

Ramla Ali: A name of Inspiration; A name of history.

It was a dreary and gloomy afternoon. I had nothing to do unless watching TV. I took a cup of coffee and started to watch BBC news. Suddenly a small caption of breaking news caught my eye. "My mum said Muslim girls never box" says Ramla Ali. I never heard her name before but I definitely heard this quote long ago. I was just wondering about Ramla Ali. Who is she? Why did she say that? What did she mean by that? There were lots of questions filling in my head.

Ramla Ali is a Somalian boxer based in London (Bethnal green). She moved to England from Somalia as a war refugee in the early 1990s after her elder brother (12) was killed during the civil war. She started boxing as a teenager in an effort to lose weight. After a few months she started to love boxing. In 2015 Ramla won Novice National Championships and then in 2016 she won England Boxing Elite National Championship.

Ramla has been competing across the country for the past 10 years. Now she will represent her homeland (Somalia) in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics as the first boxer ever from Somalia . Somalia has never sent a boxer to the Olympics nor won a medal before - but Ali is targeting both in 2020. It will be definitely a momentous event in Somalian history.

Ramla is the first Muslim woman to win an English boxing title. In fact when Ramla Ali won the British and English titles in 2016, none of her family members were watching the game since they didn't know anything about it. She kept her boxing a secret from her strict family - believing they would not allow to box. As a young Muslim woman she experienced ongoing battles against stereotyping and her own family's expectations.

Ramla's story is very inspiring for all of us. As a child refugee she had to face lots of challenges, a tragic event (her brother's death) and a horrific situation (escaping from her homeland). These ultimately gave her the inner strength to move her way through life. Ramla's story taught me one thing; nothing can stop us if we work hard, if we determine to meet our targets and if we desire to fulfil our dreams.

At some point I found some similarity with Ramla. When I chose 'Mass Communication and Journalism' for graduation, my parents were not very impressed like Ramla's parents. They said to me that this profession is not very suitable for a girl, that this subject is not for you. It is similar to Ramla's parents who said "Muslim girls never box". It is clear that sometimes we give our society more priority than ourselves. We keep thinking what other people will think. We scared to break our social boundaries even if it destroys many of our dreams. In her interview Ramla said, her mum was worried about the society – what will people say but now her mum proud for her.

So COME ON girls, don't scared, don't be shy, and don't give up your dream. One day your parents and your society will proud of you like Ramla's.