

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**THE DAGBAMBA WITCHCRAFT AND THE CONCEPT OF
EXORCISM**



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EXORCISM

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**A Thesis in the Department of Gur-Gonja, Faculty of Languages Education,
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, University of Education, Winneba
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of the Master of
Philosophy (M. Phil) Degree in Ghanaian Language Studies (Dagbani).**

JULY, 2018

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, ISSAHAKU SULEMANA, declare that this Thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

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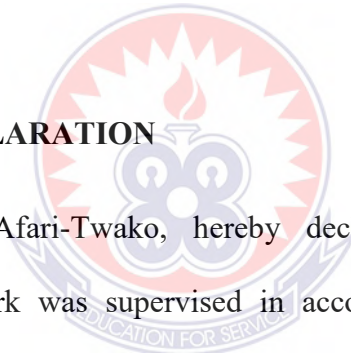
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SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I, Mr. Henry Afari-Twako, hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of Thesis / Dissertation / Project as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

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DATE:



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DEDICATION

In loving memory of my late father M ba Issahaku (Gbumli Gushee Naa) and my late friend Abdul-Fatawu (Mablo Boy) whom I love tenderly.

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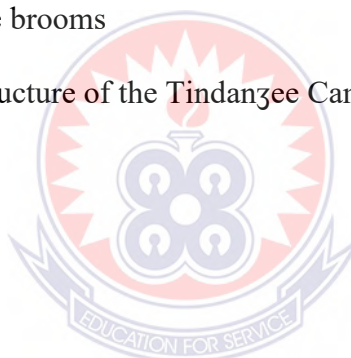
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

NCWAG	National Conference on Witchcraft Accusations in Ghana
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
NCCE	National Commission for Civic Education
CRHRP	Country Reports on Human Rights Practices
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
GES	Ghana Education Service
Fig	Figure
CS	Circuit Supervisor
QDA	Qualitative Data Analyses
PBUH	Peace Be Upon Him
ATR	African Traditional Religion
MOFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
TTH	Tamale Teaching Hospital

ABSTRACT

Witchcraft is considered as a feminine art in the Dagbamba society. The art is generally attributed to older women, but young women or even girls can sometimes be involved. This study sought to discuss the Dagbamba witchcraft and the concept of exorcism. The primary aim was to find out how witchcraft is perceived and understood by the Dagbamba and how this belief influences the lives of the people. The Tindanze Yili in Kpatinga is the main study area however; the findings were present in some other selected communities including Kpatinga, Gaa and Sampimo all under the Gushegu District. The research approach employed for this study was qualitative as it sought to understand and assess people's perception about witches in the Dagbamba society. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants for the study. Two main research instruments (interview and observation) were used. A total of forty two respondents, who qualified as key respondents for the research, participated in the study. The study sample comprised fifteen (15) resident respondents from Kpatinga, Gaa and Sampimo who perceived not to be witches were interviewed to get their perception about witchcraft. Five (5) opinion leaders including the Kpatinga chief, the assemblyman of the Sampimo electoral area, some religious leaders and traditional title holders were interviewed. In addition, the acting earth priest of the Tindanze camp and twenty one alleged witches from the camp who were between the ages of forty to seventy years were also interviewed. The study established that the belief in witchcraft and witchcraft activities is very common in the Ghanaian rural communities where the extended family systems existed. The study further established that people perceived to be witches are vulnerable in Dagbamba society and those who are being labelled as witches are suffering serious stigmatization as a consequence.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the Background to the Study, Statement of the problem, Purpose of the Study, Research Objectives, Research Questions, Significance of the Study as well as the Limitations and Delimitations of the Study.

Witches are viewed by many people as agents of misfortune. Witchcraft allegation may be described as an 'inerasable scar' and when levelled against an individual, such person's life is in danger. The person may never regain her respect in the society. No matter the levels of this allegation (whether true or false) people will start pointing accusing fingers at the person. From my own view about witches in the Dagbamba society as a native of Dagban kingdom, apart from our ancestors, witches are ranked next in terms of spiritual power. They are therefore feared in the Dagbamba communities.

Many people believe that, not all problems that are encountered by an individual are natural. Most of the problems are caused by witches. Among the Dagbamba, a witch can be a man, a woman or a child but they are mostly perceived to be the old women. A woman who engages in witchcraft activities is called 'Sonya' singular or 'sonima' plural. A man who also practices witchcraft is known as 'Bukpaha' singular or 'bukpahinima' plural which literary means a wizard(s).

The Dagbamba believe that, many of the sufferings of man such as ill-health, death, poverty, childlessness, crop failure and madness are attributed to witchcraft. These beliefs are common in many parts of the world and not limited to only African communities. According to Kindness (1996), Witches are implicated in all forms of trouble, from car crashes to marital discord, to cancer and death from lightning bolts. A witch is typically seen as a jealous person who kills, maims and brings misfortune

to those they perceive to be more fortunate than they themselves. The Dagbamba have similar believe about witches as they tag them to be evil.

Witchcraft accusation has now become a daily news item for discussion in Africa especially in the Northern Region of Ghana where the witches' colonies are. The accused persons are denied of their fundamental human rights and forced to flee from their communities to the witch camps. In Ghana, the witch camps are where the perceived witches are sent to in order to avoid instance justice.

1.1 Background to the Study

This study sought to examine Dagbamba witchcraft and the concept of exorcism and how these affect the life of the people. The Dagbamba speak Dagbani which is one of the Gur Languages spoken in Northern Ghana. The Dagbani Kingdom resides in the Northern part of Ghana. It covers an area of about eight thousand square miles of the Northern region, (Abdallah and Adam, 2015). The kingdom is inhabited largely by the Dagbamba ethnic group. The overlord of the Dagbani Traditional Kingdom is the Yaa Naa, whose court and administrative capital is Yendi. The Yaa Naa is assisted by divisional and sub-chiefs in his area of jurisdictions.

According to Lewis, Gary & Charles (2016), Dagbani is the mother tongue of approximately 1,160,000 speakers in Northern Ghana. The language is one of the major languages of the country accepted by government and reduced into writing, taught in schools and used in the state-owned media. It is widely spoken in Tamale, Yendi and some parts of Bimbila and their environs.

The speakers know themselves as Dagbamba (plural) and Dagbana (singular). They are also referred to as Dagombas (plural) and Dagomba (singular) by non-native speakers. The land occupied by the Dagbamba is called Dagbani with three distinct varieties of the languages spoken in the area. These are the Western dialect

(Tomosili), spoken in and around the Administrative Capital of Northern Region of Ghana, Tamale. The Eastern dialect (Nayahili) which is spoken in Yendi, the Traditional Capital of Dagban and its environs and Nanunli which is spoken in Bimbila and its environs (Hudu, 2010).

According to Abdallah and Adam (2015) citing the 2010 Ghana Housing and Population Census, Dagban is made up of nine administrative districts. These are Tamale Metropolis, Yendi Municipal, Tolon, Kumbungu, Savelugu-Nanton Municipal, Gushegu, Karaga, Saboba, Cheriponi and Zabzugu-Tatali. Traditionally, however, some of the major towns of Dagban are Tamale, Yendi, Kumbungu, Tolon, Savelugu, Gushegu, Karaga, Diari, Sang, Mion, Nanton, Nyankpala and Zabzugu, (ibid). From my observation, Dagbani is mutually intelligible with Mampruli and closely related to Grune, Dagaare, Kusaal and Waala among the other Gur Languages.

Figure 1.1 below shows the Ethnologue Language Map of the Dagbamba people.



Source: Bethany World Prayer Center.

Witchcraft is a universal and historic phenomenon which continues to attract wide interest. The belief in witchcraft and consequent witch-hunting is found in many cultures all over the world particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and for that matter Ghana, (NCCE Research Report, 2010). Capuccio and Ravaru (2004) reveal that, witchcraft probably originated about 25,000 years ago in the Paleolithic era. At that time, humankind and nature were seen as inextricably linked. People acknowledged every rock, tree and stream as deities in the life force, and the Earth as mother, offering both womb and tomb.

Chavunduka (2001) argues that many people who have accepted Islam and Christianity did not resign from the African traditional religion (ATR) nor did they abandon African culture completely; they have maintained dual membership. This reflect the belief among the Dagbamba locals. Many Christians and Muslims in the Dagbamba society continue to participate in traditional religious rituals; they continue to consult traditional healers. The ATR is still a very strong force in the minds and hearts of majority of the Dagbamba. Death is perceived among the Dagbamba as the beginning of communication between the visible and the invisible worlds. Therefore, the goal of life for a Dagbana is to become an ancestor after death, (Abdallah and Adam, 2016). Ancestors occupy a central position in our African religion largely because of their ownership of land and their relationship to God (Chavunduka, 2001)

Many Christians and Muslims believe in witches and their activities, some even practice it or attempt to practice witchcraft. It has been confirmed by scholars from religious scriptures that witchcraft has existed for centuries. In Biblical times, according to Howell (2004), witchcraft and sorcery existed in Israel and amongst the surrounding nations of Egypt, Canaan and later in Babylon. Perho (2012) reports that Islam's doctrine recognises the existence of magic (*sihr*). He further reports that in the

Holy Qur'an, it was the devils and two angels – Harut and Marut – who taught people magic (Q 2:102). Perho noted that the angels taught magic, but at the same time they warned people from blasphemy that would endanger their salvation. In the *hadith* reports cited in Perho (2012:185) the Holy Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) was bewitched by a man and the witchcraft caused him physical suffering. One of the shortest versions of the story was given by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 855) in his *al-Musnad*:

–The Prophet was bewitched by a Jew. The Prophet suffered from it for days. Angel Gabriel came to the Prophet and said: –A Jew has bewitched you. He tied a knot against you and placed it in such and such a well. Send someone to fetch it.” The Prophet sent ‘Ali who retrieved the knot, brought it with him and disassembled it. The Prophet got up as if he had been released from shackles. The Jew was not told and the Prophet never met him”.

Foreign religions such as Islam and Christianity have played a role of influencing the mindset of many Africans and therefore being one of the causal factors of witchcraft accusations in the Ghanaian communities especially in the Northern part of the country. Before the introduction of these foreign religions, Africans had their own way of worshipping God through their ancestors. Most of the ethnic groups in the Northern part of Ghana especially the Dagbamba practices the Islamic religion.

According to Igwe (2016) Islam is the dominant and, in fact, official religion of the Dagbamba. Since the infusion of these foreign religions into this part of the country, witchcraft accusations began to rise. With the advent of Islam and Christianity in Northern Ghana, Islamic clerics and Church priests also assumed the roles of the Dagbamba traditional medicine-men by attending to people's physical and

spiritual problems. One nagging problem which these people often attend to is demonic-possession.

Igwe (2016) notes that the Dagbamba belong to two main Muslim traditions, the Tijaniyya and the Al-Sunnah. The Tijaniyya make up the oldest rendering of Islamic tradition in Dagbaŋ Kingdom. Igwe emphasized that;

–Tijaniyya Mallams use the Qur‘an to do miracles, conduct special prayers, and perform divination and rituals. They cooperate with local chiefs to provide Islamic remedy to local problems like witchcraft accusation. Every chief’s palace has a Mallam and a Priest *Buyulana* attached to it. These religious consultants use their supernatural powers to help the chiefs in resolving cases brought before them and the elders”.

Igwe (2016) adds that Many Muslims openly profess their strong belief in witchcraft and in the tradition of witch detection and purification at shrines. Christianity enjoys limited privilege and popularity among the Dagbamba as compared to Islam. Despite the dominance of Islam among the Dagbamba, shrines play a significant role in the everyday life of the people particularly in the resolution of disputes and problems such as complaints of witchcraft and witchcraft accusations.

Many people believe that the consultation of *Mallams* or Church priests‘ for prophecy is a way of solving their problems. Such people always go to the Mallams or pastors to find out what causes their misfortune and to get solutions to their problems as well. Through this consultation, such persons would end up by pointing accusing fingers at someone within the family or his/her relatives as well. Some of these Mallams are well armed spiritually and can even sit in their rooms and use some verses in the Holy Qur‘an to bewitch people or cause any form of misfortune. Because of this, most people go to the Mallams with the names of individual persons they want to bewitch.

Witches are just like any other ordinary human being but what differentiates them from an ordinary being is the notion of having supernatural powers which they can use to transform themselves into any other form of creature. According to Musah (2013) every society has its belief systems and practices that guide individual and group behaviour and conduct. One system of belief and practice that is widespread, but also involving cultural specific and historical elements and variations, is the belief in and practice of witchcraft.

According to Mencej (2015) once misfortunes occur, especially when they start to accumulate and continue, the person that allegedly caused them had to be identified. This is necessary in order to annihilate their evil powers once and for all, break off their harmful power and thus prevent further misfortunes. Since time in memorial, there were already anti-witchcraft shrines in existence in Dagban where the accused persons were sent for ritual performance. This ritual performance would confirm whether the accused person possesses the witchcraft powers or not. If the accused person is guilty, some rituals would be performed by the earth priest of the shrine to remove the witchcraft powers and to make the accused person clean. These anti-witchcraft shrines are still in existence in the Northern Region of Ghana especially in the Dagbamba traditional area.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Witchcraft as a topic is vividly discussed in different public places such as the media, bus stops, waiting rooms, churches, mosques, markets, and on public transport. To scholars like Mahama (2004), Nukunya (2003), Otabil (1998), Igwe (2004), Igwe (2016), Sarpong (2006), Evans-Pritchard (1976), Kirby (2004), Wyllie (1973), Debrunner (1978), Nangpaak (2007), Amponsah (1975), Onyinah (2002), Okon

(2012), Kindness (1996), Leiden (1975) and Quarmyne (2011), witchcraft is believed to exist in all ethnic groups within the African continent and beyond.

Witchcraft has been viewed differently by many people because of the different cultural backgrounds and lack of documentation of oral traditions. It is high time we focus much of our research works on the oral traditions particularly on witchcraft in order to educate the general public, more especially the upcoming generations on the caliber of people they should be subjecting to witchcraft accusations. Women and children are always accused of being witches which leads to all sort of social vices against the accused persons in our communities. The target group of witchcraft accusation is women especially the old aged who lack the necessary social security and legal awareness to demand and insist on their right to liberty and dignity.

When a woman is accused of being a witch in a given community (especially in Northern Ghana), she is threatened to be punished unless she confesses her misdeeds. Mostly, women in particular are accused when unfortunate incidents begin to plague their families, friends or even neighborhood, (Bekoe, 2016). Somebody may not possess the witchcraft powers but per the attitude of the person towards others, he/she may be subjected to witchcraft accusations in Dagbamba society. Kindness (1996) observes that witches are said to be involved in many heinous crimes but the one definitive act of witchcraft is killing.

The creation of ill-health is only one among a whole array of evil deeds which include responsibility for almost all the deaths in Dagbani, marriage failures, job losses, accidents and bad luck in general. Witches are believed to be invisible when they undertake their practices. They are also believed to turn into animals at night such as *jan̄kuno* ‘_cat’, *baa* ‘_dog’, *nahu* ‘_cow’, *wahu* ‘_snake’ *buŋa* ‘_donkey’ or may also

appear physically as a human with clear identity to attack people. This is the typical depiction of witches in Dagbani.

Over the years, the Dagbani oral tradition has received less or no attention from researchers. Since the Dagbamba witchcraft is believed to be attached to spirituality, many researchers did not want to investigate it. Most researchers including Hudu (2012), Fusheini (2013), Olawsky (1999), Issah (2013) and Dawuni (1993) have devoted time to their areas of interest like Dagbani Phonetics, Phonology, Morphology, Semantics and Syntax. Not much has been done in the traditional aspect of Dagbani literature. Other researchers such as Abdulai (2014 and 2008), Abdallah and Adam (2015), Abdallah (2012; 2015a and 2015b) and many others based their research on aspects such as dirges, proverbs, folktales and other cultural related topics in the language but were silent on witchcraft and the concept of exorcism which has been a common topic for discussion in the Ghanaian media and within Sub-Saharan African continent at large.

Generally, the Dagbamba witchcraft is understudied as compared to witchcraft in other languages. Even though there are anti-witchcraft shrines and witch camps which have existed for years and even centuries in the Dagbamba society, they are not given wider public attention by researchers. To the best of my knowledge, researchers like Musah (2013), Bekoe (2016), Igwe (2016), Mahama (2004) and the Research Department of NCCE (2010) did their research in this field. But because they focused much of their research on the economic lives and other human rights related issues of the alleged witches in the camps and even failed to give a detail account on how the alleged witches and wizards are exorcised after sending them to these camps, people keep on questioning the credibility of these anti-witchcraft shrines. Also, people doubt the reliability of the alleged witches after they have gone through the exorcism ritual

process. They keep on asking questions on whether the powers possessed by the accused persons can be removed and render them powerless and also want to know the process involved in this ritual performance. This indeed is seen as a gap which needs to be filled.

Sulemana (2015) in his research discussed the witchcraft in Dagbaŋ but not into details. He also failed to talk about how the exorcism rituals are performed in the Dagbamba society. It is against this background that this research seeks to bridge the gap by investigating into the Dagbamba witchcraft and the concept of exorcism.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to examine how witchcraft is perceived and understood by the Dagbamba. The researcher intends to do a detailed research on the acquisition of witchcraft powers, witchcraft activities, witchcraft accusations, witchcraft substance, types of witchcraft, the characteristics of witches, the factors or reasons for witchcraft beliefs in Dagbaŋ, how witchcraft powers are exorcised and the protection against witchcraft in Dagbaŋ.

1.4 Objectives of the Research

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To find out how witchcraft is perceived and understood by the Dagbamba.
2. To examine the mode of acquisition of witchcraft among the Dagbamba.
3. To identify the characteristics of witches in the Dagbamba society.
4. To examine how witches are exorcised in Dagbaŋ.

1.5 Research Questions

The following questions have been formulated to guide this study:

1. How is witchcraft perceived and understood by the Dagbamba?

2. What are the modes of acquisition of witchcraft in Dagbanj?
3. What are the characteristics of a witch in the Dagbamba society?
4. What are the processes involved in witchcraft exorcism in the Dagbamba society?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are going to be significant in the following ways:

The results from this study will be added to the little existing literature on witchcraft which will intend help to educate the general public on how witchcraft is perceived and understood by the Dagbamba.

It would also educate the general public on how witchcraft powers are acquired and how the alleged witches are exorcised in the Dagbamba society. This will therefore help the general public to build a level of control over their behaviour towards those perceived to be witches and wizards so as to foster peace and unity in our communities.

Finally, the findings of this research will serve as a guide and reference material for other researchers who are interested in researching into related topics which will go a long way to enhance development of Dagbani Literature.

1.7 Limitation

There were some significant problems that the researcher encountered during this research which had the tendency of affecting the results of the study. The traditional authority of the Tindanze camp was represented by the caretaker who assumed the role of the earth priest of the camp following the death of the *Tindana* for the past eight years. It was difficult getting access to the acting earth priest of the camp and some of the opinion leaders in the community to respond to the interview since it was a harvesting period.

There was also a chieftaincy friction between the Kpatinga Lana (chief of Kpatinga) and some members of the Kpatinga community where about three rooms in the chief palace were burnt down by some aggressive community members as at the time the data collection was on process. This made it difficult for the researcher to get access to the chief to respond to the interview even though he was one of the key respondents for this research. Inaccessibility of the target groups to administer interview questions affected the gathering of the data.

Most of the respondents especially the alleged witches were not able to provide their date of birth and rather quoting some past events to mark the year of their birth as they were told by their parents. This had given the researcher a laborious task to make enquiries on the years such events happened. Some of the respondents were not also ready to open up to respond to the interview questions due to fear of been harmed by the evil spirit and also for some security reasons. The researcher was not allowed by the witch camp authorities to take photographs of some of the activities in the camp. There is also a probability that respondents provided false information with the use of this instrument which might have affected the reliability of the results.

1.8 Delimitations of the Study

This thesis has its population delimitation in three selected communities in the Gushegu District comprising Kpatinga, Gaa, and Sampimo. The main focus of the research was centered on Tindanze Yili, a witch camp located at Kpatinga in the Gushegu District of the Northern Region of Ghana. However, a brief comparison was made with other three camps located at Gambaga in the East Mamprusi District, Gnani in the Yendi Municipality and Bonyasi in the Central Gonja District all in the Northern Region of Ghana.

To obtain primary information, the researcher visited the Tindanze witch camp which is located at Kpatinga, a farming community in the Gushegu District. Kpatinga is remotely located and it is about seventy five miles away from the Northern Regional capital, Tamale. To visit the village, I found it more convenient to use a motor bike than to use a commercial vehicle due to the deplorable state of the road network linking the Northern Regional Capital to the Kpatinga community. This make it very difficult to get a car to the community. The Tindanze witch camp is a segregated community which comprises people of different cultural backgrounds and religious denominations.

The camp has been in existence for centuries but not much has been documented about its existence. The caretaker was not able to quote years during the interview session when he was asked about the history of the camp and rather quoted events in the past to back his submission. This heckled the researcher in his attempt to do a historical analysis of the study.

According to the caretaker who also acts as the earth priest of the camp, it is difficult to give the exact background of the Tindanze camp since there is no historical document backing it. The camp was not given public focus until recent times. He noted that, the camp was founded by his forefather who was believe to be deserted by his people due to some family friction. He noted that, the camp was founded to protect and provide shelter to the alleged witches and rejected people who were banished from their communities. According to the earth priest, between 1992 and 1994, the camp was housing a total of two hundred and twenty two residents but during the Guinea fowl war between the Nanumbas and the Konkombas in 1994, the Kpatinga community was burnt down and they lost the camp record book. The camp

was rebuilt by World Vision International, a faith based NGO in Ghana and it has about forty round huts which accommodate a total of forty five residents.

The researcher selected these study sites because the data for the study can easily be collected from these communities. These communities were purposefully and conveniently selected because it was the convenient areas that the researcher could readily establish contact with the chiefs, opinion leaders, the earth priest and the alleged witches to collect data so as to effectively undertake the research. Another reason that motivated the choice of these research sites had to do with accessibility. I found it less difficult in accessing the target groups, because I used the purposive sampling technique.

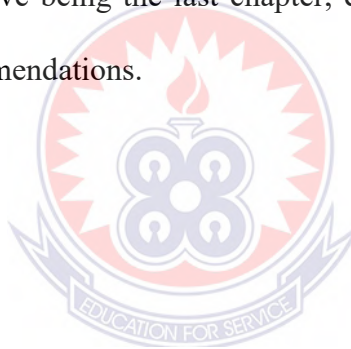
Figure 1.2 below shows the location of the Gushegu District in Ghana.



Source: Wikipedia Contributors

1.9 Organisation of the rest of the Study

The study is organized into five (5) chapters. Chapter One of this thesis includes the General Introduction, Background of the Study, Statement of the problem, Purpose of the Study, Research Objectives, Research Questions, Significance of the Study, Limitations as well as the Delimitations of the study. Chapter Two deals with the Review of Related Literature. Chapter Three describes the Research Methodology. It covers issues such as the Research Design, The Research Approach, Population, Sample, Sampling Techniques, Data Collection Techniques, Instruments, Data Collection Procedures and Data Presentation and Analysis Methods. Chapter Four presents the Results and Discussion of the Findings of the Study. Chapter Five being the last chapter, covers the Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the theoretical frameworks and recent studies that have been carried out in the field that may be relevant to this work. There is quite a big number of literature addressing the topic of witchcraft. Some of such studies will be reviewed below in order to give a brief overview of the works previously carried out on this topic and to provide a contextual background against which to place the current study. The themes to be discussed in this chapter will be under the following sub headings.

- Vulnerability theory,
- Stigma theory,
- what witchcraft is,
- witchcraft substance,
- witchcraft accusation,
- types of witches,
- detecting witches,
- witchcraft acquisition,
- witchcraft activities,
- magic, sorcery and witchcraft,
- witchcraft exorcism,
- training in exorcism,
- protection against witches
- the advantages of witchcraft beliefs and
- the effects of belief in witchcraft.



2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Vulnerability Theory

Decades of research have yielded various theoretical conceptualizations of witchcraft offering explanations across political and cultural spheres. One of such theories is Martha Fineman's vulnerability theory. The theory contends that vulnerability is inherent to the human condition, and that governments therefore have a responsibility to respond affirmatively to that vulnerability by ensuring that all people have equal access to the societal institutions that distribute resources (Kohn, 2014). The origin of this word lies in the Latin *vulnus*, meaning 'a wound', and *vulnerare*, 'to wound'. Specifically, the word vulnerable derives from the Late Latin *vulnerabilis*, and this is enlightening. *Vulnerabilis* was the term used by the Romans to describe the state of a soldier lying wounded on the battlefield, i.e., already injured therefore at risk from further attack (Kelly and Adger, 2000). The vulnerability or security of any group is determined by resource availability and by the entitlement of individuals and groups to call on these resources.

Vulnerability is a silent social disease in African societies. Many societies live with it and do not take firm and sustainable actions to face it until the consequences erupt in violent and dramatic forms. The conventional factors that make an individual vulnerable as indicated by Nagle and Owasanoye (2016) include lack of education, discrimination, poverty, political instability, conflict, and displacement. But for a careful observation of what *triggers* those factors, one could observe that the fundamental human rights and civil rights to which a person is entitled may be weak or absent entirely.

Witches are vulnerable people in the Dagbamba society due to the perception people have about them. They are implicated to all forms of misfortunes which make

them fear and wish to be eliminated. People use anxiety dreams and suspicion as their bases of evidence to accuse others of witchcraft. This form of accusation always calls for instant justice where the victim's fundamental human rights are abused. Perceived witches in Dagbamba society are mostly old women and widows who are not strong enough to protect themselves when they accused them as witches. Witchcraft accusations are usually accompanied with various forms of physical abuses, molestations, emotional tortures and as well as lynching. Witches are always at risk when any form of calamity befalls their communities and neighborhood.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Second Assessment Report cited in Kelly and Adger (2000) indicates that, vulnerability defines 'the extent to which climate change may damage or harm a system; it depends not only on a system's sensitivity but also on its ability to adapt to new climatic conditions'. Sensitivity, in this context, is 'the degree to which a system will respond to a change in climatic conditions'. From this perspective, the definition of vulnerability must be contingent on estimates of the potential climate change and adaptive responses. In the context of witchcraft, people accused of witchcraft are mostly banished from their respective communities and are forced to take refuge in the witch camps in order to save their lives. This change of environment affects the accused persons physically and psychologically. They find it difficult to associate themselves with members of the host communities which intend make them feel lonely and isolated.

This theory is attractive not only because it helps explain the basis for broad social welfare policies, but also because it suggests that vulnerability can replace group identity (e.g., race, gender, poverty) as a basis for targeting social policy. Specifically, it argues that vulnerability theory provides a helpful framework for understanding social responsibility and the role of the state.

2.1.2 Stigma Theory

Stigma theory was propounded by Ervin Goffman (1963). Stigma is viewed as ‘a mark that is deeply discrediting’ and identified the role of social interaction in stigma, including the acquisition of negative labels and the process of stereotyping (Goffman, 1963). Knifton and Quinn (2014) suggest that stigma persists across societies because it serves to reinforce social order and solidarity among the ‘insider’ majority.

