcher but also provide edutainment for the listeners in the communities of Lesotho regarding the freedom of expression for the lesbian women.

Crook (2002) explains that radio drama, also known as radio play, is a form of audio storytelling broadcasted over the radio. It began in the early 20th century and became especially popular during the 1920s to 1950s, known as the "Golden Age of Radio." Radio drama features actors voicing characters, accompanied by sound effects and music to create immersive experiences. Without visual elements, radio dramas rely on dialogue, sounds, and music to evoke imagery and emotions in listeners' minds. This form of entertainment provided a way for people to learn enjoy stories and performances.

## 1.2. Problem statement

Basotho people are among populations which still view sexuality from a binary lens. While the past decade has experienced a drop in the rejection of LGBTQI in some developing countries of the West, in many other countries, including Lesotho, homophobia keeps intensifying, (Matthews 2019). The law in Lesotho is silent on same sex practices between women; however, homophobic violence and discrimination occur. Official reports are uncommon due to fear of further stigmatization, (Lesotho Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour, 2011).

The issue of human rights for lesbian women in Lesotho is not supported by the law but rather supports certain groups of people and leaves out the other groups. The human right that is most violated by almost every homophobic people is Freedom of Expression. It is a problem for lesbian women to express themselves in any forms of expression possible for them to still feel like human beings in their communities. Same-sex behaviour is considered taboo and not openly discussed in society. Incidents of violence against LGBTI+ individuals still occur, but victims often do not report them due to fear of being publicly identified as LGBTI (UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, 2012).

## 1.3. Aim and objectives

This research seeks to investigate how radio drama can be used as an advocacy tool to explore how Lesotho lesbians can explore various forms of freedom of expression. The investigation will be conducted online through WhatsApp call due to data expenses in Lesotho. I will be interviewing five lesbian women between the age of 18years and 25years.The objective of this research is to explore in depth the concept of freedom of expression and advocacy for lesbian women in Lesotho through the use of radio drama. To achieve this aim, I will use WhatsApp call semi-structured interviews; - I will record these interviews for my data analysis and creation of the radio drama script.

## 1.4. Research Questions

- In what ways can radio drama be used as a tool to propel freedom of expression for lesbian women in Lesotho?
- How can radio drama be used as advocacy for the freedom of expression for Lesotho Lesbian women?

Sub questions

- What is freedom of expression and what does it mean for the lesbians in Lesotho?
- What does freedom of expression mean for and to the lesbian women in Lesotho?

## 1.5. Rationale

I am doing this research because I have realized that in Lesotho, the issue of freedom of expression works for non-homosexuals only while LGBTQI+ community is not accommodated. Therefore, they (LGBTQI+) have to face the challenge of violation of human rights (freedom of expression).This research is going to benefit the lesbian women because they are the most vulnerable group in Lesotho in that, whenever they try to express themselves in their communities, they get negative reactions from their communities, because of the social norms that bind them to express themselves according to the social norms and expectations and not according to their (lesbian women) preferences or desires, (Mofokeng, T. 2022,p.102-117).

There is limited understanding and documentation on how the constitutional exclusion of LGBTQI+ rights impacts the daily lives of lesbian women in Lesotho. The societal norms and expectations have led to the hindrance of freedom of expression for lesbian women in Lesotho. Furthermore, the lack of awareness and education in Lesotho about lesbianism and the human rights of lesbian women have led to unsolved cases of violence against the LGBTQ+ individuals; they do not report violence anymore but rather let the pain dwell in them.

The study will also benefit the community in that, more knowledge about lesbianism in Lesotho will be spread and that leads to educating the communities about lesbianism and human rights of lesbian women in Lesotho.

With radio drama, Crook (2002) argues that even though not widely recognized as a tool for addressing social issues, it can serve as a powerful medium for advocacy. Applied Drama and Theatre studies may benefit from this powerful medium for educational and advocacy purposes.

## 1.6. Literature Review

The key points in my literature review are radio drama, advocacy and freedom of expression. Crook, (2002) states that radio drama is one platform that includes all the issues people are facing and seek to address through a creative play or drama. Although not widely recognized as an effective tool for addressing social issues, radio drama serves as a powerful medium for advocacy. It not only addresses these issues but also creates a platform for debate on social matters. He further states that radio drama shows how experimentation in radio narrative has blurred the dividing line between fiction and reality in modern media as well as advocacy. Using extracts from scripts and analyzing radio broadcasts, Crook explores the practicalities of producing drama for radio. Radio drama would offer a unique chance to share lesbian women's experiences and perspectives, providing a platform for advocacy and challenging the dominant narratives that have historically been silenced or marginalized them. This research also looks into how radio drama can be used to create a safe space and act as a voice for lesbian women to share their stories and express themselves authentically. It can also be used to mobilize support and solidarity from a wider audience, and to influence public opinion and policy on issues related to freedom of expression for lesbian women. Crook suggests that it is not widely recognized, so I feel that this study can enhance the knowledge that radio drama can bring into the public spaces.

Studies have shown that advocacy is said to be a way of voicing out for the voiceless (for example, lesbian women in Lesotho). Lukasz (2019) states that advocacy is the process that organizations and companies undertake to influence agenda and create an enabling external environment for their operation. Shaffer (1979) he defines advocacy as a form of reconciliation that involves moral discourse aimed at improving community life by addressing neglected interests.

In this study, I am using radio drama as a tool for advocacy, aiming to give a voice to lesbian women and promote greater knowledge and understanding of freedom of expression within Lesotho communities. According to Lukasz, this can create social change by enhancing awareness and support for the rights of lesbian women. It is the concept of freedom of expression that is a conversation behind the closed curtains amongst most lesbian women in Lesotho and yet no lesbian woman has the audacity to speak up. The closed conversations of freedom of expression for lesbian women in Lesotho is a concern that this study seeks to

investigate and radio drama as a tool to advocate or voice for the voiceless (lesbian women) and for the lesbian women to be able to freely express themselves publicly.

Looking at Lesotho's status when it comes to homosexuality, there is nothing promising. In most cases, when a lesbian woman freely expresses who they really are and their preferences, they end up experiencing discrimination, criticism, humiliation depression, suicide, homicide and abuse (either physical or verbal abuse) from their families and communities. The issue is supported by two articles written by Keneuoe Mats'umunyane and Dipane Hlalele (Culture, Religion and sexual Diversity in Lesotho) which is about the kinds of abuse most LGBTQI+ group (lesbian women) face which include sexual harassments, rape and verbal and physical abuse from their communities, families and peers.

In the article, there is one of the interviewees' (a lesbian) statements which says, "I was once raped by a married man in my village. I could not tell anyone because I knew I would be calling a lot of judgments to myself, I knew I was going to be blamed for tempting that man now that I don't want to have a boyfriend, so I kept that to myself" (Mats'umunyane&Hlalele 2019:506). This quote speaks back to the issue of violation of human rights for lesbian women in Lesotho whereby the lesbian women just decide to deal with their social challenges in silence because no law will work on their behalf.

Furthermore, it is a known fact that the family has to be defined in a form of two parents of different sex living with their children under the same roof, and that can only be considered as a "valid" family. Unfortunately, that does not imply to the homosexual families in Lesotho, leading to the idea or perception of sodomy, (The Other Foundation 2017:13). Lesbian women in Lesotho cannot or are not allowed to go through same-sex marriage and that creates a problem as to how one (lesbian women) can freely express their sexual orientations and preferences to their communities as well as families and friends without any judgment or criticizing.

Freedom of expression means having the right to express one's thoughts, opinions and idea without fear of restriction, retaliation or legal sanction (Oster, 2015). Freedom of expression for lesbian women in Lesotho remains a complex issue, influenced by cultural, legal, and social factors. Lesotho, a predominantly conservative society with strong Christian values, often faces challenges in fully embracing LGBTQI+ rights. Lesbian women in Lesotho often experience discrimination and stigmatization, which hampers their ability to freely express their sexuality and preferences.

Mokoto (2008) state that despite the constitutional provision for freedom of expression, the societal attitudes towards homosexuality can be hostile. Conservative views dominate, often

equating non-heteronormative behaviors with immorality. This societal pressure forces many lesbian women to conceal their sexual orientation to avoid ostracism and violence (Mokotso, 2018).

Legal protections for LGBTQI+ individuals in Lesotho are minimal. While homosexuality is not explicitly criminalized, there are no specific laws safeguarding against discrimination based on sexual orientation. This legal vacuum leaves lesbian women vulnerable to discrimination in various sectors, including employment, healthcare, and education (Ntlhoki, 2019).

Advocacy refers to the act of supporting, promoting and defending the rights, interests and need of individuals or groups. It involves influencing public policy, decision-making and societal attitudes to bring about positive changes. According to the World Health Organization (2018), "advocacy in the process of influencing decision-makers to take action to promote the health and well-being of individuals and communities". McNutt (2018) states that advocacy is about giving voice to those who have been silenced, marginalized or ignored.

Activism and advocacy efforts by local LGBTQI+ organizations are gradually creating awareness and promoting acceptance. These organizations work tirelessly to support lesbian women, offering safe spaces where they can express themselves without fear. They also engage in dialogue with policymakers to push for inclusive legislation that protects the rights of all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation (Lesotho LGBTQI+ Rights Coalition, 2020).

International pressure and human rights organizations also play a crucial role in advancing the rights of lesbian women in Lesotho. By highlighting the plight of LGBTQI+ individuals, they (international pressure and human rights organizations) contribute to the global movement towards equality and non-discrimination.

## 1.7. Conceptual Framework

Radio Drama

Radio drama is a media concept that uses a storytelling medium that engages listeners through immersive audio experiences, emphasizing character-driven narratives across diverse genres. It relies on auditory cues to deliver sceneries and evoke emotions. Accessible to audiences of all ages and backgrounds, radio drama offers a platform for creative freedom

and collaboration among writers, actors, sound designers, and directors. It reflects cultural themes and societal issues while maintaining a timeless appeal, making it an impactful and enduring form of narrative art despite technological advancements in media, (Crook, 2002). Moreover, Lewis (2008) declares that "Radio Drama as Advocacy" forces the immersive power of audio storytelling to raise awareness and promote social change. By crafting narratives that highlight pressing issues or marginalized voices, radio dramas engage listeners emotionally and intellectually. Through compelling characters, realistic scenarios, and impactful dialogue, they confront societal challenges, advocate for justice, and inspire action. Whether addressing human rights, environmental concerns, or cultural representation, these dramas serve as potent tools for advocacy, amplifying voices that might otherwise go unheard and raising empathy and understanding among diverse audiences, ultimately striving for positive societal transformation, (Lewis, 2008). I chose this concept because not only young people can access radio drama but also elderly and people can access a radio to listen to a radio drama from any location they are in, a bathroom, car, bedroom or kitchen. As such, the advocacy for lesbian women will reach a larger audience with the hope that the script would also have its own advocacy lustre. Radio has the capability to reach a broad and diverse audience, including those in remote or rural areas where other forms of media might be less accessible. This makes it an effective tool for advocacy as it can spread messages widely and to various demographic groups. Unlike television or internet-based media, radio does not require expensive equipment or internet access, making it accessible to people of different economic backgrounds. The oral nature of radio drama also overcomes literacy barriers, ensuring that even those who cannot read can still receive and understand the advocacy messages.

Lesbianism

According to Jones (2015), lesbianism refers to the romantic and/or sexual attraction between women. It includes the identity, behavior, and community associated with women who experience such attraction. Lesbianism is an important aspect of sexual orientation, contributing to the diversity of human sexual expression and identity. Therefore, a lesbian is a woman who is sexually attracted to other women. Barrett (2016) states that lesbianism is a complex and many-sided identity that includes a range of experiences, desires and practices. According to Rich (1980), lesbianism includes a range of woman-identified experiences and bonds, not limited to the sexual. She further states that it is a product of societal and cultural forces, and those women's desires and identities are shaped by their experiences and environments.

While Lorde (1984) emphasizes how race, gender, and sexuality intersect to uniquely marginalize Black lesbians within both Black communities and feminist movements. She discusses the distinct challenges they face, including the elimination of their identities and experiences caused by intertwined racism and heterosexism. Lorde's work emphasizes the need to recognize and address the compounded forms of discrimination that Black lesbians endure, advocating for their visibility and inclusion in broader discussions about equality and social justice. In her statement she says, “Black lesbians are particularly invisible. We exist, we are natural, we are recognizable, but we are often made invisible by the deletion within both the Black and feminist communities.”

Freedom of Expression

Freedom House (2020) defines freedom of expression as the vital human right to express one's thoughts, opinions, and ideas without fear of retaliation or censorship by the government, other authorities and societies or communities.

