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# **Witchcraft and Human Rights of Women in Ghana: Case Study of Witches Villages in Northern Ghana**

**A Study Conducted By the Research Department of the National  
Commission For Civic Education (NCCE)**

**September, 2010**

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**Baron Y. Amofo**  
**Deputy Chairman (Programmes)**

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## Executive Summary

The study conducted on *Witchcraft and Human Rights of Women in Ghana: Case Study of Witches Villages in Northern Ghana* was undertaken by the Research Department of the NCCE in July 2010.

The findings are expected to inform the government, social welfare organizations, international development partners, NGOs and Civil Society about the conditions of these women who stay at the camps. It would also enable funding to be provided to NCCE to educate these communities for attitudinal change towards accused witches.

A total of five hundred and forty respondents were interviewed. Three hundred and ten were alleged witches; one hundred and fifteen was allocated to the pull communities, seventy five to the push communities where most of the alleged witches come from. Forty was allocated to opinion leaders. In addition eight focus group discussions were held. The key findings of the study are presented below:

### **Respondents' Definition of Witchcraft**

The hundred and fifty respondents provided their views as to what witchcraft really meant. One hundred and twenty nine (89 per cent) defined it as the use of spiritual powers to harm or kill people. Eight respondents (5.3 per cent) defined it as the act of seeing into a person's future and manipulating him or her negatively. Closely following was the definition by seven respondents (4.7 per cent) to the effect that it is the act of using spiritual powers to appear in a person's dream, four respondents (2.7 per cent) also defined witchcraft, as the exhibition of extreme anti social behaviours.

### **Beliefs in the Existence of Witchcraft**

The findings on the community belief on witchcraft shows that 134 (89.37 per cent) believe that witchcraft exists, whilst 16 (10.7 per cent) thought otherwise.

As many as 35 (88.5 per cent) out of 40 opinion leaders interviewed believed in the existence of witchcraft. This indicates that there is a high belief in the existence of witchcraft in the community.

### **Identification of a Witch**

It is known that certain peculiarities enable others to identify some people as witches. These findings are peculiar to the Kalande, community members and opinion leaders.

At Kalande a person is identified as a witch when he exhibits extreme anti social behaviour and 25 (62.5 per cent) said this. Also 6 (15 per cent) explained that spiritualists and persons with supernatural powers can identify witches. Three (7.5 per cent) people said one can identify through the concessions of persons who possess the witchcraft power. One (2.5 per cent) person considered a person who was met naked at night to be a witch.

The community members interviewed, 56 (37.3 per cent), mentioned a witch is identified through the exhibition of extreme anti social behaviours. Another 35 (23.3 per cent) said a spiritualist can identify a witch. Twenty seven consider a person a witch when the person attacks you in your dream. Twenty-four believe witches are identified through personal confession.

The opinion leaders 18 (45 per cent) also mention the exhibition of extreme anti social behaviour.

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Attacking people in their dream is mentioned by 15 (37.5 per cent) people. Another 13 (32.5 per cent) said a spiritualist can identify a witch. Eight persons once again talked about personal confession by the witch. One person also said a person met naked at night was a witch and another person surrounded by misfortunes.

### **Accusation of Witchcraft**

The study sought to find out how witchcraft is acquired. The findings are interesting and is similar for the alleged witches among the Kalande, the community and opinion leaders.

Inheritance through the family lineage is an important factor. Of the 22 alleged witches who admitted they were real witches 10 said they inherited it through the family lineage. At Kalande 27 (67.5 per cent) believed it was inherited, 49 (37.7 per cent) of community members said it was inherited and 36 (90 per cent) of opinion leaders believed witchcraft is inherited.

Witchcraft is also acquired through buying. Only one alleged witch bought it. At Kalande, 14 (39 per cent) of them were believed to have bought it from spiritualist for protecting themselves. Fifteen (10 per cent) of the community members said it is bought from spiritualists and 19 (47.5 per cent) of opinion leaders agree that people buy witchcraft powers.

Witchcraft can be acquired from friends. Nine confessed witches said they requested it from friends. Fourteen (9.3 per cent) community members said it was obtained from friends, 10 (2.5 per cent) opinion leaders also said it can be obtained from friends.

It is believed that witchcraft is also acquired through gifts. This was confirmed by respondents in all the communities. At Kalande 3 (7.5) people said it was received through gifts. Fifty seven (38 per cent) of community members and 12 (30 per cent) of the Opinion leaders said the same.

### **Community Dealings With the Accused**

The findings of the study shows that a little below half of the alleged witches 139 (44.8 per cent) said nothing happened to them in the community. Seventy four (23 per cent) were manhandled and lynched, 38 (12.3 per cent) were banished from their communities 30 (9.79 per cent) were sent to the chief or fetish priest to confirm whether they really witches. Another 20 (6.5 per cent) said they were stigmatized and isolated.

Accused persons at Kalande were sent before chiefs, Fetish priests and elders where rituals are performed to exorcise their powers; 911 (60.7 per cent) of community members said the same.

Some persons 5 (12.5 per cent) from Kalande said nothing is done to the accused. Their company is just shunned. Thirteen (8.7 per cent) community members said the alleged witches are manhandled and humiliated in the community.

According to the alleged witches more than half of them were forced to the camps 182 (58.7 per cent). 127 (42 per cent) went on their own freewill.

At Kalande alleged witches are not sent to camps and 37 (92.5 per cent) said this 3 (7.5 per cent) said otherwise. It is not their practice to send accused witches to camps.

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## **Procedures Alleged Witches go Through at the Camp**

The findings indicated that an alleged witch goes through various procedures before settling at the camp. The accused witch is sent to the chief or fetish priest by family members was mentioned by 186 (80 per cent) of the alleged witches, 32 (21.4 per cent) of community members and one opinion member. The provision of animals and items to perform rituals to the gods was said by 20 (6.5 per cent) of the alleged witches, 56 (37.3 per cent) of community members and 17 (42.5 per cent) opinion leaders. The slaughtering of animals to ascertain the truth of witchcraft accusation was mentioned by 40 (12.9 per cent) alleged witches, 57 (38 per cent) community members and 13 (32.5 per cent) of opinion leaders. The concoction given to disarm the witches was mentioned by 225 (72.6 per cent) alleged witches, 103 (68.7 per cent) community members and 23 (57.5 per cent) opinion leaders. The drinking of concoction to disarm witches seemed a very important part of the procedure which is noted by all.

## **Conditions at the Camp**

The study examined the condition of the camps in reference to its facilities such as Electricity, Water, Housing, KVIP, Sanitation, Health Post, Recreation, and Security.

Electricity seems to be a facility majority of the inmate had a problem with. Almost all the respondents 303 (97.7 per cent) said the facility was non-existent in their camps.