Witchcraft related stigma exists across cultures, creating social exclusion within families and communities and discrimination in all community related activities. Across African continent and beyond, witches are viewed negatively by many people which make them face attitudinal barriers including prejudice, stereotypes, and low expectations. These negative attitudes and inaccurate beliefs towards witches can result in stigma. Due to the perceptions that community members have about witches, they always find it difficult to reintegrate with their families after their accusations. Knifton and Quinn (2014) notes that stigma can lead to delay help-seeking, rejection and shame. People can be alienated by their families, who fear the person is bewitched or under the influence of spirits. Within communities, people can be seen as dangerous or evil, and traditional beliefs can reinforce stigma by viewing them as deserving punishment for wrongdoing.

In view of Rohwerder (2018) stigma refers to attitudes and beliefs that lead people to reject, avoid, or fear those they perceive as being different. Musah (2013) applauded Ervin Goffman (1963) for the development of the stigma theory. He ‘inspired a profusion of research on the nature, sources, and consequences of stigma’. Goffman (1963) posits that, the Greeks, who were apparently strong on visual aids, originated the term stigma to refer to bodily signs designed to expose something

unusual and bad about the moral status of the signifier. The signs were cut or burnt into the body and advertised that the bearer was a slave, a criminal, or a traitor a blemished person, ritually polluted, to be avoided, especially in public places.

Musah (2013) citing Westbrook, Bauman and Shinnar (1992: 633-634) indicates that, a stigma is used to refer to an attribute that is deeply discrediting and a stigmatized person is described as a person who possesses an attribute that others see as negative, unfavorable, or in some instances unacceptable. Rohwerder (2018) citing Scior (2016: 5) and Mostert (2016: 6-8) notes that stigma arises when elements of labelling, stereotyping (negative evaluation of a label), and prejudice (endorsement of the negative stereotypes) combine to lead to status loss and discrimination for the stigmatised individual or group, and occur in situations where they are disempowered. Stigma elicits negative responses such as pity, anxiety, avoidance, hostility, and even hatred and disgust. Musah (2013: 9) citing Goffman (1963) identifies three types of stigma. These are stigma of character traits, physical stigma/abominations of the body and the stigma of group identity/tribal stigma of race, nation, and religion.

Musah (2013) relates stigmatization to the exercise of power by citing Gilmore and Somerville (1994: 1342). According to him, stigmatization is an exercise of power over those stigmatized and a manifestation of utter disrespect for them. Stigmatized people are devalued and people who are devalued are more likely to suffer further stigmatization. He observes that people accused of witchcraft fear or suffer from different forms of stigmatization. This fear partly arises out of the powerlessness of accused witches and wizards. He argues that one of the long term effects of accusing and labeling people as witches and wizards is the loss of social status. Their powerlessness may partly be seen from their inability to have control over their lives and over the accusations. Thus, once they are labeled and stigmatized,

they may grudgingly and resignedly accept their circumstances. They are likely to remain at that lower ebb of society, as those who possess enormous powers may continuously work against them in order to maximize the utility that comes with power.

Goffman (1963) stigma theory was adopted because a stigma can result in a loss of liberty, which in some cases leads to accused witches being hidden or locked away for many years by their families. The rights of the alleged witches are often abused. There is also exclusion from the family itself, where people accused of being witches could be made to eat separately or even shunned by their families. Relationships suffer, where people are seen as been a burden by their parents or siblings or as inadequate partners. Witches are shunned due to beliefs that they are dangerous and this belief is apparent in Ghanaian rural communities. They are being taunted and made fun of and excluded from a range of activities including communal activities. In addition, communities are often instrumental in making it known that witches are not a suitable marriage partners.

2.2 What Witchcraft is

Witchcraft is viewed differently by different scholars depending on the cultural background of the person or researcher. For instance, in Van Wyk (2004) the term “witchcraft” is used to describe the magical activities of a variety of people that in various ways and through various methods, harm others in one way or the other. Such people are seen to possess some spiritual powers which they employ in their activities.

Van Wyk (2004) description of “witchcraft” may be quite debatable and may also be seen as culturally specific because of the varying beliefs and practices among different communities within Africa. Although, this definition is the common way of

describing “witchcraft” in most African communities, it falls short on how the Dagbamba perceived witchcraft to be. The Dagbamba perception about witchcraft is exceptional. They have a common belief that, the word “witchcraft” can be analyzed in different angles. It can be analyzed in terms of spirituality and can also be analyzed based on a person’s behaviour or character in a society. Based on this, I argue that “witchcraft” is not only about using magical or spiritual powers to harm others. The unacceptable/negative behaviour of a person can also lead to witchcraft.

Ally (2015) categorizes witchcraft into three types. The first type of witchcraft refers to the capacity of some individuals to manipulate objects in nature as well as through spiritual incantations, charms and spells to harm others. Ally (2015:28) citing Lerner (1974) informs us that this form of witchcraft is released through powers activated by hatred. Interpersonal quarrels, jealousy at the success of others, and even beauty may thus be motivating factors to harm another person (Evans-Pritchard, 1937; Fortes, 1953) cited in Ally (ibid).

The second type of witchcraft is steeped in a religious tradition where a pact is taken with the Devil or Satan, a Christian fallen angel associated with evil. Here, witches, the users of witchcraft, are believed to engage in spiritual sexual relations with the Devil in exchange for supernatural powers, which they use to harm their enemies (Heinemann, 2000; Parrinder, 1963) cited in Ally (ibid).

According to Levack (1995) cited in Ally (ibid) the third type of witchcraft, very similar to the first is reflective of a community of evil doers. In this community, witches share common goals, assist each other in harming enemies and even combine forces to harm others. Implicit to the third type of witchcraft is that witches form a cult and can teach their children the art of witchcraft and its magic (Briggs, 2002) cited in Ally (2015).

This relate to how the Dagbamba perceived witchcraft to be. The Dagbamba believe that witches have the same ideology. They believed to intentionally break the norms of the society in which they live in order to increase their evil powers. Witches are believed to operate singly and can also operate in groups to harm their enemies. For instance, when an enemy is noted to be spiritually stronger than the witch herself, she may seek support from other witches. Through this, the witches can combine forces to harm the person.

According to Harrop (2012) some people argues that such spiritual beliefs of witchcraft are strongest among the poorest communities. Harrop (2012) citing the September 2012 report by Action Aid (Ghana) comments that ~~it~~ is no coincidence that the witch camps are found only in northern Ghana, which is one of the poorest regions of the country and suffers from low education and literacy standards”.

Even if this assumption holds true for some researchers, it does not mean that believed in spirituality does not exist in the wealthy areas. It has been proven through research that spiritual beliefs are part and parcel of every ethnic group within the African continent. For instance, Otabil (1996) establishes that, many people in West Africa including the educated elite strongly believed the reality of witchcraft. He identified the factors or the reasons for witchcraft belief in Africa to include: anxiety dreams, problems of modern life, damaging effect of tropical diseases, kinship stresses, lack of knowledge in scientific agriculture, neurosis/psychological/mental problems, antagonism of sexes, negative newspaper publications and activities of anti-witchcraft groups.

Since death and misfortunes do not only occur in the poor areas and witchcraft is believed to be triggered and acted behind the scenes, one can argue that, the belief in spirituality is also strong in the wealthy areas. Believed in spirituality is solely

based on one's level of faith. There are people in the wealthy areas who strongly believed in spirituality even more than those in the poor areas. Many Ghanaians, both educated and non-educated persons have dual membership of religions because of their belief in spiritual works. Many people hold the African traditional religion firmly in one hand and also practice either Christianity or Islam in addition.

2.3 Witchcraft Substance

The substance of witchcraft has to do with the objects or items that witches use or harbour in to be able to undertake their nocturnal activities without being seen or recognized. Onyinah (2002) maintain that even though witchcraft has been considered as a nocturnal act among the Akan, it has a well-structured concept with its byelaws. Onyinah (2002) and Sarpong (2006) have similar assertion about witches and the witchcraft substance. In their view, they believed that a witch is supposed to possess witchcraft object which Onyinah describes to be pots, calabashes, or any form of container with a mixture of many items including human blood, beans, kola nuts, human hair and herbs which are believed to be kept in places where the ordinary eye cannot see it.

Once a person acquires the witchcraft substance, the hidden place of that substances is not arguable. This would depend on the instruction of the witch master from whom the individual acquired the powers. Some of these substances are hidden within the spirit of the alleged person which is considered as the drive of mankind. Onyinah (2002) reveals that, these objects can be hidden in the alleged victim's room, on a farm, by a river or under a river, under a hearth, in a dunghill, anthill or just outside one's house. A person is expected to show where the witchcraft object is when one is accused of witchcraft. These objects are expected to be brought out and burnt after the person has confessed that she is a witch and narrated her wrong doings.

Sarpong (2004) considers witchcraft substance to be anything. According to him witchcraft substance can be in the form of pot or a bead or part of the human body. In some places, as the culture varies, it is supposed to be a little particle of body attached to the liver. For instance in the Tiv society of Nigeria, witchcraft substance is believed to grow within the heart of people. Witchcraft substance can be within the person, it can be outside the person, it can be in the house, under the pillow, or far away from the house, in the form of something like an animal or an insect. As a result of the fact that witches make use of substances, Sarpong (2004) indicates that, the possession of a witchcraft substance makes somebody a witch. So by his definition, he describes a witch to be somebody who possesses a witchcraft substance.

This definition has a certain superficial logic, but on closer examination, it does not cover whom the Dagbamba witch is. In the Dagbamba society, it is not always the case that an accused person should possess a witchcraft substance. To the Dagbamba locals, there can be a witch without a witchcraft object. For instance, a person's behaviour in a society can subject her to witchcraft accusation. Among the Dagbamba, witchcraft substance *'sotim'* as it is known by the locals, goes beyond how Onyinah (2002) and Sarpong (2006) perceived it to be. The substance can be anything that is harmful to the human body.

Sambel, Avanger and Abanyam (2014) describes witchcraft as a substance that grows in the heart of people or somewhere within the chest. It also grows in the heart of some animals and can be biologically transmitted by birth. According to them, in the Tiv society, if a person dies and is suspected to be a witch, the chest is cut open to ascertain whether he or she possesses witchcraft substance or not. A person without witchcraft substance in the chest is described as a person with "an empty chest" while a person who has witchcraft substance in the heart is seen as one with a

‘malevolent chest.’ Through this angle, witchcraft could be defined as supernatural power that enables some people to harm others, kill them, or cause misfortune to them by ensnaring their spirit and harming it which reflects physically on the victim.

The practices carried out by the Tivs to determine whether a person possesses the witchcraft powers or not appeared strange as it is not practice in the Dagbamba society. The Dagbamba also have a different way of determining whether a person have the witchcraft powers or not and this can be done through ritual performance. The rituals can only be done when the suspect is still alive but not after the death of suspect as it is in the Tiv society. The rituals can be done in a shrine by the traditional priest or through the use of verses in the Holy Qur’an by some Mallams.

2.4 Witchcraft Accusation

Otabil (1998) argues that people who are accused as witches are usually those in a state of enmity with the victim. They include old women, in-laws, sisters, co-wives and family members. Certain characters of a person can lead to suspicion in some communities. People who are inquisitive, quarrelsome, greedy, selfish, envious or people perceived as being very wicked are accused as witches.

There is some credibility in Otabil’s argument in the sense that, in some cultural groups, not all the accused persons are considered to have witchcraft in their possession as people perceived them to be. Sometimes people may have powers which may not necessarily be witchcraft but powers that have descended direct from God to the perceived witches. Those people who receive their powers direct from God are seen to be naturally born witches. These categories of people are always innocent when they levelled witchcraft against them.

Naturally born witches do not normally use their powers to cause harm in society. They rather expose those who cause harm to others in society. They mostly

protect the humankind or the vulnerable in society. They normally support community rulers to rule their people. In the African context, witches are believed to leave their bodies at night asleep while their ‘spirit’ is at work. Some of the alleged witches are believed to leave their bodies in the house and use other people’s body or skin to cover themselves when carrying out their operations.

According to Awedoba (2005) unusual physical characteristics may lead to suspicion. The physical features such as reddish eyes, deformation of limb and allied may fuel suspicion. The toothless old woman who has no children may be a candidate of witchcraft suspicion. This is true about the Dagbamba witchcraft. A woman growing a beard is vulnerable in Dagbamba society. Again, an extraordinary physical beauty or extreme ugliness in an individual may sometimes also prompt suspicion.

Quarmyne (2011) have similar assertion as Awedoba (2005). He notes that those typically thought to be witches are middle-aged or elderly individuals, particularly those who are in poor health. Of this, elderly women are said to be more susceptible to accusations because of their particular physical features, such as drooping breasts, eyes that are yellow or red, wrinkled skin, missing teeth, and a hunched stance.

Quarmyne (2011) observation appears to suggest that, the physical features of a person are not a strong evidence to identify her as a witch. Somebody may be physically unfit due to poor health condition such as malnutrition and other medical or psychological related issues. The issue of using physical appearance in victimizing a person as a witch reflects the mentality most Dagbamba have about witches. In the Northern part of Ghana, some women especially the old age who are handicapped in their communities are sometimes falsely accused of being witches due to their physical appearance. For instance, the National Conference on Witchcraft

Accusations in Ghana (NCWAG) (2014) report makes it clear that victims of witchcraft accusations are poor and vulnerable old women who lack the necessary social security and legal awareness to demand and insist on their right to liberty and dignity.

It is the poor people, the old people and the beggarly people who are often accused because, as socially handicapped people, they are naturally regarded as wicked members who are capable of bringing mishap upon the society through witchcraft, (Omoyajowo, 1965:11). These categories of people are often deserted by their families and are subjected to all kinds of physical abuse when misfortune occurs to any member within the family and the community. Their fundamental human rights are totally denied. No one is ready to support them whenever any form of allegation is laid against them, whether good or bad.

From Evans-Pritchard (1937) one can deduce that witchcraft accusation cannot take place without a reason. Evans-Pritchard (1937) and Otabil (1998) have similar believe on the motivational factors of witchcraft accusation. Both Evans-Pritchard (1937) and Otabil (1998) posits that witchcraft accusation is motivated by jealousy, hatred, envy as well as fear. Nukunya (2003) adds that these are also caused by the necessity to account for unexpected or undeserved incidences where it is not recognized that such misfortune can happen by chance or natural causes. Evans-Pritchard (1937) notes that witchcraft does not strike at random and before witchcraft accusation can come from someone, the supposed victim must have some relationship with the accused. The relationship may be kinship, neighborhood, friendship, colleagues or fellow students.

The perception of (Evans-Pritchard, 1937; Otabil, 1998; and Nukunya, 2003) about witchcraft accusation is not farfetched from what triggers witchcraft accusation

in Dagbaŋ. The Dagbamba believe that, witchcraft activities can only be carried out within one's family. This means that, before a witch can harm a person, the victim must have a blood relation with the witch. Witches in Dagbamba society believed not to harm those outside their families. A witch can only bewitch a person outside her family if only she joined forces with somebody within the victim's family.

2.5 Types of Witches

Nukunya (2003) indicates that witches are people, male and female, who are believed to possess inherent supernatural powers which they use (knowingly or otherwise) to harm others or to benefit themselves. The assertion of Nukunya's means that there are types of witches that can be categorized as good and bad witches. Many people purchase the witchcraft substance with good intention while others purchase it for negative reasons. Witchcraft substances work through the directions of the possessor. Some people go in for the substance with the intention of protecting their business, children and also to get a good harvest while others used it to harm and to destroy other people's properties. What differentiates Nukunya's work from Dagbamba witchcraft is where he classified men to be witches. Men are wizards and wizards are believed to possess powers that can be used to save lives of people when witches attempt to harm them in their presence.

An alternative view about witches is put forward by Sarpong (2004) who argues that there are no good witches. He describes witches in two forms, the best and the worst. At best, a witch is described as a selfish person who wants everything for him or herself or for those he or she loves. At worst, a witch is described as a cannibalistic brutal person who feeds on human beings. This belief does not reflect how the Dagbamba perceive witches to be. Some people purchase the powers with the

intention of protecting their business and children so that no any other witch can harm them.

Mahama (2004) sees men not to be witches, only women are witches. Men may be wizards but since they do not catch and eat human beings, there is nothing evil about them, there is rather something good about them; they save the lives of people when witches attempt to catch them in their presence. In view of this, Awedoba (2005) agrees with Mahama (2004) to some extent but he however disagrees with him when Mahama branded only women to be witches.

According to Awedoba (2005), the English word witch usually refers to females and this has negative connotations, while the opposite term wizard characterizes males and often has positive connotations; however in African societies witches can be of either sex. Awedoba (2005) citing Colson (2000: 336) indicates that among the Tongo people of Zambia, it is more often men rather than women who are accused of practicing the most dangerous witchcraft and it is not unusual for young men to accuse their own fathers as witches.

Nadel (1952) also disagrees with Mahama (2004) by arguing that, the men fit into this pattern in an ambiguous way. Certain men are said to possess a power similar to witchcraft, which enables them to see and deal with witches. This power is essentially good; so that the men possessed of it can control and combat the women witches. In view of the Dagbamba locals, female witches need the co-operation of the men, for only when the female and the male powers are joined does female witchcraft become fully effective. Nadel (1952) develops this argument further by stating that, the men are said to use their powers not to assist, but to restrain the female witches, by withholding the required aid.

The ambiguity Nadel (1952) talks about then lies in this. Men are necessary for the fullest effect of witchcraft; but as a class, they also stand aloof and are not themselves evil; rather do they attempt to block evil witchcraft. Even so, the fatal effects of female witchcraft are admitted to occur; in which case Nadel (1952) states that a few evil individuals among the men have betrayed their own sex and become the helpers of women witches.

Mahama (2004) posits that, it is usually old women who are believed to be witches. Old women of fair complexion easily become candidates for witchcraft. It is unusual for young women to be witches. In view of this, Van Wyk (2004) agrees with Mahama (2004) by stating that witches are mainly old women who harm people for no good reason, without being aware of what they are doing. This reflects the perception people have about the Dagbamba witches. They believe that witches harm their enemies without a reason. Awedoba (2005) however debunked the notion of Mahama (2004) and Van Wyk (2004).

Awedoba (2005) indicates that, a witch may be young or old and babies have been known to be accused. Awedoba further develops his argument by citing Wendy James (1979: 117). According to him, the Uduk people believe that anyone born a twin is a witch. Awedoba notes that, to give birth to twins in Uduk society is sign to the woman that she has been contaminated by witchcraft. Very often one child is disposed of so that people will not know of the monstrosity. According to him, in the past, both children and the mother too, were killed in order to eliminate the evil. The witchcraft mentality in Uduk society does not conformed to that of the Dagbamba beliefs. Giving birth to twins in the Dagbamba society is considered as a blessing from God and not a curse.

According to Quarmyne (2011) a witch can be described as “a person with an incorrigible, conscious tendency to kill or disable others by magical means,” or as someone “who secretly uses supernatural powers for nefarious purposes”. Quarmyne (2011) view about witches indicates that, all witches possess witchcraft powers which they used for negative purposes.

Quarmyne (2011) definition of witches is not in line with the Dagbamba perception about witches. Among the Dagbamba, not only those who possesses the witchcraft powers are considered as witches. Somebody may not have the witchcraft powers but through the behaviour or the skills portrayed by the person in a society may lead to suspicion. For instance, a child excellent performance in school may lead to suspicion. Again, if somebody is wealthy without people knowing the source of his or her wealth, they may start gossiping about the person.

Manala (2004) posits that, there are two categories of witches, namely *day witches* and *night witches*. According to Manala, a “day witch” is any ordinary individual who acquires the ability to use evil magic powers or spells from some expert, with which ability he/she tries to kill her identified prey, with or without cause. Day witchcraft can therefore be acquired by buying it from someone who practices that kind of witchcraft. Day witches therefore learn the practice of witchcraft. According to Kgatla (2000) cited in Manala (2004), “day witches” are so resolute to commit acts of witchcraft that they can only be deterred or stopped by being put to death.

A “night witch” on the other hand is one who is able to perform her evil activities without the aid of magical potions. They are said to be mostly women who walk naked at night, even during the coldest of nights. Night witches are feared, especially because they can enter closed huts, work during the night and make use of

animals and entities such as hyenas, dogs, cats, owls, snakes, lightening, birds and so forth, to carry out their evil deeds (Manala, 2004). Night witches are also believed to be able to cause infertility and to turn people into zombies and so forth.

The submission made by Manala (2004) is in line with the perception the Dagbamba have about witches. The only difference is that, the Dagbamba does not categorize witches into ‘day and night’ witches. But on close examination based on characteristics, the Dagbamba witches have similar characteristics with both day and night witches as indicated by Manala (2004)

Wehmeier and Ashby (2000:1390) describe a zombie as perceived in Africa, as “a dead body that has been made alive again by magic.” The death of such a person is usually believed to be caused deliberately by evil magical means for a specific purpose. Kgatla (2000) cited in Manala (2004) therefore describes a zombie as “a human being who has been killed and his/her soul turned into a slave for the witch.” Some of these people are said to be seen in trains in industrial areas where they are said to work for the sustenance and livelihood of their witch masters. Therefore, night witches are said to be extremely fearsome and dangerous to the community.

The Dagbamba also believe in the existence of zombies. These creatures are known as *Kpiinyi/Kɔyibe* which literary means a dead body that has been brought back to life by a supernatural force. There are two ways people believed to become zombies in the Dagbamba society and these are; through the evil deeds of witches and by purchasing the zombie juju. People who became zombies through the evil deeds of witches are believed to die prematurely. Such people may die through accident or sickness and because their death is believed not to be natural, they would not be welcome in the unseen world by their ancestors. Therefore, they would be forced to return as zombies. This normally happens when witches want to punish the deceased.

The deceased would be put into coma so that he or she would be buried. After the burial, the deceased spirit would be brought back to him or her. Through this, the deceased would return back to life as zombie.

Many people also believed to purchase the zombie juju with the intention of returning back to life after their death. No matter the age of the possessor, he or she would return to life after his or her death. The death of such people can be natural or artificial. People who possess zombie juju are believed to have a number of times they can die and return to life. The person can die about two or three times and after the third death, he or she cannot return to life again.

Igwe (2004) notes that, Africans make a distinction between negative and positive witchcraft. In many parts of Africa, the negative (harmful) witchcraft is associated with women and children. Men are said to possess the antidote, i.e. positive (or harmless) witchcraft. Hence, they are called witchdoctors. Witches and wizards are believed to operate at night as birds, rats, cats and insects. This submission reflect the mentality the Dagbamba also have about witches and wizards.

2.6 Detecting Witches

According to Debrunner (1978) a witch cannot be detected in daylight but there are certain signs supposed to be warnings that witchcraft is in the air. Debrunner highlights some key signs that an ordinary person including the commoners can use to detect that a person is a witch. One of these signs is when a woman has hair on her face. Even though the Dagbamba also use beard in branding women as witches but to me, this sign alone is not enough evidence to brand somebody as a witch. Debrunner (1978) further observes that, witches do not want people to talk about them in their presence. They do not like to hear the word ‘_witch’ mentioned before them at all. If

they hear this, it may force them to repudiate the whole cult and to begin to reveal secrets.

Another sign mentioned by Debrunner (1978) is dreams. He indicates that witches may also be detected through dreams. Debrunner's focus here is on bad dreams as many people associate bad dreams to spirituality. Dream is one of the basis of witchcraft accusation in the Dagbamba society. Dagbamba always attribute bad dreams to witchcraft. This supported the assertion of Debrunner (1978). Debrunner notes that, dream of being persecuted by a cow, a wild animal or a white person, means that there is a witch after you and there is a little trick to find out if this is so: it is believed that the eyes of the witches look a bit different in colour, and that some can see from the back of their heels (Debrunner, 1978:100). Experts in detecting witches believed that if you apply sand or some specially prepared black powder to the back of the heels of such person, if they really are witches, their eyes would at once begin to glow.

Another sign outlined by Debrunner (1978) is that witches are believed to walk spiritually on their heads, and their eyes are at the back of their heels. These believe is common across many cultural groups in Africa. Some people blow dust at the heels of people when they suspect them to be witches, and if they really are practicing witchcraft, they will try to clean their eyes. The last point Debrunner talks about is by using guinea pepper. You may light fire under the tree where the witches habitually meet, and you put the pepper into the fire. If there is a witch on the tree and the smell entangles her, she cannot fly away and will be found on the tree in the morning.

Chireshe, Chireshe and Shumba (2012) identifies three most commonly use methods of detecting witches in Zimbabwe which include divination either by spirit

possession, the throwing of bones and the poison ordeal. A diviner may identify a witch under the influence of the divining in him or her. Throwing of bones is done by a diviner as a way of identifying a witch or witches. The direction in which the bone falls to the ground indicates to the diviner who the witch is. The poison ordeal is administered on an alleged witch. If a person to whom the poison is administered vomits the poison, she is believed to be innocent but if she retains the poison, she is defined as a witch.

No one ever admits to being a witch; witchcraft accusations ~~are~~ based on mere suspicion, rumor, or gossip” that circulates within the community. When misfortunes are experienced, traditional healers and diviners are often sought to determine and explain whether the source of the misfortune was witchcraft. The belief is that diviners can smell out a witch because ~~witches~~ carry a terrible smell that diviners can detect” (Quarmyne, 2011:480).

This form of detective measure is also practice by the Kasena people in the Upper East Region of Ghana. Howell (2004) postulates that when someone suffers a death viewed as unnatural in the Kasena society, the cause is sometimes determined by ‘carrying‘ the dead person’s mat before the burial to determine who has caused the death. On some occasions, the mat will identify a witch or some witches who caught the person’s soul. The men then take the mat into a room so that the burial can begin. The men who carried the mat are then taken to the earth shrine where a fowl is sacrificed and they are given a horn to protect themselves from those the mat identified.

The accused person (s) may also come out and deny or confess to the general public about why he/she did it. This normally happens when the victim realizes that his or her life is in danger. This may be triggered by the spirit of the deceased

attacking the witch or the wizard through his/her dreams. Misfortune such as disease may also cause the alleged witch or wizard to confess his/her deeds to the public. If he/she wants to recover from the sickness or to be free from the demonic disturbances of the deceased spirit, then he/she has to confess.

The deceased person may also inform the family about whom he/she had a fight or a problem with either physically or through his dream before his/her death. When this incident happens, the family of the deceased would inform the community chief to call the accused person to interrogate her and passed his judgement.

Schapera (1952) drew our attention back to the olden days on how witchcraft cases were dealt with. According to Schapera (1952), when a person had died, fallen ill, or is afflicted with some other misfortune, a witchdoctor was invariably called to divine the cause. Sometimes the misfortune might be attributed directly to the action of God in which case nothing could be done. In other cases, it might be attributed to the action of the ancestral spirits because some norms might have been violated within the kinship group or the society at large.

In this case, the sick person would usually recover after the performance of a special cleansing ceremony to the ancestral spirit. It is very common, however, for the witchdoctor to attribute the misfortune to witchcraft. In such cases he would never directly mention any person by name as responsible, but would state the sex, totem, skin complexion, and the direction in which she usually came when bewitching people. If the people could from the description identify the sorcerer, they would normally hold an inquiry and try to obtain further evidence of his guilt. If satisfied that s/he was the culprit, they would report him/her to the chief, who alone had the power to prosecute and to punish witches. In such cases, the accused would be interrogated by the chief and if it was clear from the evidence that the accused was

guilty, the chief would order him/her to heal the patient, i.e. to remove the effects of the witchcraft so that the patient would recover. If s/he refused, he would be tortured until s/he consented.