Human rights are essential rights and freedoms that belong to every human being, regardless of their nationality, race, gender, religion, language, sexuality and status. According to the United Nations (2022), human rights are essential to all human beings regardless their nationality sex, sexuality, ethnic origin, colour, religion, language or status. Donnelly (2013) states that human rights are the basic rights that are essential to a life of dignity and worth of a human being. Some of those rights are, right to life, liberty, education, health and well-being, freedom of expression and equality and non-discrimination.

Lesbian human rights are mostly violated. Lesbians face discrimination and marginalisation which violates their right to equality. Moreover, their sexual orientations and relationships are often subject to unwarranted inspection and interruption, leading to their hindrances to ability to express their true identities. Due to the violation of their right to freedom of expression, their love lives are affected, leading to unrecognized and unprotected relationships and families status choices. Furthermore, like it is stated before, every human being has a right to health and well-being; it is not the same case with lesbian women. They face barriers in accessing healthcare, including reproductive and mental health services.

Advocacy

Stone, (2017) explains advocacy as the act of supporting or recommending a cause, policy, or idea. It involves promoting the rights and interests of a particular group or issue, often through public campaigns, lobbying, or raising awareness in society to influence public opinion or policy decisions.

In order to overcome these issues faced by lesbian women, there should be advocacy on decriminalization of same-sex relationships and relationships recognitions as that will support freedom of expression for the lesbian women. For those countries that have strong laws and policies against same-sex relationships and marriages like Lesotho, there should be strict laws and policies that support and protect the LGBTQI+ communities. This will help in decreasing of violence and discrimination against the LGBTQI+ individuals and promotion of their (LGBTQI+/ lesbians) visibility and presentation in public spaces and national/government bodies. Every no-homosexual has the right to life, good health and well-being and so is every member of the LGBTQI+ community. Every lesbian woman must have access to inclusive healthcare and social service.

I chose this concept because it is my area of interest and focus. It is because I recognized the gap of unequal treatment between the LGBTQI+ (lesbians) community and the non-homosexual communities in the country (Lesotho).

## 1.8. Methodology

I used Practice as Research as my methodology. Practice as Research is a methodology where creative practice (like art or performance) functions as both the focus and technique of research. Thus,-producing knowledge through the process of creation. It incorporates creative practice and academic inquiry, using artistic processes to explore, document, and communicate research findings through creation, (Nelson, 2013). Furthermore, Fleishman (2012:3) states that Practice as Research involves practitioners conducting research through their creative practice, where the practice itself is both the method and the result of the research. Nelson (2013:10) simply describes Practice as Research as a research approach that combines creative practice with academic structures, resulting in both scholarly insights and creative works.

Practice as Research (PaR) combines artistic practice with scholarly investigation, with the creative process serving as both the method and the result of research. In my PaR approach, I will explore performance-making using applied theatre approaches while reflecting on the creative process to create critical insights and information.

I chose to use this method because I want to explore freedom of expression for lesbian women in Lesotho and their forms through the use of the medium of radio drama, explore the point at which they claim to be or not free to publicly express themselves and find out whether or not radio drama is advocating for them.

**How Radio Drama helped me to collect data?**

I collected data through observation. I observed the participants' mood, energy, actions and facial expressions. I journalled by jotting down key feelings and thoughts brought up in the discussion with the participants as they reflected on various key points in the study including the discussion of the play. I recorded the interviews and discussions for further references during the process; I did an analysis of the recording then picked out important points to create a radio drama script that helped in the last process of creating or producing a radio drama. Crook (1999) states that radio drama functions as a research method that enables practitioners to investigate narratives, sound and performance within an auditory context. As a data collection method, it allows for the study of listener engagement, the effects of soundscapes on storytelling, and the tones of voice acting, resulting in analytical insights into issue under study (Crook, 1999).

In order for me to have my radio drama produced, I first of all had online interviews, most preferably WhatsApp group call because WhatsApp data is cheaper for my participants in Lesotho unlike Zoom data which is more expensive.

After interviewing, I asked them (participants) to write a short radio drama script each about the issues of freedom of expression raised in the interviews, we then found similarities in what they wrote and picked out most important and common points from their scripts then write a final script which I recorded at Voice of Wits FM, also known as VoW FM (Wits radio station that is found on the 9$^{th}$ flow at Es'kia Mphahlele building). The scripting process was also part of the data collection because the participants gave information from the interview, but creatively using it to express their voices through the words/wording/lines in the script and the audio stage directions. Audio stage directions also gave data on the atmosphere behind the lack of freedom of expression. The sound design will also gave a sense of ambience that accompanied the feelings and thoughts of the characters in the drama.

## 1.9. Data Analysis

I used thematic analysis method. Braun and Clarke, (2006) describe thematic analysis to be a qualitative research approach utilized to detect, examine, and present patterns (themes) within data. It entails methodically arranging and interpreting textual information to reveal significant themes that offer insights into the subject under investigation. I used Braun and Clark (2006) thematic analysis steps being:

Step 1: Familiarization with the Data

I went through the noted points picked up during the interview session, then listened to the interview records and tried to pick out the missed points, then re-wrote those points to make myself familiar with them so that I understood them better.

Step 2: Generating Initial Codes

I made sure that these points also addressed my research questions.

I found common/similar and different themes from the collected data and put them in different groups. Grouping themes helped me come up with chapters at the later stage of my research. These themes are known as codes.

Step 3: Searching for Themes

After grouping the themes, I re-did the grouping but this time, tried to come up with one or two possible "main" themes that I used to elaborate more on the subthemes identified earlier.

Step 4: Reviewing Themes

I checked and adjusted the themes to make sure they correctly represented the data. This review ensured that the themes were clear, consistent, and accurately capture the main points from the data and were open to scholarly argument.

Step 5: Defining and Naming Themes

After reviewing the themes, I defined and refined the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis told. Defining and refining the specifics of each theme helped me to identify the essence of what each theme was about and determining how it fitted into the broader narrative of the data. Thereafter, lead to coming up with chapters' names.

Step 6: Producing the Report

After following the mentioned steps above, I wrote a report that put forth the scholarly argument of radio drama as a tool for advocacy and addressing the issue of freedom of expression. The writing also included my personal stance and how the story/ contributed scholarly.

## 1.10. Ethics

Since this was a practice -based study which included human participants, I made sure to ethically protect the participants from risk and harm both in the practical work and in the resultant research report. I prepared a Participatory Information Sheet that gave the participants initial knowledge about the research before they consented to take part in the research. They were also given consent forms that guided them on various logistics of the study. These included clauses on recording agreements, confidentiality and anonymity. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality for my participants, no real names were disclosed in the

research report. I also asked for their permission to record the interviews for further or future references as I continued with the research. The recorded information was stored in a password protected computer with all identifying features removed. The ethics clearance was done through the Wits University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical).

## 1.11. Conclusion

The primary focus of this research is the freedom of expression for lesbian women in Lesotho. The study aimed to deeply explore the concept of "freedom of expression" as a fundamental human right, specifically targeting lesbian women aged 18-25years. By using radio drama as an advocacy tool, the research seeks to spread awareness about freedom of expression and how these women wish to express themselves within their communities. It is also find out if indeed radio drama can be used as a tool for advocacy.

The use of radio drama as an advocacy tool can also contribute to scholarly knowledge by offering insights into the effectiveness of media in social change, the dynamics of communication in marginalized communities, and the cultural impact of storytelling. By studying radio dramas, researchers can explore how narratives influence public opinion, shape social norms, and provide a platform for underrepresented voices, (Smith, 2021).

# Chapter 2

## 2.0. Conceptual Framework

This chapter describes the concept of advocacy for freedom of expression for lesbian women in Lesotho though the use of radio drama.
The key points in my conceptual framework are radio drama, advocacy, lesbianism and freedom of expression.

Radio drama

Crook, (1999) states that radio drama refers to a form of audio storytelling in which dramatic works are presented through sound alone. He further explains that it relies on dialogue, music, and sound effects to evoke images and imagination in the minds of listeners, making it distinct from visual media like television or film- with radio drama, the listeners are able to exercise their imagination through the help of the help of the sound effects featured in the radio drama audio while with television and films, viewers are visually spoon-fed therefore they don't have to exercise their imaginations.
Radio drama is a unique art form that combines a variety of practical skills to create engaging audio storytelling. These skills include directing, which ensures that the narrative is brought to life through the nuanced performances of voice actors; writing, which provides the backbone of the drama through well-crafted scripts and compelling dialogue; and sound design, which uses sound effects, music, and ambient noise to create an immersive world for the listener, (Crisell,1994).
In addition to these practical aspects, radio drama is deeply connected to media history and communication theory. It draws upon historical developments in broadcasting to understand how the medium has evolved, and it applies communication theories to examine how audiences interact with and interpret audio narratives. This interplay of practical and theoretical knowledge highlights the medium's ability to influence and reflect cultural norms.
One of the most interesting aspects of radio drama is its capacity for narrative experimentation. Throughout its history, creators have pushed the boundaries of storytelling, crafting narratives that challenge traditional notions of fiction and reality. For instance, some productions use realistic soundscapes and unscripted dialogue to create a sense of authenticity, while others blend factual events with fictionalized accounts, leaving audiences

questioning what is real. This blurring of lines not only captivates listeners but also reveals how modern media shapes perceptions of truth and imagination.

By merging artistic craftsmanship with academic insights, radio drama remains a powerful and innovative medium that continues to evolve, captivating audiences and pushing the limits of storytelling in the auditory realm. Crook (1999) further states that this medium can range from adaptations of literary works to original scripts written specifically for audio.

Grove and Wyatt (2014) define radio drama as a form of audio storytelling that relies entirely on dialogue, sound effects, and music to create an immersive experience for the listener. In the absence of visual elements, sound becomes the primary tool for engaging the audience, serving as a multifaceted medium that simultaneously builds atmosphere, develops characters, and drives the narrative forward.

Dialogue carries the weight of storytelling, providing not just plot progression but also emotional depth and character dynamics. Sound effects act as auditory cues, creating brilliant mental images of the setting and action—whether it is the echo of footsteps in a hollow, the crackle of fire, or the hum of city life. Music, on the other hand, serves as a bridge between scenes, a tool for setting mood, or a way to heighten dramatic tension, (McLeish & Link,2015).

Together, these elements form a rich sonic landscape that allows listeners to visualize the story in their imagination, often making the experience deeply personal and emotionally resonant. By emphasizing sound, radio drama transforms the invisible into the brilliantly visible, proving the power of the auditory realm to captivate and transport its audience.

Radio drama serves as a compelling tool for advocacy by leveraging the power of storytelling to address pressing social issues, raise awareness, and inspire meaningful change. Its audio-centric format allows it to reach diverse and often underserved audiences, including those in remote or low-literacy areas, where visual or text-based media might be less effective.

By merging complex social themes into engaging narratives, radio drama creates an emotional connection with listeners, fostering empathy and understanding. Characters and storylines that mirror real-life struggles allow audiences to see their own realities reflected making the issues presented relatable and impactful. This immersive approach not only educates but also empowers individuals by offering perspectives and solutions to challenges they may face in their own lives, (McLeish & Link,2015).

Moreover, radio drama's ability to integrate advocacy messages into compelling stories ensures that critical topics—such as health, gender equality, environmental sustainability, or human rights—are communicated without seeming didactic. This makes the content more palatable and likely to resonate deeply with audiences.

In addition to sparking individual reflection, radio drama can catalyze community-wide conversations and inspire collective action. By addressing societal concerns in an accessible and engaging way, radio dramas can influence public opinion, challenge stereotypes, and even mobilize grassroots efforts for social change. Its blend of entertainment and advocacy positions it as a powerful medium for driving awareness and fostering transformation.

Kerr (1999) states that African radio dramas often serve as platforms for political advocacy, addressing themes such as human rights, corruption, and governance. By crafting stories that mirror societal challenges, these dramas act as a voice for marginalized groups who might not Radio drama is accessible not only to young people but also to the elderly, and it can be listened to from practically any location—whether it's in a car, bathroom, bedroom, or kitchen. This makes radio an ideal medium for advocating on behalf of lesbian women in Lesotho, as it has the potential to reach a wide audience. Radio's ability to reach diverse listeners, including those in rural or remote areas where other forms of media may be harder to access, enhances its effectiveness as a tool for advocacy.

Unlike television or internet-based media, radio doesn't require expensive equipment or an internet connection, making it accessible to people across different economic backgrounds. Additionally, because radio is an audio-based medium, it eliminates literacy barriers, ensuring that even individuals who cannot read are still able to receive and understand the advocacy messages being delivered (https://www.lenepwha.org.ls/advocacy/).

Lesbianism

Lesbianism refers to the romantic and/or sexual attraction between women. It is an important aspect of sexual orientation and identity, representing the diversity of human relationships and emotional connections. Jones (2015) defines lesbianism as the romantic and/or sexual attraction between women, including the identity, behaviors, and community associated to women who feel such attraction. It forms a key part of sexual orientation and reflects the diversity of human sexual identity and expression. Barrett (2016) adds that lesbianism is a complicated identity, incorporating numerous experiences, desires, and practices.