- Water was problem at Tindanzie camp at Yendi where 127 (41 per cent) rated it as very poor.
- Housing situation was also a challenge for some of these alleged witches. Of the 310 respondents a total of 163 (52.6 per cent) constituting more than half were of the opinion that the situation was poor and 43 (13.9 per cent) said it was very poor. On the other hand an insignificant proportion of 28 (8.4 per cent) were happy (good) about, while 18 (5.8 per cent) were very happy with the accommodation situation.
- The Gushegu housing situation seemed to be good. Yendi had a very poor housing condition. The Gambaga's camp housing situation was also poor.

The camps had a problem of inadequate toilet facility. A total 129, representing 41.6 per cent stated that the facility was in a bad condition, and 38 (12.3 per cent) felt it was very bad. However a substantial number of 349 (11 per cent) rated it as good and only 20 (6.5 per cent) said it was very good.

Out of the number that said it was poor Yendi had the highest proportion of 91 of its 250 respondents, followed by East Mamprusi with 38.

## **Witches Period of Stay at the Camp**

The study discovered that over a third of the respondents 114 representing 36.8 per cent had stayed in the camp for a period of 5-10 years. Fifty eight (18.7 per cent) had been there 3 -5 years, 54 (17.7 per cent) 1-3 years, forty one (13.2 per cent) had been there for 10 – 20 years whilst 23 (7.4 per cent) had lived at the camp for over 20 years

## **Improving Conditions of Alleged Witches**

There is the need for improvement in the conditions of these alleged witches. The provision of basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter is stated by 125 (83 per cent) of community members and 26 (65 per cent) of opinion leaders. This was also mentioned by 168 (54.2 per cent) of the alleged witches.

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The need for economic empowerment in the form of skill training, soft loans and farming inputs is stated by 42 (28 per cent) community members, 6 (15 per cent) opinion leaders and 138 (44.5 per cent) alleged witches.

Provision of adequate facilities like water, electricity and roads was mentioned by 36 (24 per cent) community members, 11 (27.5 per cent) opinion leaders and 165 (53.2 per cent) alleged witches.

Adequate healthcare provision was stated by 12 (8 per cent) community members, 10 (25 per cent) opinion leaders and 39 (12.6 per cent).

### **Protection of Rights of Alleged Witches**

The alleged witches had problems with loneliness and isolation. Over 50 per cent of the respondents 173 representing 55.8 per cent said they felt lonely and isolated compared to 129 (41.6 per cent) who were quite integrated and happy.

In relation to their movement a number of questions were put to respondents to find out if their movement was restricted in anyway whatsoever, as many as 296 constituting 95.5 per cent confirmed that their movement was not restricted as against 5 (1.6 per cent) who gave a counter view.

Again, 287 (92.6 per cent) asserted that indeed they were allowed to visit their relatives. Only 19 (6.1 per cent) said they were restricted. According to the community members, 113 (75 per cent) indicated that the alleged witches were allowed to visit their relatives whilst 36 (24 per cent) said otherwise.

The opinion leaders agreed that relatives of the alleged witches are allowed to visit them. Majority 31 (77.5 per cent) said the alleged witches are allowed to visit their relatives; 9 (22.5 per cent) said their movement is restricted and they do not visit their relatives. This indicates that the movement of the alleged witches are not totally restricted and they can visit their relatives if they want to.

### **Reintegration of Alleged Witches Into Their Community of Origin**

An overwhelming majority 213 (68.7 per cent) did not want to go back home, as against 90 (29 per cent) who were willing to be reintegrated into their communities.

The community members were asked whether they would accept the alleged witches back into the community. 46 (61 per cent) said they would not accept the alleged witches back into the community 29 (39) stated otherwise.

The opinion leaders stated that 31 (77.5 per cent) there has been an instance where an alleged witch has been reintegrated into the community, Nine (22.5 per cent) persons who are opinion leaders claim that such reintegration has never happened.

Those who support reintegration said the relatives of the alleged witch came for them 21 (52.5 per cent) others said they are reintegrated because the person is disarmed this was said by 7 (17.5 per cent) people. Two people said they were accepted back because the person is innocent.

The opinion leaders 6 (15 per cent) who said there had never been reintegrated mentioned that they

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cannot determine whether they have really been disarmed. 3 (7.5 per cent) said this was not likely because of fear of stigmatization.

### **Maintain or Abolish the Camp**

A majority of 278 (89.6 per cent) alleged witches wanted the camp to be maintained while 25 (0.9 per cent) felt it should be abolished. The community members 133 (90 per cent) indicated that the camps should not be abolished whereas 17 (11 per cent) stated otherwise.

It is interesting to note that the alleged witches as well as the community did not want the camps to be abolished. For the alleged witches, it is a safe haven for them, protects them from humiliation and stigmatization. It serves as a place where they are disarmed from the powers.

The community members think that their stay at the camp brings peace and that it is a tradition that must be preserved.

The reasons cited for abolishing the camps were that most of those accused were innocent; the camps results in stigmatization and therefore makes resettlement difficult. There was the issue of inadequate facilities at the camp. There was a problem with inadequate health care and lack of basic needs. The alleged witches experience loneliness and isolation. They want to join their families and be happy and its violation of their rights.

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# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction and Methodology

### 1.0 Background

Witchcraft is a universal and historic phenomenon which continues to attract wide interest. The belief in witchcraft and consequent witch-hunt is found in many cultures all over the world particularly in Sub-Sahara Africa and for that matter Ghana.

Witches are believed to be people, both male and female, who possess inherent supernatural powers which they use knowingly or unknowingly to harm others or to benefit themselves. (Nukunya, 2004). Witchcraft is also believed to be the power of a person to harm or influence nature through occult means. (Wikipedia 2010). In the views of Evans Pritchard (1937), witches can injure people by virtue of an inherent quality.

According to Nukunya (2004), witchcraft may be inherited or acquired and it is often transmitted from parent to children. The same observation was made by Pritchard (1937); who noted that witchcraft is not only a physical trait but also inherited. It is transmitted by unilinear descent from parent to children. It is also a general belief that witchcraft is associated with certain physical characteristics and behavioral patterns. Thus very old ladies particularly those with certain physical defects are branded witches. Persons with red eye, ill-tempered, rude, quarrelsome dispositions and other queer habits as well as loners and misers are equally suspects. Habits considered anti-social may be suspected and accused of witchcraft.

Other traits include excessive wealth or success, abject poverty and wretchedness. This is because such wealth could only be made possible by witchcraft and acute poverty could motivate a person towards harming others or be a means to camouflage real identify as a witch. (Nukunya, 2004: page 60). Aside these physical characteristics, Pritchard (1937) also asserted that witches can also be confirmed by oracles, and when maggots come out of the apertures of a dead man before burial. It is also believed that witchcraft is a substance in the body of witches. This substance is an oval blackish swelling or bag in which various small objects are sometimes found which is attached to the edge of the liver and this substance can only be extracted through autopsy. (Pritchard 1937, pp: 21, 22).