Schapera (1952) emphatically puts it that, if the patient then recovered, the accused would be let off with a severe reprimand, although sometimes s/he might be also banished from the village or town to settle somewhere else. But if the patient died, or if was already dead when the case first came to court, the accused would be killed. Since the introduction of European rule, the chiefs no longer have the right to impose the death penalty.

According to Awedoba (2005) a witch can be identified through self-confessions in many societies. The witch may come forward to confess to being a witch and to having killed or harmed others. Identification of the witch can also be through the instrumentality of a witch-doctor or shrine. A witch might also be identified by other established or known witches in the community or people claiming clairvoyance.

Awedoba (2005) notes some behavioral characteristics that serve as a clue to witchcraft. According to him, witches are usually perceived to be greedy individuals; they are people who are said to love meat excessively. They are noted to make unnecessary requests and tend to bear grudges. Witches are also said not to be open or well-disposed to other people and they seem to have a reason for hating other people, especially people who are successful. The witch may also be perceived to be solitary and laconic but paradoxically those who are very garrulous may also be suspected. Inquisitive and nosey people may equally be suspected in some societies, especially when they have the tendency to interfere in other people's business. He further

established that people who constantly breach the norms of the society risk of being suspected to be witches.

Extraordinary success in life may also be attributed to witchcraft. Awedoba (2005) observes that, certain wealthy people such as market women and men derive their dubious wealth through sorcery is not dead in Ghanaian communities. Even the Tiv of Nigeria have similar perception about successful people in their communities. In Tiv society, a wealthy person is often suspected of being a witch, just as powerful chiefs in Northern Ghana are believed to have the support of witchcraft.

According to Mencej (2015) citing Hutton (2006) the characteristics of the witch throughout the world is somebody who uses apparently supernatural means to cause misfortune or injury to others; this person does harm to neighbors or kin, rather than strangers, and represents a threat to the community, and operates not for straightforward material gain but from envy or malice, and thus is either inherently evil or in the grip of inherent evil.

Witches are considered as wicked people and do not carry out their activities for material gains. Some witches use their powers profitably to benefit themselves while others use the powers for their own selfish gains. Some of them have the supernatural powers not necessarily because they want to use them to harm others but they rather use them to protect their children and their properties. The wicked ones use their powers not to harm other people alone but including their own biological children and those within their localities. Manala (2004) citing Kgatla (2000) lists the following basic beliefs regarding witches:

Firstly, a certain category of persons, especially women, have recognizable and particular signs that single them out to be identified as witches. These people may

bear physical stigma, such as red eyes, have a reserved personality, and be stingy or quarrelsome.

Secondly, certain misfortunes are ascribed to witches. These include natural calamities such as death, illness, drought or natural disaster. However, the context of the misfortune is always apparent.

Thirdly, witches turn against their own people and kinsmen; they do not harm strangers or people from far away.

Fourthly, they are driven by envy, malice or jealousy of individuals, rather than being in pursuit of material gain as such.

Fifthly, witches reverse all normal/acceptable standards. For instance, they eat their own children, dig up corpses, go naked at night, meet at particular spots to plan their evil deeds, and enjoy practicing their craft.

Witches are not only feared, but also hated because they make life unbearably difficult for individuals, families, communities and societies.

Sarpong (2004) came out with certain character traits of witches. According to him, witches are supposed to be very quarrelsome, sometimes they are supposed to walk on their heads, sometimes women who have beards are supposed to be witches. People born with certain defects on them are supposed to be witches. Some of the character traits listed above by Sarpong (2004) may not be applicable in the Dagbamba society since the Dagbamba differentiate between good and bad witches. For instance, not all Dagbamba witches are quarrelsome. Some of the witches have some level of control over their behaviors in society. Most Dagbamba witches are aware that the character of a person in society can lead to suspicion. They know that, people who are quarrelsome in society are noted as wicked members and enemies to

every living soul within the society. Due to this, they always pretend to be humble and to appear good for people to appreciate them.

2.7 Witchcraft Acquisition

Omoyajowo (1965) identifies three common ways by which people believed to become witches. Firstly, according to him, people become witches through inheritance. For instance, the Ga people in Southern Ghana believed that witchcraft can be inherited from the mother. In relation to the Dagbamba witchcraft, Mahama (2004) debunked this perception by stating that the belief in witchcraft acquisition among the Dagbamba is not through inheritance. I agree with Omoyajowo (1965) and disagree with Mahama (2004) because, there are some families in Dagbamba who are noted to be witches.

Secondly, it is believed that witchcraft substance can be picked up, bought or swallowed. These substances are believed to be sold at cheap prices by women so that the poor people can easily purchase them.

Thirdly, witchcraft substances can be intentionally acquired from demons. Sometimes demons force them upon people and compel them to bring evil upon their neighbors against their wish.

Nyabwari and Kagema (2014) have similar beliefs on witchcraft acquisition as Omoyajowo (1965). They stated that, there are three ways by which witchcraft can be acquired. According to them, witchcraft can first of all be acquired through inheritance. Secondly, witchcraft as a substance can be picked or bought from specialized people and finally, they believe that, witchcraft can be adopted or bought from other communities.

With the view of Onyinah (2002), witchcraft is believed to be acquired through various means. One of such means is spiritual means. Witchcraft obtained

this way may be received from Almighty God. Another way of obtaining witchcraft is through heredity which is also believed to be mostly inherited from a dying witch within one's family or it might have been given to a person by a relative while in the mother's womb. For the Akans, according to Onyinah (2002), witchcraft is mainly acquired within one's family. It is held that, an inherited witchcraft cannot be given to a person in another clan. Witchcraft that is believed to be transferred by a dying witch to a beloved without one's knowledge begins to manifest in the recipient after the death of the transferor. Onyinah (2002) further observes that witchcraft can also be acquired through receiving of gifts and also through, eating of certain foods, such as mashed-plantain mixed with palm oil, prepared by a witch and infested with his or her powers. It can also be acquired through purchasing of it by anyone who wants it.

Amponsah (1975) did a comparative study on witchcraft beliefs between the Akan's in Southern Ghana and that of the Nepal people. From his findings, in the Akan tradition just like the Nepal tradition, people believed that wizards are more powerful than witches and their reason is that, since creation God created man to be stronger than woman. On the part of witchcraft acquisition, the Akan's believed that a child can acquire witchcraft powers through birth. The belief is that the alleged witches have the ability to remove the fetus from the womb of the mother. After removing the fetus, they will then send it to their meeting point and infest it with their witchcraft powers and place the child back to the womb of the mother on that same night.

They also hold the view that, a witchcraft substance can be transmitted from the blood of the alleged witch when she is pregnant to the fetus in her womb. Here, both Amponsah (1975) and Onyinah (2002) have similar believe on witchcraft acquisition. They believed that, witchcraft can also be acquired through gifts of items

including earrings, necklaces, clothing, beads and food like palm nut soup. They also believed in transition of witchcraft powers from the alleged witch to her beloved daughter when the alleged victim is about to die.

Adhikari and Adinkrah (2014) aptly posits that witchcraft is believed to be passed on from one person to another in many societies. The Nepal ethnic group and the Akan's in Ghana have similar beliefs in witchcraft acquisition. Adhikari and Adinkrah (2014) citing Sah (2007) observes that, in the Nepal tradition, women can pass on their witchcraft powers onto their daughters who can also pass it on to their children in a never ending cycle. Similar beliefs exist in the Akan tradition. The Akan's believed that a grandmother or a mother can pass on the witchcraft heirloom to a favorite grand-daughter or daughter. The Nepal and the Akan societies hold a common view that witchcraft can also be acquired by eating certain foods believed to be infested by the witchcraft powers as discussed earlier on by Onyinah (2002).

Bekoe (2016) comment on the motives that motivates witchcraft acquisition in African communities which was identified as good motives and bad motives. With reference to the traditions of Northern Ghana, it is believed that those who acquire witchcraft powers for good motives use it as a source of protection for all kind of evil deeds from other witches. The evil powers may also be used in shielding one's family from several other forms of misfortunes.

On the other hand, according to Bekoe (2016), many others in African communities believed that witchcraft powers are used with and for negative reasons. Witchcraft may be the cause of sudden diseases, rancor, protracted sicknesses, poverty, sterility, accidents, sudden deaths as well as destruction of property. Although witchcraft powers may be acquired for both good and evil reasons, many people are of the view that the witchcraft substances are used predominantly for evil

purposes rather than good. The work of witchcraft powers depends widely on the intention or factors that motivate the possessor to go in for the powers.

The (2010) research report conducted by the Research Unit of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) shows that, witchcraft can be acquired in many ways which include: through inheritance, buying it, acquiring it from friends and also through receiving it from gifts. The NCCE (2010) research report indicates that, witchcraft inheritance through the family lineage is an important factor. According to the research report, some alleged witches in Kalande in the Kpembe traditional area who admitted they were real witches said they inherited it through the family lineage. Some of the alleged witches admitted that they acquired their spiritual powers through buying from spiritualists. They were believed to have bought it from spiritualists for protecting themselves and their properties.

The NCCE (2010) research report also indicates that, witchcraft can be acquired from friends. Some of the confessed witches said they requested it from friends. Witchcraft is also believed to be acquired through gifts. These beliefs in witchcraft acquisition are common across all ethnic groups in Africa where the Dagbaj kingdom is not left out.

Kindness (1996) asserts that, among the Monze people in Southern Zambia, there is no special qualification to become a witch. Becoming a witch may involve inheritance or not, and may be voluntary or not. However, witchcraft is generally not inherited, and generally one voluntarily becomes a witch. There is no special qualification to become a witch, and people become witches in several ways, some of which are involuntary. With reference to Mahama (2004) the assertions of Kindness (1996) about the Monze witchcraft is somehow related to that of the Dagbamba witchcraft. According to Kindness, if one is named after a person who was a witch

unknown to the general public then the propensity to be a witch will be high and the person is moved to begin practicing witchcraft. A second way could be that if one's uncle is a witch then he might secretly send some of the ghosts he keeps to eat at your house.

The ghosts will become attached to the one who feeds them. Should you then have any disagreements with anybody the ghosts will go and kill the person. This will be without your knowledge. The ghosts will then come back to you and say "Look what we have done, we have taken care of your enemies for you". You are then a witch, because you have killed. The ghosts of the dead enemies killed now work for you. Another way of becoming a witch is to go for wealth medicine. For much of the activities require that you become wealthy in order to practice witchcraft. Becoming a witch is largely a matter of apprenticeship. The practice of witchcraft is thus open to all who are willing to receive the appropriate instruction (Kindness, 1996:69-70).

2.8 Witchcraft Activities

The activities of witches are generally regarded as being evil and against the norms of society. Lateju and Inyang (2012) observe that witches operate mainly at night. They meet in the guilds and they meet spiritually. This is to say that the meetings are mainly the activities of the souls. This is why it is believed in Africa that witches leave their physical bodies at home asleep in their rooms while their souls go off to their meetings.

To be able to do this, it is believed that they can take the form of a cat (especially black ones), an owl or bat. It is also believed that if this animal or bird whose form is taken is killed during the process, the witch using the body automatically dies. Lateju and Inyang (2012) notes that witches have powers to spoil medicines and render magical cures useless because they know the plants, roots, herbs

and barks the magician and the medicine men use. As a result of this, some medicine men collaborate with witches so that they can work successfully.

The observation of Lateju and Inyang (2012) about witches is very common in many African societies. It would be very difficult for an ordinary person to determine the operational time of the Dagbamba witches because their activities are done spiritually. Witches normally plan and work with the time that their operations can be carried out successfully. Many researchers including Lateju and Inyang (2012) believes that, the operation of witches is mainly at night but Mahama (2004) however debunked the notion by stating that witches operate both by day and night. According to him, night time is said to be the time for hunting and for the display of their supernatural powers. The submission made by Mahama (2004) is true about the Dagbamba witches

Witches are said to move in different groups in their hunting expedition and also believed to use the stock of millet as their guns. The meeting of witches remains secret as there is no evidence of physical meeting. The witches go to these meetings by various means depending on the locality. Mahama (2004) indicates that, they shoot not the physical body but rather the spirits of human beings which roam at night. When the target is hit according to Mahama (2004), the person will become ill and eventually die unless the witches responsible for the harm caused administer the necessary treatment.

Evans-Pritchard (1929) notes that some nocturnal birds and animals are very definitely associated with witchcraft and are thought to be the servants of human witches, and to be in league with them. Evans-Pritchard mentions some birds like bats, which are universally feared for their evil attributes, and owls, which hoot forebodings of misfortune in the night. These nocturnal creatures are associated with

witches because witchcraft is especially active at night, where it may be sometimes be seen in motion.

Witches are noted to practice spiritual cannibalism by feeding on human meat. It is believed that they have their own festivals and organize a plan for the provision of victims for their celebrations, (Omoyajomo, 1965). Witches are believed to send victims to their meetings and this is done spiritually. When a victim has been obtained he or she is fastened to a tree with a rope around the neck. The victim has now become meat that would then be shared out by the members according to rank. The victim only dies when the heart has been reached or touched. Witches may begin eating the victim's lungs while the person is still alive with the results that, such a person contracts some ailment. They may start from the legs and give the person ulcers. Witches are also believed to have a special taste for human blood. In doing so they are said to drain the blood spiritually, this make the victim grow lean and wears away gradually till s/he finally dies.

Omoyajowo (1965) further observes that Ghanaian witches are said to deceive those they leave behind so that the people are not conscious of their absence. He believes that, some witches are said to turn upside down and walk with their heads and their feet in the air when going to their meetings and some somersault to increase speed. Some witches are said to fly naked, having rubbed on their bodies a certain ointment which make them invisible. Some walk to meetings on spiders' webs, some ride on animals like black or white and spotted cats, toads, dogs, rats and birds. For instance, in Ibo-land, according to Omoyajowo (1965), witches are believed to turn into small insects which enter houses at night and bite men. They can also turn into night birds, owls and lizards. Witches are also said to appear like balls of fire on top of trees.

One of the commonest fantasies about the powers of the witch in the Yoruba tradition according to Prince (1961) is that, a witch can transform her "heart-soul" into a bird or animal. This occurs at night and her physical body remains in a deep sleep while her transformed heart-soul moves abroad. Prince notes that, a woman who sleeps on her back with her mouth open and arms outstretched is probably a witch. She cannot be awakened while her heart-soul is abroad and if someone captures the bird or animal into which her soul has been transformed she will not be able to wake up; if the creature is killed the witch will die.

One of the most common deeds attributed to witches is interference with reproduction. Impotence is common among Yoruba males and it is the prevalent idea that this is the work of witches as it is observed by Prince (1961). A witch is said to be capable of taking the penis of a man and having intercourse, using it with the man's wife or some other woman. The witch will then return the man's penis but it will be altered in some way and may not be able to function. The woman who is visited in this way may become barren. Witches are also believed to be drinking the life blood of their numerous victims. By doing this according to Prince (1961), the witch is thought to be able to prolong her own life, and it is for this reason that old people are suspected of being witches.

Awedoba (2005) aptly puts it that, witches are believed to attack taboo breakers so that when they die their death can be attributed to the ancestors and gods, thus allowing the witch to escape responsibility and culpability. Secondly, persistent taboo breakers may themselves be suspected of being witches. In some societies, taboo violation is what witches use to strengthen their powers. Witches are believed to acquire extra power through taboo violations, such as their indulgence in incest and

other social malpractices. In any case, the belief sometimes is that witches can get away with taboo breaches.

Devi, Katewa, Kaushal and Joshi (2006) categorize the processes by which witches can use to cause diseases and death in the Oraons society into two forms which include; the direct method and the indirect method. By using the direct method, the Oraons believe that witches use ash of cremation ground, chicken bone, lizard and cat's feaces, chanted rice, mustard seeds, grains bundled in a cloth which are believed when secretly and cautiously mixed with victim's food and after eating such food, the victim gradually wastes away. Witches are also believe to have knowledge of poisonous herbs which they normally use to harm their victims.

With the use of the indirect method, the Oraons believe that witches use supernatural powers which they can use to kill anybody within a specified period. They hold the view that, a witch can harm the victim by mere uttering of victim's name and invocation of spell over the name is enough to cause illness or misfortune. By sprinkling graveyard dirt at victim's courtyard or under his feet a witch can make the person sluggish and ill.

Joshi, et al. (2006) believes that witches have the power of evil eye in Oraon society. When a witch casts an evil eye on a child, the child falls sick and keeps on crying constantly without any reason. If an evil eye is cast on a pregnant woman, it may cause difficult or labor pains, miscarriage, etc. even animals are also susceptible to witchcraft. When a witch casts an evil eye on a cow, it stops to yield milk. They also believed that witches shoot invisible arrows, which hurt and paralyse the victim.

Joshi, et al. (2006) further indicates that witches go through secret trainings in the Oraon society to acquire more powers and to control the spiritual world. To acquire more powers, witches propitiate their main deity and other evil spirits. They

also perform elaborate rites at cremation grounds during dark nights to attain more powers. These rites consist of chanting of mantras, charms, songs and invocations to please their deities. Once the witch has mastered these things she has to kill her own child or any member of the family. After the completion of the training, witches perform magical mantra of witchery on a tree and if that tree dies within few days, it indicates that the person has mastered the art of witchcraft. Joshi, et al. (2006) posits that it is very important for witches as on this night they perform all evil works and acquire new powers through propitiation. All witches gather at cremation grounds and undress completely, tie brooms around their waists. They dance for the whole night and worship their deities.

Sarpong (2004) indicates that witches have their functionaries of everyday life. They have their chiefs, their queen mothers, their courtiers, drummers and so on. They are believed to share responsibilities especially to share human flesh among themselves. This they do in turns. You supply today, another day another person supplies.

Sulemana (2015) agrees with Sarpong (2004) and Otabil (1998) by stressing that witches have leaders in their operations. Sulemana argues that both men and women can be leaders of these so-called witches. Both men and women are qualified to preside over issues during witchcraft meetings but it is women who normally lead the witches during their operations. To lead the Dagbamba witches during their expeditions does not matter the age or how long the person has been in the business. The leader can be a child or an adult, physically fit or disabled since the activities are spiritually bound. What matters most is how strong or powerful the person is in terms of spirituality.

Sulemana (2015) observes that the meeting time of witches' remains secret as one cannot use an ordinary eye to see them during their meeting and operations. The meeting place of witches can be within the community or outside the community. It can be in the bush, an open place, in the market or on water bodies. The bodies of the witches will be left in the house sleeping while their spirit would be out there for their meetings. The spirit can transform itself into any form of creature such as animals and insects to perpetrate their evil machinations. Witches are also believed to turn upside down during their meeting. In this case, their head will be on the ground while their legs are on air.

Sulemana (2015) and Otabil (1998) have similar views on the operational mode of witches but have different views on their time of operation. They both agree that, witches have leaders in their operation. According to Otabil (1998), witches operate at night and in groups with leaders or can operate singly but Sulemana (2015) argues that witches have no fixed time of their operation since death or misfortune which are believed to be caused by witches have no fixed time of occurrence. They operate on top of big trees like "ødum", "wawa", and "onyina" in forests, on water bodies (e.g. rivers, lakes, seas, lagoons) and in open places like football fields.

The witch power, according to Otabil (1998) changes into an animal, a bird or fireball and goes to its destination. Some go to the place of meeting naked while others fly or go on horsebacks or donkeys. He again notes that, the witches are said to bring victims they intend to kill and the victims are spiritually changed into animals like sheep and goats and killed. They have rules of admission. E.g. new comers who want to join a group pay late-comers fee by bringing their own children or close relatives to be killed and eaten by all.

Debrunner (1978) comments on the movement of witches when going for their meetings or carrying out their witchcraft activities. According to him, witches go naked, then begin to glow. The extremities begin to glow especially the mouth, which glows like a fiery ball. They go out –emitting flames from their eyes, nose, mouth, ears and armpits. They travel through the air, –with great balls of fire around them, the person being in the very middle of the balls of fire.

2.9 Magic, Sorcery and Witchcraft

Nyabwari and Kagema (2014) describe witches as people with an inherent power by means of which they can abandon their bodies at night to meet with others (witches) or to suck or eat away the life of their victims. The stories of their mystical powers and exploits are difficult to substantiate. In a broad sense witchcraft describes all sorts of evil and the employment of mystical powers generally in a secret fashion. Nyabwari and Kagema citing Mbiti (1969) observes that in African societies, the distinction between witchcraft, sorcery, evil magic, and –evil eye” is quite thin and academic. In a more popular sense, the term witchcraft is used to designate the harmful employment of mystical power in all of its manifestations.

The dynamic nature of witches remains a mystery in the African context and even in the world at large. Witches are strongly believed to use their magical powers to transform things to suit themselves. They have the ability to transform themselves into any creature and can even abandon their bodies at night and use their spirit to go for their meetings. They can use somebody’s skin to cover themselves when carrying on their activities.

They went on to classify magic into two which include: the good magic“ and the evil magic‘. Nyabwari and Kagema (2014) notes that good magic‘ is accepted and esteemed, and is used mainly by specialists such as medicine men, diviners and

rainmakers. These practitioners use their knowledge or tap into this power for the benefit of their community. Examples of beneficial use of magic power include, the treatment of diseases, counteracting misfortune, neutralizing or destroying evil power or witchcraft.

‘Evil magic’ on the other hand, involves belief in and or practice of tapping and using this power to harm human beings and their property. Belief here is largely based on fear, suspicion, jealousy, ignorance or false accusation. Hair, nails, cloths, or other articles can be used by enemies to produce evil magic. Hair or nails may be burned or otherwise used in a harmful way. When used maliciously, such mystical power is termed black magic, evil magic or sorcery (Nyabwari and Kagema, 2014)

Nyabwari and Kagema (2014) citing Mbiti (1969:201) alludes that sorcery involves the use of poisonous ingredients in the food or drink of the intended victim. Sorcery is clearly anti-social employment of mystical power. Sorcerers are greatly feared and hated. They can send flies, lions, snakes, or other animals to attack enemies or send diseases against them. They can do this by spitting or directing spittle with secret incantations to go and harm someone else. They may even dig up graves to remove human flesh or bone to increase their powers or use them to attack their targets. Others provoke spirits to attack or harm others.

According to Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) magic can be good or bad, licit or illicit. Bad or illicit magic is known as sorcery and its practitioners are known as sorcerers. This kind of magic is considered to be offensive and anti-social. Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) notes that, bad or illicit magic is much feared since it can be used to kill, harm, destroy life or property, to make a happy destiny an unhappy one, and to disrupt the well-being of the individual and the society.

A sorcerer is seen as an evil person, feared and hated and his activities are in darkness since his deeds are evil. As indicated by Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) sorcerer uses various techniques to achieve his ends. He may kill an enemy by means of invocation and incantation. A sorcerer may also harm an enemy by sending some poisonous things like a snake or scorpion or an animal to attack a victim.

Witchcraft on the other hand, according to Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) is an art of the wise. It is the belief that “the spirit of living human beings can be sent out of the body on errands of doing havoc to other persons in body, mind or estate”. Witches can operate singly or individually but they are said to work in guilds. They suck the blood or eat the soul of their victims.

Nyabwari and Kageka (2014) citing Van Wyk (2004:1211) observes that sorcerers practice their evil at daytime, are mostly men, cannot leave their bodies, and do not kill or harm randomly. They kill or harm for a specific purpose. Unlike witches, a sorcerer can stop being one. However, both witches and sorcerers can perform natural magic or thaumaturgy (evil or black magic, casting spells, incantations)

It is therefore means that, evil magic, sorcery and witchcraft have a spiritual links as the practitioners of these fields are considered to have the same ideology. Capuccio and Ravaru (2004) classify witchcraft as an area of magic but gave two different definitions to differentiate between magic and witchcraft. From their observation, they describe magic as a process of causing change to transform the direction of different energies through the use of your will. In other words magic is the guidance and control of energy to a desired destination or goal. We can manipulate that energy and drive to different targets making changes to occur.

They went further to classify magic into many different branches or areas which include; Herbalism, Aromatherapy, Healing, Shamanism, Elemental Magic, Sympathetic Magic and many others. On the other hand, witchcraft is considered as generally based on the area of spell casting. They define witchcraft as an area of magic that deals with spell casting, healing, fertility, protection and hexes.

Otabil (1996) on his part describes witchcraft as an evil spirit in man which has enormous power to destroy life and property. Again, he sees magic to be a mystical power which can be tapped by a man to control people and events for his selfish ends. Otabil believes that, magic can be used to promote success and prosperity and also to destroy life and property.

From the observation of Capuccio and Ravaru (2004) and Otabil (1996) on magic and witchcraft, it can be deduce that magic and witchcraft have some similarities. Witchcraft is classified under magic or as a branch of magic. Witchcraft and magic have something in common since they are all spiritually bound.

According to Sarpong (2004) bad or evil magic is called sorcery. It is seen as a spiritual poison and the word for this spiritual poisoning as noted by Sarpong is the same word as for physical poisoning. There cannot be a good sorcerer. A good magician is the archenemy of both the witch and the sorcerer. The so-called divinities too are the enemies of the witch and the sorcerer. The good magicians and the divinities then protect, bless, guide and help others. They may act as doctors or healers, they may act as diviners, telling you the future, diagnosing and prognosing diseases.

Sagrsta (2015) citing Schwarz (2011: 5) indicates that, 'Magic is the use of hidden forces to make things happen that do not ordinarily happen in nature'. The magical power constitutes those supernatural abilities present in some people, spirits,

plants, animals, stones and other objects. Magic comprises basically a group of techniques whose control allows a person to influence the outcome of specific situations. Sorcery on the other hand is a set of practices that can be learnt and it is something a person sets out to do'. It is the ritual employment of harmful substances and objects for malevolent purposes' where the sorcerer has clear intentions of harming or killing someone (Zocca and Urame 2008; Eves 2013 and Glick 1973) cited in Sagrista (2015).

2.10 Witchcraft Exorcism

Exorcism, according to the Longman's dictionary (1995) is a process during which someone forces evil spirits to leave a place or someone's body by using special words and ceremonies. The person who forces evil spirits to leave a place or someone's body is known as the exorcist.

Jimoh (2014) citing Parrinder (1987:17) defines exorcism as adjuration addressed to evil spirits to force them to abandon an object, place or person. In the opinion of Thayer (1979:224) cited in Jimoh (ibid), exorcism is 'putting the spirit or demon on oath' to leave the possessed and not to come back again. Nangpaak (2007) citing Sarpong (2002) comments that, in the traditional setting, the suspected witches go through the exorcism ritual exercise when they are caught by witch doctors. They strip almost half naked and their heads shaved leaving spots of hair. Eggs are broken on their heads before they are made to confess publicly. The methods and items used by exorcists in their operations are, however, diverse as the cultures are diverse.