Rich (1980) expands on this by stating that lesbianism involves a broader range of woman-centered experiences and relationships that go beyond the sexual. She emphasizes that lesbian identity is influenced by societal and cultural factors, with women's desires and identities being shaped by their personal experiences and the environments in which they live.

According to Kulkarni (1997), lesbianism refers to the emotional, romantic, and sexual attraction between women. Kulkarni explores lesbianism not only as a sexual orientation but as a complex identity that is shaped by societal, cultural, and personal factors. She states that lesbianism includes both individual and collective experiences of women who form

relationships based on mutual attraction and emotional bonds- according to her, societal norms dictate what is considered "acceptable" behaviour, influencing how lesbian identities are perceived and whether they are openly expressed. Cultural factors where traditions, religious beliefs, and historical narratives shape how same-sex relationships are understood. Whereas in some cultures, lesbian identity may be celebrated as a biological variation of human life, in other cultures, it may be marginalized or criminalized; this further shapes one's notion of belonging and ability to form community ties. Looking at the personal factors, sexual orientation on an individual level may come because of family acceptance, experiences, and self-awareness.

Furthermore, Blackwood (1999) provides an anthropological perspective, exploring how lesbian identities and relationships are constructed and understood differently across cultures. She emphasizes that lesbianism is not a universal experience but is shaped by varying cultural norms and expectations, which can affect how lesbian relationships are formed and maintained- cultural norms shape the expression of lesbianism in regard to acceptance, visibility, and relationship dynamics. Where the culture is inclusive, relationships may display openly; where the norms are restrictive, secrecy or stigmatization may be promoted. Expectations around gender roles, family structures, and societal values further impact how lesbians form, express, and sustain their relationships.

Faderman (1991) explores the historical origins of lesbianism, demonstrating that romantic relationships between women have existed for centuries, even if they weren't always explicitly recognized as such- she highlights romantic relationships between women across centuries, from ancient Greek poet Sappho to early modern romantic friendships that challenged societal norms. Faderman reveals these connections were often erased or dismissed, underscoring the persistence of women’s love despite historical repression. She contends that the understanding and acceptance of lesbianism have evolved over time, shaped by shifting societal attitudes toward gender, sexuality, and relationships.

Lesbianism and LGBTQ+ identities are often framed within mostly White or Western contexts. Robson (2022) states that lesbianism is often portrayed through a Western, White-centric lens. She argues this perspective marginalizes non-western experiences and constructs lesbianism as a primarily White phenomenon, thus ignoring diverse racial and cultural expressions.

Lorde (1984:47) highlights how race, gender, and sexuality intersect to uniquely marginalize Black lesbians within both Black communities and feminist movements. She discusses the distinct challenges they face, including the elimination of their identities and experiences caused by intertwined racism and heterosexism. Lorde's work highlights the need to

recognize and address the multiple forms of discrimination that Black lesbians endure, advocating for their visibility and inclusion in broader discussions about equality and social justice. In her statement she says, “Black lesbians are particularly invisible. We exist, we are natural, we are recognizable, but we are often made invisible by the deletion within both the Black and feminist communities.”

Freedom of Expression

According to Barendt (2005), freedom of expression is defines as a major democratic principle that allows individuals to communicate their thoughts and participate in public discourse.

Human rights are essential rights and freedoms that belong to every human being, regardless of their nationality, race, gender, religion, language, sexuality and status. According to the United Nations (2022), human rights are essential to all human beings regardless their nationality sex, sexuality, ethnic origin, colour, religion, language or status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education. According to UNICEF (2015), human rights are standards that recognize and protect the dignity of all human beings.

Lesbians too, just like any other human beings have human rights and the most violated right is freedom of expression. They experience discrimination and marginalization, invading on their right to equality. Additionally, their sexual orientations and relationships are frequently subjected to unjust inspection and interference, limiting their ability to express their authentic identities. This violation of their freedom of expression negatively impacts their romantic lives, resulting in unrecognized and unprotected relationships and family status choices.

Freedom of expression is essential for political opposition (because it allows political opposition to voice disagreement, challenge government policies, promote accountability, and protect democracy by ensuring diverse viewpoints are heard, preventing authoritarian control and promoting informed decision-making) cultural diversity, creativity, innovation, and for individuals to develop their personality through self-expression. It enables dialogue, builds understanding, and increases public knowledge. When we can freely exchange ideas and information, our knowledge improves, which benefits our communities and societies. Freedom of expression also enables us to question our governments, which helps to keep them accountable. Questioning and debate are healthy – they lead to better policies and more stable societies, (https://www.article19.org/what-is-freedom-of-expression).

In Lesotho, lack of freedom of expression for lesbian women is forced by a combination of legal, social, and cultural barriers. Although Lesotho's constitution provides for freedom of

expression, LGBTQ+ individuals, including lesbian women, face significant challenges in exercising these rights due to widespread homophobia and societal stigma. Same-sex relationships remain criminalized under common law, and there is no legal recognition of same-sex unions, making it difficult for lesbian women to express their identities openly without fear of discrimination or violence (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

Socially, traditional views on gender and sexuality, heavily influenced by Christian values, dominate public discourse, further marginalizing lesbian women. Public advocacy for LGBTQ+ rights is often met with resistance, and lesbian women are forced to navigate a landscape where their existence is largely invisible or misunderstood (Maseko, 2016).

In Lesotho, societal attitudes toward gender and sexuality are deeply rooted in traditional and Christian values, which shape public insights and discourse. These views reinforce inflexible gender roles and heterosexual norms, leaving little room for acceptance or understanding of diverse sexual identities. As a result, lesbian women face significant marginalization and are often rendered invisible within their communities. Public advocacy for LGBTQ+ rights is particularly challenging in this context. Efforts to raise awareness or demand equal rights frequently encounter resistance; as such initiatives are seen as conflicting with deeply ingrained cultural and religious beliefs. This hostile environment forces many lesbian women to remain closeted, limiting their ability to express their identities openly. According to Maseko (2016), the lack of visibility and societal misunderstanding perpetuate a cycle of exclusion and discrimination, further entrenching the challenges faced by lesbian women in Lesotho.

Activist groups such as the Matrix Support Group, based in Maseru, have worked to create safe spaces for LGBTQ+ individuals, providing support and raising awareness about human rights issues for the LGBTQI+ individuals. However, progress remains slow, and lesbian women in Lesotho continue to face challenges in expressing their identities openly and safely (Mothopeng, 2020).

Radio drama, within the context of Applied Drama and Theatre, serves as a transformative medium for engaging communities, fostering dialogue, and addressing social issues. Rooted in storytelling and theatrical performance, radio drama utilizes soundscapes, voice acting, and music to create immersive narratives that exceed physical boundaries, making it accessible to diverse audiences, including those in remote or marginalized areas.

Applied Drama emphasizes the use of performance as a tool for education, empowerment, and social change. Radio drama aligns with this ethos by offering a platform to explore pressing societal concerns such as health, gender equality, and human rights. Its auditory nature encourages active listening and imaginative engagement, fostering empathy and

critical reflection among listeners. Unlike conventional theatre, radio drama eliminates the restrictions of physical space, enabling large-scale participation and outreach.

Radio drama also offers unique opportunities for community involvement, as local stories, languages, and voices can be incorporated into productions. This inclusivity strengthens cultural identity and collective problem-solving. In educational settings, radio drama can simulate real-life scenarios, prompting listeners to consider alternative perspectives and solutions.

In essence, radio drama in the Applied Drama and Theatre framework is a powerful catalyst for raising awareness, inspiring action, and nurturing a sense of agency in addressing societal challenges.

## 2.1. Conclusion

The chapter underscores the potential of radio drama as a tool for advocacy by highlighting its unique ability to combine artistic storytelling with educational and activist messaging. Through a mix of sound effects, dialogue, and music, radio drama captivates audiences, encourages imagination, and fosters emotional connections. These features make it an accessible and impactful medium, particularly in addressing sensitive or marginalized topics such as freedom of expression for lesbian women in Lesotho.

The discussion reveals that despite legal, cultural, and social barriers that limit LGBTQ+ visibility and acceptance in Lesotho, radio drama offers a pathway to challenge these norms. It enables storytelling that mirrors the struggles of lesbian women, promotes empathy, and catalyzes dialogue about equality and human rights. The audio format also overcomes barriers like illiteracy, economic limitations, and remoteness, making it a viable platform for reaching diverse audiences.

In the context of Lesotho, where societal attitudes are shaped by traditional and Christian values, radio drama serves not only as an entertainment medium but as a refined yet powerful platform for advocacy. By presenting relatable characters and stories, it helps humanize marginalized identities and address the lack of visibility for lesbian women in public discourse. The relationship between artistic, cultural, and activist dimensions in radio drama positions it (radio drama) as a unique and transformative tool for fostering change in restrictive social environments.

# Chapter 3

## 3.0. Methodology

The aim of this research is to investigate how radio drama can be used as an advocacy tool to explore how Lesotho lesbians can explore various forms of freedom of expression. This chapter seeks to explore in depth how a radio drama can be a voice on freedom of expression for Lesbian women in Lesotho. Thus, it explores the research methods and methodology applicable for this study.

This chapter discusses the methodology used to qualify the underlying theoretical frames, conceptual lens, and philosophies that guided the research to its findings. The paper also puts forward that the methodology was guided by the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings assumed for this research. It introduces the use and analysis of Practice as Research as the guiding and leading method of research in this study.

I used Practice as Research as my methodology. Practice as Research (PaR) is a methodological approach where creative activities such as art or performance serve as both the subject and the method of investigation, generating knowledge through the act of creation. It combines artistic practice with academic inquiry, employing creative processes to explore, document, and present research outcomes (Nelson, 2013).

Nelson (2013) presents Practice as Research (PaR) as an important methodological approach that incorporates artistic practice with academic inquiry, generating knowledge through creative processes. This perspective is exciting because it acknowledges the legitimacy of artistic creation as a form of research, challenging traditional notions that prioritize textual or experimental analysis. By positioning creative activities as both the subject and method of investigation, Practice as Research allows for a deeper, experiential understanding of complex ideas that may not be fully captured through conventional research methods. However, a potential challenge is ensuring that the research outcomes are effectively communicated beyond artistic communities, making them accessible to a broader academic audience. Despite this, Nelson's argument highlights the growing recognition of artistic practice as a demanding and valid means of knowledge production, enriching both artistic and scholarly discourse. At the end of the day, Practice as Research provides a dynamic framework for interdisciplinary exploration and innovation in research.

Fleishman (2012) notes that in PaR, practitioners engage in research through their creative work, with the practice itself functioning as both the means and the product of the research.

Nelson (2013) further explains that PaR integrates creative practice with academic frameworks, leading to both scholarly understanding and the creation of artistic works. Haseman (2006) describes PaR as an approach that legitimizes practice as a primary research method in the arts and performance studies. He further explains that PaR is particularly valuable in fields where the researcher is also a practitioner, allowing for a more combined form of research where theory and practice inform one another. It is often repeated, with research informing practice and vice versa, creating a dynamic process of exploration and discovery.

Nelson (2013), Fleishman (2012), and Haseman (2006) together show the significance of Practice-as-Research (PaR) in integrating creative practice with academic inquiry. Their perspectives emphasize how Practice as Research validates artistic practice as both a research method and an outcome, making it particularly valuable in fields where theory and practice are deeply intertwined. I agree that Practice as Research nurtures a dynamic and repetitive process, allowing practitioners to generate knowledge through their artistic work. This approach not only challenges traditional research paradigms but also ensures that practice remains central to scholarly discourse. Haseman's argument about Practice as Research's validity is especially convincing, as it reinforces the idea that research in the arts should not be limited to written analysis but should embrace creative outputs as valid contributions. Generally, their views collectively confirm that Practice as Research is an important methodology for researchers who are also practitioners, bridging the gap between artistic creation and academic scholarship.

On the other hand, Schön (1983) explains Practice as Research as an approach in which the process of creating, performing, or engaging in artistic or professional practice becomes a mode of inquiry, generating knowledge through action rather than traditional theoretical research methods.

Schön's (1983) concept of Practice as Research is perceptive, emphasizing knowledge generation through action. It values experiential learning and reflection, making it particularly relevant for creative and professional fields. This approach bridges theory and practice, fostering deeper understanding and innovation beyond traditional research methods, enriching both academia and industry.

Practice as Research for Barrett & Bolt (2010) is a methodology that combines creative practice with academic inquiry, locating practice as a means to generate knowledge. They further state that PaR challenges the traditional patterns of research in terms of the importance of embodied, experiential and unspoken modes of understading.