According to Pritchard (1937) witchcraft is an inherent force which does not perform rites, rituals; makes sacrifice or recite any incantations. Witches do not engage in any manipulation of physical object but are involved in nocturnal orgies and transform into birds, reptiles and other creatures. In Ghana, witches are often reported to hold night meetings where decisions are taken on their victims and actual devouring of unfortunate victims take place. (Nukunya, 2004).

Witches do not operate with their physical bodies; it is the soul of the witch that leaves the corporeal home anytime. It is believed that they send the soul on errands at night. It sails through the air emitting a bright light. In the day time its light can only be seen by witches and witch doctors. (Pritchard, 1937). Witches as they move along, the light shines just like flame; it shines a little and then goes out. This light is not the witches but an emanation from the body. (Pritchard, 1937).

Pritchard (1937) affirmed that witches gather, kill people and boil their flesh in witchcraft pots for their feast. Witches do not immediately destroy their victims; it is done gradually in stages until only when

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a witch has eaten all the soul of a vital organ does death occur. They are also responsible for causing difficulties such as illness, bareness, crop failure or financial misfortune among others.

Witches, according to Nukunya (2004) are neither revered nor honoured but feared. “As far as Ghanaians are concerned, the reality of witchcraft is not in doubt” Nukunya (2004), this affect human behavior. The activities of witches are regarded as evil and harmful hence once someone is suspected to be a witch, the person is either killed or banished from the community as in the case of Western and Central Europe between 1450 and 1750 where about 40,000 people were executed for witchcraft. There is violence against suspected witches in Africa, in South Africa for example people accused of witchcraft run out of town and lose their property while over 300 were killed by mob action. [www.religioustolerance.org/wic\\_afr.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/wic_afr.htm) (2010).

In the witches villages in Northern Ghana for instance, people accused of witchcraft mainly old women, often widows are banned from their villages and cannot go back because they will not be accepted by the village folks.

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana makes provision for the establishment of the National Commission for Civic Education to do among others; to formulate for the consideration of government, from time to time, programmes at National, regional and district levels aimed at realizing the principles and objectives of the Constitution. One of the prime principles of the 1992 Constitution is the protection and preservation of the fundamental human right and freedom of every citizen to ensure the unity and stability of the nation. It is worth noting that when peace prevails in our homes it will reflect in the life of our communities and thereby positively affect the nation as a whole.

## **1.1 Problem Statement**

The 1992 Constitution and various International instruments beginning with the Universal Declaration of Human Right in 1948 have been passed to ensure the rights of every human being. Rights are entitlements which are inalienable. They are expectations that impose on the state, society or individuals the responsibility to protect, ensure and fulfill them (Osei, 2010). These rights include the right to equality before the law, to freedom from torture and cruelty and from inhuman or degrading treatment, the right to human dignity, education, health and to share the cultural life of the community.

Very important treaties have been adopted by the UN since 1966; these include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Other Human Rights instrument have also been adopted, the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention against Torture (CAT), and the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Ghana is a signatory to these treaties.

There is a high possibility that most of these women could be suffering from mental health problems and depression and there are many conventions protecting the rights of mentally ill persons. These include, the UN Standard Rule for the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and the UN Principles for the Protection of mentally ill persons (M1 Principles). These and others are referred to as International Bill of Rights with specific provisions against abuse of the right of the mentally ill.

Certainly, belief in witchcraft is deeply rooted in the Ghanaian culture. Although Nukunya (2004) believes that witchcraft and beliefs associated with it serves as a social control mechanism. In his view

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knowing the characteristics and behavioral patterns usually associated with witches, are likely to be avoided to prevent one being branded a witch. On the other hand, the fear of being bewitched would make people curb excesses and other behaviors to avoid possible witchcraft attack. However, witches are generally feared and nothing good is associated with them, not even the so called good ones.

The witch substance according to Pritchard (1937) grows as the body grows because it is part of the body. Hence, the older the witch is the more potent the witchcraft and the more unscrupulous its use. This is the reason why people are apprehensive of older people.

Again, Pritchard (1937) observed that members of the princely class and Governors, people in positions and wealth are not likely to be accused of witchcraft. Generally, lesser people do not dare consult the oracle about influential people if not their life will be a misery.

It is noted that the inmates of all the witch villages in Northern Ghana are women, mostly old ladies who are widowed with no social and economic standing. As stated above, these women are accused of witchcraft and banned from their villages and they cannot return because they will not be accepted and for fear of being lynched. The camps have therefore become a safe haven for them.

Witchcraft is widespread in Africa and in Ghana for instance witchcraft belief has become institutionalized in certain locations in the Northern part of the country. The women at the witch villages are tagged as witches with no legal justification, banned illegally and threatened with lynching or go on self imposed exile. Some news reports and our investigation showed that the women live outside their normal living settings in the villages tagged “witch camps” and are not allowed to go back. This can affect the alleged witches mentally and physically since they live without their families and are not able to participate in community life of their own villages. The questions then to be asked are their human dignity not being abused, what are the conditions and nature of the camps as well as the facilities at the camp. Thus, the issue this study sought to investigate was; in the light of the above conventions and treatise, do these women fit into the description of witches and to what extent are their human rights upheld.

## **1.2 Objective of the Study**

The key purpose of this study is to ascertain the extent to which the rights of these alleged witches are being upheld. Secondly, the study attempted to observe life at the witches’ villages and their surrounding communities. Specifically however, the questions the study intends to address include;

- Find out the nature or how witchcraft is perceived and understood in Ghana?
- Who identifies a witch and what happens to those identified to be witches?
- Under what conditions are they living in the witch village?
- How are their rights protected?

## **1.3 Organization of Study**

### **1.3.1 Fact-Finding Mission**

In order to gain a holistic picture of the societies to enhance the success of the study, a three-member team from the Research Department- Headquarters of the Commission on March 22, 2010 embarked on a fact-finding mission to the study areas in the Northern region of Ghana where the witch camps are located. The team specifically went to Gambaga, Kpatinga, Ngani and Kalande. The trip was very fruitful as very useful information was gathered on the history and nature of the camps.

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The Gambaga camp is the oldest witch camp in Ghana. The camp has been in existence before 1900. It is located in the East Mamprusi district. According to the chief of Gambaga, the Gambarana, before the colonial era, the alleged witches were executed. A woman by name Adisa from Simba in the Upper East region was accused of witchcraft. When she was being sent for execution, she saw an Imam by name Liman Baba on the way. She ran to the Imam and pleaded with him to save her life. The Imam therefore rescued her and took her to his house. He used the Quran to exorcise the witchcraft power from her and cared for her. Since then, any person accused of witchcraft was sent to the Imam's house. Over the years, as the number increased there was the need for a more spacious environment for the alleged witches. In 1910, Imam Liman Baba in consultation with the then Gambarana sited them behind the latter's house which is now their present location. It was learnt that the alleged witches went to the camp by themselves or sent there by their relatives, on the accused of witchcraft.