All religions including; Christianity, Islam and the African traditional religion practice exorcism. He however states that 'methods of exorcism employed by exorcists in each of the three faiths vary'. While Muslim exorcists use chapters of the Glorious Qur'an to exorcise their patients, most Christians cast out demons from the

bodies of victims in the name of Jesus. When the demon proves stubborn, exorcists in the two religion, in such instance, resort to beating and tormenting. Traditional exorcists also employ beating. Jimoh (2014) observes that some Christian exorcists even go to the extent of asking the Holy Ghost Fire to consume the demon. The traditionalist exorcists also use the harsh method. In most cases, they try to appease the invading demon to leave; while after its exit, they also dedicate a shrine to it in order to keep it at peace.

In Dagbamba tradition, exorcism is traditionally practiced by the earth priest *Buyulana* singular or *Buyulaannima* plural (owners of private shrines) and the *Tindana* singular or *Tindaamba* plural also known as *Tijbia* (custodians of the land). They are in charge of the traditional affairs in Dagbaŋ and believed to be closer to the gods and the ancestors. According to Musah (2013) the role of a chief and a *Tindana* are specifically defined in Dagbaŋ. While the chief oversees a wide range of activities of the community, including the maintenance of law and order as well as the development of the community, the role of the *Tindana* is more spiritual. The *Tindana* is responsible for all activities that have to do with the gods and deities and is consulted on almost all matters that relate to the spirits and gods.

According to Igwe (2016) the *Buyulana* is the owner of a private shrine while the *Tindana* presides over community shrine. *Tindana* is also called earth priests. As priests, their duties are to offer libation and perform sacrifices to pacify the gods. People become shrine priests by inheritance, through the family.

Musah (2013) asserts that when a person is accused of witchcraft and is either sent or voluntarily moves to the Gnani community, the first thing that is done by the *Tindana* is to consult with the deity, known as *ten* to determine whether the accused person is guilty of the accusation or not. This process involves *speaking* with the *ten*

through the slaughter of a fowl interspersed with some incantations. As noted by Musah (2013), the position of the fowl after being slaughtered determines whether an alleged witch or wizard is guilty or not guilty of the allegations. The innocence or guilt of an accused is thus determined by the final posture of the fowl as it dies.

He further explains that once an accused person is found guilty through the position of the fowl, what follows is exorcising the accused person's witchcraft powers. It is believed that shrines have enormous powers to exorcise the witchcraft spirit inherent in the accused (ActionAid, 2008: 26) cited in Musah (2013). This process is marked by the drinking of some concoctions by the accused persons.

The purpose of taking this drink is that apart from disempowering the alleged witches and wizards of their powers, it is intended to cleanse them and thus prevent them from engaging in witchcraft practices in the future. Therefore, by standard practice, exorcised and cleansed alleged witches and wizards are not to be considered witches and wizards again. By drinking the concoctions, they are also indirectly warned not to engage in witchcraft practices in future, failure of which the gods will strike them dead.

Yussif (2001) describes exorcism as a process of removing the magical powers of the alleged witches or demons and make them powerless. When the family of the alleged witches or wizards are fed-up of his/her misdeeds in Dagbamba community, they can take the victim to the shrine for exorcism rituals. Before the exorcism ritual can take effect, the alleged witch or wizard has to confess his/her misdeeds. As part of the ritual process in Dagbaŋ, the *Buyulana* or the *Tindana* would prepare some concoction made up of herbs for the victim to drink. The Dagbamba believe that, when the victim takes this concoction, his/her powers will go completely. The existence of witches is considered to be a threat to every ordinary African as their

activities are believed to be in secret or in darkness. This brought about the activities of witch-hunting.

Bekoe (2016) notes that, destroying the vessel in which the evil powers are contained is one popular way of destroying witchcraft powers. When a person is caught, she is forced to bring out the container that contains the witchcraft substance which many researchers including Bekoe believe to be a pot that contains many items including hairs, nails, blood among others for it to be destroyed.

Traditionally, witches are sent to the anti-witchcraft shrine for exorcism rituals. According to Bekoe (2016), many people send the accused witches to traditional priests who prepare concoctions for them to drink. It is believed that these concoctions contain higher spiritual powers that will automatically paralyze the witchcraft powers of the accused. There is a strong belief among the Dagbamba that, when a witch successfully passes through the exorcism rituals, she is not expected to go back to the evil deeds or else she will die.

Bekoe (2016) further comments on the exorcism ritual process that the alleged witches go through upon their arrival at the Gambaga witch camp. She notes that, when a woman arrives at the camp, she is subjected to different forms of rituals. One involves the slaughter of chickens. This is done to prove whether the alleged witch is innocent or guilty of the crime of which she is being accused. This ceremony is performed by camp chiefs or male priests who are called "*Tindanas*". They are believed to possess supernatural powers and can find out the innocence or guilt of the accused. They are also thought to be able to exorcise the witchcraft spirit, and thus set the victim free. This ritual process can only be successful after the alleged witch confesses her misdeeds. She must then reveal the source of her witchcraft powers and

then surrender the evil powers to the exorcist (traditional priest) to destroy it completely.

According to Bekoe (2016), the traditional priest of the shrine slaughters a white fowl and throws it into the air. If the accused is found innocent by the spirits of the shrine, the fowl falls on its back. But if the spirits of the shrine find the accused guilty, the fowl lands on its front. If the fowl lands with the beak in the ground and the accused witch is found guilty, a second fowl might be slaughtered. The second fowl is slaughtered to determine whether the attacks have been carried out in collaboration with the ancestors or if the witch has practiced her powers through a physical object (such as a frog), which then needs to be found and destroyed.

After the slaughtering of fowls the witch can drink a concoction that will cleanse her of the witchcraft. If a guilty witch has denied her aggression, the gods will kill her through the concoction. Following this cleansing ceremony, the accused witch may return home. But if the community does not want her back, she settles in the camp where the spirits of the shrine look after her (Bekoe, 2016:44-45).

2.10.1 Training in Exorcism

To qualify as exorcists in the Yoruba tradition, according to Jimoh (2014), one must undergo training and receive certification from a renowned master. The duration of the training, however, depends largely on the brilliance and maturity of the apprentice. A very important training given to a would-be exorcist is in the area of diagnosis. Jimoh (2014) did a comparative analysis of exorcism between the Yoruba traditional exorcists, the Yoruba Muslim exorcists and the Yoruba Christian exorcists in the South-West Nigeria. From his analyses, he linked the job of an exorcist to that of the medical doctor. According to him before a person can become an exorcists in

any of the religions, such a person needs to go through some training. A very important training given to the apprentices is in the area of diagnoses.

According to Jimoh (2014), hardly is there a Muslim exorcist in South-West Nigeria who was not once apprentice before becoming a practitioner. There are some among them who acquired the skills from their fathers who were renowned exorcists in their life time. There are some who therefore enrolled as apprentices under renowned exorcists or even travel out for the purpose to places like Sudan, India etc. to acquire the knowledge and the skills. Muslim exorcists are trained not to be wicked or unnecessarily harsh to their patients. They are also trained to be righteous, God-fearing and prayerful. At the end of the training, they are also taught some daily routine prayers which they have to do in the morning and in the evening. These prayers are to serve as protection for them against possible attacks of demons.

In finding out the training of the Christian exorcists, Jimoh (2014) did his research in three different Christian churches in the South-West Nigeria which include the Catholic, Anglican and the Pentecostal churches. For the Catholic and Anglican churches, exorcists must be ordained priests, who will also have to perform exorcism only with the express permission of a local bishop. Jimoh noted that, an exorcism is not commonly performed in these churches with the belief that, most cases thought to be demonic possession are rather mental or physical illness. In the Pentecostal churches, deliverance is more common than exorcism. Exorcism is performed only when the demon has taken total control of the possessed and robbed him of his personality.

2.11 Protection against Witchcraft

As the culture of a person is believed to direct and shape the behaviour of the person, a lot has been said on how one can protect himself against witches but these

ideas varies from one culture to another. What one sees as a protective measure of witches from his/her culture may not be so in another person's culture. Even though witches are considered to be the agents of every misfortune in human life and believed to use their powers to manipulate human beings the way they want for their own selfish gains, they are believed to be some preventive measures by which one can prevent himself against witches.

Prince (1961) highlights some of these preventive measures in his article entitled the Yoruba image of witch. According to him, there are three general methods the Yoruba may use to defend himself against witches and these measures include:

- With the help of native medicine usually as instructed by the native doctor,
- Through membership of certain cults, and
- Through organizing witch hunts and using trial by ordeal.

The three preventive measures highlighted by Prince are in line with the preventive measures employed by the Dagbamba people.

According to Sulemana (2015) unlike the Yoruba tradition, a typical Dagbamba man *‘Dagbandoo’* can protect himself against witches through seeking spiritual protection from the medicine men or from spiritualist. Some even go to Mallams and church priests for the spiritual protection. One can also seek spiritual protection from the gods or the deities. There are many anti-witchcraft shrines in Dagban which believed to have the ability to protect one from the evil deeds of witches. Such anti-witchcraft shrines include: the *Buyuli Jaagbo*, *Kpaliyoyu*, *Gurigbaya*, *Lansah*, *Yabayili* and *Salim* which have the powers to protect human beings against all kinds of evil spirits. These anti-witchcraft shrines are believed to be powerful and can protect an individual from all forms of misfortunes and calamities.

Witch hunting is also used as a preventive measure against witches in the Dagbamba communities.

Otabil (1998) also spoke on the issue of how one can protect himself against witches. According to him, various means of witchcraft protection are employed by many Africans. Ritual specialist like diviners and medicine men give charms, amulets and talismans to use for protection. These are worn on the body or concealed in bags and rooms. Otabil notes that people burn a strong scented gum (latex) called “*h̄ye*” *tulaalemuriga* in their rooms before going to bed. Certain leaves with a very strong scent are also put under pillows, mats or in bags.

An open threat to the suspected witches is another means of protection against witches. This method as a measure of protection from witches is common practice in the Dagbamba society. The victim threatens to kill the witch with a cutlass or a gun, beat her up or causes physical harm to her. Both Sulemana (2015) and Otabil (1998) agrees that, suspected witches may be given gifts of items by their community members in order to appease them. These items may include pieces of cloth, necklaces, foot wear and money.

According to Otabil (1998) one can be protected by God. It is believed that God is omnipotent and protects people who do good things or serve him well or do his will. This shows that one’s personal character can serve as a means of protection.

In the Effutu communities in Southern Ghana, Wyllie (1973) notes that a person who feels himself bewitched may seek protection from his unknown assailant by consulting a traditional priest who will, after consulting the deity whose medium he is, supply anti-witchcraft substance. Most priests limit their activities to providing a kind of blanket protection for their clients, but there are some whose deities are supposed to be able to do more than deter witches. According to Wyllie, their anti-

witchcraft medicine is so strong that witches who come in contact with it become ill and can only find relief by coming to the priest to confess.

In the Kasena communities according to Howell (2004) people seek ways to protect themselves from being harmed by witches. They either wear protective items on their body or else they use a ‘medicine’ to bath in and eat. The main protective device used by the Kasenas as noted by Howell is the horn. When someone becomes ill, the house head may first of all consult a diviner to see the source of the sickness. After identifying the source, the diviner may refer them to the earth shrine if indeed the sickness is being caused by witches.

The elders of the area charge the sick person a sheep, a fowl and a pot of *pito*. They sacrifice the sheep and the fowl and pour libation to the ancestors. As they sacrifice, according to Howell (2004) the guardian of the earth shrine swears an oath asking the earth shrine to kill any person who attempts to kill the wearer of the horn. They mix blood of the sheep, the fowl with some *pito* and the soil of the earth shrine. They then take the sheep’s horn, cut off the tip and put the mixture inside the horn. They sew a piece of the animal’s skin around the horn to keep the medicine inside it and they then hang the horn around the neck of the person.

The common way to protect oneself from witches among the Dagbamba is through spiritual protection. When somebody falls sick in the Dagbamba community, the first point of contact is to consult *baya* ‘diviner’ or a traditional healer to find the source of the sickness. If the diviner or the traditional healer perceives the cause of the disease to be an attack from evil spirits, the person would be protected by the use of a talisman, charm, amulets, and a spiritual bath to drive the evil spirits away. These are rites aimed at driving off evil and dangerous powers, spirits or elements. Their

function is to eliminate the evils or dangers that may have already taken root in a family or community.

2.12 Advantages of Witchcraft Beliefs

As noted by Nyabwari and Kagema (2014) there are some perceived advantages of witchcraft in African communities. According to them, witchcraft is a powerful deterrent against evil intentions like stealing, incest and murder. It also has an educational function in that it keeps the norms and values of society alive. Witchcraft teaches a powerful lesson that non-conformity is dangerous. It thus acts as a strong force for social cohesion. What this says is that one should not depart from accepted norms, for any departure could bring isolation and eventual destruction, not only of the individual nonconformist, but also of society may ensue. This helps to suppress negative emotions like envy, hatred, anger, lust etc. Fear of being labelled a witch is a powerful deterrent against immoral antisocial behaviour, thus enforcing conformity to societal morals and values.

According Otabil (1998) the belief in witchcraft serves as an important social sanction against anti-social behavior. It causes fear in people and encourages them to behave well in society. The fear influences the conduct of people by encouraging them show their virtues such as being kind, generous, respectful, loving, sympathetic and good. Since witches known to be bad-tempered and anti-social, people behave well so that they are not branded as witches.

2.13 Effects of Witchcraft Belief

The effect of belief in witchcraft in the social life of people is tremendous. Awedoba (2005) categorizes it into positive and negative effects. According to him, it sounds preposterous to even imagine that witchcraft could have anything positive or advantageous. On the positive aspect of witchcraft beliefs, Awedoba (2005) believes

that, witchcraft belief help to shape the character or the behaviour of an individual in the society. Since one is not sure who is or who is not a witch, it means one should try to live one's life in such a way that the relatives and the neighbors will not have reason to reproach one and to then bewitch one.

Those who fear bewitchment or its opposite, accusation or suspicion are forced to abide by the norms of the society. Due to this, members of the community are likely to show respect to others; they are also likely to avoid being unnecessarily rude or quarrelsome. This makes people to be kind and generous to others within reasonable bounds. A person must not have a voracious appetite or be too greedy since it is witches who are believed to have these character traits. One can therefore deduce that, the belief about witchcraft and about who might be a potential witch can work together to enhance interpersonal relations within the society. This makes people to be tolerant even in the face of provocation.

Awedoba (2005) indicates that, the belief of witchcraft helps a person to hold his or herself firmly in society in order not to repeatedly fall foul of the social norms. This is so in societies where witches are believed to be arrogant and anti-social often disrespectful of the norms and taboos of the society. Individuals who fear to be suspected or to be branded as witches are expected to abide by the norms of their communities so that they should not be seen by anyone to be behaving like witches. This believed restricted people not to make unreasonable demands on others, since to do otherwise would fuel speculation that one might be a witch.

Rohantynskyj (1988) cited in Awedoba (2005) indicates that, among the Mossi of Burkina Faso, any woman who does what she pleases and does not cook for her husband may be branded as a witch. One can therefore say that, witchcraft is a tool used for the control and exploitation of women in society. Awedoba (2005) posits

that, the belief in witchcraft can potentially enhance a culture of sharing in some societies. The wealthy are under pressure to share a portion of their prosperity with their poor relatives. The belief is that failure to share can provide a pretext for a witch to act, especially when it is not known for sure who is a witch and who is not.

On the negative part of witchcraft beliefs according to Awedoba (2005) can engender excessive fear and insecurity in a community. Where belief in the potency of witchcraft is widespread, people live in constant fear of being bewitched or being suspected and even accused of witchcraft practice. This can hamper the development of positive personal relationships. Through witchcraft beliefs, persons with unusual physical features are under pressure and may be made to feel insecure. Such people fail to gain the sympathy of their society and what they rather get is hatred. People fear them and are unwilling to associate with them (see Awedoba 2005: 231).

In some communities, people may be suspected due to their unusual talents and skills or even an innovative slant of mind. In this case, people may be unwilling to exhibit their talents for fear that they might be seen as witches. Some people may even refuse to work hard or refuse to excel for fear that their success would invite the attention of witches.

From Sarpong (2004) we learn that parents warn their children not to receive gifts from people especially the old women because of the belief that somebody can give you a gift that is witchcraft substance. People are also warned not to take strange items on the ground. According to Sarpong (2004), if you see something on the ground as precious as gold, the best thing is to leave it alone. The suspicion is that, such a thing could be witchcraft substance.

Also, when people are sick, they will not stay near their homes because witches are believed to strike at short range and not at long range. If you are far from

home, they cannot strike you. So it happens that when somebody is going to have an operation, he or she will either not tell anybody in his or her immediate circle because witches attack their relatives and they may make use of the occasion to attack them or else they travel far away to have their operation.

Witchcraft beliefs also spoil the relationship in the family especially the relationship between the young and the old, (Sarpong, 2004). The older a person becomes, the more people become suspicious of her becoming a witch and so beliefs in accusation of witchcraft are constantly in marriage relationship in our families. There is no peace in many villages because of the witchcraft accusation. Many people are shunned because they are thought to be witches. Certain diseases are said to be the effects of bewitching.

According to Otabil (1998) witches are anti-social, immoral and evil. Witches are believed not to contribute to the general good of the society. This reflects the image of witches in the Dagbamba society. The Dagbamba tag witches to be unfriendly people in society. The fear of being killed by witches may even prevent individuals from doing certain things to improve their lives and the society. Otabil adds that, witchcraft beliefs lead to fatalism and inaction. The minds of people become so conditioned sometimes that they always blame their failure and sufferings on witches and resign themselves to fate. Thus they do nothing to improve their conditions.

2.14 Conclusion

In summary, the variability of the phenomenon of witchcraft command agent attention. As noted by some scholars in the literature, witchcraft does not mean exactly the same thing for every society and beliefs differ to the extent that what one society considers as witchcraft or its manifestation may not be so perceived in another

society. It can be deduced that, the belief in witchcraft can be found among individuals of varied educational and professional backgrounds and among people of different religious persuasions which have both positive and negative impact on individual life and the society at large. It can therefore be seen that, various studies have already been carried out within the subject-area of witchcraft and the concept of exorcism. My own study will make use of the information seen above in this work, although since it does not aim to directly reproduce any previously-conducted study, it will differ slightly from those included within the literature review.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology used in conducting this research work. The chapter covers the research design, the research approach, population, sample, sampling technique, data collection techniques, instruments, data collection procedure and the data presentation and analysis methods.

3.1 The Research Design

A research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted. In order to ensure the success of the investigation, an appropriate research design was selected in a manner that would facilitate the researcher's arrival at valid findings. Amedahe and Gyimah (2013) describes research design as a plan or blueprint which specifies how data relating to a given problem should be collected and analyzed. It is the procedural outline for the conduct of any investigation. It is the researcher's overall plan for obtaining answers to the research questions or for testing the research hypothesis.

The main design employed for this study was a descriptive method as the research seeks to understand and assess people's perception about witches in the Dagbamba society. Specifically, the research design seeks to examine the Dagbamba witchcraft and the concept of exorcism. The design was selected because it allowed the use of multiple data collection tools in seeking to address the research questions in an in-depth manner.

3.2 The Research Approach

A qualitative research approach was therefore sought and utilized. Qualitative research involves deriving information from observation, interviews or verbal interaction and focuses on the meaning and interpretation of the participants (Owu-Ewie, 2012). The process of qualitative research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data (Creswell, 2009:4).

Creswell (1998) describes qualitative research as an inquiry process of understanding based on a clear methodological process that uses a social or human problem by building on a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, report detailed views of respondents, and conducted in the natural setting. It is a development of concepts which helps us to understand social phenomena in natural (rather than experimental) settings, giving due emphasis to the meanings, experiences and views of the participants. Owu-Ewie (2012) citing Denzin and Lincoln (1994) posits that qualitative research is multi-method in approach, involving interpretation and naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means qualitative research studies things in their natural settings; it also involves the study of a variety of empirical materials.

A qualitative research is characterized by its aims, which relate to understanding some aspect of social life, and its methods which (in general) generate words, rather than numbers, as data for analysis. Unlike the quantitative research which is numerical and anchored on quantity by using interrogative words like (how many, how much), the qualitative research uses interrogative words such as (what,

why, how) in its description of data to clearly state the views of the respondents in order to ensure a quality outcome.

A qualitative research approach was adopted for this study in the sense that, in investigating a quite debatable research topic like witchcraft and its related issues, one needs to gather in-depth information that will give a good and clear understanding of the issues related to witchcraft.

3.3 Population

Owu-Ewie (2012:25) citing Best and Khan (2006) postulates that, a population is a group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common and of an interest to the researcher. It is useful to make a distinction between the target and accessible population. According to Amedahe and Gyimah (2013) the accessible population is the aggregate of cases that conform to the designated criteria that are accessible to the researcher as a pool of subjects for a study. On the other hand, the target population is the aggregate of cases about which the researcher would like to make generalizations. This means that, the target population is the units for which the information is required and actually studied.

The target population of this study was the entire people within the Dagbani kingdom that covers all the indigenes in and around Tamale, Yendi, Bimbila, Savelugu, Gushegu, Karaga, Kumbungu, Tolon, Mion and Nanton. The population that the researcher targeted could not be used because of financial and time constraints. Due to this reason, the population was narrowed to only one district in the Dagbani kingdom known as the Gushegu District. The population in the district selected was too large to be covered within the given period of time so the researcher decided to narrow it to three selected communities within the district. The communities selected comprised Kpatinga, Gaa and Sampimo all in the Gushegu

District. The population under study comprises people with diverse ages, sex and social status.

3.4 Sample

A sample is a small portion of the population that is selected for observation and analyses (Owu-Ewie, 2012). In the view of Amedahe and Gyimah (2013) sampling is described as the process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population. This enables the researcher to study a relatively small number of units in place of the target population, and to obtain data that are representative of the whole target population.

Due to constraints of time, effort and resources it became virtually impossible for one to undertake a much larger scale. So for this study, a total of forty two respondents, who qualified as key respondents for the research, participated in the study. The study sample comprises fifteen (15) resident respondents from Kpatinga, Gaa and Sampimo who perceived not to be witches were interviewed to get their perception about witchcraft. The respondents were between the ages of twenty to forty five years which was made up of ten (10) males and five (5) females. This is because, cases of witchcraft accusation mostly come from men than women. The selection was also done based on availability and willingness of respondents to participate. Five (5) opinion leaders including the Kpatinga chief, the assemblyman of the Sampimo electoral area, some religious leaders and traditional title holders were interviewed. In addition, the acting earth priest of the Tindanzee camp and twenty one (21) alleged witches from the Tindanzee camp who are between the ages of forty to eighty years were also interviewed.

3.5 Sampling Technique

In order to make generalizations and draw appropriate inferences, there was the need to conduct sampling in the research process. Sampling, as Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) rightly said, the quality of a piece of research stands or falls not only by the appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted.

A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants for this study. A purposive sampling, according to Owu-Ewie (2012) is a sampling method in which elements are chosen based on purpose of the study. As the name implies, the researcher adhering to the objectives of the study, selects respondents who can answer his research questions. Amedahe and Gyimah (2013) posits that, in purposive sampling, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality or particularly knowledgeable about the issues under study.

The sample was selected because they possess the information the researcher needs. The researcher was of the view that, these groups of respondents selected were in position to provide the information he was looking for. Purposive sampling does not produce a sample that is representative of a larger population, but it provides the right source of information for the researcher. The sample was used for this study because it is not every member of the research community who possesses the information the researcher needs.

3.6 Data Collection Techniques

The data for this study consists of primary and secondary data collection techniques. The primary data were obtained from traditional leaders. Others included religious leaders and some opinion leaders within the selected communities. All these people

were interviewed face to face and their responses were recorded and used for analysis. The spontaneous utterances related to witchcraft given by the subjects were also recorded as the researcher heard them in natural situations such as in social gatherings.

The secondary data sources on the other hand include library and internet materials from both published and unpublished sources. The researcher made good use of written texts related to the topic both in Dagbani and other languages. The researcher also used his native intuition of the cultural practices of the Dagbamba people. As a native speaker of the language, some of the data was from the researcher's native speaker intuition.

The researcher also gathered the data by embarking on field work to interview a number of native speakers including the old folk who have detailed information on witchcraft and witchcraft exorcism. Through this, the researcher was able to gather samples of instances of witchcraft accusations and how the alleged witches are exorcised in the Tindanzee camp. This was either recorded or written down to assist the researcher in examining how witchcraft is perceived and understood by the Dagbamba and the impact of this belief into the lives of the people.

It took the researcher four days to visit the communities under study to first and foremost introduce himself and also to explain to them the purpose of the research and the reasons why he decided to choose those communities as the research setting. Out of the four days, two days was used to visit the Kpatinga community where the Tindanzee witch camp is located. When the researcher got to the Kpatinga community, it took him a full day to meet the community chief and his council of elders. The other one day was used to meet the earth priest of the camp and the

alleged witches to pre-inform them about his intention. This was also done in order to familiarize himself with those areas and to make the necessary initial contacts.

Data gathering, analysis and interpretation were carried out with the assistance of a research assistant. The research assistant was chosen from the Kpatinga community. He actively participated in all the interviews administered to the respondents. The research assistant was chosen not because he was a Dagbamba by tribe and can speak Dagbani. His selection was influence base on his vast knowledge on the Dagbamba traditions and culture. He has worked under the Ghana Education Service (GES) as a circuit supervisor (CS) for several years which makes him a high profile person in the area. He was therefore able to build the first contact with the Kpatinga traditional authorities, the assembly member of the Sampimo electoral area, some religious leaders within the Kpatinga Township, the earth priest of the Tindanze camp as well as the residents of the camp. He also assisted in organizing the various interviews.

During my first visit in the Kpatinga community, I was told by the research assistant that since we were to pay homage to the chief and his council of elders, I would have to buy cola nuts and add some amount of money to it since the tradition demands that, we cannot pay homage to the chief empty handed. On the part of the earth priest, I was asked to buy bread, cola nuts, alcohol and add some amount of money to it. After that, I was then led to the Tindanze camp to visit the residents and their leadership.

On our initial visit to the camp, it was the assistant *Magazia* who gave us a warm reception. The leadership of the residents was represented by the assistant *Magazia* and the *Zonzongili* (Organizer of the residents) because the *Magazia* (Queen mother) was not at home. Most of the residents were not at home during my our visit

to the camp and so the researcher was advised to go back to Tamale so that they would make the necessary arrangements and called him back for them to start the interviews. He was called on the third day by the research assistant to come to the camp, so he had to buy the same items for the earth priest on his second visit. When the researcher got to the camp, he was not charged to pay monies to the residents before having an interview with them but he was advised to get something little for the residents in order to motivate them.

3.7 Instrument

The research tools are also referred to as instrument for data collection. Research processes utilize one or more procedures to collect information. The success and reliability of any research depends largely on the process of data collection and research method selected. Two instruments were used for the study; in-depth open-ended interviews and observation.

3.7.1 Observation

Observation was the first instrument used in the study. In this study, direct observation was used to form follow-up questions during interview sessions and before the interviews as well. Anane and Anyanful (2016) citing Mikkelson (1995) postulates that, direct observation involves observation of physical structures, social differences, behaviour, and action and symbols in solitude or with others with whom the observations are discussed and it provides important information for posing central questions.