I chose to use this method because I wanted to explore freedom of expression for lesbian women in Lesotho and their forms through the use of the medium of radio drama, I also aim to explore the point at which they claimed to be or not free to publicly express themselves and find out whether or not radio drama would be the vehicle for that.

I did online interviews through a WhatsApp group voice call with my participants because that was an accessible and cheaper means of communication for them. With their permission, I recorded the interview session for future reference and also listened to them as they answered the research questions and at the end of the session I asked them to each write a short radio drama script based on the information exchanged in the interview session and send them to me. Thereafter, I read the participants' scripts and picked out the important points and also re-visited the interview record to pick out the missed points.

I wrote a final radio drama script using the information picked out of the participants' scripts and the interview record. The written radio drama script was then recorded using the VoW FM recorder because it had a better recording device and thick walls that blocks the noise from outside the studio to penetrate the walls. In the process, I also added sound effects to better my final record. After recording, I sent it to them to listen then later invited them into my living room to discuss and analyse the radio drama play. The presentation of the complete radio drama play was at eMakhaya Theatre (19$^{th}$ floor at Es'kia Mphahlele building). The participants were not in the room but I asked them to send me their responses to the radio drama so that they can also be included in the research report.

Radio Drama as a data collection tool

Data collection often relies on diverse methodologies to capture complex human experiences, narratives, and cultural expressions. One innovative and underexplored method is radio drama, which provides a unique platform for gathering, representing, and analyzing social realities. Radio drama as a data collection tool aligns with informative and critical paradigms, emphasizing subjectivity, meaning-making, and participatory inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Radio drama is basically a narrative medium, engaging audiences through voice, sound, and script. Narratives serve as powerful research tools that allow participants to articulate their experiences in structured yet flexible ways (Riessman, 2008). As a data collection method, radio drama facilitates the construction of lived realities through dramatization, allowing researchers to access cultural meanings, social interactions, and personal identities.

A reflexive approach is essential to radio drama, as participants actively engage in creating stories that reflect their perspectives. The process of scriptwriting, performance, and listening enables individuals to critically examine their own experiences, leading to deeper insights. This aligns with Practice as Research (PaR), where creative outputs themselves become research artifacts (Barrett & Bolt, 2010). Through iterative storytelling, participants co-construct meanings, making radio drama a dynamic tool for ethnographic and phenomenological research.

Crook (1999) states that radio drama functions as a research method that enables practitioners to investigate narratives, sound and performance within an auditory context. As a data collection method, it allows for the study of listener engagement, the effects of soundscapes on storytelling, and the tones of voice acting, resulting in analytical insights into issue under study (Crook, 1999).

Crook (1999) highlights the value of radio drama as both a creative and analytical tool. By examining narratives, soundscapes, and voice performance, it provides unique insights into audience engagement and storytelling techniques. This perspective underscores the importance of auditory media in research, expanding how narratives and emotions are studied.

In other words, radio drama represents a compelling and innovative data collection method that integrates narrative, participation, and reflexivity. By engaging participants in creative storytelling, it fosters rich, refined data that deepens understanding of social sensations.

I had five lesbian women from Lesotho as my participants and the data collection was conducted through an interview over the WhatsApp group call. I collected data through observation (the mood, energy, actions and facial expressions especially when listening to the radio drama), journaling their initial thoughts and feelings about expressing their lesbianism in Lesotho and when they did the same after listening to the radio drama. Recording (for further references during the process), analysed the recording then picked out important points to create a radio drama script that helped in the last process of creating or producing a radio drama.

In order for me to have my radio drama produced, I first of all had online interviews using WhatsApp group call because WhatsApp data is cheaper for my participants in Lesotho unlike Zoom data which is more expensive. I asked them the questions noted in a proposal therefore it was a well-structured interviewing process with guiding questions structured in the sense that everyone clearly understands the concept.

After the interview, I asked them (participants) to write a short radio drama script each about the issues of freedom of expression raised in the interviews I outlined similarities in what

they wrote and picked out most important and common points from their scripts then wrote a final script which I recorded at Voice of Wits FM, also known as VoW FM (Wits radio station that is found on the 9th flow at Es'kia Mphahlele building). After recording, I sent them the record. I then invited them (participants) into my living room to discuss and analysis the radio drama play. The scripting process was also part of the data collection. This is because the participants had to give/state the information from the interview, but creatively using it (radio drama) to express their voices through the words/wording/lines in the script and the audio stage directions. Audio stage directions also give data on the atmosphere behind the lack of freedom of expression, as Matamala and Orero (2011) note, "Most creative activities are described by the freedom and audacity of their expression. Audio description, a modality to make audio-visual content accessible for all, has been the subject of standardisation from its origins. The sound design also gave a sense of ambience that accompanies the feelings and thoughts of the characters in the drama. Some of the feelings I noticed were happiness, wonder and curiosity.

*Below are the Tables showing the series of actions/steps taken*

SESSION 1 (2hours)

| Steps | Activity | How data was collected |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Introduction:-Name telling game called U tseba Mang?<br>-Check in | Name Telling game: I asked them to play the mentioned game whereby they tell their names and ask each other's names. The game used rhythm and was suitable because of the platform used (online).<br>Check: I asked them how they felt and they should use the colour to describe in depth how they felt. Check in accommodated the general feeling and how they felt about the process. | Observation: The mood when they answering to the check in, their energy from the beginning of the session and their voice tones as they explain themselves as to how they felt with the process. |
| 2. Interviews | Online interviews were held | -Journaling: I jotted down |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | through the use of a WhatsApp group call: interviewees were asked direct questions relating to the concept of freedom of expressions for lesbian women in Lesotho.<br>Some of the questions asked are as follows:<br>-As a lesbian woman living in Lesotho, what does freedom of expression mean to you?<br>-What are the forms of freedom of expression Lesbian women in Lesotho crave for/want to express?<br>-According to you, what do you understand about radio drama?<br>-How do you think radio drama can advocate for the kind of freedom of expressions that came out of the interview session?<br>At the end of the session, I gave instructions that the participants must to each write radio drama scripts based on the interview they had with me and send the scripts to me.<br>I had another WhatsApp session with them to guide | the key points brought up in the discussion within the focus group.<br>-Recording: I recorded the interview for further reference during the process. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | them on how they can write a radio drama script (even though they were not experienced in it). My guidance helped. | |

SESSION 2 (6hours)

| Steps | Activity | How data was collected |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Radio drama script composition | -I read the participants scripts<br>-Revisited the record made in the interview. | - Journaling: I read down all the points each participant brought up in their scripts and finding similarities and differences in their scripts.<br>-Listening to the record to try to find points that may have been left out in the scripts yet part of the record. |
| 2. Script Writing | I wrote the final radio drama script using the information I jotted when reading the participants' scripts and listening to the record as well. | Identified the common key points from all the participants' scripts. |
| 3. Radio Drama Recording | I used Vow FM recorder to record my script/story because it has a better recording device and the recording room has thick walls that help in hindering the outside sounds and voices to penetrate the walls, resulting in pure recording. In the process, I also added sound effects to better my | All the noted key points were included in the recording to form a radio drama. The scripting gave me the key points to answer the research question as with all the other data collection methods. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | final record. | |

SESSION 3 (2 hours)

| Steps | Activity | How data was collected |
|---|---|---|
| Radio Drama Presentation | The presentation of the complete radio drama at eMakhaya Theatre. The participants were not there in the room during the presentation but I sent the recording to them as asked them to listen to it and send a recording with their responses to the radio drama. | A set up of different locations in the theatre is made to show that radio drama can be listened to from different location. The different locations that I chose to set up are the bedroom, the car, in the kitchen and under the tree because they serve as examples of the different locations that one can listen to the radio drama from. |

## 3.1. Data analysis

In this section, I looked at data analysis. Data was jotted down, recorded and collected through an online (WhatsApp group call) interview in a focused group as mentioned in the methodology. I used thematic analysis to analyze my data.

According to Nowell, Norris, White & Moules (2017), thematic analysis is a method used to identify patterns and themes in data like interview transcripts, survey responses and social media profiles. It can be used to understand people's views, opinions and experiences.

Braun & Clarke, (2006) describe thematic analysis as a qualitative research method used to identify, analyse, and report patterns (themes) within data. They further explain that it is often employed in analysing text-based data, such as interview transcripts or focus group discussions, to provide a detailed, nuanced understanding of the data. The process typically begins with familiarization with the data, where the researcher reads through the data multiple times to gain an overall sense of the content. This is followed by generating initial codes, where significant elements of the data are labelled for further analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Next, researchers search for themes by grouping related codes, and refine these themes to ensure they accurately reflect the data's core messages. The final stage involves defining and naming these themes, making sure each theme summarises an essential

aspect of the data. Throughout the process, thematic analysis is flexible, allowing researchers to either adopt an inductive approach, where themes emerge directly from the data, or a deductive approach, guided by existing theoretical frameworks (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) provide a clear and structured approach to thematic analysis, emphasizing its flexibility and depth in qualitative research. Their explanation highlights its usefulness in identifying meaningful patterns within text-based data, making it a valuable method for researchers seeking rich, nuanced insights into participants' experiences and perspectives.

Steps of thematic analysis taken

During the data analysis process, I documented every piece of information gathered from the interview, ensuring that all relevant details contributing to data collection were recorded. I carefully examined the responses to confirm that they directly addressed the research questions, maintaining a clear focus on the study's objectives. To organize the data effectively, I grouped themes based on their similarities and differences, allowing for a structured analysis. This initial categorization helped in identifying patterns within the participants' responses. After this step, I re-grouped the themes to refine them further and identify the main theme that summarized the core findings of the research. Once the main theme was established, I used it as a basis to structure the study, leading to the creation of chapter names that rationally aligned with the study's progression. By following these systematic steps, I developed a well-structured report that presented a scholarly argument on the use of radio drama as a tool for advocacy and the promotion of freedom of expression. In addition to analyzing the data, I incorporated my personal stance, reflecting on how the narratives contributed to academic discourse. This approach allowed me to contextualize the findings within existing literature while demonstrating the real-world implications of radio drama as a medium for social change.

**Chapter 4**

**Process of scripting and producing the Radio Drama for the freedom of expression for Lesbian women in Lesotho**

## 4.0. Introduction

This chapter is a presentation and analysis of the data that was collected from the research field work. It builds from the propositions made from chapter 1, 2 and 3. The study explores how radio drama serves as a medium for advocacy and self-expression for lesbian women in a traditional society. Chapter 1 introduces the research, emphasizing the challenges lesbian women in Lesotho face due to cultural, legal, and societal restrictions on their freedom of expression. It highlights how radio drama provides a safe auditory platform for downgraded voices. The study aims to examine how radio drama can amplify their voices, challenge stereotypes, and promote inclusivity.

The research objectives investigate the role of soundscapes, voice performance, and narrative storytelling in advocating for gender freedom. The study's importance is underscored by its potential contributions to LGBTQ+ rights advocacy, media studies, and policy discussions in Lesotho. The theoretical framework includes queer theory and media representation theories, providing an analytical foundation. The chapter also outlines the research methodology, which employs qualitative approaches such as content analysis and audience reception studies. Additionally, it summarizes the dissertation structure, setting the stage for an in-depth examination of radio drama as a catalyst for social change.

Chapter 2 explores the significance of radio drama as an advocacy tool for lesbian women's freedom of expression in Lesotho. It describes radio drama as a fascinating auditory medium that engages listeners through dialogue, sound effects, and music. Citing Crook (1999) and Grove and Wyatt (2014), the chapter highlights radio drama's capacity to foster imagination and emotional connection, making it an effective platform for advocacy.

The chapter also examines societal challenges faced by lesbian women in Lesotho, particularly the cultural and legal restrictions that hinder their expression. Radio drama is recognized as an accessible medium that can reach diverse audiences, including rural and low-literacy communities. The discussion incorporates perspectives from scholars like Jones (2015), Kulkarni (1997), and Lorde (1984), who explore the complexities of lesbian identity in different cultural and social contexts.

Legal and societal barriers restricting freedom of expression, such as criminalization, religious influences, and public stigma, are also analyzed. The chapter argues that radio drama, through storytelling, can challenge these oppressive norms, foster empathy, and initiate discussions on human rights. In due course, it concludes that radio drama is a

powerful medium for advocacy, education, and social transformation in restrictive environments.

The research methodology is detailed in another chapter (3), emphasizing the use of Practice as Research (PaR) as a guiding approach. Practice as Research incorporates artistic practice with scholarly inquiry, legitimizing creative outputs as valid research contributions (Nelson, 2013). This methodology allows for an experiential understanding of social issues, as suggested by Haseman (2006) and Fleishman (2012).