The Gambarana further mentioned that when the alleged witches are sent to the camp, they are asked to confess whether they are wizards or witches and if they have ever bewitched someone. If the person confesses, he or she is disarmed of the witch powers and given the option to go home or remain in the camp. They are also asked to cure those they have bewitched. Most of them decided to remain in the camp for fear that they will not be accepted back home. For those alleged witches who refuse to confess, the chief performs certain rituals to ascertain the truth or otherwise.

The Gambaga camp is situated within the Gambaga community. The alleged witches engage in trading activities and help the community especially the chief on his farms during harvest period. The camp has facilities such as water, toilet and bath. They live in individual mud round huts roofed with thatch (grass). The huts are built with the assistance of the chief and other non-governmental organization like "Go Home" whenever an alleged witch is brought to the camp. The population of the camp is about 90.

The Tindanzie camp at Kpatinga is located in the Gushegu district. Elders of the community indicated that the Tindanzie camp has been in existence far before Ghana gained independence in 1957. The Tindanas' (custodian of land/chief priest) used to be in charge of the camp. The alleged witches are given some concoction to render them powerless. They however, do not have any power to determine whether a person is a witch or not.

Currently, there are thirty-one women at the camp but the number keeps on fluctuating. This is because some of them do go back home and are accepted. The old women among them live with their grandchildren who help them with their household chores.

The Tindanzie camp is isolated from the community and it made up of mostly old women. The old structures which served as abode for the alleged witches had been pulled down and new buildings built with cement and roofed with iron sheet. The houses which are round shaped were put up by the World Vision Ghana (Gushegu branch). There is a school near the camp where some of the grand children of the inmates attend. The camp also has a borehole.

The Tindang camp is located in the Yendi Municipal. On how the camp came into existence, the fetish priest known as the Tindana said that the camp was established by their great grandfather called Jabarli who was a hunter. After Jabarli founded he discovered from soothsayers that the gods through the rituals in the shrine, can identify and disarm wizards and witches. He was also taught the process of identifying and disarming witchcraft.

The process of proving witchcraft, according to the chief priest (Tindana), is by sacrificing a fowl to

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the gods, when the fowl dies facing up it implies that the accused person is not a witch or wizard. But when it dies face down it is an indication that the accused is guilty. The process of disarming witchcraft is by giving an accused person concoction to drink. This is followed by incantations, stressing that if an accused person is really a witch or wizard but denies he or she should die, and if he or she is not, should live. The death of an accused person under such circumstances occurs instantly or after some few hours after drinking the concoction. However, those who admit being witches live. They vomit and have diarrhoea after drinking the concoction. Purification rites are performed for the victim after sacrificing a goat or sheep to the gods. The person also pays an amount of money as cola to the chief priest (Tindana). The amount of money usually depends on the ability of the person. It was noted that sometimes family members paid for the victim.

Currently, the camp has a population of about five hundred (532) inmates made up of two hundred (200) wizards and three hundred and thirty two (332) witches.

The Tindang camp is the biggest of all the four camps visited. It is isolated from the community. The camp is made up of Kokombas and Dagombas who live separately from each other due to cultural difference. The alleged witches live in round mud huts with thatch roofs. They fetch water from a stream which is quite far from the camp. The two boreholes at the camp are broken down. There is only one public toilet.

The alleged witches engage in trading activities and also work on the farms of members of the community in return for food. They interact freely with the community members. They are also in touch with their relatives who do visit them. They visit their communities to attend funerals and other social events.

Some relatives of the victims do request for their return to their communities. Most of the alleged witches live with their grandchildren in the camp.

Kalande community is located at the Salaga district. Kalande has no witch camp. It is rather a community of farmers who are settlers from Techiman a town in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana. At Kalande accusations and counter-accusations of witchcraft is widespread throughout the entire community. People accused of witchcraft are not banished in anyway whatsoever from the community. However, there is always arbitration and amicable settlement of issues relating to witchcraft accusations when they arise and the people remain in the community.

There is always tension because of the accusations and counter accusations of bewitched. Though the town is divided along the lines of those who migrated from Techiman and those who claim to be the first settlers, accusations of witchcraft continue to be the main dividing factor. The outcome of the fact finding mission provided in-depth information about the witch villages and alleged witches which helped in the designing and planning of the study.

#### **1.4 Methodology**

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed for this study. This is because the study of the phenomenon of witchcraft involves gathering in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior.

#### **1.5 Study Population**

The population of the study consisted of three (3) witch villages in the Northern region of Ghana where

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the witch camps are located namely Gambaga (East Mamprusi district), Tindanzie (Gushegu district) and Tindang (Yendi Municipal) as well as Kalande (Salaga district) which is not a typical witch village but is a place with wide spread witchcraft belief and accusation. The population included the alleged witches, the residents of the three communities where the camps are located and that of the three push villages where most of the alleged witches come from, the chiefs and their attendants at the camps, some religious and opinion leaders in the communities as well as residents of Kalande.

### **1.5.1 Sample Design**

The study was conducted in only the Northern region where the witch camps are located. In view of the objectives of the study and to ensure fair representation half of the population of the witches in every camp was sampled. From the fact finding mission report, it was deemed necessary to ascertain the views of other categories of persons. These were the communities where the camps are located termed the pull or receiving communities, the push communities where the alleged witches are coming from and opinion leaders such as chiefs, their attendants, religious, heads of institutions, assembly members, leaders of youth groups and other important people in the communities. Kalande though not a camp, but due to the peculiar nature of the community, it was also sampled. As a result a total of five hundred and ten (510) respondents were interviewed.

In all a total of three hundred and ten (310) alleged witches were interviewed, forty five (45) from Gambaga (East Mamprusi district), Tindang (Yendi Municipal) two hundred and fifty (250) and Tindanzi (Gushegu district) fifteen (15). For the push and pull communities' seventy five (75) respondents were selected from each community, Kalande and opinion leaders had forty (40) respondents each.

### **1.5.2 Sample Selection**

Various sampling techniques were used in the sample selection. In the selection of the household to enter, the random walk technique was adopted using the day's code and observing a sampling gap of three (3). This helped to determine the starting point of each day's work, with the objective of giving every respondent an equal chance of being selected. The three witch villages were mapped out and the simple random sampling technique was used to select the alleged witches and community members. In the case of the opinion leaders, they were purposively selected in order to obtain rich information. Eight questionnaires were administered per day for three days.

### **1.5.3 Study Instruments**

The main instruments used in the data collection were the questionnaire and focus group discussions. Four different sets of semi structured questionnaire were designed for the various categories of respondents and eight focus group discussions organized for the alleged witches.

The questionnaires were developed by the research department of the commission. Each set of questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section captured the demographic characteristics of the respondents such as age, sex, educational background, occupation, marital status and religious affiliation.