Concealment observation technique was also used in the course of gathering of data. This was used during the interview sessions with respondents who were purposively selected. The aim was to collect information that otherwise could not be captured by the interviews. As the researcher was a member of the cultural group

under investigation, it was easy for him to gain a large amount of data through taking notes from natural interactions or behaviour of subjects about the topic under study. Indeed, observation has given me a deeper understanding of the community under study.

3.7.2 Interview

The second instrument used was interview which was prepared in a way to capture relevant information for the study. The interview guide used centered broadly on the perception the general public have about witches.

The first section captured the bio-data of the respondents such as the age, occupation, marital status and religious affiliation. The second section focused on issues related to beliefs in the existence of witchcraft, what witchcraft is, why people believed in the existence of witchcraft, who a witch is, the causes of witchcraft accusation, what witchcraft substance is, the modes of acquisition of witchcraft, the mode of operation of witches, the processes involved in witchcraft exorcism, the characteristics of witches, the public reactions towards the alleged victims after they are identified as witches and how one can be protected against witches. All the notes from these interviews were recorded, written down and analyzed in line with the research objectives.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher met with the traditional authorities such as the Kpatinga Lana (the chief of Kpatinga) and some of his elders, the caretaker of Tindanze Yili who also act as the traditional priest of the camp, and some opinion leaders including some religious leaders and the assembly member of the Sampimo electoral area to elicit their opinion and obtain permission for the research he was to undertake. The researcher informed them of his institution, his area of study and the purpose for

which he chose such a task. The purpose for the study was explained to all respondents and consent sought from them before interviews were conducted. Permission was also sought from the traditional authorities of the camp to observe the exorcism ritual performance that was going on in the Tindanzee camp at Kpatinga and also to take some photographs using a digital camera.

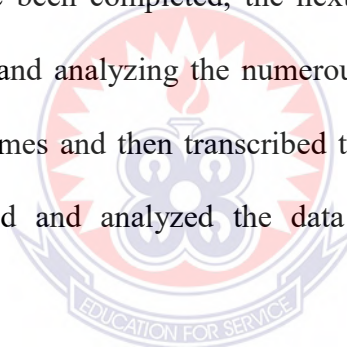
Interviews were arranged and conducted personally by the researcher with the support of the research assistant after making initial contacts with respondents and having given them prior notice. The researcher personally arranged and conducted interviews at convenient places with persons related to the topic under study. Interviews lasted between thirty to forty five minutes, depending upon the interest of the interviewees. Most of these interviews were conducted in Dagbani and tape recorded. During the interview processes, a voice recorder was used to record proceedings. Where the interviewee did not allow tape recording, notes were taken. The interview process addressed issues that needed clarification.

My personal experience, as one born and bred in Dagbani also came into play in the collection of the data. During each interview session, the researcher established rapport with interviewees. This created a platform for the free flow of deliberations. Even though the research site was made up of different tribal groups such as the Dagbamba, Konkombas, Mamprusi and the Nanumbas, the Dagbani language which is widely spoken in the area and understood by all the respondents was used as the medium of communication during the interviews. The interviews were further made quite interactive because of my linguistic competence in Dagbani language. This made it quite easier to obey and respect the basic etiquette of the language and the people.

3.9 Data Presentation and Analyses Methods

A Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) is the range of processes and procedures whereby we move from the qualitative data that have been collected, into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of the people and situations we are investigating. It is the breaking down and ordering of data into meaningful groups while searching for patterns of relationship among the data groups.

The researcher employed descriptive analysis when he was interpreting various interviews. The data collected for this study included voice recordings, pictures and notes written by the researcher. The pictures were taken in order to give a comprehensive view of the Tindanze witch camp. After the recordings, observation and data elicitation have been completed, the next stage was the laborious task of transcribing, translating and analyzing the numerous data collected. I listened to all recorded tapes several times and then transcribed those which were relevant for the project. I also translated and analyzed the data that I wrote down during the interviews.



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the field study in the Tindanze Yili located at Kpatinga in the Gushegu District. The primary aim is to find out how witchcraft is perceived and understood by the Dagbamba. With this, four research questions were formulated to help in the study. The presentation was done in a logical sequence taking the research questions into consideration. Field interviews were conducted with the alleged witches in the camp, some opinion leaders, the earth priest of the camp as well as some resident respondents within Gaa, Sampimo and the Kpatinga community who perceived not to be witches. Where a wide range of responses were obtained during the interview session, the most significant responses that relate to the study were considered.

4.1 How is Witchcraft Perceived and Understood by the Dagbamba?

The belief in witchcraft differs from one society to another. What may be considered as witchcraft in one society may not be so in another society. For instance, given birth to twins in some societies is seen as a blessing from God almighty while it is perceived in Uduk society as a sign of witchcraft. In Uduk society, it is a sign to the woman that she has been contaminated by witchcraft (Awedoba, 2005). Also, a woman having beard in some societies raised suspicion that she might be a witch. People perceived to be witches are vulnerable in Dagbamba society. Due this, those who are being labelled as witches are suffering serious stigmatization as a consequence. Many Dagbamba believe the existence and practices of witchcraft. As a result there is the belief that certain types of human misfortunes are not due to accident, chance, the work of God or the lesser gods but are attributable directly or

indirectly to spiritual aggression mounted by some evil humans. In line with this thinking I undertook a survey to ascertain how the Dagbamba view the issue of witchcraft. In all, forty two respondents were interviewed and the following views came to light.

4.1.1 What Witchcraft is

Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) observe witches to be anti-social members of the society, and that they are the implacable enemies of the society in which they live. This observation seems to be in line with how Dagbamba perceive witches to be and could be a workable definition in thesis. Due to the dynamic nature of witches in Dagbamba, there is no exact description of whom witches are in Dagbamba society. A varied description of witches by the respondents came to light during the interview session.

Most of the respondents interviewed maintained that the word ‘witchcraft’ is about suspicion. It is about suspecting somebody of doing something that is anti-social in your life. In other words witchcraft is the use of magical powers to cause harm in a society. Others view witchcraft differently by referring it to both arrogant, innocent, old and young people whose behaviors are anti-social and contradict the norms of the society in which they live. According to some of the respondents, there is no doubt about the existence of witchcraft in the Dagbamba society.

In view of this, one of the respondents who believed he has been bewitched by a witch before emphasized; *“I strongly believed in the existence of witchcraft because I have ever been bewitched by a witch”* According to him, he had a fight with a certain woman some time ago whom he suspected to be a witch. After the fight, the woman went and sat somewhere and told people about her evil intentions against him. He emphasized;

–She told them that she would show me where power lies. She just wanted to kill me to serve as a deterrent to others. Fortunately on my part, one of those people came and told me about the evil intention of the woman. I did not take it kindly and went directly to the woman and told her that I was ready for that day but she should also prepare. The woman came into my room one night and tried to bewitch me. I was asleep on my bed when something just struck my mind like a dream. When I wake up, I saw something descending from the top of my room. When I saw it, I started calling the names of my ancestors to protect me. That thing just came and attacked me once and I struggled with it for some time and it left the room” The person added;

–My son, I must confess to you that, I myself, I am a wizard. I have dealt with witches for long and so I am spiritually armed. I don’t fear any witch and nobody can harm me spiritually”.

He concluded by saying that on that night there was blood all over his body but the witch couldn’t defeat him. He emphasized;

–When you look at my face you will see the scar like a tribal mark. On that day I gave the woman one week to join her ancestors and that was what exactly happened. The woman died within the given time”.

According to some of the respondents, it is not only old women who are witches in Dagbaŋ. Men and women, both young and old can also possess the witchcraft powers. It was also reported that a witch is someone who exhibits anti-social behavior towards others. However, when it comes to witchcraft cases, nobody will come out and say s/he is a witch in Dagbaŋ unless the person is a *nabipuyiŋga* (princess) or *Jinwara* (members of a traditional customary practice group believed to have potent invisible powers and can foresee and destroy evil spirits).

One of the respondents during the interview session explained that the Jinwariba (plural) stand tall in terms of spirituality in Dagbaŋ. According to him,

there is no evil about them because they are believed to save lives of people when witches tried to bewitch them. He emphasized;

–The „Jinwariba“ are believed to possess inherent super natural powers which they use knowingly to heal and to save lives of people who are believed to be attacked by witches. They are noted to foresee evil things that an ordinary eye cannot see. They foresee things that are yet to happen and to find solutions to such problems. Due to this the „Jinwariba“ work hand in hand with the local chiefs and the earth priest(s) in the Dagbamba communities. Their symbol of identification in Dagbaŋ is white beads worn around their left wrist and cowries woven around their walking sticks. Both men and women use it and this makes them unique in the Dagbamba society”

According to Alidu (2011) the *jinwariba* opposed to the witches, and that they have knowledge of magic and herbal medicine that is capable of fighting the witches thereby neutralizing the effects of witchcraft and saving the victims. He emphasizes that, the constructive spiritual powers of the *Jinwariba* counter balance or attacks the evil destructive powers of witches who are generally hated and feared in society. However a *jinwara* may see the bewitching activities of the witches but be unable to do anything except to talk or warn the victim.

It is believed that the *sonya* ‘witch’ and *Jinwara* are both belong to the same spiritual family but while the *sonya* is harmful to society, the *Jinwara* is harmless. In order not to create any confusion within their own spiritual fraternity, the *Jinwara* only warns the victim of the witchcraft hoping that he or she would exposes the witch to the society. Another reason why the *Jinwara* only has to talk or warn the victim is that, witches mostly get to harm only people they are related to. The *jinwara* therefore does not want to be blamed for planting hatred or enmity within any family so he/she only alarms the victim of the dangers inflicted upon him or her by the witch.

In light of this, a respondent who believed to be in her forties admitted she have a strong believed about the existence and the activities of witches in Dagbaŋ. She posits that;

–Even though I am a woman, but left to me, there is witchcraft in Dagbaŋ. From what I heard from people, in the past, there was a specific group of people who engages themselves in witchcraft’.

According to her, in the olden days, it was princesses who were engaging themselves in witchcraft activities.

From what the respondent said, it means that *nabipuyinga* (princess) can come out openly in public to let people know that she has the witchcraft powers. The *nabipuyinsi* (plural) occupied a high space in Dagbaŋ and therefore, they are respected in the Dagbamba society. These people are believed just like the *Jinwariba* to use their powers not to harm people but to protect and save people from evil attack. They are also believed to use their powers to support the chief to rule the community. Apart from the *nabipuyinsi*, a queen *‘napaya’* was also noted to practice witchcraft in Dagbaŋ. She was believed to possess the witchcraft powers for positive reason and not for negative purposes.

In another instance, one of the respondents who believed to be in his thirties posits that the concept of witchcraft is about evil. It is about using evil spirit to harm others. He indicates that one may see somebody in his/her dream using an evil spirit either in the form of animal or insect to harm him/her and before you realize the person may fall sick. If the person is a typical *Dagbandoo* ‘Dagbamba man’, he may first of all consult a diviner to confirm the source of the sickness. He recounted;

–Since when I was a child, I have been hearing the word „witchcraft” and it is real. So I believed in the existence of witchcraft. Witches are very powerful in terms of spirituality. A witch may tell you that you will see and she may even

give you the number of days you will be in existence in this world before you die and it will surely happen”.

This submission drew the attention of the researcher to an earlier submission made by one of the respondents who believed to be bewitched by a certain woman whom he suspected to be a witch.

According to Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) witches are those who possess the inherent, psychic power to send out their spirits invisibly, or through lower creatures, to harm others or do havoc to other persons. Awolalu and Dopamu’s perception about witches is in line with the perception of one of the respondents who believed to be in his forties. According to the respondent, a witch is a person who kills her fellow human beings without the use of a gun or any other physical weapon but through spiritual means. He maintained that a witch may sit in her room and send the spirit to harm somebody. He emphasized;

–Even though I am still a child but what I have been hearing from elders is that, a witchcraft substance may be a Kabire (a word used by Pagans for binding with juju powers), it may be a powdered substance which can easily dissolve in food substance or it may also be a Sambu (a charm buried in the ground for harming people) which they use for their own selfish gains”

In view of the above submission, how witches are perceived by both Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) and that of the respondent have some things in common. Firstly, they all tag witches to be bad people in society and secondly, they relates witchcraft to only spirituality.

This submission does not go well with the perception the Dagbamba have about witches. Both the respondent and Awolalu and Dopamu focused their submission on only the negative side of witchcraft. Among the Dagbamba, witchcraft is believed to have importance in society. One important about witchcraft in the

Dagbamba society is that, it help to direct and shape the behaviour of people in the society. Because witches are noted to be wicked members in society, people humble themselves and developed the culture of sharing. The norms and taboos of the society are highly observed and respected by members within the society since nobody want to fall a victim.

The respondent further notes that, apart from gender (male and female) witches have no types in Dagbaŋ. According to him, a witch is a witch. *–We don't have good witch and bad witch in Dagbaŋ. They are all the same*” He indicates that witches can also be classified in terms of spiritual strength. Some of them are spiritually stronger than others. A witch can have more than one witchcraft substance and each substance will have its purpose. According to the respondent, some of the witchcraft substances is just a crocodile head and if the witch wants to harm somebody she will just open it and mention the person's name or she will open it and command the person's shadow into the crocodile head and after that she will close it and the person who has been put into the mouth of the crocodile will die.

Another respondent who believed to be in his fifties debunked the above idea by saying *–witches are of different categories*. There are witches that are born with the ability to perform witchcraft. Others have to be initiated into a witchcraft cult, to learn the secrets of witchcraft. The respondent indicates that, *–there are two types of witches in Dagbaŋ*” He maintain that, apart from the gender (male and female) witches can be categories into two and that is the good and the bad ones. He emphasized;

“Witches can be grouped into two categories and these are the good witches „sopelli” singular or „sopela” plural (white witch(s)) and the bad witches „sosabini” singular or „sosabla” plural(black witch(s))” He added *–The white witches are those who are believed to be good and to lesser extent do good*

things and black witches are those who use their witchcraft powers for evil intentions”

The bad witches use their powers to cause harm in society and they are normally believed to be black and the good ones are white. The black witches are believed to be wicked and use their powers to bewitch people and destroy their properties.

Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) agree with the respondent by stating that, even though witches are usually evil, some witches are sometimes thought to be good. For instance, some witches claimed to protect their families and businesses with witchcraft. Such witches are known to belong to no guilds but operate on their own.

From the respondents, one could deduce that, witchcraft plays a crucial role by influencing the lives of the Dagbamba people. Both respondents believed that there is witchcraft in Dagbaj. The respondents have different views about witchcraft. Many of the respondents did their analysis based on the negative side of witchcraft. They tag witches to be enemies of progress in society. But in another instance, one could also deduce that, some of the respondents have different understanding about witchcraft by looking at the positive side of witchcraft.

4.1.2 Witchcraft Accusation

Witchcraft accusation acts as a punishment for those who do not cooperate with local norms. According to one of the respondents, there are a number of factors that may cause witchcraft accusation in the Dagbamba society and some of these factors are;

- (1) Through dreams
- (2) Through fighting and
- (3) Through cheating

The Dagbamba locals have strong believe in dreams. Through dreams, a large number of people are being labelled as witches in Dagbaŋ and suffering serious stigmatization as a consequence. They belief that a person can foresee what may happen to him/her in future through dreams. When a typical Dagbamba man ‘Dagbandoo’ experiences a bad dream, the first thing he would do is to consult a *baya* ‘diviner’ to get the interpretation of the dream. Through consultation the diviner would tell him the cause of the dream. One funny thing about the Dagbamba locals is that, they never attribute good dreams to witchcraft but they always attached bad dream to bewitchment. Bad dreams are the common cause of witchcraft accusation in Dagbaŋ. A person may see somebody in his or her dream trying to harm him/her. When such incident happened, the person may raise alarm and may end up by accusing somebody.

Fighting is considered as a bad moral behaviour in every society. It forms the bases of witchcraft accusation in Dagbaŋ. According to the respondent witches like people who fight among themselves.

–Witches easily harm those who like fighting among themselves. When your tempers go high, you can easily say forbidden things to one another. When a witch hears this, she can use it as an opportunity to harm any of you and at the end, you will be accusing each other and the witch would be free” He emphasized.

The submission made by the respondent means that, one could be accused of witchcraft in the Dagbamba society without knowing the bases of the accusation. Somebody may use forbidden words to treat his or her enemy without the intention of harming the person. When witches hear this, they can find their way inn to harm the person and witchcraft accusation may set in.

Cheating is another cause of witchcraft accusation in Dagbamba society. You may see somebody as an old person and try to cheat the person. She may not have the witchcraft powers but because of her age, God almighty may intervene and witchcraft accusation will set in. The Dagbamba have a strong believe that witchcraft can be perform by the possessor, but that it is also possible to order someone else to perform it instead of oneself. With this according to the respondent, if the person who feels cheated has the supernatural powers she may use it to harm you. But if she does not have the powers on her own, she may order someone else to do it on her behalf. He emphasized;

–Sometimes the person may not have the witchcraft powers by her own but knows somebody who has it. She may go and explain to the person what you have done to her and seek support from the one having it”

Apart from the points listed above by the respondent, ‘old age’ is also a factor of witchcraft accusation in the Dagbamba society. ‘Old age’ which should have seen as a blessing from God turned to be a punishment to some individuals, especially women in the Dagbamba society. The Dagbamba have varied perceptions about whom to be called a witch. Many Dagbamba use the physical appearance while others use the character of a person to tag her as a witch. Some people even go beyond that by using ‘old age’ to labelled people as witches. The Dagbamba have terminologies for both men and women who are very old. The general term for people who are above seventy years of age is *nɪnkurugu* which literary mean an ‘old person’.

A man who is above seventy years of age is called *Dokurugu* ‘old man’ and that of a woman is known as *Payikurugu or Payikpema* which means an ‘old woman’. These terminologies can sometime be given as birth names for children. The term *Payikurugu* however has a serious implication on women. Many people interpret it to mean a witch. The terminology used for witch among the Dagbamba is ‘*sonya*’.

People however failed to differentiate between these two terms and used it interchangeably. Any woman who is above seventy years of age in the Dagbamba society becomes a suspect when any form of calamity befalls her neighborhood. She became vulnerable as community members would start calling her *Payikuru*. People within the community would start pointing accusing fingers at her and even warn their children not to go near her.

Another cause of witchcraft accusation in Dagbamba is the belief in spirituality. Many people lack the idea of modern technology which has the tendency of influencing their lives. It is indeed make them to relate all their misfortunes to witches. Abdallah (2015) indicates that different cultures have different systems of health beliefs to explain what causes illness, how it can be cured or treated, and who should be involved in the process. White (2015) argues that many traditional Africans believe spell-casting and witchcraft to be other way one could become sick. There is the view that people with evil powers could cause other people they see as their enemies or are disrespectful to them to become sick as a way of punishment. White (2015) develops his argument by citing Obinna (2012) and Thorpe (1993). He emphasized that;

–Many traditional African communities are of the view that certain illnesses which defy scientific treatment can be transmitted through witchcraft and unforeseen forces; these include barrenness, infertility, attacks by dangerous animals, snake bites by dangerous snakes, persistent headaches and repeated miscarriages”.

In the past, Dagbamba used to relate diseases and poor agricultural harvest to witchcraft. Diseases were viewed to be caused by attacks from evil or bad spirits. Even though this believe still persist among some individuals, scientist came out to prove the causes of some of these diseases. For instance, some of the diseases are

believed to be caused by poor hygienic conditions. Poor agricultural harvest may also be caused by lack of knowledge in scientific farming.

Adhikari and Adinkrah (2014) did a comparative analysis of witchcraft beliefs and witchcraft-related violence in Ghana and Nepal, and from their findings it was clear that, persons often accused of witchcraft tend to share a number of characteristics in terms of socio-economic background. They indicate that alleged witches tend to be illiterate, uneducated, unemployed and poor.

–Poor and illiterate persons are unlikely to know their civil, political, legal or human rights. Most cannot afford legal counsel to represent them in civil litigation against their accusers or to have other means to protect themselves in the face of abuse. They are therefore susceptible to witchcraft accusation and subsequent mistreatment”.

Lack of education is a key factor for witchcraft accusation in Dagbamba society. This came to light when the researcher had an interaction with some of the residents at the Tindanee Yili. Most of the residents in the camp attributed their accusation to lack of education. The illiteracy rate in the Ghanaian rural communities is very high. Due to this more than half of the residents in the camp confirmed they had no primary education. Most of them could not read and write and this made it quite difficult for them to defend themselves when they were accused.

In an interview with one of the longest serving residents who has stayed in the camp for about ten years and believed to be in her sixties emphasized;

–Hmm.... My husband, illiteracy is a big disease that is killing us in our communities. If I were to have a primary education, I wouldn't have been in this camp. When they accused me of witchcraft, I was subjected to severe beating and molestation and due to this I was totally paralyzed. My children had to take me to the Tamale Teaching Hospital (TTH) for treatment and the medical doctor advised them to file the case in court”

Due to lack of education, the children did not see the need to file such a controversial case in court. Because the children were not aware of the rights and responsibilities of every citizen in this country, they considered the advice of the medical doctor to be a waste of time, energy and resource. The submission of the respondent has supported the NCWAG (2014) report. The report indicates that victims of witchcraft allegations are given harsh and inhumane treatments, which include physical assault, banishment, social ridicule, isolation, lynching and death. The Dagbamba have a strong believe in spirituality and due to this, they do not send witchcraft related cases to court for settlement. Traditionally, cases that are believed to have spiritual implications attached to it are normally send either to the chief palace or to an anti-witchcraft shrine for settlement.

Lack of knowledge in scientific farming also form the bases of witchcraft accusation in Dagbamba society. Ignorance of scientific agriculture cause people to believe that witchcraft is real. Farmers need to be educated on the modern scientific way of farming as the poor harvesting is attributed to the evil deeds of witches. The use of fertilizers, improved seeds and insecticides brings about increase in crop production. Ignorance of scientific farming in most cases is the cause of poor agricultural harvest and not witches.

Wrong career choice can also form the bases of witchcraft accusation in the Dagbamba society. Many people go in for careers they have no basic knowledge or information about. Before one can choice a better career, one need to do consultation through career experts. Many people may just see others making progress in a certain career and decided to jump in without consulting career experts. When such people failed to make progress in his career of choice, he or she would begin to sense that, somebody is plotting evil against him or her.

4.1.3 What are the witchcraft Activities?

There are many ways a witch can bewitch a person but from the information gathered during the interview session, most of the respondents indicates that, the easiest way is through gifts of items and food. In light of this, one of the residents who has not been to her village for about seven years now indicates that, her accusation was triggered through this motive. According to her, one of her brother's wife gave birth to a baby girl and her senior sister went to the house and told their brother that she would support them to take good care of the child. She recounted;

–One day, my sister went to the market and bought beads. When she came home, she went to our brother's house and put the beads around the child's waist. Some few weeks later our brother's wife who was the mother of the child died. When the incident happened, they said it was I and my elder sister who killed our brother's wife"

Several respondents who were interviewed agree that witches in Dagbamba society operates through diverse activities. They maintain that the activities of witches are said to be in total darkness. Most of the witches operate in the night when people are busy sleeping while others operate in daytime. According to one of the respondents, witches have leaders in their operations. He recounted;

–Witches have their „Magazia“ (Queen mother) and even butchers. You may see a witch or somebody perceive not to be a witch having „karinyekurugu“ (a big sore which cannot be healed). This sore may be on the part of the person's leg. The secret is that, witches may be using the person's leg as their butcher's stick which they use for cutting their meat. So any time you see the sore expanding, it is a signal that they have killed somebody and have used the leg for their operations"

According to Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) witches are mostly women, but men can also be found, especially at the head of the guilds. When it comes to witchcraft activities, some Dagbamba people tag only women especially the old aged

to be the activist of witchcraft. For instance, Mahama (2004) tag only old women to be witches in Dagbaŋ. He believed that men possess a positive antidote and therefore stand the chance of saving the lives of individuals when witches attempt to harm them in their presence. In an interview with some of the respondents it was not only women who suffer witchcraft accusation, but men may also be accused of that kind of practice. The respondents gave the example of the Gnani witch camp in Yendi where both men and women live as victims of witchcraft accusation.

Accordingly, the activities of both witches and wizards in Dagbaŋ are the same. They are all believed to possess the magical powers and their activities are secretly done. The only thing that differentiates witches from wizards is the name(s) that brought about their gender identities as indicated earlier on by some of the respondents. Witches are females and wizards are their male counterparts. They both possess the magical powers and have the same ideology. Being a witch does not matter what age you are. Most of the respondents indicate that;

–Both adults and infants can change their physical forms or appeared physical as human with clear identity and bewitch their enemies or relatives”.

Some people are of the view that, although wizards are expected to save lives of people as indicated by Mahama (2004), not all wizards behave that way. The Dagbamba locals believe that, the activities of witches cannot be carried out successfully without the support of the wizards. It is the wizards who prepare the grounds through divinations to pave way for the witches to operate. Through the consultation, they can give the alleged witches the days and time (whether in the morning, afternoon or in the evening) that their activities can be carried on successfully without any hindrance.

Some of these wizards are opinion leaders or traditional council members in their respective communities and therefore, no relevant decision can be taken within the community without their consent. With this, any decision that is taken within the community that would go against the so-called witches would finally get to them. They work hand in hand with the witches and therefore link any important information that is trending within the community to the alleged witches.

Witchcraft and spirituality does not only believed and practice by the Dagbamba locals alone. Some Islamic clerics also assume the role of the traditional priest(s) by using verses in the Holy Qur'an to exorcise witches and to deliver people from demons. According to Igwe (2016) Mallams who practice Tijaniyya, which is the oldest rendering of Islamic tradition in the Dagbanj Kingdom use the Qur'an to do miracles, conduct special prayers, and perform divination and rituals. Alidu (2011) agrees with Igwe (2016) by indicating that;

—The Tijaniyyah being a Sufi group believes strongly in spirituality and the efficacy of using the Qur'an to solve diverse needs of humanity. As a result of this belief, the Tijaniyyah Mallams engage in many acts of healing and protection to people who came to them for help. Through this, they also exorcise people who are possessed by Jinn and witchcraft”.

Some of the Tijaniyyah Mallams claim to have knowledge into the past and the future predicament of people who visit them. They then depend on the problems found to prepare some charms to protect or enhance the fortune of those people. Alidu (2011) observes that the Ahlus-Sunnah and the Ahmadiyyah vehemently condemn these practices and likened them to the indigenous Dagbamba traditional beliefs and practices. Indeed such practices have negative impact as the beneficiaries of such

magical powers sometimes use them to perpetrate evil and vices like causing divorce, armed robbery, *Sakawa* (internet fraud) and many others.

In an interview with one of the respondents, a Mallam who is believed to be in his fifties, it came to light that most women may not have strong witchcraft powers to bewitch some people. Some of them may not even have the witchcraft powers at all but they can bewitch their enemies through the support of some Mallams. According to the respondent upon consulting the Mallam for bewitchment of an enemy, he would first of all ask you to provide the full name of the person intended to bewitch. This would help him to check the status of the person's *ɲmariga* 'star' (whether it is strong or weak). In the Dagbamba society, every human being is believed to possess a *ɲmariga* (star) during birth till death. The *ɲmariga* is believed to be on earth guiding the person till the person's death. When the person dies, the *ɲmariga* will also disappear from earth. This would again determine the success or failure of the Mallam's work and would also inform him whether the person can easily be bewitched or not.