Radio drama is both a research method and a data collection tool which allows participants to express their lived experiences through scripted dramatization. Five lesbian women participated in structured WhatsApp group call interviews, followed by scriptwriting exercises. The key themes from these interviews were synthesized into a final radio drama script, which was recorded at Voice of Wits FM. The production process provided deeper insights into participants' experiences and the role of soundscapes in storytelling (Crook, 1999).

The study employs Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify patterns and themes within participants' narratives. This repetitive approach improves understanding of the social and cultural dimensions of freedom of expression, reinforcing radio drama's potential as an advocacy tool and a means for social change.

This chapter, therefore, explores the conceptions of scripting and producing the radio drama for the freedom of expression for Lesbian women in Lesotho. It focuses on detailing on the research questions, interviews, responses, scripting, production of a radio drama and my perspectives of scripting and producing the radio drama for the theme of freedom of expression whilst still looking into the supporting theorists in this research.

## 4.1. Details on scripting and Producing of the Radio Drama for the theme of Freedom of Expression

During the first session, some of the participants were shy to introduce themselves, shy to talk and express their thoughts and shy to answer the questions because they thought they were being exposed. During the check in, the participants had to carefully choose colours to represent how they feel about the interview and the main concept of the interview. Below are the colour choices and their meaning in response to the check in activity:

Participant 1: chose the white colour because she said she felt blank, she had no feeling yet, she felt like a blank A4 paper.

Participant 2: chose the light blue colour because she was curious.

Participant 3: chose colour red because she said she felt already in fire and she wanted to do this. She further said that she had been longing to be part of this kind of a talk.
Participant 4: chose the yellowish red colour because she felt uncertain about everything concerning the research and interview but she was keen to see where it ends.
Participant 5: chose a black colour and said, "I have no clue, I'm in the dark, enlighten me."
Moving on, in the interview, the struggle escalated because some participants went completely silent and when I asked them why they couldn't say anything. One of them said that they felt as if they are exposed. Another, who presumably was the most outspoken, expressed that, "Guys, this is our chance to speak up, no need to panic. Not everyone gets a chance to be heard, this is the only way forward if you really want to live peacefully. I want to show off my girlfriend in public without any harassment, don't you?" After that short statement, my five participants started being active.

Scriptwriting process

The participants wrote scripts of two paragraphs each following the interview that we had. I read and looked at the similar concepts in their scripts which where;
-Being given a chance to publicly expose themselves anyhow they wanted.
-Public physical and emotional expression with no judgment.
-Religion and community should stop being used as a weapon against them.
-Culture should not be used to deprive them their rights to choose who to marry.
-Parents should stop ill-treating their lesbian kids as soon as they find out that their kids are into women and not men.
After finding these similarities, I wrote the final radio drama script. I proceeded to recording the script using a recording device, downloaded the background music and used the app called Audacity for the final edition of the radio drama. I sent the finished radio drama to the participants for their reviews and they were excited with it, claiming that it is exactly what they were hoping for.

## 4.2. Responses to the Research Questions

Question 1: What is Freedom of Expression?

Participant 1: "Being given a chance to publicly express myself without having to compromise myself or face judgment."

Participant 2: “Being able to say out anything I want concerning my identity without judgment.”
Participant 3 and 4: “Being liberated from the stigma of homosexuality. I want to live my life in peace. I hate how people look at me when I walk holding hands with my woman in public.”
Participant 5: “it means being freeee! (She laughed). Let’s be honest guys, no freedom of expression for the whole LGBTQI+ community in this country. I can’t kiss my woman in public without being given a nasty attitude. The kind of life the non-homosexual people life, the life without criticism, discrimination, nasty attitude, and free expression of themselves, identities and affection publicly is what I define as freedom of expression.”

Question 2: What forms of Freedom of Expression would you like to express/voice out?
Participant 1: “express my feelings and affection to my lover freely, regardless of where I am. I feel compromised whenever I have to pay attention to what people may think of me.”
Participant 2: “nothing I hate like being given a nasty look because of how I dress. Straight ladies out there go around in their short skirts and dresses and no one humiliates them. Why should I be humiliated for putting on my masculine clothing? I want to put on my clothes in peace. That’s one of the things the society is using when judging lesbian women here in Lesotho.
Participant 3: “People should stop using culture against us. I want have a choice in who I want to be in love with or marry. That is one form of expression I want to voice out. My soul mate is not a man.”
Participant 4&5 said nothing because they agreed on what was said by the other participants.

Question 3: How can you use Radio Drama as Advocacy?
Participant 1: “You see those stories we grew up listening to in Radio Lesotho? The like of Bolibeng-ba-Mahlomola and Phamokate, which we used to raise awareness against HIV/AIDS and human trafficking? We need to listen to such kind of stories about lesbianism and or LGBTQI+. Those stories should unfold the true nature of us and help the nation to understand us better and take into consideration our existence. I always feel like I don’t exist in my own country and I know it’s not just me, there are more of the lesbian women out there who feel the same but have no one to talk to.”
Participant 2: “We need poetry session slots on the radio whereby we praise the LGBTQI+ community, speak about our existence and lead people understand that we are humans and not wild animals, we deserved to be celebrated like any other existing human being.”

Participant 3: “TV Lesotho together with Radio Lesotho should hire one of “us” and develop a programme that is specifically about us so that we can have a platform to voice out our wishes just like everyone being given a chance to speak out their hearts on a national TV/radio. I am including TV Lesotho because whatever happens on TV Lesotho is passed on to our national radio. Please note that I am still aware that the main focus is on the radio and not the television.”

And yet again, the other participants agreed with what was said therefore said nothing.

Participant 1: “if this radio drama can be a success, a lot of us are yet to come out of the closet and that will make me very happy because it isn’t good to live a lie.”

Based on the responses to the research questions, it became clear that many lesbian women in Lesotho remain closeted due to fear of societal and cultural backlash. This radio drama serves as a platform for them to express their concerns, emotions, and desire for visibility. It provides a voice for their experiences, allowing them to engage with the community and advocate for fair treatment. Through storytelling, the radio drama becomes a gateway to their freedom of expression, summarizing their aspirations and the recognition they seek.

## 4.3. Perspectives on Scripting and Producing Radio Drama on Freedom of Expression

The scripting and production of radio drama as a tool for advocating freedom of expression for lesbian women in Lesotho aligns with the Practice as Research (PaR) methodology by incorporating creative processes and critical inquiry, using radio drama to strengthen lesbian women's voices and also incorporate artistic creation with scholarly inquiry (Nelson, 2013). Practice as Research permits creative outputs as valid contributions to research, allowing radio drama to serve as both a medium of advocacy and a method for examining the lived experiences of marginalized groups (Haseman, 2006). This approach enables participants to articulate their struggles and aspirations in a structured yet expressive format.

The scripting process revealed the deep-seated fears and challenges faced by lesbian women in Lesotho. Many participants hesitated initially, feeling vulnerable about sharing their thoughts. However, through guided discussions and scriptwriting exercises, they gradually engaged in open expression. The use of color symbolism in the introductory exercise demonstrated the diverse emotions participants experienced, ranging from curiosity to apprehension and determination. This reflective activity aligns with feminist and queer

theories, which emphasize the importance of personal narratives in challenging dominant cultural narratives (Butler, 1990; Lorde, 1984).

The radio drama's themes, including public expression, societal judgment, religious opposition, and familial rejection, reflect broader discussions in LGBTQ+ studies and these themes emerged in this study. Queer theorists argue that heterosexual structures destroy non-conforming identities, reinforcing social invisibility and discrimination (Jagose, 1996). By transforming real-life experiences into a dramatized narrative, the participants could confront these issues in a format accessible to a wider audience. This aligns with the media representation theory, which stresses the role of media in shaping societal perceptions and advocating for social change (Hall, 1997).

Production techniques, such as soundscapes and voice modulation, were carefully combined to enhance the drama's emotional depth. Crook (1999) states that radio drama engages listeners through auditory storytelling, making it a powerful tool for advocacy. The use of Audacity software for final editing ensured that the production maintained high-quality sound, effectively conveying the participants' emotions, feelings and thoughts and scaping the physical behaviours (in an imaginary way).

The thematic analysis of the scripts revealed recurring concerns: The right to publicly express love and identity without judgment, resistance to cultural and religious oppression, and the need for familial acceptance. These themes mirror global discussions on LGBTQ+ rights, where freedom of expression is often shortened by legal and societal constraints (Jones, 2015). The participants' engagement demonstrated that radio drama not only provides a voice for the marginalized but also fosters solidarity among them.

The impact of the radio drama extended beyond the participants, as they expressed excitement and satisfaction with the final production. The project confirmed that media, particularly radio, can be a transformative tool in conservative societies by providing access to diverse perspectives, education, and unbiased news. It empowers marginalized voices, promotes social awareness, and fosters dialogue on sensitive issues. Its accessibility and anonymity allow individuals to engage with new ideas while respecting cultural boundaries, driving gradual change, providing a safe yet impactful platform for advocacy. By airing these narratives, the drama challenges dominant discourses and promotes inclusivity, resonating with theories of media activism and participatory communication (Freire, 1970).

## 4.4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the scripting and production of radio drama as an advocacy tool for freedom of expression among Lesbian women in Lesotho has validated the power of storytelling in strengthening marginalized voices. By incorporating the Practice as Research methodology, this project has provided a structured yet creative means for participants to articulate their experiences and aspirations. The thematic analysis revealed critical social issues, including societal judgment, cultural and religious oppression, and the urgent need for public and familial acceptance.

The process of scripting and producing the drama highlighted the challenges lesbian women face in conservative societies and provided a platform for advocacy through media representation. Utilizing soundscapes, voice modulation, and immersive storytelling techniques, the drama effectively conveyed participants' messages while fostering emotional connections with listeners. As media continues to shape public perceptions, radio drama remains a fundamental medium for challenging discriminatory norms and advocating for inclusivity.

At the end of the day, this project emphasizes the transformative potential of radio drama in conservative environments, proving that creative expressions can lead to social change. The enthusiastic reception from participants further validates the significance of such platforms in advocating for LGBTQ+ rights and fostering greater societal awareness and acceptance.

The next chapter focuses on the techniques and styles that enabled the lesbian women to express themselves. Since this is a Practice as Research study, it is important to see how radio drama was used in expression of freedom for Lesbians. Robin Nelson (2002), in his exploration of Practice as Research (PaR), underscores the importance of embodied knowledge and creative practice as valid research methodologies. He argues that PaR enables practitioners to generate new understandings that cannot be fully captured through traditional academic discourse alone. According to Nelson, the process of artistic practice itself is a form of inquiry, where meaning is co-constructed through both the researcher’s engagement and the participants’ expressions. This approach recognizes that participants contribute to knowledge production not just through verbal articulation but also through embodied actions, emotions, and unspoken understanding (Nelson, 2013).

# Chapter 5

# Radio Drama techniques and styles enabling the lesbian women to express themselves

## 5.0. Introduction

This chapter is a presentation of the findings on the techniques and styles of radio drama that enabled the lesbian women in Lesotho to express themselves. The chapter explores the utilization of soundscapes, voice modulation and immersive storytelling techniques to convey participants' encounters (actions and emotions) with lesbianism to foster emotional connections with the listeners.

A technique in radio drama refers to a specific method or approach used to create, structure, and enhance storytelling through sound, voice, and music (Hand & Traynor, 2011). One key technique in developing a radio drama is sound design, which involves the strategic use of sound effects, ambient noise, and silence to create atmosphere, realism, and emotional depth. In the development process, sound design helps establish setting and mood before dialogue is even introduced. For example, the distant hum of traffic and occasional car horns can instantly place the listener in a busy city without openly stating it (Crisell, 1994). During scriptwriting and production, sound designers work closely with writers and directors to integrate diegetic sounds (heard by characters, such as footsteps) and non-diegetic sounds (background music or symbolic effects) to enhance storytelling (Rodero, 2012). Silence is also a powerful tool-it can build suspense, emphasize emotions, or allow dramatic pauses to stay. By incorporating sound design early in the creative process, radio drama can achieve greater immersion, emotional engagement, and narrative clarity, ensuring the audience experiences the story beyond just words.

Style in radio drama refers to the unique way in which storytelling elements-such as dialogue, narration, sound design, and music-are crafted to create a unique listening experience. It shapes how emotions, themes, and narratives are conveyed, influencing audience engagement and interpretation (Hand & Traynor, 2011).

In the process of developing a radio drama, style guides creative choices in scripting, acting, and production. A realist style, for example, uses naturalistic dialogue, ambient sound, and understated performances to create an authentic and relatable experience (Crisell, 1994). In

contrast, an expressionist style employs exaggerated sounds, misleading voices, and abstract soundscapes to convey psychological states and heightened emotions (Verma, 2012). During the development stages, style influences scriptwriting, ensuring that language and pacing match the chosen aesthetic. It also dictates sound design, from minimalistic realism to layered, surreal atmospheres. Additionally, actors adjust their performance techniques to align with the selected style, using tone, pitch, and pacing to enhance immersion. Ultimately, style defines the mood and impact of a radio drama, shaping how audiences connect with characters and narratives through sound alone (Douglas, 2004).