The second section focused on issues related to belief in the existence of witchcraft, what happens to the alleged witches when they are accused, procedures they go through at the camps, conditions at the camps and human right issues.

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## 1.6 Response to Questionnaires Administration

**Table 1.1: Response to Questionnaires Administration**

Group	Questionnaire Administered	Response	Percentage per cent
Alleged Witches	310	310	100
Push Community	75	75	100
Receiving Community	75	75	100
Opinion Leaders	40	40	100

## 1.7 Training of Field Officers

A team from the research department – headquarters travelled to the Northern region, Tamale, to undertake a one-day training workshop for the twenty-two (22) research assistants who were engaged for the study. The research assistants were all staff of the Commission from the regional and district offices. The training took place on July 20, 2010, at the Catholic Guest House.

The Research Assistants were briefed on the objectives of the study. After which they were taken through the methodology of the study and how to create rapport in the field.

The Research Assistants were challenged to go the extra mile by working hard to come out with quality data. They were also cautioned of the sensitive nature of the exercise and asked to approach the exercise with professionalism.

## 1.8 Focus Group Discussions

Eight (8) focus group discussions were held for the three (3) witch villages based on gender and ethnic groups. Four (4) discussions were held in Tindang for the men, women, Kokombas and Dagombas since it is the largest in terms of population. Three (3) were held at Gambaga village for Dagombas, Frafras, and Mamprusis. Tindanzie at Kpatinga had only one discussion because they are the least populated. Kalande was however left out from the focus group discussion because there is no identified group of witches nor is it a typical witch village.

Each focus group had a total number of twelve (12) participants. Questions were put to participants in an interactive group setting which allowed free interactions with other group members. All the groups recorded a high level of receptiveness from the participants.

## 1.9 Supervision and Monitoring

The Head Office team after the training remained on the field to monitor and supervise the data collection activities. This yielded good results, as research assistants were put on their toes by ensuring that they worked according to the laid down procedure. Auditing of structured questionnaires was done at the district offices of the Commission to ensure that the views of respondents were well captured. Again, research assistants were urged to ask questions correctly and to probe for the right answers.

The team also monitored, supervised and observed all the eight (8) focus group discussions held at Gambaga, Tindang and Tindanzie witch camps. The team ensured that the correct responses were

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recorded by the Research Assistants. After that the reports were thoroughly examined and necessary corrections effected.

In all the training and monitoring team spent ten (10) days on the field.

### **1.10 Data Analysis**

The data collected from the field were edited, coded and entered for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. This was carried out at the National Commission for Civic Education head office in Accra. Information derived from the eight focus group discussions held was also synthesize and collated.

# CHAPTER 2

## Socio-Demographic Background of Respondents

### 2.0 Introduction

This section deals with the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents in terms of Age, Sex, marital status, occupation education attainment and religious affiliations.

The respondents here included the alleged witches, the residents of the three communities (pull communities) where the camps are located and that of the three push villages where most of the alleged witches come from, the chiefs and their attendants at the camps, some religious and opinion leaders in the communities as well as residents of Kalande.

### 2.1 Age and Sex Distribution of Respondents

Respondents were asked to indicate their ages. For effective analysis, respondents ages were categorized into six namely “19 and below, between “20-29”, “30-39” “40-49”, “50-59” and “60+.

#### 2.1.1 Alleged Witches

With the alleged witches, out of the 310 alleged witches interviewed the age group 60+ had the highest respondents with 119 (38.4 per cent). Second was the age group “50-59” with 89 (28.7 per cent) followed by the age group “40-49” with 60 (19.4 per cent). A look at the sex respondents of the alleged witches also shows that, 239 representing 77.1 per cent were females with male constituting 68 (21.9 per cent). However, 3 (1.0 per cent) respondents did not respond to this. A cross tabulation of sex and age of respondents of the alleged witches shows that all the age groups have a higher response rate for females compared to males, with the highest female respondents coming from the 60+ age group with 93 (78.2 per cent). This was followed by the age group “50-59” with 70 (78.7 per cent) and 40-49 with 47 (78.3 per cent). On the other hand, the highest male respondents were from age group 60+ with 25 (21 per cent) next was 50-59 with 18 (20.2 per cent) and 40-49 13 (21.7 per cent)

**Table 2.1: Age and Sex of Respondents of Alleged Witches**

		Age of Respondent						no response	Total
		19 and below	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+		
Sex of respondent	Male	2	1	8	13	18	25	1	68
		2.9 per cent	1.5 per cent	11.8 per cent	19.1 per cent	26.5 per cent	36.8 per cent	1.5 per cent	100.0 per cent
	Female	4	1	22	47	70	93	2	239
		1.7 per cent	.4 per cent	9.2 per cent	19.7 per cent	29.3 per cent	38.9 per cent	.8 per cent	100.0 per cent
	No response	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3
		.0 per cent	.0 per cent	.0 per cent	.0 per cent	33.3 per cent	33.3 per cent	33.3 per cent	100.0 per cent
Total		6	2	30	60	89	119	4	310
		1.9 per cent	.6 per cent	9.7 per cent	19.4 per cent	28.7 per cent	38.4 per cent	1.3 per cent	100.0 per cent

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### 2.1.2 Kalande

At Kalande, out of the total 40 respondents interviewed, 10 (25 per cent) of the 40 respondents were between the 50-59 age group with 20-29 age group following with 9 (22.5 per cent). The 40-49 age group was also next with 8 (20 per cent).

With the sex of respondents in Kalande, 22 representing 55 per cent were males while 18 (45 per cent) were females.

**Table 2.2: Age and Sex of Kalande Respondents**

		Sex of Respondents		Total
		Male	Female	
Age of Respondents	19 and Below	0	1	1
	20-29	6	3	9
	30-39	2	4	6
	40-49	5	3	8
	50-59	5	5	10
	60+	4	2	6
Total		22	18	40

A critical analysis of the sex and age of respondents in Kalande also shows that male's respondents were higher for all the age group than that of the female respondents, that is the highest male respondents came from the age group 20-29 with 6 (66.7 per cent) followed by the age group 50-59 with 5 (50 per cent). The age group 40-49 and 50-59 had 5 respondents each representing 62.5 per cent and 50 per cent respectively.

However, the highest female respondents were from the age group 50-59 representing 5 (50 per cent) followed by 30-39 age group and 20-29 with 4 (66.7 per cent) and 3 (33.3 per cent) respectively.

### 2.1.3 The Receiving/Pull and Push Communities

With the push and pull communities, out of the 150 interviewed, 43 (28.7 per cent) of the respondents were between the 20-29 age group, following them were those between the 40-49 age group with 33 (22 per cent) and the 50-59 age group with 24 (16 per cent).

A glance at the sex of respondents also shows that, out of the 150 interviewed, 88 (58.7 per cent) were males while 61 (40.7 per cent) were females.