After going through this process according to the respondent, the Mallam would then ask the person to come with something belonging to the victim which the Mallam would use to perform the rituals. This can be anything including: sandals, underpants, hair, fingernails, sponge, cloth, shirt, etc. The respondent further explained that after using these items for the rituals, the Mallam may give the person directives on how to use those items. He may either ask the suspect to return it for the victim to use it, or ask her to give it to a beggar on the street, or he may ask her to throw it away or bury it on the ground and he may even ask her to put it on crossroads. If the suspect follows the directives of the Mallam very well, the charm

would start to work on the victim but if the suspect defied the directives, it would not work or may work against her.

The respondent concluded by stating that, even though some Mallams engaged in bewitchment of people by using verses in the noble Qur'an, some of them use other verses in that same Qur'an to detect, protect and to exorcise witches as well. He emphasized.

–Well I would say that, the work of the Mallams have both advantages and disadvantages. The Mallams are not just using the verses in the Holy Qur'an for the purpose of bewitchment only but they also use it to detect, protect and to exorcise witches”.

In order to bewitch a person, apart from using the person's *ɲmariga* _star' as stated by the respondent, some Mallams will divine to find out the day the victim was born (e.g. from Monday to Sunday). Because of this reason the Dagbamba locals restrict the birth day or dates of their children. They do not expose them when the children are grown.

The Dagbamba are believed to be so religious. Most of them believe to have faith in both Islam and the traditional religion and because of that they hold a dual membership. Other people dropped the traditional religion and practice only Islam. Due to this belief, when there is a witchcraft case in any Dagbamba community, there is always a mixed reaction. They either send the accused person to a Mallam or to an anti-witchcraft shrine for solution. In order not to violate the norms of the Islamic teachings, those who practice only the Islamic religion prefer to send the accused person to the Mallams for solution rather than sending them to the shrine. The belief in Islam is that, any form of magic, good or bad, is considered forbidden in Islam since it is perceived as an attempt to prevail over the will of God.

Witches are also believed to use poisonous substances to harm or totally get rid of their enemies. When somebody dies in the Dagbamba society, the tradition demands that the body of the deceased person goes through some ritual bathing before given a befitting burial. When it comes to bathing the corpse, according to Abdallah and Adam (2015), the first born son of the deceased is often the first to be given the opportunity to bath his late father. Traditionally, a woman does not __bãh her deceased husband in the Dagbamba society. After that the other children will go one after the other to __bãh their late father. This will continue until all the immediate family members, who also want to have their turns to get into the room to __bãh the corpse.

According to some of the respondents, witches take advantage of this ritual bathing by picking the *pihim* (the decay substance in a person after death) which they can use to harm their victims by way of mixing it with the victim's food. The *pihim* is believed to be poisonous and can easily dissolve due to its watery nature. A little drop of it in a food substance, when consume is believed to cause harm in human body which can result into death. Some of the respondents also indicates that, when somebody died in the Dagbamba society, witches can use cotton to clean the saliva in the deceased mouth or any form of flue from the deceased and soak the cotton in water for some time so that they can use that water to harm their victims.

Through the belief in witches and their activities in Dagbamba society, some people do abandon their homes and families just to escape the evil deeds of witches. Witches in the Dagbamba society are believed not to cross boundaries to attack their enemies. In the olden days, the belief was that, when witches want to bewitch somebody in the Dagbamba society and the person manages to move out of the

geographical area of where the witch lives and settles at another geographical location, the witch cannot cross the boundary to harm the person.

But one of the respondents who believed to be in his forties debunked this notion by stating that, this belief no longer holds because Dagbamba witches now have different sources of getting their witchcraft powers. He emphasized;

–Some of the alleged witches normally force their way outside the Dagban kingdom to purchase their witchcraft substance from other ethnic groups which enables them to cross boundaries to bewitch their victims. Witches can even travel abroad to bewitch their enemies”.

From the interactions with the respondents it is evident as some of them maintained that, people who are normally attacked by witches in the Dagbamba society are those who do not conform to the norms of the society. This believed is in line with Awedoba (2005) as he aptly puts it that, witches are believed to attack taboo breakers so that when they die their death can be attributed to the ancestors and gods, thus allowing the witch to escape responsibility and culpability.

Some of the respondents however debunked this notion by stating that a well behaved people in society can also be attacked by witches. In an interview with one of the respondents, he emphasized that;

“Witches normally attack the well behaved and responsible persons in society. People who respect, observes the norms and taboos of the society and even responsible for the welfare of the so-called witches are believed to be those who are easily attacked and killed by witches. They are the target group of witches in the Dagbamba society”

This perception is true about the Dagbamba witches. Witches sometimes even fear to attack the taboo breakers in society because they know that, those people can easily use their radical or uncultured behaviour to take revenge.

4.2 What are the Modes of Acquisition of Witchcraft in Dagbaɲ?

How witchcraft is acquired among the Dagbamba remains secret. During an interview session with my respondents, some of them revealed that, witchcraft can be acquired through various means. One of such means as indicated by the respondents was hereditary. Witchcraft can be acquired through family lineage, either through inheriting it from a deceased relative or obtaining it from a relative who is living. People practice witchcraft in Dagbaɲ today without even knowing the source of their powers.

Some of them are believed to inherit it from their mothers, grandparents and uncles. Even though somebody may possess the magical powers and have children and none of her children nor any of her family members inherit it after the person's death. There are still families in Dagbaɲ who are noted to be witches. One of the respondents emphasized that;

“I know some individuals who were witches and gave birth to children and the children too are witches and even their grandchildren are witches”

The concept of the transfer of witchcraft powers from one person to another is a common belief by many ethnic groups in Ghana and among the Dagbamba. Witches who are considered to be the wicked ones always transfer their powers to the innocent people without their notice. Children brought up by a practicing witch are likely to acquire the witchcraft powers through the transition act.

Other means of witchcraft acquisition among the Dagbamba is through purchasing and receiving of gifts. Witchcraft is believed to be acquired through purchasing and to some extent through receiving of gifts which knowingly or unknowingly believed to be infested by the magical powers of a practicing witch.

Among the Dagbamba just like the Nepal and the Akan ethnic groups, witchcraft powers are believed to be acquired by purchasing it from a practicing witch.

Some people bought the powers with some little amount of money from a spiritualist with the intention of using it to protect their children or for evil purposes. A respondent who believed to be in his forties, stress that witchcraft powers may be acquired through spiritualist or the medicine men. He noted that, establishing contact or seeking spiritual support from this people can lead to witchcraft acquisition. According to the respondent, some of the spiritualist or the medicine men are so wicked to the extent that, they can give somebody the witchcraft powers without the person's knowledge. Through the interaction with some of the residents, this assertion came to light.

A resident who believed to be in her sixties and stayed in Tindanze Yili for about seven years admitted that, she had established good relationship with so many spiritualist with the intention of seeking spiritual support from them before she was accused and move to the camp. According her, she was a successful business woman and so her intension was to grow and protect her business but not to harm anybody. She recounted;

–My son.... Even though I belief I do not have the witchcraft powers but I suspect this might be the cause of my accusation. As a business woman, I never go to my fellow woman to help me spiritually to grow my business but as for men, I went to many of them to perform money rituals for me. Even my husband was aware of that and he was even helping me spiritually to grow and protect my business”

According her, another thing was that, she suffered a lot from child bearing. She went through a series of miscarriage and even buried her seven children. She lamented *–Anytime I gave birth, the child would die”*. Through this, according to the

respondent, people were insulting her, even her co-wives, just to leave her husband but she refused. *“My husband himself even asked me to leave him and get another man to marry but I refused”*. She indicates that, her husband took her to many spiritual men including the traditional herbalist and Mallams for spiritual protection. She concluded by saying; *“If somebody secretly gave the witchcraft powers to me without my knowledge, it left with God and the person”* she emphasized.

Another means of getting witchcraft powers as mentioned by the respondents is through friendship. Somebody may acquire the witchcraft substance from a friend who is a practicing witch.

4.3 What are the characteristics of a witch in the Dagbamba society?

Sagrista (2015) points out that, witches are said to be unsociable, unfriendly, bad-tempered, uncharitable, and prone to unusual or suspicious behavior, especially at night. They are said to eat human wastes, and to rob graves to satisfy their hunger for human flesh. The perception by Sagrista (2015) reflects the image of witches in the Dagbamba society.

Respondents gave varied answers regarding the behaviour characteristics the alleged witches' exhibit in the Dagbamba society. As indicated by some of the respondents, it would be very difficult for a commoner to use the physical appearance to accuse somebody as a witch. Some of them posit that even though witchcraft is considered as a hidden agenda within a person, there are some signals that indicate that somebody is a witch. One of my respondents during the interview session highlighted the following four behavioural traits as the characteristics of a witch in the Dagbamba society.

- Witches make unnecessary request from people
- A witch does not sit at one place

- Witches are high tempered and very aggressive
- They do not wish other people well

According to the respondent, a woman making unnecessary request in the Dagbamba society is a sign of witchcraft. For instance, if a woman prepares a soup and put it aside and always request soup from others, such woman will finally be accused of witchcraft.

Any woman who doesn't sit at one place can easily be tagged as a witch in Dagbanj. Women who always move from one house to the other interfering in other people's matters are always accused of witchcraft.

A tongue of a person can easily lead her to witchcraft accusation. For instance, if a person like using hash words to others she will end up by being accused a witch. Aggressive and highly tempered people are always accused of being witches in the Dagbamba society. People who always fight with others are considered as witches in Dagbanj.

One of the respondents indicates that another characteristic of witches in the Dagbamba society is that, they like chewing long *dibiga* (a chew stick used to clean the teeth) at night and also have a reserved personality. According to him, *any woman who like chewing ,dibiga" in the night can easily be accuse of witchcraft"*. Witches do not sell out their ideas to other people. Some of them even feel shy to speak in public. The respondent concluded by stating that, the most dangerous side of witches is that they pretend to be nice to people in society. Their faces look bright when they appear before people but inside their hearts is totally black.

4.4 What are the processes involved in witchcraft exorcism in the Dagbamba society?

4.4.1 The Concept of Exorcism

Exorcism is the process of removing the magical powers of the alleged witches to make them powerless. Exorcism varies from shrine to shrine. According to Onyinah (2002) the general procedure of exorcism includes confession of sins, revealing the names of witch-spirit animals, submission of witchcraft substances for destruction and the main ritual which is sometimes followed by a specific command of *'we take out your witchcraft'*. After this, the person is said to have been delivered from witchcraft.

4.4.2 Witchcraft Exorcism

Exorcism, *'Nyuhubu, or sabili ηmɛbu or sabili dihibu'* as it is known by the Dagbamba locals is traditionally practiced by the earth priest *'Buyulana'* singular or *'Buyulaannima'* plural (*those in charge of family deities or privately owned deities*) and the *'Tindana'* singular or *'Tindaamba'* plural also known as *Tɪɲbia* (custodians of the land). They are in charge of the traditional affairs in Dagbaŋ and believed to be closer to the gods and the ancestors. To be a *Tindana* in the Dagbamba tradition does not depend on one's wealth or one's level of experience but it is through inheritance *'Siyili'* and therefore, one must come from the *Tindaamba* family. The *Tindana* is the chief priest in every community in Dagbaŋ and he/she is in charge of looking after the welfare of the land and the deity belonging to the entire community. Unlike the *Tindana*, one can also become a *Buyulana* through inheritance or by purchasing the deity as his/her private asset.

There was quite an interesting debate among respondents when the issue of whether witchcraft powers can be exorcised came up during the interview session.

Many of the respondents doubt the credibility of the anti-witchcraft shrines and therefore find it difficult to live with the alleged witches who went through the exorcism rituals. After the purification rituals, the accused persons are always deserted by the members of their communities and even lose their trust, respect and are not even allowed to take part in any communal activity in their respective communities. Some of the respondents do not believe that witches can be exorcised while others believe they can be exorcised.

This mentality makes it difficult for the alleged witches to reintegrate with their families after they have gone through the ritual process. Their lives are always in danger when any form of calamity befalls their residential and neighboring communities. During an interview session with some of the respondents, it was emphasized by one of the respondents who said he does not believe in witchcraft exorcism that;

“On the part of witchcraft exorcism, I don’t believe that witchcraft powers can be exorcised. The traditional priests are just doing something to represent something. A witch may go through this ritual process and at the end, she would be more spiritually stronger than before”

In view of the above submission, one of the residents who is believed to be in her sixties and has stayed in the camp for about three years indicates that when she was accused of witchcraft, her husband was very sad. Because of that her husband took her to *Nawunni* (one of the anti-witchcraft shrines in Dagban) to confirm the incident.

“My son, before my husband brought me to the Tindanze camp, he first took me to Nawunni to confirm whether I was really possessing the witchcraft powers or not. When we got there, the earth priest asked me to state the reason why they brought me to the shrine. After that the earth priest asked me several times whether he should go ahead and perform the rituals and I

responded yes. He went on to appease the gods by slaughtering a fowl. He then gave me some concoction to drink. After drinking it he asked me to go inside the Nawuni River and wash my legs and I did so and came out and nothing happened” she recounted.

According to the respondent, after she went through the exorcism ritual processes in the Nawuni River successfully, her husband took her back to their community but she was not trusted by the community people. When the husband took her back to the community, she stayed in the community for about one year and the chief banished her from the community. She concluded by saying;

–Within that period, I was something else in the community. I was totally deserted by my family and relatives. Many people in the community even warn their children not to come near me and because of that, children were running away from me whenever they saw me”

Another resident, a woman who was visually impaired for about ten years now and believed to be between seventy and eighty years of age recounted her life experience in the witch camps. According to her, she has spent most of her life in both Gnani and the Tindanzee camp. She has been a resident in the Gnani camp in Yendi for about seven (7) years before she moved to the Tindanzee camp. But because of the negative perception people have about the alleged witches who went through the exorcism rituals, it was quite difficult for her to reintegrate with her people. She served most of her life in the witch camps. She emphasized;

–My son look, because people loose trust on us after we go through the exorcism rituals, most of us would end up our lives in the witch camps. Can you imagine after spending about seven years in the Gnani camp in Yendi, I went back to my village to reintegrate with my people and the community members rejected me again?” She asked rhetorically.

She is currently a resident at the Tindanzee camp for about eight years now. It is her granddaughter who is staying with her in order to support her in the camp.

Some of the respondents debunked the mentality of those questioning the credibility of the anti-witchcraft shrines. According to them, the anti-witchcraft shrines are very powerful and therefore have the ability to exorcise witches. They indicate that once an alleged witch passes through the exorcism ritual process, she would become clean and powerless. It was explained that before a person can be exorcised in any of the anti-witchcraft shrines, the family would be charged to submit some items including a fowl (it can be any colour), money and alcohol depending on the anti-witchcraft shrine.

For instance, some residents in the Tindanzee camp indicate that, after they have submitted those items the traditional priest would consult the ancestors through the deity. After that, the earth priest would slaughter the fowl and drop the blood into the calabash containing water and add some alcohol in it and then asked the suspected witch to drink the concoction. According to Bekoe (2016) it is believed that these concoctions contain higher spiritual powers that will automatically paralyze the witchcraft powers of the accused.

According to the respondents, after slaughtering the fowl, the position of the fowl (whether it falls on its back or front) is a first clue to determine whether the person is a witch or not. Secondly, if the person has the powers and takes the concoction, she will be growing lean. She cannot even sleep in the night. The person will even realize that she is not progressing in life. After taking it, she cannot do anything neither can she have any power to harm anybody.

This was truly confirmed by one of the respondents who is a traditional leader in his community. According to him, the alleged witches who went through the exorcism rituals have no powers to harm anybody again. He emphasized;

“Yes I believe there are witches in Dagbaŋ and they are very powerful in terms of spirituality. Those who are questioning the credibility of the anti-witchcraft shrines are in total darkness. I am a traditional leader and I believe in spirituality. The alleged witches who went through the exorcism rituals in the anti-witchcraft shrines are neutral and therefore have no powers to harm anybody. So the perceived witches in the witch camps especially residents in the Tindanzee camp are neutral and therefore no witchcraft activities can be carried out in the Tindanzee camp”

4.4.3 Initiation into a witch Camp

Tindanzee Yili is an organized place which serves as a home for the alleged witches. The camp is under the supervision of the earth priest. He does his work in consultation with the Kpatinga chief. One cannot just move into the camp without the consent of the earth priest and the community chief. Before an accused person is sent to the camp, the family of the accused needs to seek permission by way of pre-informing the earth priest. The earth priest would then forward their request to the community chief to seek his approval or rejection. In order to be a member of the camp, it is quite expensive as the family of the alleged witch would be asked to submit some items to the traditional priest for a ritual performance.

Before a newcomer is initiated and accepted to be part of the family, she needs to go through some ritual processes which are mandatory for every resident in the camp. The rituals in the camp are grouped into three phases. These include the first ritual, the second and the third ritual. The first ritual is done the first day the accused person set her foot to the camp, which I will term as the ‘welcome ritual’. The second ritual is done after some few weeks the accused person settles at the camp which will

also be termed as ‘shaving of the hair’ and the third ritual is done when the accused person is set to leave the camp, which I would term the ‘send-off rituals’. All rituals are mandatory as it is important for the person’s successful stay in the camp. According to the earth priest each of these phases has its own spiritual implication.

In order to perform the ‘welcome ritual’ the family of the alleged witch would be task to present some list of items to the earth priest. The items include fowl (any colour), alcohol and an amount of one hundred Ghana cedis (GH¢ 100.00) for the first phase of the rituals. Before the ritual is performed, the earth priest would first ask the alleged witch the reason why she decided to move to the camp. After the interrogation, the earth priest would consult the deity with some incantations and slaughter the fowl. After the fowl is slaughtered, he would then drop the blood into a calabash containing water and then add the alcohol for the alleged witch to drink.

When the earth priest slaughters the fowl, he will throw it on air to determine the position of the fowl. The position of the fowl can only be interpreted by the earth priest. According to the priest, when the fowl falls on its back, it indicates that the person does not have the witchcraft powers and when the fowl falls on its front, it indicates that the person have the powers. When she has the witchcraft powers and drinks the mixture, she cannot sleep, but when she is clean, nothing would happen to her.

This therefore is followed by shaving off the accused person’s hair. Shaving the accused person’s hair is the second phase of the ritual performance in the camp. This involves a different set of items to be presented to the earth priest. This time round, the items are quite expensive as it includes a fowl (any colour), goat, gunea fowl and an amount of one hundred Ghana cedis (GH¢ 100.00). The traditional priest indicates that each of the items listed above have a spiritual meaning attached to it.

The shaving indicates that, the bad hair that was on the accused person's head has been shaved off and she is now clean. If an accused person is unshaved, her movement in the camp would be restricted. It indicates that the person is not clean and therefore cannot move freely in the camp. The spiritual implication attached to this is that, if the unshaved witch goes outside the camp and anything happens to her, no medicine man on this earth can cure her and she would definitely have to die.

The last ritual performance in the camp is the send-off ritual which serves as the final ritual performance in the camp. This ritual is normally performed when the alleged witch is set to go back to her original community. The items needed for the final phase is a fowl (any colour) which the earth priest would use to appease the gods; inform the gods that the alleged person is set to leave the camp. After this ritual, the accused person would now be free to go back to her original community and reintegrate with them.

4.4.4 How does one become a Traditional Exorcists?

To obtain information on this issue my attention was drawn to people who are the repositories of the traditional practice of exorcism. In my investigations it came to light that before one can practice exorcism in the Dagbamba society, one needs to go through some training by a renowned exorcists. The Dagbamba societies and the Yoruba tradition have similar view when it comes to training an exorcist but what differentiate the two traditions is that after the training among the Dagbamba, there is no need for certification as it is in the Yoruba tradition. To qualify as exorcists in the Yoruba tradition, according to Jimoh (2014) one must undergo training and receive certification from a renowned master.

The Dagbamba witches can be exorcised either in a mosque or in a shrine. There are many Mallams in Dagbambay who assume the role of the traditional priest by

attending to peoples spiritual problems. These Mallams use some verses in the Qur'an to exorcise witches. Traditionally, the *Tindana*'s (*land owners*) and the *Buyulana*'s (*those in charge of family deities or privately own deities*) are the people who qualify to practice exorcism in the Dagbamba society.

The *Tindana*'s case is different from the *Buyulana*'s when it comes to the training of an exorcist. For the *Tindanas*, their skills are believed to be acquired through inheritance. They are believed to acquire the skills from their fathers or grandfathers who were renowned exorcists. They go through training as apprentices by being guided on how to diagnose a problem and how to handle cases brought before them.

Some of the *Buyulana*'s go through some training by renowned exorcists before they can practice exorcism in the Dagbamba society. This is because, most of the shrines are privately owned by the *Buyulana*'s as their private assets but some too belong to the family. It is through the family shrine that one can get the skills through inheritance. Before a person purchases a shrine as his private asset, one needs to go through some training before he is allowed to practice as exorcists.

Even though one needs to go through some training before practicing *Nyuhubu* 'exorcism' in the Dagbamba society, the most important thing is about one's level of maturity, trustworthiness and morality. There is no need for certification after the training because with our traditional education the ability to do something well after training is enough evidence of certification.

4.5 Detecting Witches

In the Dagbamba society, witches can be identified through many ways including; divination, dreams, carrying the deceased person believed to be killed by witches, by sending the witch to the anti-witchcraft shrine and also through

confession by the victim. Because of the dynamic nature of witches (i.e. turning themselves into any other form of creatures) and also believed to be invisible when undertaking their activities, it is impossible for a person to use an ordinary eye to identify somebody as a witch *‘sonya’*. The only way an ordinary person can use to identify somebody as *sonya* is through the consultation of a diviner, dreams and confessions by the alleged witch.

Taking the alleged person to the anti-witchcraft shrine is a practical way of detecting witches in the Dagbamba society. This came to light when the researcher had an interaction with one of the respondents, he emphasized;

—I have ever witnessed a witch confessing before an earth priest but it has been a long time. There was one earth priest in Kutum where I came from, who was dealing with witchcraft cases. He was a Konkomba by tribe. Day in day out, people from far and near were going to the man with their spiritual problems. Whenever they brought a suspected witch to the anti-witchcraft shrine, the man will give the victim the chance to say whatever is bothering her mind. The spiritual weapon he was using for the rituals was a broom. After that, he would consult the deity and hold the broom near the victim's neck. If the suspect is a witch, the broom would stick to the person neck. If the suspect refuses to confess, he would repeat it for the second time. If she still refuses to confess he would repeat it for the third time. As for the third round whether she like it or not, she would confess, if not she will die. On other hand, if the suspect is not a witch nothing would happen to her. After the ritual performance, the earth priest will set her free to go”

Once a person falls sick in the Dagbamba society, the patient's immediate relative(s) or friend(s) consult a diviner *‘Baya’* who, through the force of supernatural powers, diagnoses the problem and also identifies its source. White (2015) citing Croucamp (2013) indicates:

—Divination is a technology that is used to deliberately initiate a process of accessing and collecting information, through the use of randomly

arranged symbols and then, using the brain's capacity for analogical thinking, making associations that are ordinarily inaccessible. It is therefore a transpersonal field of information to gain healing knowledge”.

If the problem is an ancestral spirit oriented one, the diviner may prescribe the sacrificial process to be conducted thereof. Likewise, should the problem have roots in demons (also called spirits), the diviner may give first aid, largely in form of herbal concoctions and if necessary, refer the patient to a more powerful spiritualist for further treatment.

Conversely, if the illness is witchcraft oriented, the diviner gives prescriptions and then refers the patient for further attention by a healer or medicine person ‘Timalana’. The healer is therefore one who restores the health of a patient through the use of herbs and related herbal concoctions and charms. The majority of healers are not diviners, similarly, many diviners are not healers.

When the sickness or symptoms of the illness persist, and more so, considering that the initial consultative missions to diviners will have identified the witch or wizard responsible, the victim's relatives seek to quench their curiosity and suspicions further by consulting as many different famous diviners from far and wide. If all or the majority of the information gathered from the diviners tallies, that it agreeably pin-points a certain person as the villain, the issue is immediately reported to the local chief.

At this stage the patient's relatives ask for permission from the local chief to invite a witch doctor to finally identify and name the villain in public. Having been named thus, the alleged witch or wizard will be obliged to cleanse the ailing person and restore his health on the spot, which, they often do, under the watchful eyes of the public, including the local chief and his council of elders.

More often than not, further action is taken against the *‘Sonya or Bukpaha’* especially if he/she denies any knowledge of witchcraft or involvement in bewitching the ailing person or worse still, if he/she denies having caused the death of an alleged person through witchcraft. With permission from the local chief, the aggrieved family takes the witch to the anti-witchcraft shrine to confirm the allegation and to seek final justice from the local chief and priest of the shrine, particularly if the victim finally dies.

If a person is accused of being a witch among the Dagbamba, in order to clear doubt in the minds of the community members and to restore the dignity of the accused person, the family of the accused person would be given a chance to send the victim to the anti-witchcraft shrine for ritual performance to declare the victim either guilty or not. This ritual is done by the earth priest of the shrine. The family of the accused person would be charged to present some items necessary for the ritual fortification including fowls and money.

Carrying the corpse according to the Dagbamba tradition is another practical way of detecting witches. This practice is done by the Dagbamba locals and it is believed to have a spiritual implication. Howell (2004) indicates that this form of detective measure is also practice by the Kasenas in the Upper East Region of Ghana. Both the Dagbamba and the Kasenas believed this practice to be one of the effective ways of detecting witches in their communities. From this point one could observe that, both the Dagbamba and the Kasenas have similar beliefs and cultural practices when it comes to detecting witches.

The only difference is that, while the Dagbamba locals have to carry the deceased person's body when unnatural death occurred, the Kasenas only carry the deceased person's mat in accordance with their tradition. This practice is normally

done by both cultural groups when there is a belief of mysterious or unnatural death. Among the Dagbamba locals, the family of the deceased may require the chief of the community to fish out those believed to be behind the death. The chief of the community may allow them to carry the body of the deceased person around the community. One of the respondents emphasized that;

“I have ever witnessed a case where a woman just came out and said she was a witch. There was a certain man who died mysteriously in the Kpatinga community some time ago. So the family of the deceased decided that they should carry the corpse. When they carried the deceased, the corpse directed those carrying it to a particular woman in the community and knocks her down. She confessed that, she really had the witchcraft powers but her hands were not part of the person’s blood rather she was using it to protect her children”

Another respondent threw more light on the earlier submission by stating that it is the spirit of the deceased person that would be directing those carrying it to the various witches whose hands are believed to be part of his or her death. If the suspect is male, the corpse will knock him three times and four times for female. According to him, before this activity is done, the chief is required to announce to the general public to be aware so that none of the community members would move out of the village within that period. Members of the community, especially women, both old and young would have to be in the community within this period.

Another way of identifying witches apart from carrying the corpse in Dagbamba society is the use of beard. Women with beard in Dagbamba society are vulnerable as the Dagbamba use beard as a detective measure in identifying witches. Women with beard are not trusted in Dagbamba. They are considered as supernatural beings and therefore, the possibility of them possessing the witchcraft powers is high.