## 5.1. Soundscapes, techniques and styles

Soundscapes played an important role in the radio drama because they created atmosphere, stimulate emotions, and immerse listeners in the story, (Hand & Traynor, 2011). For example, in scene 1, which is an opening scene, there is soft music playing in the background. It sets the mood and creates an emotional feeling for the story. The soft background music at the beginning launches a peaceful and emotional atmosphere, setting the space for the audience to engage with the narrative, (Rodero, 2012).

Environmental sounds, such as children playing, footsteps and household chores, aided to situate the listener in the rural setting of the play. The sounds of village life, like working in the fields or carrying water from the well, emphasizes the reality of Teboho's world, (Hand & Traynor, 2011). These soundscapes do not only function as background noise; they contribute to the narrative by demonstrating how deeply embedded cultural expectations shape individual identities. The concept Teboho's reality was noticed as one of the participants nodded their head as an agreement to how the rural communities are culturally embedded in Lesotho.

Silence is a powerful tool in radio drama, used to create dramatic tension and highlight moments of emotional distress or realization. An example is when "Teboho sat down on a chair in silence" after confronting her father, (Scannell, 2014). Here, silence symbolizes her internal struggle and the burden of societal expectations. The absence of sound in this moment forces the audience to reflect on the seriousness of the situation and Teboho's sense of isolation. Not only did the participants reflect to the moment of isolation, but they talked

about being rejected by their families and communities the moment they revealed their sexualities

Conflict in the play is resembled by the use of loud, aggressive tones, reflecting the oppressive nature of patriarchy and homophobia, (Sonn & Quayle, 2013). For example, Ramosoeu angrily confronts Teboho, shouting, *"Khanthe uena u eng? Ha u ngoanana ka har'a ntlo ee?"* The intensity of his voice conveyed rejection and societal condemnation, making the audience intuitively experience the protagonist's struggle. The aggression moment in the play was first discussed in an interview as the participants were talking about being free to publicly express their feeling to their loved ones without any societal judgment or condemnation.

Another significant soundscape is crying and emotional speech, which humanizes the characters and builds empathy, (Hand & Traynor, 2011). A touching example is "'Malintle weeping after reading Teboho's farewell note". Her cry not only explain the personal cost of discrimination but also works as a reminder of the emotional peal that rejection and misunderstanding have on individuals. Malintle's crying and emotional speech served as a representative of the actual feelings of lesbian women in Lesotho. The feeling of appeal to rejection, recognition, being understood and acknowledgement of existence for the lesbians in Lesotho.

Soundscapes also represented societal oppression. The collective voices of villagers insulting and humiliating Teboho on the streets showed the harsh reality of being a lesbian woman in a conservative society like Lesotho. The public nature of the insults highlights the stigma attached to non-conforming identities, (Blauert, 1997). This part of the scene is also an example of societal condemnation faced by the lesbians in Lesotho. It was highlighted when one of the participants emotionally stated that they also want not only do they face societal judgment by public affection expression to their lovers but also their masculine dress code attracts social judgment.

In contrast to earlier scenes of aggression, the resolution is noted by softer tones in 'Malintle and Ramosoeu's voices. When 'Malintle and Ramosoeu ask for forgiveness, their voices are submissive, signaling healing and transformation, they also symbolizes the potential for societal transformation and acceptance (Rodero, 2012). This contrast in soundscape highlighted the possibility of societal change and acceptance, aligning with the play's main

message of hope. This message or sign of hope was noticed in an interview when the participants were answering to the research question, “how can you use radio drama as advocacy” and one of the participant responded by saying that positive radio drama plays about lesbianism or homosexuality can be aired on radio stations in Lesotho so that a message can be past to their communities which will provide a platform for engagement in conversations about lesbianism or homosexuality, the more the discussions, the more the understanding and hopefully, the societies will come to an understanding and stop condemnations towards homosexuals such as lesbian women.

## 5.2. Styles Used in the Radio Drama

Beyond soundscapes, the play employs various stylistic elements, including realism, expressionism and symbolism to effectively convey its themes.

Realism in the play represented everyday experiences and cultural expectations authentically. For example, the strict gender roles imposed on Teboho-such as being forced to wear a dress and heels-highlight the rigidity of societal norms. This realistic representation allowed the audience to grasp the real-life struggles faced by lesbians in traditional settings, fostering awareness and empathy. The realism was also recognized and felt as the participants were sharing their lived experiences through the answering of the research question, (McMurtry, 2019).

Expressionism is another dominant style in the play, where sensitive emotional intensity reflects Teboho’s internal and external battles. The confrontation between Teboho and her father is a key example. Through expressive dialogue and voice modulation, the audience can feel her pain and disobedience, making her journey relatable and powerful. The relatable moment was when one of the participants was talking about some lesbian women living a lie by being in a closet because of the fear of their parents’ reactions after finding out, (Korte, 2015).

Objects and actions in a play carry deeper meanings. The dress and heels symbolize imposed femininity, whereas working in the fields with her brothers represents Teboho’s rejection of traditional gender roles. These symbols deepen the narrative’s impact, making her struggle for identity more appealing to the audience. This is brought up in a play after a participant said, “I hate being asked if I am a boy or girl because of how I dress…” This statement served as symbol of sexual identification as a girl child.

The stylistic choices in the play successfully strengthened themes of self-identity and the struggle for freedom of expression for lesbian women in Lesotho. Using radio drama theory, the play used auditory storytelling techniques to immerse audiences in Teboho's emotional and psychological journey, making her experiences more impactful (Crook, 1999). Through expressionism, her open declaration of sexuality became a performative act of regaining her identity, aligning with freedom of expression theory, which states that self-expression is a fundamental human right (Barendt, 2005).

Symbolism in the refusal to wear dresses represents a rejection of imposed gender norms, resonating with lesbianism theory, which highlights how heteronormative structures seek to subdue lesbian identities (Rich, 1980). The play's use of realism presents the discrimination faced by lesbians in conservative societies, educating audiences and fostering empathy, as theorized in Practice as Research (PaR), which emphasizes the power of performance in generating knowledge and social change (Nelson, 2013).

## 5.3. Conclusion

Through an analysis of production processes, voice modulation and soundscapes, this study showed how radio drama enabled lesbian women in Lesotho to articulate their experiences through sound and immersive storytelling. Sound design became a key part of creating atmosphere and emotional impact, and the modulation of voice allowed participants to express emotions from confidence to vulnerability. Tools like first-person narration and naturalistic dialogue brought larger audiences and gave an added authenticity. According to the study, radio drama was also a strong advocacy tool, offering a platform for lesbian women to voice out their struggles and desires for freedom of expression in a safe environment. Ultimately, it demonstrated how radio drama can amplify marginalized voices and challenge societal norms, fostering greater representation and empowerment.

# Chapter 6

## 6.0. General Introduction

The previous chapters have explored the use of radio drama as a tool for advocacy for the freedom of expression for lesbian women in Lesotho, examining how it can create spaces for dialogue, visibility, empowerment and most importantly enabling the women to express themselves. The importance of this study lied in addressing the systemic silencing of lesbian women, exploring how media, particularly radio drama, can serve as a platform for advocacy and social transformation. Radio drama, with its long-standing tradition of storytelling, possessed the unique ability to engage the listeners emotionally and intellectually, making it a powerful medium for addressing sensitive social issues. This study applied Practice as Research (PaR) to investigate how creative processes, such as scriptwriting and recording can contribute to knowledge production and advocacy efforts. The first chapter presented the foundational ideas and planning behind the research, providing a background on key concepts and terminology relevant to the study. The analysis chapters have examined and advocated for a shift in the practice-based research paradigm. Additionally, the previous five chapters have detailed, analyzed, and explored the development, rationale, and application of radio drama as a tool for advocacy for promoting freedom of expression among lesbian women in Lesotho. Chapter 6 gives summary and conclusive remarks of the research journey and paper as well as the finding that were led by the research questions.

## 6.1. Summary of the study

This study primarily emphasized its methodological approach, wherein a practice-based perspective facilitates insights into establishing continuity between theory and practice by linking theory and practice, allowing for deeper understanding and continuous development through application. This study saw data collecting as a real-life experience, emphasising reflection and action in practice-based research. The artistic texture allowed for exploration of the topic of freedom of speech or expression, including uncertainties. The study enabled the analysis of themes to be a continuous conversation rather than a tightly structured and technical information generation platform in that, the more each theme was unfolding, the

more the opening up of the platform for the conversation, leading to further exploration of such theme.

Chapter one introduces the research, the research topic, problem statement, aim and objective, research questions, rationale, literature review and or conceptual framework, methodology and data analysis. It explores the role of radio drama as an advocacy tool for freedom of expression among lesbian women in Lesotho. It explores how radio drama can be used to amplify marginalized voices and create spaces for public discourse on LGBTQI+ rights. Using a Practice as Research (PaR) approach, the study examines the challenges faced by lesbian women in expressing their identities, while also highlighting the potential of media, particularly radio drama, in fostering dialogue and social change (Barrett & Bolt, 2010).

Freedom of expression is a vital human right that allows individuals to articulate their thoughts, beliefs, and identities without fear of discrimination (Emerson, 1970). However, in Lesotho, lesbian women often experience systematic overpowering due to cultural, religious, and legal constraints (The Other Foundation, 2017). While homosexuality is not explicitly criminalized, societal attitudes remain largely unaccepting, leading to discrimination, violence, and lack of legal protection (Smith, 2023). This study sought to address these issues by exploring how radio drama can provide a platform for advocacy and visibility for lesbian women.

This study determines that radio drama is an effective advocacy tool for promoting freedom of expression among lesbian women in Lesotho. Radio drama, as explored by Crook (2002), is denied as a compelling medium capable of fostering emotional engagement and stimulating discussions on complex social issues.

By using narrative storytelling and soundscapes, it offers an engaging way to challenge societal norms and create inclusive spaces for LGBTQI+ discourse. The findings suggest that further research should explore broader applications of media advocacy for other marginalized groups in Lesotho and beyond.

The study contributes to the fields of media studies, gender studies and applied drama, demonstrating how creative storytelling can function as both an artistic expression and a catalyst for social change. The use of radio drama as a medium for advocacy underscores the power of media in fostering dialogue, building empathy, and shaping progressive narratives for LGBTQI+ rights in traditional societies (Smith, 2021).

Chapter 2 highlights the literature that exposes the unique qualities of radio drama, including its accessibility, emotional impact, and capacity for social commentary. By bringing in

scholarly perspectives on radio drama, advocacy, lesbianism, and freedom of expression, the chapter reveals how this medium can serve as a powerful platform for amplifying marginalized voices.

The discussion highlights the challenges faced by lesbian women in Lesotho, including legal discrimination, social stigma, and cultural erasure. It also explores how radio drama can help dismantle these barriers by fostering empathy, raising awareness, and promoting alternative narratives that validate lesbian identities.

The chapter argues that radio drama is not just a form of entertainment but a transformative tool for social change. Through carefully crafted narratives, it can challenge homophobic attitudes, empower marginalized communities, and advocate for a more inclusive and equitable society.

The literature, in chapter 2, expresses that freedom of expression is a fundamental human right, allowing individuals to communicate their thoughts, beliefs, and identities without fear of repression. The United Nations (2022) explains freedom of expression as the right to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media. However, it was found, in the study, that in Lesotho, lesbian women face significant barriers to exercising this right due to widespread homophobia and social stigma and also supported by the Human Rights Watch (2018).

Chapter 3 explores the methodological framework employed in the study to examine how radio drama can be used as an advocacy tool for the freedom of expression of lesbian women in Lesotho. The research is guided by the Practice as Research (PaR) approach, which incorporates creative practice with academic inquiry (Nelson, 2013). The chapter outlines the theoretical foundation, research design, data collection, and data analysis methods used in the study.

The study approves Practice as Research (PaR) as its primary methodological framework. PaR is an approach where creative activities, such as art and performance, serve as both the subject and method of research. This methodology emphasizes knowledge generation through artistic creation rather than traditional textual analysis (Nelson, 2013).

Nelson (2013) explains that PaR challenges conventional research paradigms by recognizing creative practice as a valid mode of inquiry. It enables researchers to explore complex ideas experientially, making it particularly useful for studies in the arts and humanities. Fleishman (2012) supports this view, stating that in PaR, the creative process itself is both the means and the outcome of research.