**Table 2.3: Age and Sex of Respondents From the Pull and Push Communities**

		Sex of respondent			Total
		Male	Female	No response	
Age of respondent	19 and below	5	1	1	7
	20-29	22	21	0	43
	30-39	14	8	0	22
	40-49	14	19	0	33
	50-59	17	7	0	24
	60+	15	4	0	19
	No response	1	1	0	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>88</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>150</b>

A cross tabulation of age and sex of respondents in these communities also revealed that the highest male respondents came from age group 20-29 with 22 (70.8 per cent), also the age group 50-59 and 30-39 came second and third with 17 (70.8 per cent) and 14 (63.6 per cent).

In regards to the female respondents, the highest respondents were from the age group 20-29 with 21 (48 per cent) next was the age group 40-49 with 19 (57.6 per cent) and 30-39 with 8 (36.4 per cent). However, the least female respondents fell within the age group 19 and below with 1 (14.3 per cent).

### 2.1.4 Opinion Leaders

With the opinion leaders, out of the 40 respondents interviewed, it was discovered that majority, that is 18 (45 per cent) were between the age group 60 and above. This was followed by the age groups 40-49 and 50-59 with 8 (20 per cent) and 7 (17.5 per cent) respectively. On the sex of respondents, majority, 33 representing 82.5 per cent were male while only 6 representing 15 per cent were females.

An analysis of the sex and age of the opinion leaders shows that all the age groups have a higher response rate for males compared to females, thus the highest male respondents were between the age group 60 and above with 17 (94.4 per cent) second was 7 (87.5 per cent) from the age group 40-49.

In comparison, the highest female respondents were from the age group 50-59 with 3 (42.9 per cent) which was followed by those within the age group 20-29 and 30-39 with 1 respondent each representing 50 per cent and 20 per cent respectively.

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## **2.2 Educational Attainment of Respondents**

Respondents were asked to state their highest educational attainment which will help in comparing their views on issues according to their educational background for better understanding of their responses.

### **2.2.1 Alleged Witches**

It is interesting to note that out of the 310 respondents, more than half that is 293 (94.5 per cent) had no formal education, a little of 7 (2.3 per cent) had no formal education but can speak and write in English and/or vernacular. While 5 (1.6 per cent) were educated up to the basic education.

A cross tabulation of the sex and educational background of the alleged witches showed that majority 228 of the female respondents had no formal education, 6 had no formal education but can write in English or vernacular. However, only 2 had completed their basic education.

With regards to the number of male respondents, 63 had no formal education, 3 had completed their basic education .while 1 had no formal education but can speak and write in English or vernacular.

### **2.2.2 Kalande**

At kalande, out of the total of 40 interviewed, 29 (72.5 per cent) had no formal education (comprising of those in the “no formal education and can’t speak or write English and/or vernacular.

However, only 1 (2.05 per cent) of the respondent with no formal education can speak or write English and/or vernacular.7 (17.5 per cent) had completed their basic education while 3 (7.5 per cent) had completed their secondary education.

A critical look at the educational background and sex of respondents also showed that the highest male respondents 51 had no formal education, 18 had completed their basic education while 12 had also completed their secondary education.

On the other hand, 44 of the female respondents had no formal education as compared to the male respondents with 51. 10 and 5 had completed their basic and secondary education respectively while only 2 had no formal education but can speak or write in English or vernacular.

### **2.2.3 The Receiving/Pull and Push Communities**

Out of the total number of 150 respondents interviewed in the pull and push communities 95 (63.3 per cent) had no formal education. Second were those who have completed basic education with 28 (18.7 per cent), 18 (12 per cent) had completed secondary school and 3 (2.0 per cent) had also completed the tertiary education.

Analysis of the sex and educational background of the pull and push communities showed that 14 of the male respondents had basic education as their highest education, followed by 3 who had completed secondary education. However, a high number of 14 had no formal education.

With the female respondents 3 had basic education as their highest education, 14 also stated that they had no formal education just the same number as their male counterpart.

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#### **2.2.4 Opinion Leaders**

A look at the education background of the opinion leaders shows that more than half of the total respondents that is 27 (67.5 per cent) had no formal education. However, 6 (15 per cent) respondents had completed tertiary education followed by those who have completed basic education with 5 (12.5 per cent). The table above shows details of this.

A cross tabulation of the sex and educational background of the opinion leaders showed that 21 of the male respondents had no formal education, 6 had completed tertiary while 4 had also completed their basic education. With regards to the female respondents, 5 had no formal education while only 1 had completed basic education

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## **2.3 Occupational Background of Respondents**

This section sought to find out the occupational background of the respondents. For the purpose of this case study, the various occupations in Ghana were categorized into eight groups.

### **2.3.1 Alleged Witches**

The highest number of respondents, 139 (44.8 per cent) of the total respondents were farmers/fishermen. This was followed by the unemployed and traders/businessmen with 93 (30 per cent), 33 (10.6 per cent) respondents respectively. However, 8 (2.6 per cent) respondents could not mention an occupation they belong to.

A cross tabulation of the sex and occupation of the alleged witches also showed that, majority 52 of the male respondents were into farming/fishing, 5 were unemployed. However, 2 were into in trading / business.

In contrast, 85 of the female respondents were into farming/fishing, 30 were traders while a high number of 88 were unemployed as compared to the male respondents with 5.

### **2.3.2 Kalande**

At Kalande, the most predominant occupation among the respondents was farming/fishing with 23 (57.5 per cent) of the total respondents. 11 (27.5 per cent) were traders/businessmen with 2 (5 per cent) being teachers/lecturers. Only 1 (2.5 per cent) was unemployed.

A critical analysis of the sex and occupation of respondents in Kalande showed that, the occupation group of traders/business was dominated by females with a number of 10, this was followed by those involved in farming /fishing with 5.

In comparison, the male respondents dominated the farming/fishing category with 18 while only 1 was into trading/business activity.

### **2.3.3 The Receiving/Pull and Push Communities**

The analysis of the study reveals that the highest number of respondents 82 (54.7 per cent) were into farming/fishing. Traders/businessmen were the next predominant occupation with 24 (18 per cent), 18 (12 per cent) were students and 11 (7.3 per cent) were unemployed. The table above shows more details.

A cross tabulation of the sex and occupation of the respondents in the pull and push communities revealed that farming and fishing category were dominated by the males with 57, 13 were students and 5 were civil/public servants.

However, 25 of the female respondents were into farming/fishing, 20 were into trading/business as compared to 4 for the males; also 6 of the females were unemployed as against the males with 5.

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### **2.3.4 Opinion Leaders**

The occupational background of the opinion leaders also showed that 21 (5.2 per cent) were into farming, 6 (15 per cent) were also involved in trading /business. However, 5 (12.5 per cent) were unemployed. The table above shows all the details.