Apart from identifying a woman with beard as a witch, another way the Dagbamba identifies a witch or wizard is a person without an eyebrows. If the hair on the eyebrows is not there, such a person is taken as a witch or wizard. It is said that eyebrows is natural hair for which everyone is born with. As a result, when an adult loses his or her eyebrows, it is purported that, the person used it for witchcraft to enable such a person to see far and could also identify others who are powerful.

Although the loss of eyebrows is linked to witchcraft, another traditional way the Dagbamba use to identify witches or wizards who torment them is the use of the traditional arrow *piem*. This traditional arrow *piem* is gotten when an elderly person dies. The community performs the ritual of *pilinga* the arrows are gathered and shared among the family members. These arrows are said to be fortified and serves as defensive weapons and shared to responsible adults in the family for keep. People may get at least one or more of such arrows for self-defense.

In a time of difficulty, in terms of witchcraft, the person can come out at midnight and chant or incantate to evoke his or her ancestors. After that the arrow is shot at any direction without targeting anything. One may also throw it at any direction, if you do not have the bow to shoot your arrow. The following day, one could trace the arrow and take your thing (missile) back for keep. After the shooting, within one week your assailant will die without any announced cause. This process the Dagbamba use it as a last resort in other to win a case of witchcraft attacks. However, this is an individual way of identifying your assailant.

4.6 Life at the Witch Camp

A witch camp is a settlement where persons suspected of being witches can flee to for their safety, usually in order to avoid being lynched by neighbors. In the Northern Region of Ghana, people suspected to be witches seek refuge in witch

camps to escape the bizarre of their family and community. The Dagbamba locals believed that, the camps are safe places where witchcraft cannot be carried out, which is why the alleged witches can live there safely. The Kpatinga camp popularly known as the Tindanze Yili is a segregated community within the Kpatinga Township which accommodates people of different cultural backgrounds and religious denominations. The Kpatinga camp is one of the popular witch camps that exists in the Northern Region of Ghana. There are such camps as Kuku Camp in the Nanumba Municipality, Gnani Camp in Yendi and the Gambaga camp in Gambaga. Other witch camps in the Northern Region of Ghana include Bonyasi in the Central Gonja District and Nabuli in the Gushegu District.

At the Kpatinga camp which has about forty round huts accommodates a total of forty five residents. In an interaction with some twenty one (21) residents in the camp they indicated that some of the old structures built with mud in the camp were pulled down by World Vision Ghana and replaced with new round shaped buildings built with cement and roofed with iron sheets. Some other structures built with mud and roofed with thatch (grass) are still in existence in the Kpatinga camp but some of those structures are in a deplorable state. There is one toilet facility and a wash room. According to the residents, the washroom was built by Chief Naa Tia, one of the spiritualists in Dagbaŋ.

The camp accommodates only women, not even a single man is accommodated in the camp. Before a resident is accepted as a full member of the camp, she need to go through the exorcism rituals. She would also asked to pay an accommodation fee which is about one hundred Ghana cedis (GH¢ 100.00). The residents in the Kpatinga camp face many challenges. In an interview with one of the

residents, a woman believed to be in her fifties and stayed in the camp for about seven years, emphasized that;

—... Life in this camp is not easy for us at all. We are facing so many challenges in this camp but the most challenging factors are lack of water and electricity. Water is a problem in this camp as most residents are very old and cannot walk distance to fetch water. Our main source of water is the borehole that we are using with the community members and it is few meters away from this camp. Some of the old women among us have their grandchildren with them to support them with their house chores but others don't have. Even if you go to the borehole to fetch water, you will have to join a queue before it gets to your turn. On the part of the electricity, I must say that we are in total darkness. We cannot do anything in the night which has to do with electricity. Even when you want to charge your mobile phone, you have to walk distance to the Kpatinga Township in order to get access to electricity”

Therefore it is important to provide the basic needs such as water and electricity in the camp in order to improve the living conditions of the alleged witches. The housing facilities in the camp also need to be improved as some of the residents sleep in pairs in the round huts. Some of the round huts are in a deplorable state and need maintenance.



Fig 4.1 Housing facilities in the camp



Fig 4.2 Source of water in the camp



Fig 4.3 Washroom donated by Chief Naa Tia



Fig 4.4 Toilet facility in the camp

4.6.1 Social Life of the Alleged Witches

The social life of the residents in Tindanze Yili was quite interesting as they respect one another and do not go beyond each other's rights. Even though the residents are from different backgrounds and locations, they support one another and live in harmony. The movements of the residents in the camp were not restricted. Due to this, they are quite integrated with the people of the Kpatinga Township. They are allowed to pay visits to their relatives and friends outside the witch camp. They support the community people during the farming season to work on their farms and are also involved in the communal activities within the host community.

In an interview with one of the residents who is believed to be in her seventies and has lived in the camp for about seven years indicates that, they do not feel lonely and isolated in the camp as they support and entertain each other. They do everything in common no matter where one is coming from. According her, they understand one another and because of that they are able to settle their differences whenever there is a misunderstanding between them. They have their leadership in the camp and also have a representative from the various tribal groups. Some of them were friends before they came to the camp.

—For instance I and Azara were good friends before we came to this camp. We are from the same village. We came to this camp on the same day over the same issue. The allegation that brought me to this camp was the same allegation that brought her into this camp. We were accused by the same person...” She emphasized.

Some of the residents in the camp are also relatives. This came to light when the researcher had an interaction with one of the residents believed to be in her sixties and has stayed in the camp for about six years. She posits that:

—Amina is my cousin and we are together in this camp again. My mother is her paternal aunt and she was staying with my mother as a foster child until she

got married. My mother was accused of witchcraft so she was also in this camp. When Amina came to this camp as an accused person, she was staying with my mother before she got her own room. I came to this camp before my biological mother left the camp. It is about four years now since she left the camp. So my mother and I were staying in the same room”

4.6.2 Economic Life of the Alleged Witches

Though the economic condition in the Tindanze witch camp at Kpatinga is not all that conducive for the alleged witches, most of them are putting up their best to make life possible for them. Most of the residents support the community farmers during harvesting period in exchange of a bowl of corn. While the lucky ones among them have families to care for them and occasionally send them food, others are shunned by their families and left to feed on their own.

In an interaction with some of the respondents they indicate that most of the residents left their communities at night without the notice of the community members in order to avoid being attacked by the community members. Some of them arrived at the camp without anything in their possession and they have no way to earn an income. In an interview with one of the residents who has stayed in the camp for about six years recounted her experience when she got to the camp. She emphasized;

“I secretly left my community without the notice of the community members and because of that, I couldn’t pick my belongings so I arrived at the camp empty handed. When I got to this camp the earth priest asked me to bring a fowl and alcohol so that he would perform the rituals. So I was not having money to buy the fowl. That time my biological mother was a resident in this camp and so it was my mother who helped me to get the fowl”

Some of the residents maintained that, the camp was their final destination and they were therefore soliciting support from the government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO’s) to support them better their lives and meet their basic needs.

Some of the alleged witches mentioned that, they need an economic empowerment in the form of skill training, soft loans and provision of farming inputs to help them meet their basic needs.

Most of them were said to be engaged in some economic activities in their respective communities before they were accused and moved to the camp. The economic activities that some of the residents were engaged in their communities before they came to the camp included brewing of local beer known as *pito*, charcoal burning, making local soap, processing sheer butter, processing locust-beans locally known as dawadawa, locally made brooms and retails of farm produce. A resident who has stayed in the camp for about three years emphasized that;

–Life is full of struggle... even though some of us considered this camp as our heaven and cannot visit our original communities again, we are still performing a lot of responsible roles in our homes. For instance, some of us were breadwinners in our families...”

From what she said, one can deduced that, even though some of them were accused as witches and forced to flee their communities of origins to the witch camps, they still perform responsible roles in their families. Most of the alleged witches in Tindanee Yili are widows whose husbands died and left the destinies of their children into their hands. Some of them are working hard to secure a better future for their children. For instance, a resident believed to be in her fifties and has stayed in the camp for about seven years emphasized;

–As I am here, am still working hard to secure a better life for my children. I cannot sit down and watch them fail in life because if they fail, I will be the one who failed. One of my children is still in school and I am the one who is paying the school fees. My children are always here to visit me but since they banished me from our community, I haven’t made an attempt to go there again because they warn my children that they do not want to see me in the community again”

She concluded by stating that her husband is still alive and therefore she is not a widow. According to her, she was the only wife to her husband and since she left their community to the witch camp, her husband has not considered of marrying another woman because of the support she had for him. She further explained that since she left him, he quit playing his role as a father. She emphasized;

–Hmm My husband was a responsible man. He was so concern about the welfare of our children when we were together as husband and wife but since this allegation torn our marriage apart, he has turn his back against my children. He has lost confidence in them and so I am just struggling to build a better future for them. He used to ask about my welfare when I first moved to this camp but for some time now, he has been silent for long”.

According to one of the residents who has stayed in the camp for about three years and believed to be in her sixties indicated that, even though some of them had their respective economic activities in their original communities before they were moved to the camp, some of those activities cannot be done in the camp because of lack of money. Also, People have painted bad pictures against them and because of that some of the community people are afraid to buy products that come from the camp. In an interview with her, she recounted;

–Yes, some of the community members understood our situation and therefore put their confidence on us. For instance, when there is a funeral or any other special occasion in the community, some of them will just contact us to brew a local beer known as pito for them. Some of the women in the community also contact us to process dawadawa for them. But for us to do it here and send it into the market for sale, that one we don”t do that. We prefer making local homemade brooms to earn a little money from that than to invest much money into some of these products which you would end up by throwing it away...”



Fig 4.5 Resident processing dawadawa and corn Fig. 4.6 Locally homemade brooms

The image of witchcraft in the Dagbamba society is quite embarrassing. People accused to be witches are not trusted by their community members. This makes it difficult for people to support them when they are in trouble. Because witches are branded as enemies to every living soul in the Dagbamba society, anybody who tried to support them also becomes an enemy to the community members. This makes people distance themselves from the perceived witches. Nobody wants to associate with them even their own relatives.

4.6.3 Religion in the Camp

Religion is considered to be a set of beliefs, feelings and practices that defines the relations between human being and sacred or divinity. Bonsu (2016) indicates that religion does not have a single universally accepted definition. Bonsu (2016) citing James (1902) define religion as the “feeling, act, and experiences of individual men and women in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine”

Most of the residents in the Kpatinga camp popularly known as Tindanze Yili hold a dual membership of religion. Most of them practices both Islam and Christianity in the camp. The reason been that, Christianity was a mandatory religion in the camp and therefore every resident in the camp was supposed to practice it. From my own observation, over seventy five (75) percent of the residents in the camp were practicing Muslims in their respective communities before they were migrated to the witch camp as their second home. Some of the residents admitted they were true Muslims and they believed in the Islamic religion as the true religion but they practice Christianity not because they have faith in Christianity but it is because of the support the Christian organizations have for them. As the researcher was told by some of the residents during the interview session, there was no freedom of religion in the camp.

Each and every resident in the camp has the Holy bible at their possession and because of that most of the residents decided to quit practicing the Islamic religion and practice only Christianity. One of them emphasized;

“I am a practicing Muslim but since I got to this camp my faith in Islam has gone down. Even though I am still a Muslim, I am practicing Christianity as well”

While others decided to quit one, some are still practicing the two religions. In an interview with the caretaker who doubled as the earth priest of the Kpatinga camp posits that;

“My son, I must confirm to you that, this camp belongs to Christians. I am a Muslim but right now I am holding a dual membership. Besides my role as a traditionalist, I am practicing both Islam and Christianity because it is the Christians who are supporting me to manage this camp. So it is mandatory for every resident in this camp to practice it”

In another instance, one of the residents who has stayed in the Tindanze Yili for about six years also emphasized that;

“I am a Muslim and at same time a Christian. As we are here, we have no option than to practice Christianity. All the structures you are seeing around in this camp were provided by the Christian organizations. It is the Christians who are looking after our welfare in this camp. They are those feeding us, giving us clothing and shelter. Each and every one of us in this camp including the earth priest has a bible. They built a church and we attend our church service”

4.6.4 Politics at the Camp

Traditionally, the Kpatinga camp popularly known as Tindanze Yili is under the traditional jurisdiction of *Kpatinga Lana* (chief of Kpatinga) since he is the chief of the community and the camp is not privately owned but rather belongs to the entire community. The Kpatinga Lana is not the spiritual leader of the Tindanze camp as it is in the Gambaga camp. Politics in Tindanze Yili is quite different as compare to that of the Gambaga camp. Nangpaak (2007) indicates that the *Gambagarana* (chief of Gambaga) is the spiritual leader of the Gambaga camp. Even though the Tindanze camp is under the supervision of the *Tindana*, it is the chief who is the general overseer of the camp. The *Tindana* represents the chief when it comes to spiritual works and therefore the *Tindana* is the spiritual leader in the camp. The *Tindana* does his work in consultation with the community chief.

As noted by Musah (2013) the role of a chief and a *Tindana* are specifically defined in Dagbaŋ. While the chief oversees a wide range of activities of the community, including the maintenance of law and order as well as the development of the community, the role of the *Tindana* is more spiritual. The *Tindana* is responsible for all activities that have to do with the gods and deities and he is consulted on almost all matters that relate to the spirits and gods.

4.6.5 Leadership at the Camp

There are three elected executives in the Kpatinga witch camp. The elected executives are the *Magazia* (Queen mother), the *Magazia Wulana* (assistant *Magazia*) and the *Zonzongili* (organizer) as the residents called the organizer. These elected executives can communicate among themselves and can also take decisions on behalf of other residents in the camp. Other executives include the ethnic group representatives who are chosen by the members of the various ethnic groups. New leaders are always elected if the former dies or returns to her hometown. Elections in the camp is organized and supervised by the earth priest who is the spiritual leader of the camp. One of the respondents emphasized that;

–Electing new members in this camp is very simple. It is not through balloting. We want the leadership to be rotational and so we don't allow the residents to vote because some ethnic groups have the numbers while others are very few. When there is a vacant position, because we want the leadership to be rotational, members from the various ethnic groups who have the interest will show up. We will then write „Yes or No“ in pieces of paper and fold it. After that, we will ask the contestants to choose. Whoever choose „Yes“ will get the position”

Even though the community chief and the earth priest are not elected executives, they are on the top hierarchy at the Kpatinga camp as they oversee all the activities in the camp. The Kpatinga chief (Kpatinga lana) is the general overseer of the camp since he is the traditional leader of the community. This implied that, nothing can be done in the camp without the consent of the community chief. The earth priest is said to be the final authority when it come to the activities in the camp.

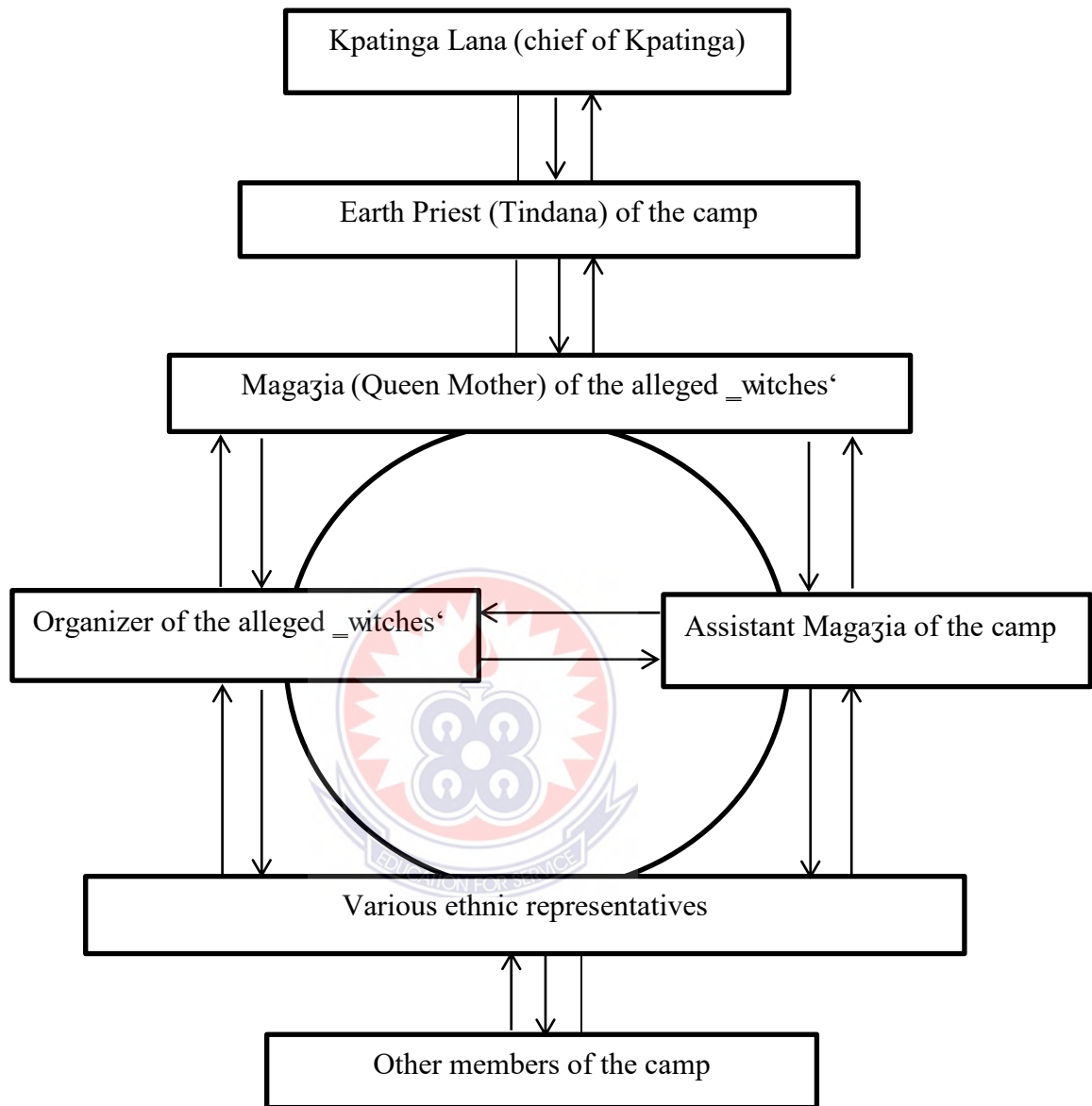
Apart from the community chief and the earth priest, the next in command in the camp is the *Magazia* (queen mother) who is elected and endorsed by the residents in the camp as their leader. She represents the residents and also supervises the

activities of the residents in the camp. She is therefore supporting the earth priest to manage the affairs of the residents in the camp. The *Magazia* have the right to communicate direct to the earth priest. But in order to communicate to the community chief (Kpatinga lana), she have to pass through the earth priest. The next in command at the camp after the *Magazia* is the assistant *Magazia*. She is also an elected executive in the camp. In the absence of the *Magazia*, she is mandated to take decisions concerning the welfare of the residents in the camp.

Next to the assistant *Magazia* in the hierarchy of the camp is the organizer whose duty is to make sure that, all relevant information get to other members within the camp on time. She is therefore serving as the mouthpiece of the residents. They do not have a secretary in the camp because none of the residents can neither read nor write. There are other ethnic representatives who are chosen by members of the various ethnic groups in the camp. Their duty is to settle differences within other members in the camp. They are also mandated to forward the consent of their members to either the *Zonzongili* or to the *Magazia wula*, for them to also forward it to the *Magazia* for redress. The ethnic representatives also have the right to communicate direct to the *Magazia* without the knowledge of the *Zonzongili* and the *Magazia wulana*.

The structured leadership style in Tindanze Yili helps both residents in the camp and members of the host community to communicate easily and also to observe the ethics of the camp without any difficulties. If a resident has a problem with any member within or outside the camp, she is mandated follow the right procedure to report her grievances.

Figure 4.7 below shows the leadership structure and the communication channel at the Tindanze witch camp.



Source: Researcher's own construct, June, 2018

4.6.6 Selecting the Tindana (Earth priest)

In the traditional system of governance in Dagbaŋ, there is a traditional priest who is the spiritual as well as the custodian of the land. To be a *Tindana* in the Dagbamba tradition does not depend on one's wealth or one's level of experience in

the tradition but it is through inheritance. Therefore, one must come from the *Tindaamba* family. Nagle and Owasanoye (2016) argues that women play no significant roles in worshipping the Traditional deities except in cases where a goddess is worshipped specifically by women and women serve as priestesses.

They further indicate that women are forbidden from most shrines, and therefore, women fear the shrines and leave religious jurisdictions to the men. This philosophy seems not to be applicable in the Dagbamba tradition. The *Tindana* according to the Dagbamba tradition can be either sex. The female *Tindana* is called *Tindaampaya*. The male *Tindaamba* are believed to be more effective in discharging their duties than the female *Tindaamba*. Among the Dagbamba, there are some limitations for women in general in whatever they do. This therefore restricts the female *Tindaamba* in discharging their duties effectively in the Dagbamba society. While the male priest can come out openly to pour libation and to make sacrifices to appease the gods, the female *Tindana* would have to delegate someone to do it on her behalf. According to the traditional authorities of the Tindanzee camp, they never had a female as their earth priest in the camp.

The *Tindana* is the traditional priest in every community in Dagbaŋ and he/she is in charge of looking after the welfare of the land and the deities belonging to the entire community. Igwe (2016) indicates that as priests, their duties are to pour libations and perform sacrifices to pacify the gods. People become shrine priests by inheritance, through the family. *Tindana* have a horse tail or a walking stick as the symbol of their office. The *Tindaamba* _plural_ are highly honored and feared in the Dagbamba society. They are the spiritual leaders in every community in Dagbaŋ and are believed by the locals to be closer to the gods and the ancestors.

Even though the Tindanzee camp has no substantive earth priest, Adam Musah Sampa is the acting priest and the caretaker of the camp. In an interview with him, he posits that they lost their earth priest for about eight years now. He emphasized;

–We lost the earth priest for some time now. So I am looking at the welfare of the alleged witches. For now I am performing the duties of the earth priest and at the same time been the caretaker because we have no earth priest for now. We have chosen somebody to take over the camp but the person is not ready yet for the enskinment. When the person is ready, I would hand over everything for him to start executing his duties. When they bring somebody as a witch to the camp, I will perform the rituals myself and give the person a place to stay”

The traditional priest in Tindanzee Yili is selected only through the rightful traditional lineage. This means that, if you are not from the *Tindaamba* lineage, you could not become a traditional priest in the camp. According to one of the respondents, when it comes to selecting the earth priest for the camp, they do not do it by themselves and so they have no hands in that. They always allow the deceased priest to choose the successor. They do so by carrying the deceased body before burial. The first day the earth priest dies is the same day they will choose another earth priest for the camp. There is no favoritism because it is through inheritance.

–When the earth priest in this camp died, the tradition demands that we carry the deceased priest to choose the right person to succeed him within the family. There are gates that are qualified to be the earth priest of this camp” he emphasized.

According to him, when carrying the deceased person, the spirit of the deceased would be directing those who are carrying it to the qualified person's house. After they get to the house, if the person to succeed him just came out, the spirit of the deceased would move ahead to knock the person down.

–If it happen that way, we will come and ask the deceased person whether he has just paid a visit to greet the person or there is a problem between him and the person. If the person offended you in any way, you should move away and leave the person but if you want the person to represent you in the camp, you should go and knock the person again” he inserted.

After saying this to the deceased person, even if he was moving away, he would come back and knock the person again. So that everybody will see. When the right candidate is chosen the person will wait until the final funeral rites of the deceased priest is performed so that they would give to him what he need as the earth priest of the camp. After that they would take him to the deity and introduce him to the ancestors but he cannot function well until the right rituals are done to initiate him.

4.7 Admission into the camp

There is a specific group of people who are qualified to be admitted as members of Tindanze Yili. The camp does not only admit people of the same cultural background but admits people from different cultural backgrounds and religious denominations. Accused persons who are suspected to be witches and are forced to leave their communities are only those who qualified to be admitted into the camp. Most of the residents have their relatives who stay with them in the camp in order to support them with their house chores. The Tindanze Yili is therefore serves as a home for rejected people. As noted by Awedoba (2005) because witchcraft is dreaded in all societies where the belief exists, witches or individuals who are suspected or have been proved to be witches or to have caused harm to others, are not treated with any sympathy. They become pariahs and are shunned by all.

From my interaction with the residents, one could observe that the belief in witchcraft powers is common in the Ghanaian rural communities (especially in the Northern sector) where the extended family system is practiced. Even though people

in the urban areas also have the belief in witchcraft, it is more dominant in the rural areas.

Most of the residents in Tindanze Yili during the interview session indicate that they were accused by members of their extended families. This is a family consisting of the nuclear family and their blood relatives. Otabil (1998:3) describes this type of family system to consist of a large number of blood relatives who trace their decent from a common ancestor and are held together by a sense of obligation to one another. It includes parents, grandparents, children, brothers, sisters, uncles, nephews, nieces, aunts, cousins, grandchildren, etc. According to Evans-Pritchard (1937) witchcraft does not strike at random and before witchcraft accusation can come from someone, the supposed victim must have some relationship with the accused. This belief was proved by the residents who took part in the interview.

Most of the residents in the camp confirmed they had direct relationship with the people who accused them of bewitchment. In view of this, a resident who has stayed in the camp for about four year and was the second wife to her husband recounted;

–I had three co-wives and we were staying happily in our husband family house. One of my husband's uncle's wife was also with us. My husband's uncle's wife was pregnant and unfortunately she had a miscarriage and the whole family teamed up and said I was the cause of it"

When this allegation came up, according to the respondent, she tried to prove her innocence but the community members including her husband's family turned deaf ears to her because she was not the only wife to her husband. She emphasized; *–They asked rhetorically why they did not mention any of my rivals name but rather mentioning my name"* She indicates that she had cried without anybody supporting

her and finally she decided to move to the Gnani camp. After some years, she went back to her original community to reintegrate with them but was rejected by her husband's family again and that motivated her movement to the Tindanze camp.

In relation to this, another respondent indicates that she was accused by her younger brother. According to her she was at her residence one day when one of her younger brother's came to their house and asked her husband to call her out. When she came out, the brother told her husband that he saw her last night running after him in his dream to kill him. The brother went ahead and told her husband that it was not the first time he saw her in his dream. She recounted;

–Hmmm... This was a terrible day in my life. When he levelled the allegation against me, I tried several times to deny it but he insisted I am a big liar. It got to a point I was not saying anything again because I was there crying. My children were there consoling me”.

After the accusation, according to her, the husband told her that it was her family issue and therefore he cannot interfere in their family matters. So the husband told her brothers to handle it.

A woman believed to be in her sixties and has stayed in the camp for about four years also indicates that she was accused by her husband's biological son. Her husband was the chief of their community and the accuser was her rival's son. According to her, the accuser's mother was the first wife of their husband and she was next to her. She emphasized;

–My son, I have developed a mental problem since my arrival to this camp and because of that, it is difficult for me to memorize past events”.