Haseman (2006) further declares that PaR is valuable in performance studies because it allows researchers who are also practitioners to join in theoretical and practical knowledge. This iterative approach ensures that practice informs theory and vice versa, creating a dynamic cycle of exploration and discovery. Schön (1983) also highlights that knowledge can be generated through action, positioning creative practice as a genuine research method. Barrett & Bolt (2010) emphasize that PaR values experiential and embodied knowledge, challenging traditional research norms that prioritize written or experimental methods. By embracing performance as a research tool, this study aims to explore how radio drama can function as a medium for advocacy and social change.

I chose PaR as the methodological approach because it aligns with the study's focus on creative expression. Given that radio drama itself is a form of artistic expression, employing PaR allows the study to investigate the advocacy potential of the medium through the process of creating and analyzing radio drama.
Through this approach, the study aims to:

- Explore the ways in which lesbian women in Lesotho experience and articulate their freedom of expression.
- Investigate how radio drama can serve as a platform for these expressions.
- Examine the impact of creative storytelling on advocacy efforts.

By inserting the research within the artistic process, the study seeks to generate new knowledge on the intersection of performance, activism, and identity.

The study further employs radio drama as a method of data collection, recognizing its potential to capture personal experiences and convey social realities. Crook (1999) argues that radio drama is an effective research tool because it allows practitioners to investigate narratives, sound, and performance within an auditory context. It provides an possibility for representing marginalized voices through dramatized storytelling.

The study employed thematic analysis to analyze the collected data. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
Miles & Huberman (1994) describe thematic analysis as a flexible and repetitive process that involves coding, categorizing, and conceptualizing data to uncover meaningful patterns. Denzin & Lincoln (2011) argue that qualitative data analysis requires reflexivity, meaning that researchers must critically engage with their own biases while interpreting data.

Steps in the thematic analysis process used include familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing the report.
This method allowed the me to identify core issues affecting the freedom of expression of lesbian women while assessing how radio drama can address these issues.

The study followed ethical guidelines to protect participants' rights and privacy.

- Informed Consent**:** Participants were given detailed information about the study and signed consent forms before participating.
- Confidentiality**:** Real names were not used to protect participants' identities.
- Data Security**:** All recordings and notes were stored in a password-protected computer.
- Voluntary Participation**:** Participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

Given the sensitive nature of LGBTQ+ issues in Lesotho, these ethical measures were vital in ensuring a safe and respectful research environment.

**Findings and Impact of the Study**

The methodology employed in the study allowed for rich qualitative perceptions into the lived experiences of lesbian women in Lesotho. Through radio drama, participants were able to:

- Express their personal struggles and ambitions in a safe and creative manner.
- Engage in advocacy by sharing their narratives with a wider audience.
- Challenge social norms by presenting alternative perspectives on LGBTQ+ identity.

The research demonstrates that radio drama is an effective advocacy tool that can:

- Amplify sidelined voices by offering a platform for self-expression.
- Promote awareness and empathy among listeners.
- Influence social attitudes and policies by fostering public dialogue.

By merging artistic practice with scholarly inquiry, the study contributes to both LGBTQ+ advocacy more especially, lesbian women and the field of applied drama research.

Chapter 4 presented the findings from the research fieldwork, building upon the theoretical and methodological foundations laid out in previous chapters. The research investigates how radio drama serves as an advocacy tool for lesbian women in a traditional and conservative society such as Lesotho. It confers the process of scripting, producing, and analyzing the

radio drama while incorporating insights from queer theory, media representation, and qualitative research methodologies.

The chapter highlights the process of scripting and producing the radio drama. It demonstrated how artistic expression can challenge societal norms and empower marginalized communities.
By documenting real-life struggles and transforming them into auditory storytelling, the study successfully amplifies lesbian voices while engaging broader audiences in critical conversations on human rights.
The findings reinforced the argument that radio drama is not just entertainment-it is a catalyst for social change.

The study reasons that radio drama provides a safe, auditory platform for marginalized voices, mainly in societies where legal and cultural restrictions hinder LGBTQ+ rights and visibility. The research explores the role of soundscapes, voice performance, and narrative storytelling in fostering advocacy and social change (Crook, 1999).
This chapter details:

- The interview and scriptwriting processes involving five lesbian women.
- The recording and production of the radio drama.
- Participants' responses to key research questions about freedom of expression.
- My perspective on scripting and production as an advocacy tool.

The scripting and production process began with WhatsApp group call interviews with five lesbian women in Lesotho. The study employed Practice as Research (PaR) as a guiding approach, allowing participants to express their experiences through creative means (Nelson, 2013).
The first session revealed hesitancy and fear among participants. Many felt vulnerable and exposed due to societal stigma. To ease them into the process, a color-based check-in activity was introduced. Notably, in the interview, the participants selected various colours to describe their feelings about the interview:

- White (blank) – Feeling unsure or neutral.
- Light blue (curious) – Wanting to explore but uncertain.
- Red (passionate) – Ready to speak out.
- Yellowish-red (uncertain but hopeful) – Cautious yet willing to participate.
- Black (in the dark) – Feeling confused or lost.

This color-based exercise allowed participants to articulate their emotions indirectly, creating a comfortable space for discussion. After initial hesitation, one outspoken participant motivated others and the other participants became more engaged, leading to deeper discussions on freedom of expression.

Following the interviews, participants wrote two-paragraph scripts about their lived experiences. I identified common themes across these narratives, which included the right to publicly express one's identity without fear of discrimination, freedom to display affection in public without judgment, challenging the misuse of religion and culture to oppress LGBTQ+ individuals, ending parental rejection and mistreatment of lesbian children.
Using these insights, the final radio drama script was composed, integrating participants' narratives into an interconnected storyline.

Using professional audio equipment at Voice of Wits FM (VoW FM), the recording was then edited using Audacity to improve voice clarity, add emotional depth through background music, and poise immersive soundscapes (Crook, 1999) to balance the audio. The final radio drama was reviewed by the participants with great excitement, and they concluded that it successfully portrayed their struggles and aspirations.

Participants explained freedom of expression as the ability to express themselves publicly without compromise and speak openly about their identities without judgment. For them, it also meant being free from the stigma of homosexuality and enjoying the same public freedoms as heterosexual individuals.

I considered the ways in which Practice as Research (PaR) validates artistic expression as academic method (Haseman 2006). Participants were able to turn personal struggles into creative storytelling through scripting, allowing them to gain confidence in articulating their identities while also being engaged in self-expression without fear of direct exposure. Such embracing narrative aligns with theories of media representations (exemplified in Hall, 1997) calling for inclusive representations, and supports queer theorists such as Judith Butler (1990) and Audre Lorde (1984), who argue that heteronormative societies render invisible those people whose identities defy societal norms. Moreover, radio drama's utilization of soundscapes and voice modulation can create emotional depth that enables non-visual media to evoke a powerful image (Crook, 1999).

**Impact and Future Considerations**

The production of the radio drama confirmed that media can be a transformative tool in conservative societies, fostering inclusivity and advocacy in ways that direct activism might not. Engaging LGBTQ+ individuals, particularly lesbian women, in creative storytelling allowed them to regain their narratives and challenge societal biases over time. Participants expressed hope that this project would encourage more lesbian women to come out and speak freely. This approves that media representation directly impacts identity visibility and advocacy efforts (Jagose, 1996).

Various techniques and styles were used in radio drama that allowed lesbian women in Lesotho to express themselves which are presented in this chapter -5-. The chapter built upon the discussions in previous chapters, exploring how soundscapes, voice modulation, and immersive storytelling techniques contributed to emotional engagement, self-expression and advocacy through radio drama.

By analyzing how these techniques that were used in the radio drama production, the chapter highlights how the voices of lesbian women in Lesotho were amplified, legitimized, and empowered through this medium of advocacy.

This chapter highlights how various techniques and styles of radio drama facilitated self-expression among lesbian women in Lesotho. Through soundscapes, voice modulation, and immersive storytelling, participants were able to articulate their struggles, emotions, and desires in an engaging and impactful manner.

The research confirms that radio drama is not just a form of entertainment but a powerful medium for advocacy and activism. It was demonstrated radio drama allows marginalized communities to reclaim their narratives, fostering awareness and social change.

By combining technical elements with authentic storytelling, this study reveals the transformative potential of radio drama in empowering lesbian women and challenging discriminatory norms.

Soundscapes played a fundamental role in the radio drama storytelling, reimbursing for the lack of visual elements by creating atmosphere, evoking emotions, and immersing listeners (Hand & Traynor, 2011). Non-diegetic sounds, such as music and background effects, are intentionally added to enhance the narrative's depth, making characters' experiences more relatable and impactful (Carlyle & Lane, 2013).

Musical soundscapes and background music were purposefully included into the radio drama to evoke emotions, immerse listeners in the struggles of lesbian women in Lesotho, and guide audience perception (Chion, 1994). Voice modulation played a vital role in expressing mood, personality and confidence levels, as outspoken participants used strong tones and loud volumes to convey determination, while reserved participants spoke softly with pauses, reflecting vulnerability (Moore, 2015). Techniques such as pitch variation, volume adjustments, and tone modulation were included to highlight emotional depth, aligning with Lukács' (1963) argument that naturalistic styles reflect real-life experiences. Immersive storytelling, through first-person narration, emotional underscoring, and naturalistic dialogue, deepened audience engagement, ensuring a personal connection to the narratives of marginalized individuals (Hand & Traynor, 2011). The absence of visuals in radio drama allowed listeners to tap into their imaginary worlds and use their imaginary vision, fostering a deeply personal experience that encouraged empathy and challenged societal norms. Ultimately, the study revealed that radio drama provides a safe space for self-expression and emotional release, using sound and voice techniques to strengthen LGBTQ+ voices and advocate for greater social awareness.

## 6.2. Limitations and challenges

Lesotho, a conservative and patriarchal society, enforces multiple restrictions on lesbian women, limiting their visibility and right to self-expression. This paper also looked into the legal, cultural, religious, societal, and economic challenges that prevent lesbian women in Lesotho from fully enjoying their right to freedom of expression.

The legal system does not clearly criminalize homosexuality, but it fails to provide legal protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation. This legal void leaves lesbian women vulnerable to discrimination, harassment, and violence (Human Rights Watch, 2018). The effects of the societal limitations were discovered when I proposed a radio drama show in the presence of my participants, examiners and my supervisor. My participants highly disagreed with my idea, claiming that they were uncomfortable with being exposed to the public. They were not sure if they were strong enough to face the community after the radio drama show, knowing exactly that they part-taken in the production. This is mainly because of the societal discrimination, judgment harassment, violence and lack of legal law that protects the rights of the LGBTQI+ community.

It lacks broad anti-discrimination laws that protect LGBTQ+ individuals from unfair treatment in employment, healthcare, education, and public spaces. Moreover, Lesotho's society is deeply rooted in masculine cultural traditions, which dictate strict gender roles and strengthen heteronormativity. Women are expected to conform to traditional femininity and any originality-such as engaging in same-sex relationships-is seen as a threat to cultural values (Mothopeng, 2020). Furthermore, lesbian women in Lesotho face substantial economic challenges due to workplace discrimination, family rejection, and lack of financial independence.

Lesotho's legal, cultural, religious, societal and economic barriers intentionally hinder the freedom of expression of lesbian women. The absence of legal protections, strict gender norms, religious condemnation, public discrimination and economic hardship force many lesbian women to remain restricted and silent.

While activist groups and social media have created small pockets of visibility, considerable that the legal and social reforms are needed to ensure that lesbian women in Lesotho can safely express themselves without fear of discrimination or violence.

## 6.3. Conclusive Remarks

This research study has explored how radio drama can used as an advocacy tool for freedom of expression of lesbian women in Lesotho. The study applied Practice as Research (PaR) methodology, joining in creative processes and qualitative research methods to inspect how lesbian women in Lesotho describe freedom of expression, the challenges they face, and how radio drama can be used as an advocacy tool for their voices to be heard.

This concluding chapter presents the key findings of the study, the impact of the research, the limitations faced, and recommendations for future studies. The study has provided an important contributions to LGBTQ+ rights advocacy, media representation, and the role of performance-based storytelling in challenging social norms.

It highlights the legal and social barriers holding back the freedom of expression for lesbian women in Lesotho, emphasizing legal gaps, societal discrimination, and cultural-religious constraints that promote self-censorship and exclusion (Human Rights Watch, 2018; Mothopeng, 2020). It shows radio drama's effectiveness to a certain extent as an advocacy tool, using soundscapes, voice modulation, and storytelling to create empathy, amplify voices, and provide safe self-expression (Nelson, 2013; Crook, 1999). The study contributes to LGBTQ+ rights, applied drama, and media advocacy (radio drama), strengthening the

importance of Practice as Research (PaR) in challenging oppressive norms and empowering marginalized voices (Haseman, 2006; Butler, 1990). However, fear of exposure, financial constraints and media censorship limited participation and outreach. Despite these challenges, the study emphasizes radio drama's transformative role in promoting inclusivity and awareness, advocating for continued legal reforms, media engagement and safe spaces for LGBTQ+ expression in Lesotho. In the end, freedom of expression is a right, not a privilege and this study serves as a call to action for greater inclusivity, respect and equality for everyone in Lesotho and beyond despite their gender identity.