A critical analysis of the sex and occupation of the opinion leaders revealed that, majority 20 of the male respondents were into farming/fishing, 3 were indulged in trading while 3 were teachers/lecturers.

On the other hand, only 3 of the female respondents were into trading, 3 were unemployed as compared to the male respondents with 2.

## **2.4 Marital Status of Respondents**

### **2.4.1 Alleged Witches**

In trying to find out the marital status of the alleged witches, it came to light that majority 102 (32.9 per cent) of the total 310 respondents were married, 47 (15.2 per cent) were divorced, 34 (12.3 per cent) were separated and 32 (10.3 per cent) and were single. However, 91 (29.4 per cent) respondents were in a status not covered by the first four categories and among those in the group were the widowed.

An analysis of the marital status and sex of the respondents shows that 53 (52 per cent) of the male respondents were married, 9 (19.1 per cent) divorced, 3 (9.4 per cent) and only 1 (2.6 per cent) was separated. In comparison, 48 (47.1 per cent) of the female respondents were married, 36 (94.7 per cent) were separated, 38 (80.9 per cent) were divorced and 29 (90.6 per cent) were single.

### **2.4.2 Kalande**

A graphical look at the marital status of the respondents in Kalande shows that a total of 27 (67.5 per cent) respondents were married, respondents who were single numbered 7 forming 17.5 per cent. Next in terms of numbers were those who were divorced with 3 (10 per cent), only 2 (5 per cent) were widowed.

A critical look at the marital status and sex of the respondents brings to light that, 15 (55.6 per cent) of the male respondents were married, 5 (71.4 per cent) were single and 1 (25 per cent) was divorced. With the female respondents, 12 (44.4 per cent) of them were married, 2 (28.6 per cent) were single and 3 (75 per cent) were divorced as compared to the male respondents with only 1 respondent

### **2.4.3 The Receiving/Pull and Push Communities**

Out of the total 150 respondents who were interviewed in the various pull and push communities, 111 (74 per cent) were married, this was followed by those who were separated with 2 (5.3 per cent), 23 (15.3 per cent) were single while 4 (2.7 per cent) were divorced.

An analysis of the marital status and sex of respondents shows that 71 (64 per cent) of the male respondents were married, 15 (65.2 per cent) were single and 2 ( per cent) were also separated. In comparison, 40 (36 per cent) of the female respondents were married, 7 (30.4 per cent) single and 6 (75 per cent) were separated.

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#### **2.4.4 Opinion Leaders**

With the opinion leaders, more than half of the respondents interviewed were married with 34 (85 per cent) followed by those separated with 4 (10 per cent). However, only 1 (2.5 per cent) was single. The diagram above shows more details of this.

A cross tabulation of sex and marital status of the opinion leaders shows that the highest male respondents were married with 31 (91.2 per cent) and 1 (25 per cent) were separated. In contrast, the highest female respondents 3 (75 per cent) were separated followed by 2 (33.3 per cent) who were married and only 1 (100 per cent) was single.

#### **2.5 Religious Background of Respondents**

Our constitution assures the right of any person to form personal religious beliefs according to his/her own conscience or join any religious denomination of their choice. In Ghana however, there are 3 prominent religious groups namely Christianity, Islam and Africa Traditional religion.

##### **2.5.1 Alleged Witches**

Out of the total of 310 alleged witches interviewed, 141 of them representing 45.5 per cent said they were Christians whereas 92 respondents forming 29.7 per cent said they were Muslims. Respondents who were followers of the Africa Traditional religion numbered 42 (23.2 per cent), only 2 (.6 per cent) respondents did not fall under any of the three main religions. It was classified under the “any other” category which included

##### **2.5.2 Kalande**

At Kalande, it was realized that most of the respondents interviewed 29 (72.5 per cent) were Christians next was the Muslims with 6 (15 per cent) and the Traditionalist with 4 (10 per cent). However, 1 (2.5 per cent) respondent couldn't state his/her religious affiliation.

##### **2.5.3 The Receiving/Pull and Push Communities**

In the pull and push communities 96 (64 per cent) of the respondents were Muslims, 31 (20.7 per cent) were Christians while 23 (15.3 per cent) had the Africa Traditional religion as their religious affiliation.

##### **2.5.4 Opinion Leaders**

With the opinion leaders, the highest respondents 24 (60 per cent) who were interviewed were Muslims, next was the Christians and Traditionalist with 11 (27.5 per cent) and 5 (12.5 per cent) respectively.

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## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Alleged Witches**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

The belief in witchcraft in Ghana like any other African Country is deeply rooted in the culture of the people, to the extent that the belief is institutionalized in some parts of Northern Ghana. Women branded as witches are either banished from their communities or go on self imposed exile for fear of being killed. These women without any choice end up in these witch villages.

This chapter thus captures the views of the alleged witches in relation to how they were treated when accused of witchcraft, life at the Camp and how they want their conditions at the camp to be improved and whether they think the camp should be abolished or maintained.

#### **3.1 Witchcraft Accusation and Dealing With Alleged Witches in the Communities**

These witch villages have been in existence for quite some time now, and the essence of these camps is to protect the lives of these alleged witches. The study therefore sought to find out how long they have been in the camps. It was discovered that more than a third of the respondents 114 constituting 36.8 per cent had been in the camps for a period of 5-10 years, 58 (18.7 per cent) 3-5 years, 54 (17.7 per cent) 1-3 years.

Significantly, 41 (13.2 per cent) of them had spent between 10 – 20 years while 23 (7.4 per cent) had lived in the camp for over 20 years. The details are shown in table 3.1 below.

**Table 3.1: Extent of Time Respondent Has Been in the Camp**

	Frequency	Percent
Less than a year	15	4.8
1-3 years	54	17.4
3-5 years	58	18.7
5-10 years	114	36.8
10-20 years	41	13.2
Over 20 years	23	7.4
No response	5	1.6
Total	310	100.0

In response to why they were in the camp an over whelming majority of 303 representing (97.7 per cent) indicated that they were accused of witchcraft. Other reasons given by the rest 4 (1.3 per cent) were that they had lost their husbands and therefore decided to go to the camp; some were staying with their parents or other relatives, while some were born there, 3 (1 per cent) however did not respond to the question.

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### 3.1.1 Existence of Witchcraft

Probing further the interviewees were asked if the phenomena of witchcraft really exist. In the view of more than half of the alleged witches 159 (51.3 per cent), the phenomena does not exist, while the other 147 (47.4 per cent), had a strong conviction that it exist.

It is quite rare to find one admitting that he/she is a witch without any compulsion. It was therefore very astonishing to discover that 22 (7.1 per cent) openly admitted that they were witches as against 287 (92.6 per cent) who denied, when the question are you really a witch was put to respondents, Out of this number, 10 were from the East Mamprusi district, 11 from Yendi and only 1 from Gushegu district. Again 5 of the self confessed witches were wizards and the rest 16 were witches.