According to her the accuser's son's wife had died and his last wife child also died. That was what sparked everything and he accused her of killing them. She emphasized;

–He went and brought a witch doctor to our house and the witch doctor confirmed to him that I was the one who killed them”.

People in the Ghanaian rural communities lack knowledge in modern scientific methods which have the tendency of transforming their economic lives. Most of them rest their destinies into the hands of the alleged witches. The fear of being harm by witches may prevent some of them from doing certain things to improve their lives and society.

It is evident from the research that, the target group of witchcraft accusation is old women. Poor helpless women between the ages of forty and eighty years are believed to possess the evil spirits which are meant for evil purposes. From the interviews conducted, most of the accusations were through dreams and suspicion. People claimed of seeing others in their dreams trying to harm them while they were asleep. People suspect others of been the cause of their misfortunes.

In an interaction with one of the respondents who has stayed in the camp for about ten years indicates that she was accused of witchcraft by her nephew. According to her, it was one faithful morning when her nephew came down from Tamale to their village and accused her of trying to remove the fetus from his newly married wife’s stomach through her dream. She recounted;

–Hmm...., look, he said his wife saw me in her dream commanding her to lay down on her back so that I will remove the fetus from her stomach. Meanwhile she was not pregnant as at that time. But one funny thing is I don’t even know where they are staying in Tamale”.

Even though the residents present different stories on the causes of their movement to the camp, one could deduced that most of them were old women who lost their husbands and children. Most of the residents lost at least one or more of their children and some of them are widows. In an interview with one of the residents

who is believed to be in her seventies and has stayed in the camp for about six months indicates that her movement to the camp was triggered following the death of her own biological son. According to her, the deceased was her last born and as a result of that they said she was the one who killed him.

–My son died on Tuesday evening and they buried him on that same night and said they are going to kill me. After the burial, I was in my room when two of my daughters came in and told me to start packing my things. I was confused and asked them why and they said the community members are threatening to kill me. I told them to leave me so that I will die in their hands but my children insisted that they are taken me out of the community” she recounted.

The movement to the camp by the residents depends largely on the type of family one came from. Some of the residents moved to the camp without the support of their families. Some families of the residents had concerned about their relatives movement to the camps while others were snubbed by their families. In some cases, the movement was initiated by the residents themselves. Some of the residents admitted their movement to the camp was initiated by themselves. One of the residents recounted;

–When the incident happened and the chief of our community told my senior brother to take me to his house so that I could stay with him for some time, my brother rejected me in the presence of the chief. I said well, our biological mother is at the Tindanze camp so I will prefer to go and stay there with my mother”

Some of the residents also moved to the camp following the directives of their local chiefs. In the Dagbamba society, the chief is the political head of his community. He rules his people with a council of elders in accordance with customary laws and practices. He acts as a judge and presides over the traditional court to settle cases and disputes and imposes fines or punishments on guilty people. In most cases,

when somebody is being accused of witchcraft in the Dagbamba society, both the accuser and the accused would be given a chance by the community chief and his council to defend the allegation. Some of the resident admitted that they were invited and interrogated by their local chiefs and their council of elders before they were banished from their communities.

In an interaction with some of the residents, one could observe that most of them were banished by their local chiefs due to their inability to prove their innocence about the allegations levelled against them. One of the respondents emphasized that;

–It is the chiefs who are controlling everything when there are witchcraft cases in a particular community. Everything is in the hands of the chiefs and their council of elders. The chiefs are the final authorities in our communities. They would determine whether to allow a person to stay in the community or banish him/her from the community. When the chiefs take their decision, no one can challenge them even the assemble members cannot say anything”

Even though the chiefs are considered to be the final authorities in the Dagbamba society, sometimes the pressure of the community members may lead the chief to change his decision. This came to light during an interaction with one of the residents. She recounted;

–The chief and his council of elders interrogated me and said no I don’t have the witchcraft powers but the community members said they were tired of me and so they will not allow me to stay in the community again. When they said this, the chief had nothing to do than to advise me to leave the community”

When a witch worries someone to an extent that the witch is identified but some powers prevent his/her banishment or eviction, the people may find means to strangle him or her to death. This is what the people called *__mia/tani kirisibu/tirisibu’* or *_n-tirisi/kirisi o tani ku’*. The powers that may prevent such witch’s eviction may be from the husband (if the husband is a strong opinion leader in the community). The

chief may also impose his powers to prevent such person's removal. If the person is a wizard he may be a strong opinion leader whom the chief relents his support.

When this happens, the youth in the community (some few individuals) will come together to attack the witch or wizard in question at midnight and strangle such a person to death. The people must be strong enough to overpower such a person. This act is always done in top secret. The people who are going to do it should believe themselves in terms of strength, magical powers and to keep secret. This action does not involve blood shade. They will mask their faces as well as the victim's face and tie a rope on the neck or at the ribs and pull until the victim is dead. The following day, they will get up and find the person dead; no one can ascertain the cause of the death. In this circumstance the people feel they can now live without fear.

4.8 Conclusion

This study discusses the Dagbamba witchcraft and the concept of exorcism. The primary aim is to find out how witchcraft is perceived and understood by the Dagbamba. With this, four research questions were formulated to help in the study. Issues discussed in the study include; how witchcraft is perceived and understood by the Dagbamba, the modes of witchcraft acquisition in Dagbanj, the characteristics of witches and the processes involved in witchcraft exorcism in the Dagbamba society. Other issues such as the life at the witch camp, detecting witches and the factors that caused the alleged witches to move to the camp were also discussed.

Cases of witchcraft, their accusations, activities and how to exorcise a witch have been in existence since time immemorial. The issue of witchcraft has been a long standing one and many societies show a lot of concern about the activities of witches. Target groups of witchcraft accusation in the Ghanaian communities especially in Dagbanj today have been the poor and needy old women. In the olden

days, there was a specific group of people who could engage themselves in witchcraft activities in Dagbañ. It was princess, a queen and jinwariba who were believed to be practicing witchcraft.

In the past, how witchcraft cases were handled by the Dagbamba society was different from how it is handled today. In the olden days, when people became fed up with an alleged witch or suspected somebody to be a witch in a particular community, she would be reported to the community chief for interrogation. After that, the community chief would then give his directives to the family of the alleged person to take her to the anti-witchcraft shrine to confirm whether the alleged person is a witch or not. If the alleged person was found or adjudged to be one she would be taken through the exorcism rituals by the earth priest.

After the ritual performance, the earth priest would warn her not to engage in witchcraft activities again. After this the earth priest would ask her to go back to her original community and reintegrate with them. If she ignored the warnings of the earth priest and tried to go back to the evil deeds again, she would die. Anti-witchcraft shrines play a crucial role in the lives of the Dagbamba as they believed to channel all their spiritual problems to the shrines for solutions. Every Dagbamba town has at least one shrine. The gods have various forms. For instance, the shrine *buyuli* at Pong Tamale is rain, the shrine at Tindanze Yili is stone and that of *Nawuni* is a crocodile. As noted by the locals, these shrines are frequently called to act in cases of theft or witchcraft.

Today, people have undermined the integrity of the anti-witchcraft shrines which make it difficult for the alleged witches to reintegrate with their families after going through the exorcism rituals.

The basis of witchcraft accusation today is through dreams and suspicion. Believe in spirituality and lack of education also form the bases for witchcraft accusation in the Dagbamba society. People associate all unfortunate events to witches. They failed to adopt modern technologies which have the tendency of influencing their lives and relate all their problems to evil deeds of some people. If one observes critically the nature of witchcraft accusations in Dagbamba today, one could say that almost every house has a witch.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This concluding chapter provides an overview of the major issues from the analysis of the data collected. The chapter being the last chapter of this thesis discusses the summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This thesis sought to examine Dagbamba witchcraft and the concept of exorcism. The primary aim is to find out how witchcraft is perceived and understood by the Dagbamba and how this belief influences the lives of the people. The Tindanze witch camp in Kpatinga is the main study area however; the findings were present in some other selected communities including Kpatinga, Gaa and Sampimo all under the Gushegu District. Two main survey research instruments (interview and observation) were used. A total of forty two respondents, who qualified as key respondents for the research, participated in the study. Data collected were analyzed using a descriptive survey method. The findings are summarized below:

1. It was established that there is a strong believed of witchcraft in Dagban. The belief in witchcraft and witchcraft activities is very common in the Ghanaian rural communities where the extended family systems existed. Most of the residents in the Tindanze Yili were accused by their own kinsmen from their extended families. Even though some of them confirmed they were accused by their nuclear family members, a majority of them said they were accused by the members of their extended families.

2. It was apparent that the basis of witchcraft accusation was through dreams and suspicion. People claimed seeing others in their dreams trying to harm them. Other people suspected the alleged witches of being the cause of their misfortunes in life. A few of the respondents confirmed they were accused following the death of their relatives and children.
3. Interestingly, most of the respondents including some of the alleged witches confirmed their belief in the existence of witchcraft. Some of them indicate that witchcraft powers can be acquired through inheritance, from friends, through gifts of items and by purchasing it from a spiritualist.
4. It was also revealed some of the behavioural characteristics of the alleged witches. From the study it is evident that witches make unnecessary request from people, they do not sit at one place, witches are highly tempered and very aggressive and they do not wish other people well. It is also evident that witches have a reserved personality.
5. With regards to the exorcism processes in Tindanze Yili, the research findings discovered how newcomers are initiated in the camp. It was confirmed that the mandatory ritual processes in Tindanze Yili were grouped into three phases. The first phase of the rituals is done the first day the accused person set her foot to the camp. The second phase of the rituals is done after some few weeks the accused person settles at the camp and third phase of the rituals is done when the accused person set to leave the camp to reintegrate with her people.
6. In many African communities, especially in the Northern Region of Ghana, both educated and non-educated persons have the strong belief about witches

and their activities leading to all sorts of social vices against women and children. It was revealed that witchcraft accusations are usually accompanied with various forms of physical abuses, molestations as well as emotional tortures.

7. It was revealed that life in Tindanze Yili is not conducive as the residents face many challenges in the camp. The most challenging factors highlighted by the respondents during the interview session were a portable source of water and electricity. The residents always have to join a long queue in order to fetch water and also have to move distance to the Kpatinga Township before they could get access to electricity.
8. Most of the alleged witches in Tindanze Yili confirmed they were lonely in the camp and would like to join their families at their original communities. This therefore shows a signal that most of the alleged witches are willing to reintegrate in their original communities provided their people are willing to accept them.
9. This study has confirmed that some of the accused persons were forced to flee from their communities of origin in order to avoid the mob actions of their community members. Some of the alleged witches in Tindanze Yili confirmed they were moved secretly out of their respective communities without the notice of the community members in order to avoid being attacked by the community members and also to save their lives.
10. It was revealed that most of the accused persons in Tindanze Yili were old women who cannot longer give birth to children. Most of them are widows who were between the ages of forty and seventy years.

12. It was confirmed that most of the alleged witches were forced to leave their respective communities following the directives of their community chiefs. Most of them were banished by their local chiefs due to their inability to defend themselves before the chief and his council of elders.
13. From the study it was discovered that some of the alleged witches were engaged in various economic activities in their original communities before they were accused and moved to the witch camp. The findings indicates that most of the residents were farmers while some of them engaged in other businesses such as brewing of local beer known as *pito*, charcoal burning, making local soap, processing sheer butter, processing locust-beans locally known as dawadawa, locally made brooms and retails of farm produce.
14. Most of the respondents confirmed there is a cordial relationship between the host community and the alleged witches. Some of the host community people understood the situation of the alleged witches and therefore put their confidence in them. The study confirmed that the alleged witches do not fill isolated in the camp as they support each other and do everything in common.
15. In relation to the movement of the alleged witches in Tindanze Yili, the study indicates that the movements of the residents were not restricted. The residents could move freely in the camp and also allowed to participate in social activities of the host community.
16. It was again revealed that most of the residents in the Tindanze Yili hold a dual membership of religion. More than half of the residents in the camp were practicing Muslims in their respective communities before they were accused and moved to the witch camp. The study confirms that since they moved to the

camp, Christianity became a mandatory religion to be practice by all residents in the camp. Due to this most residents in the camp decided to practice both Islam and Christianity. This indeed shows that there is no freedom of religion in the camp.

17. The research also exposed the procedures that they used in selecting the Tindana (earth priest) of the Tindanzee camp. From the findings, it revealed that the selection of the successor for the Tindanzee camp is through inheritance and cannot therefore be influenced by the living. The deceased priest is always allowed to choose the successor and they do so by carrying the corpse before burial.
18. In relation to the facilities in the camp, the study shows that the Tindanzee witch camp has about forty round huts and accommodates a total of forty five residents. Some of the old housing facilities were pulled down by World Vision Ghana and replaced with new round shape buildings built with cement and roof with iron sheets. Other structures built with mud and roof with thatch (grass) were also in existence in the camp but some of those structures were in a deplorable state. There is one toilet facility and a wash room in the camp. The findings also revealed that there is no health care facility in the Tindanzee camp and therefore residents have to move distance to the Kpatinga Township in order to get access to their health

5.2 Conclusion

From the discussion so far, it is prudent that the phenomenon of witchcraft beliefs form part of the Dagbamba cosmology. The perception people hold about witches makes them feared, hate and wish to eliminate them from society those

suspected or accused of witchcraft. From the findings, one can conclude that the basis of witchcraft accusation in Dagbaŋ is through anxiety dreams, suspicion, believed in spirituality and lack of education. People claimed of seeing others in their dreams trying to harm while they are asleep. Others associate infertility and poor agricultural harvest to the evil deeds of other people. Old age is also a factor of witchcraft accusation as many people tagged those who are very old to be witches. This has brought a lot of misunderstanding between the accusers and the accused which finally lead to the banishment of the accused persons in their respective communities.

The study also concludes that witchcraft belief is very common in the Ghanaian rural communities where the extended family systems existed. Most of the residents in the Tindanze Yili confirmed they were from the rural communities. From the study, one could observe that most of the residents in the camp had direct relationships with their accusers. Most of them confirmed they were accused by the members of their extended families.

Anti-witchcraft shrines play a crucial role in the lives of the Dagbamba people as they believed to channel all their spiritual problems to the anti-witchcraft shrines for solutions. Based on the findings of this research, one can observe that there are a lot of controversies surrounding the credibility and the reliability of these anti-witchcraft shrines. Many people are questioning the credibility of the anti-witchcraft shrines and also doubting the reliability of the alleged witches after they go through the exorcism rituals. This indeed makes it difficult for the alleged witches to reintegrate in their communities of origin.

Witchcraft mentality is a canker that has eaten deep into the mind of many Dagbamba most especially the upcoming generation. Most people have painted bad pictures against those who are suspected to be witches. Due to this the economic life

of the alleged witches is not conducive for them. Some of the alleged witches confirmed they had their respective economic activities before they were migrated to the camp but because of the bad pictures painted against them; those activities could not be carried out in the camp. From the findings of this research, it is prudent that people don't want to buy products that come from the camp with the thinking that, it might be infested with the witchcraft powers. This mentality makes witches to be shunned by members of their communities and even by their own relatives.

The study concluded that the living condition of the alleged witches in the Tindanze Yili were not conducive for them. The basic needs such as water, electricity, as well as the housing facilities in the camp were not adequate. These facilities need to be improved in order to help the residents better their lives. The rooms of the residents are highly congested. There was no electricity in the camp. There was no health care facility in the camp and therefore the residents had to travel distance to the Kpatinga community in order to assess their health. There is therefore a need to provide health care facility in the camp. Some of the residents sleep in pairs in the round huts. Some of the round huts are in a deplorable state and needed maintenance.

Based on the findings of this research one can conclude by saying that, witchcraft is part and parcel of every ethnic group within the sub-Saharan African communities where the Dagbar kingdom is not left out. In many African societies, there are as many terminologies for witchcraft and its practitioners as there are many different ethnic groups within the African continent. For instance, the Akan ethnic group in Southern Ghana has the expression *bayie* which is used to denote witchcraft while the expression *obayifo* is used to describe the witch. The

Dagbamba societies even distinguish between the male witch *‘bukpaha’* and the female witch *‘sonya’*.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and observations drawn from the study, the following recommendations were made:

- Education need to be intensified in the affected areas. There is the need for residents in the affected areas to know that certain misfortunes are due to accident, chance, the work of God or the lesser gods and not attributable to the spiritual aggression mounted by some evil humans. There is also the need to involve the mass media. For instance, radio programmes concerning elderly abuse should be aired in local languages.
- The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection needs to go into partnership with other donor agencies to empower residents of Tindanze Yili in the form of skill training, soft loans and provision of farming inputs to help them meet their basic needs. Even though some of the residents in the camp had their respective economic activities in the camp, they need to be trained, support with adequate funds and modern equipments in order to improve on those economic activities. For instance some of the residents in the camp are into commercial farming but due to lack funds and exposure to new scientific way of farming, it is always difficult for them to meet their set objectives after harvesting. Empowering residents in the form of soft loans and skill training can help to eradicate poverty in the camps and also make residents to feel that they are not fully neglected.

- Career guidance specialists and counselors have to be deployed to the Ghanaian rural communities to provide advice and counseling to both men and women on how to choose a better career in order to meet their basic needs. This can help eradicate or reduce the belief in witchcraft since wrong career choice can fuel witchcraft accusation. There are people who are career specialist and counselors. These people always need to be consulted when choosing a career. People who are unsuccessful in their career choice may blame their lack of success on being bewitched by someone else. People expectations are always high when choosing a life time career. Wrong career choice can lead to failure in life which people may attached spiritual implications to. Witches are noted to be agents of misfortune and therefore people always blamed witches when they are unable to succeed in their career choice.
- The study further recommends that it is important to provide the basic needs such as water, health care facility and electricity in Tindanze Yili in order to improve the living conditions of the alleged witches in the camp. Water facilities need to be installed in the camp because most of the residents in Tindanze Yili are very old and cannot therefore walk distance or joined a queue to fetch water. There is always a problem of accessing good health care by residents in the camp. The residents have to move distance to Kpatinga which is the host community in order to get access to health care. There is no electricity in the camp which always put the lives of residents in danger especially in the night since the camp is segregated from the host community.
- The housing facilities in Tindanze Yili also need to be improved as some of the residents sleep in pairs in the round huts. Some of the round huts are in a

deplorable state and needed maintenance. Serious maintenance need to be done in the camp to put the old structures into good shape. New structures need to put in place to improve the housing facilities in the camp. The rooms of the residents are congested especially in harvesting time. Storage facilities need to be provided for the residents since majority of them are engaged in serious farming.

- Education which is considered as the key to development should be intensified on the rights and responsibilities of the citizen in the Ghanaian rural communities. This can help people to know their rights and responsibilities and also to appreciate the value of human life in the Ghanaian communities.
- More than half of the residents in the Tindanze witch camp confirmed they had no primary education and therefore know little or nothing about the rights and the laws of Ghana. Therefore the study recommends that girl child education need to be enforce in the affected communities. Basic education should be made compulsory, where rights and privileges, constitutional rights are taught.
- The study recommends that the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) have to educate farmers on the modern scientific way of farming as poor harvesting forms the basis of witchcraft accusation in the Ghanaian rural communities. These economic problems are said to be caused by witches. Beliefs in witchcraft and magic have a negative impact on sustainable agricultural productivity in terms of fostering unfavorable attitudes. These beliefs are enhanced by social cultural, epistemological and economic factors such as scientific ignorance, poverty and government negligence.

- The study recommends that the Ghanaian media need to be abreast on their reportage about witchcraft and witchcraft activities as the negative newspaper publications can form the bases of witchcraft accusations.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

University of Education, Winneba

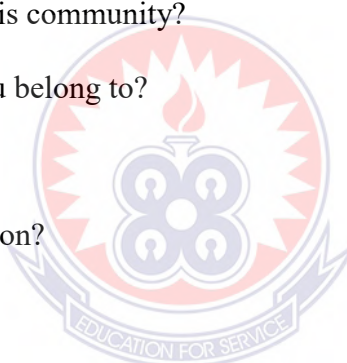
School of Graduate Studies

Faculty of Languages Education

Interview Guide for the Residents who perceived not to be Witches (SECTION A)

Bio-Data

- (1) What is your name?
- (2) How old are you?
- (3) Are you a native of this community?
- (4) Which religion do you belong to?
- (5) Have you married?
- (6) What is your occupation?



(SECTION B)

- (7) What is witchcraft?
- (8) Do you believe in the existence of witchcraft?
- (9) Why do you believe in witchcraft?
- (10) Have you ever been bewitched before?
- (11) Who is a witch?
- (12) What is a witchcraft substance?
- (13) Do witchcraft substances have types? If yes, what are the types?
- (14) What are the functions of each witchcraft substance?
- (15) Can a witch have more than one witchcraft substance?
- (16) How do you identify somebody as a witch in your community?

- (17) Do you know of anyone who has ever been accused of witchcraft?
- (18) If yes, why was the person accused of witchcraft?
- (19) Have you ever accused anyone of witchcraft?
- (20) If yes, why did you accuse the person of witchcraft?
- (21) What do you think is the cause of witchcraft accusation?
- (22) What are the characteristics of a witch?
- (23) What action do you normally take against people who are identify to be witches?
- (24) From whose authority do you take such actions?
- (25) Can witchcraft powers be exorcised?
- (26) Do witches have types? If yes, what are they?
- (27) What are the modes of acquisition of witchcraft?
- (28) What is the mode of operation of witches?
- (29) How do you protect yourself against witches?
- (30) What are the effects of witchcraft accusation?
- (31) Have you ever witness the confession of a witch?

APPENDIX II

Interview Guide for the Earth priest(s)

(SECTION A)

Bio-Data

- (1) What is your name?
- (2) Which religion do you belong to?
- (3) Can you give me the History of this shrine?
- (4) Does this shrine belong to the entire community or it is privately own?
- (5) Are you the first earth priest of this shrine?
- (6) How long have you been working here as the earth priest?

(SECTION B)

- (7) What is witchcraft?
- (8) Do you believed in the existence of witchcraft?
- (9) Why do you believed in witchcraft?
- (10) Have you ever been bewitched before?
- (11) What do you think is the cause of witchcraft accusation?
- (12) Who is a witch?
- (13) What is a witchcraft substance?
- (14) Did witchcraft substance have types? If yes, what are the types?
- (15) What are the functions of each witchcraft substance?
- (16) Can a witch have more than one witchcraft substance?
- (17) How do you identify somebody as a witch in your community?
- (18) Can witchcraft powers be exorcised?
- (19) What are the processes involved in the exorcism ritual Performance?
- (20) What are the characteristics of a witch?

- (21) What action do you normally take against people who are identify to be witches?
- (22) Do witches have types? If yes, what are they?
- (23) What are the modes of acquisition of witchcraft?
- (24) What is the mode of operation of witches?
- (25) Do witches have leaders in their operation?
- (26) If yes, what processes do they use to choose the leaders?
- (27) How do you protect yourself against witches?
- (28) Does a witch ever confess before you?
- (29) What are the effects of witchcraft accusation?



APPENDIX III

Interview Guide for the Opinion Leaders

(SECTION A)

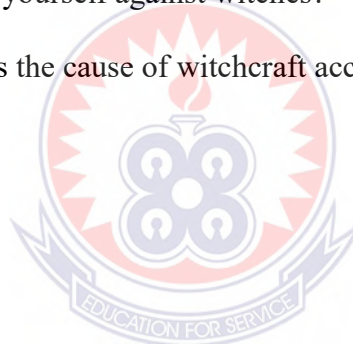
Bio-Data

- (1) What is your name?
- (2) Which religion do you belong to?
- (3) What is your title in this community?
- (4) What is your occupation?

(SECTION B)

- (5) What is witchcraft?
- (6) Do you believe in the existence of witchcraft?
- (7) Why do you believe in witchcraft?
- (8) Have you ever been bewitched before?
- (9) What do you think is the cause of witchcraft accusation?
- (10) Do you know of anyone who has ever been accused of witchcraft?
- (11) If yes, why was the person accused of witchcraft?
- (12) Have you ever accused anyone of witchcraft?
- (13) If yes, why did you accuse the person of witchcraft?
- (14) Who is a witch?
- (15) What is a witchcraft substance?
- (16) Do witchcraft substances have types? If yes, what are the types?
- (17) What are the functions of each witchcraft substance?
- (18) Can a witch have more than one witchcraft substance?
- (19) As an opinion leader, how do you handle witchcraft cases in this community?
- (20) How do you identify somebody as a witch in this community?

- (21) What action do you normally take against people who are identify to be witches?
- (22) From whose authority do you take such actions?
- (23) Can witchcraft powers be exorcised?
- (24) What are the characteristics of a witch?
- (25) Does a witch ever confess before you?
- (26) Did witches have types? If yes, what are they?
- (27) What are the modes of acquisition of witchcraft?
- (28) What is the mode of operation of witches?
- (29) Do witches have leaders in their operation?
- (30) If yes, what processes do they use to choose the leaders?
- (31) How do you protect yourself against witches?
- (32) What do you think is the cause of witchcraft accusation?



APPENDIX IV

Interview Guide for the Alleged Witches

(SECTION A)

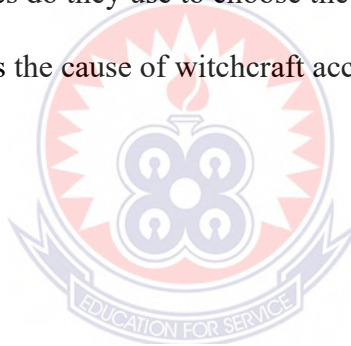
Bio-Data

- (1) What is your name?
- (2) How old are you?
- (3) Which religion do you belong to?
- (4) Where do you come from?
- (5) Why are you here?
- (6) For how long have you been in this camp?
- (7) On your arrival at the camp, can you describe in detail the procedures you went through?
- (8) Have you married?
- (9) How many children do you have?
- (10) What was your occupation before you come to this camp?

(SECTION B)

- (11) Do you believe in the existence of witchcraft?
- (12) What do you think is the cause of witchcraft accusation?
- (13) Have you ever been accused of witchcraft?
- (14) Who first accused you of witchcraft?
- (15) What is your relationship to the person?
- (16) Why were you accused of witchcraft?
- (17) How did you feel when you were accused of witchcraft?
- (18) What happened to you during the period of accusation in the community?
- (19) Do you feel lonely and isolated?

- (20) Are you free to go to the surrounding villages?
- (21) Are you really a witch?
- (22) If yes, how did you acquire it?
- (23) What is a witchcraft substance?
- (24) Do witchcraft substance have types? If yes, what are the types?
- (25) What are the functions of each witchcraft substance?
- (26) Can a witch have more than one witchcraft substance?
- (27) Do witches have types? If yes, what are they?
- (28) What is the mode of operation of witches?
- (29) Do witches have leaders in their operation?
- (30) If yes, what processes do they use to choose the leaders?
- (31) What do you think is the cause of witchcraft accusation?



APPENDIX V



Women's Livelihood Project: Kpatinga Camp



Back view of the Washroom donated by Chief Naa Tia



The Earth priest having a meeting with the Residents



The Researcher (right) and the Earth Priest (left)

Residents processing their farm products



The Housing Facilities in the Camp build by World Vision Ghana



Front View



Back View

The Inner View of the Rooms of the Residents. They are mostly congested.