## 6.4. Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings and limitations, more collaborative research in Applied Drama and LGBTQ+ Studies can or should be done, meaning that, future research should explore other creative advocacy methods, such as theatre, film, and poetry, in promoting LGBTQ+ rights. I should not only focus on radio drama but also look into other advocacy tools, open up wider to possible Applied Drama methods and not let to be stereotyped.

The interview session revealed that lesbian women in Lesotho do not have safe spaces for them to freely express themselves and have deeper conversations about their challenges as lesbians; therefore, creating safe spaces for lesbian women is vital in providing support, empowerment and community for lesbian women in Lesotho. These spaces can be physical (community centers, support groups and workshops) or virtual (online forums, social media networks) where individuals can share experiences, access resources and receive emotional and legal support without fear of discrimination. Safe spaces create dialogues, mental well-being and activism, allowing lesbian women to build confidence and advocate for their rights. collaboration with human rights organizations, LGBTQ+ activists and media outlets can help expand these spaces, promote inclusivity and push for legal reforms protecting LGBTQ+ individuals. This recommendation is helpful in the future because it helps in opening up to different practical steps to address the lack of safe spaces for lesbian women in Lesotho, and not just focusing on radio drama to address issues pertaining lesbianism. It proposes creating both physical (community centers, support groups, workshops) and virtual (online forums, social media networks) spaces to provide support, empowerment, and a sense of community, and also highlights the benefits of these spaces in fostering dialogue, improving mental well-being, and encouraging activism so that at the end of the day, lesbian women voices will be adhered, considered and acknowledged by both the government and communities in Lesotho.

Applied drama can be a powerful tool for social change, advocacy, and challenging oppressive norms, particularly in conservative societies like Lesotho. It uses interactive and participatory performance techniques to engage communities in discussions about human rights, discrimination, and marginalized voices (Prendergast & Saxton, 2009).

A recommendation would be to use through applied drama techniques such as forum theatre, playback theatre and process drama, together with radio drama to further the reach of the story. Forum Theatre, Playback Theatre, and Process Drama would provide dynamic ways for facilitating the freedom of expression of lesbian women through radio play. Forum Theatre would enable participants to envision alternative reactions to discrimination, promoting proactive problem-solving. Playback Theatre would encourage the sharing of lived experiences among lesbian women, fostering validation, public conversations and public empathy. Process Drama would engage participants in role-playing scenarios, enhancing understanding of their challenges. When used into radio drama, these techniques can facilitate interactive storytelling, enhancing the representation of marginalized voices.

The integrated use of applied drama can also be used in schools, churches and community spaces to challenge religious and cultural misunderstandings, promoting inclusivity and acceptance therefore one of the recommendations would be to engage with schools and create performances that will trigger conversations on lesbianism. By humanizing lesbian identities through storytelling and performance, applied drama raises awareness, shifts perspectives and triggers meaningful conversations about LGBTQ+ rights in Lesotho.

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## Appendix 1

Title: Set Me Free

NB: Music playing softly at the back

Once upon a time, in a village beyond the Tso'eunyane Valley, there lived a family of six, a mother named 'Mapule, father named Ramosoeu and four children, three boys named Thebe (1st born), Potlako (2nd born), Pule (3rd born) and a girl named Teboho (last born). The Villagers called it the Ramosoeus. The family was well known for its great agricultural wealth and harvest. They had many cattle, sheep, goats, horses, donkeys and three big fields. Despite that, it was well known for its religious background, the great grandfather of Ramosoeu was a pastor, then this grandfather, and now Ramosoeu is, which might pass to one of the kids to serve as a generational chain.

Ho sale joalo, ba ha Ramosoeu ene ele lelapa le hlomphehileng ka ho fetisisa ka har'a motse. Banna khotla ba ne ba babatsa botle ba lelapa la Ramosoeu, basali selibeng ba bolelisaka ka tsela eo 'Mapule e bileng mosali a lehlohonolo har'a basali ka teng 'me ha ele bana papaling teng ha ke sa bolela. Ho ne ho se ngoana ea sa lakatseng ho ba e mong oa bana ba Ha Ramosoeu. Thebe, Potlako, Pule le Teboho ba ne ba babatsoa botle le bokhabane ba bona 'me ba ts'oeroe joalo ka mahe.

Bana ba Ha-Ramosoeu ba ikholetse joalo ho se letho le ba ts'oenyang. They grew up close to each other, Teboho, the last born was always found playing with her brothers and other village boys, she would never play with the other girls in the village. Her parents had no problem with her always playing with the boys, they always assumed that she liked it best when she was around her brothers.

Ka keresemese e ngoe, ba Ha-Ramosoeu ba ile ba rekela bara le morali liaparo hore le bona ba thabe joalo ka bana ba bang. Joalo ka ngoana oa mosetsana, Teboho o ile a rekeloa mose o moputsoa ba leholimo le lietsa tse tso'eu tsa mopholosa toeba. The children were as happy as a man who just won a lottery except Teboho. She did not like the dress and heels therefore asked her mother, "Mom, why do I have to get different clothes from my brothers? Why do I get girls' clothes and not boys' clothes?" 'Mapule with all the calmness responded, "It is because you are my little girl who will soon grow up to be a woman and put on dresses." Teboho ha a ka thabela karabo eo 'me a re ho 'm'ae, "Empa 'na ke batla tse ts'oanang le tsa

bo-abuti baka" ha a qeta a sekhitla sa phoomela seboko. Ka lebaka la ho ts'abana ka ngoana oa ngoanana ea mong fela to! ka monoana, 'Mapule o ile a potlakela lebenkeleng la liaparo, a nto rekela mosetsana Teboho seo a se batlang 'me ho tloha mohla letsatsi leo, Teboho o ile a fumana sohle seo bo abuti'ae ba se fumanang.

Time passed by, Teboho got the same treatment as her brothers. Sometimes they would work in the fields together and perform men home chores. The four Ramosoeu children went to one local school called Marema-tlou International School. At school, she had male friends only, she would approach girls like any other boy would. Most girls thought she was just being one of those cool girls in school but for Teboho, it was different. The more she approached girls, the more the love of girls grew inside.

Ha Teboho a fihla sekolong se Mahareng ke moo a ile a leka ho totobatsa boleng ba hae. O ile a qala ka ho tsepama moaparong oa hae o boshanyana leha ka linako tse ling 'mae a ne a mo qobella ho apara mese. Ho ile ha tlala motseng moo hore ena Teboho o na le metsoalle ea bashanyana eseng ea banana hape o matha le ngoanana e mong motseng moo.

For that reason, the villagers started humiliating Teboho, both elders and young people in the village started calling her names. One afternoon, just like any other afternoon, the Ramosoeu family was at their house doing different jobs and Teboho took the garden tools to work in the plots then suddenly 'Malintle said, "Stebo ngoana oa ngoanana a mong feela, ako nke nkho u tsamaee le banana ba bang le ilo kha metsi selibeng". Teboho ignored her mother and continued with what she was doing then 'Malintle said, "aebo Teboho, na oa nkutloa tjee kapa u iphapanyelitse 'na? Kere u nke nkho u tsamaee le banana ba bang u ntlele metsi selibe". Teboho turned her back to her mother and told her that getting water from the well was a girl's work and she was busy with her garden work.

Ka ho cho joalo eaka o li khoathile tsa semana, Ramosoeu o ile a tlola moo a leng teng a nto re ho Teboho, "khanthe uena u eng? Ha u ngoanana ka har'a ntlo ee? Mamela 'm'ao mosetsana, u phethe seo a u bolellang hore u se phethe, khelek! Ra holisa ngoana a batla ho re tlala matsoho. Ebile ke utloile hore uena u matha le ngoanana eane oa 'Malironts'o. Ke mang a u rutileng mekhoa eo ea ho kena likamanong tsa marato le banana? U kile oa bona mang a e etsa?" Immediately Teboho decided to leave to the well and Ramosoeu stopped her and continued talking, "hona joale oa re ngala oa tsamaea, rona re sala re ahlame mona". Teboho sat down on a chair in silence.

Few minutes later the three brothers came into the heated up scene and they were suddenly caught up in it. Ramosoeu in anger asked the boys, "did you boys know that your little sister is going around dating girls?" The boys shook their heads and grabbed their chairs, sat down

to listen. ‘Malintle then said, “ao ngoan’aka Teboho, hobaneng u ka re etsa tjee? Oa tseba re ne re ts’epetse hore bonyane likhomo li tla bohela sakeng ka uena mohla u fumanang monna a u nyalang? Ana a tseba hore na bo-‘m’e ba merapelo kerekeng ba tlo ‘nyenyefatsa joang ha ba utloa hore oaka ngoana o matha le banana? Ka tla ka soaba ha ke utloa tsena tsohle hoba ke ne ke sa li labella ho tsoa ho uena ngoan’aka.” Ramosoeu shouted from the distance and told Teboho how much she has brought a disgrace and shamefulness to his family.

Teboho o ile a thetha seohlola qoqothong ‘me a nto tsoelapele a re, “’M’e le ntate, kea leboha ka ho buoa ka taba eena. Esale ke batla ho bua ka eona empa ke ts’aba hore na le tla ncheba joang hang hoba ke qete ho le joetsa. Eea, ho joalo. Sohle seo le se utloileng ka ‘na mapatlelong a motse ke ‘nete, ese ele lilemo joale ke kena likamanong tsa marato le batho ba basali eseng ba banna. ‘Nete ke hore ke motlotlo ka seo keleng sona hape nka se ipate ho fihlela bofelo ba lefats'e. ‘M’e le ntate le lona bo-abuti baka, ke masoabi ka ho le tsebisa taba e tjena empa ke nako ea hore le tsebe ‘me le etse qeto ea ho nkamohela kele ka tsela eo keleng ka eona kapa le ntahle.”

‘Mapule o ile a kebisa hlooho ‘me likhapha tsa keleketla marameng a hae, haele Ramosoeu ena o ile a rarahana leleme ke khalefo. Ho ile ha thola tu! ‘me ka mor’a nako e se kae, Teboho o ile a ema ka maoto , a leba seterateng moo a ileng a tlepuoa lits’eo, ba mo bitsa ka mabitso, ba mo nyenyefatsa ebile ba mo rohaka. The discrimination, belittling, insulting and harassment from the villagers became Teboho’s daily meal.

Ka letsatsi le leng, lelapa la Ha- Ramosoeu le sa ituletse le namile leoto tlas’a sefate sa monots’oai, Potlako a hlaha hukung ea ntlo a mathela ‘m’ae, ka letsohong la hae le letona, o ne a ts’oere pampiri a e tsoka moeeng. Ha a fihla ho ‘m’ae a hlalosa hore Teboho o tsamaile ‘me o siile lengolo betheng. Pampiri eo ene e baleha tjena, “‘M’e le Ntate, ho bile monate ho phela le lona empa ke bona eka ese ele nako ea ka ea hore ke tsoe ntlong ea lona ke le siee ka Khotso. Ke masoabi ka ho tlisa tlontlollo lelapeng la lona. Ke ne ke leka ho hlakisa seemo sa ka le hore na ke thabela ho phela baka bophelo ka tsela efe empa ho hlakile hore I will never be one of your children anymore, I will never be mommy’s little girl anymore. Ke masoabi ka ho tlisa lenyatso lelapeng la lona, kea ts’epa ka le leng la matsatsi you will find it in your hearts to forgive me. My brothers, thank you for sharing your happy and sad days with me, I learned a lot from you and wishing you all the best going forward. I love you all and you will always be my family regardless the differences we had or have”.

After reading the note, ‘Malintle wept bitterly for her daughter but there was no use because she had left the house already, Ramosoeu sat in silence and the brothers kept looking at each other with sad, teary eyes. Days passed by, weeks passed by and months passed by with no

sign of Teboho.  The three brothers secretly kept in contact with their little sister. Ka mor'a likhoeli li se kae 'Malintle a ba le lefu la pelo 'me a kena sepetlele. Hang-hang e mong oa bashanyana ba bararo ba 'Malintle a tsebisa Teboho ka tsa bophelo bo temekang ba 'Malintle. Ka mor'a nako e sa felising pelo Teboho a fihla hae le lithoto tsa hae. 'Malintle o ile a lla hoo ke Thabo ha a bona morali a khutletse lapeng.

After Teboho decided to go back home, 'Malintle and  Ramosoeu spent almost all their times asking for forgiveness and promising Teboho that she was going to be supported in everything and every way possible, as long as she is still part of the family and never ever run away from the family again.

The End!!!!!