On how they acquired the witchcraft power 10 (3.2 per cent) of the witches and wizards said they inherited it from the family lineage, 9 (2.9 per cent) requested for it from friends, 1 personally bought the power while 2 (0.6) did not know how they came by it.

### 3.1.2 Witchcraft Accusation

Witchcraft accusation is widespread in Ghana and definitely it is only when one is accused that steps are taken for one to leave the community or go to the camp. It was therefore not surprising when almost 90 per cent of the respondents 275 (88.7 per cent) confirmed that they have ever been accused of witchcraft as against 34 (11 per cent) who claimed they were never accused.

The investigation revealed that as many as 113 (36.5 per cent) of the alleged witches were first accused by their immediate family members (parents, children, husbands) and 72 (23.2 per cent) by extended family members, 29 (9.4 per cent) by In-laws while 48 (14.8 per cent) was by members of the community. It was also noted that 28 (9 per cent) of the respondents identified their rivals as their first accusers. A small proportion of 10 (3.2 per cent) were identified by spiritualist / chiefs as witches.

This is not startling as it affirms Pritchard views that witchcraft does not strike at random and that for witchcraft accusation to come from someone, the supposed victim must have some relationship with the accused such as kinship, neighbours, friends or colleagues. Accusing rivals is also to be expected since they are in some form of competition and such accusations could be motivated by jealousy, hatred and envy.

Pritchard observed that witchcraft accusation is caused by the necessity to explain unexpected or undeserved misfortunes when it is believed such misfortunes could not have happened by chance or naturally.

Thus basis for the accusation according to the respondents are as follows: The common assertion indicated by 151 (48.7 per cent) respondents was that the accusation was due to the death of relatives or community members. Another significant member of 60 (19.4 per cent) said the basis of the accusation was sickness, accidents and other misfortunes of victims - snake bit, miscarriage barrenness etc. Dream state was yet another basis for the accusation, as many as 45 (14.5 per cent) of the alleged witch stated that people claim they saw them in their dreams chasing, attacking fighting/quarrelling with them and attempting to kill them. The exhibition of extreme anti social behavioral patterns such as quarrelsome, queer habits, loners misers etc. was mentioned by 10 (3.2 per cent) while less than 10 per cent ( 5.8

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per cent) felt it was due to sheer enviousness, hatred and jealousy. Remarkably a slim minority of 8 (1.9 per cent) were accused due to certain physical characteristics (old age, deformity) and poverty.

This confirms Pritchard's assertion that witchcraft is associated with certain physical characteristics and behavioral patterns. Nukunya also identified abject poverty and wretchedness as indices of witchcraft. Out of the 310 respondents over 80 per cent of them 256 (82.6 per cent) said they were emotionally traumatized when they were accused which is a normal feeling associated with such accusations, less than 10 per cent were not bothered since they were innocent. However 5 of the witches/wizards were bold to state that they were not bothered because they were responsible for whatever act was committed.

### **3.1.3 How the Accused Witches/Wizards Were Dealt With in the Community**

As noted by Nukunya, witches are not revered or honoured but rather feared as their activities are considered evil and harmful hence most often accused persons are threatened with death, beaten or banished from their communities.

Thus with regard to what happened to them when they were accused a little below half of the respondents 139 (44.8) said nothing happened to them. However a significant number of 74 (23 per cent) close to a quarter were manhandled and nearly lynched, while 38 (12.3 per cent) were banished from their communities and 30 (9.7 per cent) were sent to the chief/fetish priest to confirm if in reality they were witches. A further 20 (6.5 per cent) indicated that they were stigmatized and isolated.

This is an indication that people are awakened to the current democratic dispensation and respect the rights of others if as many as 139 respondents were not harmed in any way even in the face of witchcraft accusation.

This trend reflected in the analysis of all the three districts. Yendi which had the highest number of respondents, 250 had 105 saying they were not touched, 61 were manhandled, 38 banished and 19 stigmatized. In Mamprusi out of the 45 respondents, nothing was done to 28 of them, 8 were however manhandled and interestingly none was banished from the community nor stigmatized. Gushegu with the least number of respondents, 6 out of the 15 reported that nothing happened to them while 5 were manhandled.

It was also important to find out whether the alleged witches were forced to go to the camps or they went on their own accord. The details as presented on figure below showed that more than half of the respondents 182 (58.7 per cent) were forced to the camps and the rest 127 (41 per cent) went on their own free will.

According to the respondents who claimed they were forced to the camps, 45 (14.5) reasoned that indeed they were actually chased out of their communities to go to the camp. Another proportion of respondents 45 (14.5 per cent) said their lives were threatened so they had no choice but to go to the camp, while 39 (12.6 per cent) noted that they were physically forced or dragged there for verification. An eccentric disclosure by 34 (11.0 per cent) was that they were chased to the camps by their own relatives. A small proportion of 18 (5.8 per cent) affirmed that though they were not physically forced to the camp, they were compelled to go due to stigmatization. Other reasons given by 11 (3.5 per cent) of the alleged witches and wizards were that they were neglected, isolated and felt lonely therefore the only option was to go to the camp, while one remarkably admitted that he personally killed his own son and since

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the camp was where he belonged he was force to leave the community.

On the other hand, those who said they were not forced to the camps, 48 representing 15.5 per cent said they willingly went to the camp due to stigmatization/ fear of stigmatization, 15 (4.8 per cent) felt their lives were under threat so decided to leave the community, while 10 (3.2 per cent) were either banished or chased out of the community so decided to go to the camp. Other issues raised by another substantial number of 45 (14.4 per cent) were; to avoid further accusations, wanted peace of mind, to prove their innocence, avoid disturbances and because their movement was restricted.

It is expected that in instances where people are tagged as witches and forced to camps, close relatives and family members would come to their aid and protect them, it was quite weird to note that most of the respondents 145 (46.8 per cent) were sent there by their own family members, 108 (34.8 per cent) by relatives as against 18 (5.8 per cent) and 5 (1.6 per cent) who mentioned community members and friends respectively. This goes to substantiate the views that because witches are feared and their activities considered evil, issues of witchcraft are not taken kindly irrespective of the one accused.

### **3.1.4 Alleged Witches and Their Relations**

According to Durkheim social integration ensures the happiness of the individual and individuals find their happiness in groups thus if one is not integrated he/she would feel isolate and unhappy and in extreme cases commit suicide. Thus it was necessary access how integrated the respondents were in their families and communities as a whole.

Evidently, over half of the respondents 204 (65.8 per cent) were living with their immediate relatives before coming to the camp and over a quarter 91 (29.4 per cent) with extended family members. Only 3 (2.6 per cent) were living alone.

Some of the respondents 155 exactly 50 per cent disclosed that they had dependents living with them at the camps because some of their children were too young to be left behind. Others too moved to the camps with their entire family due to stigmatization and humiliation, while some came to the camp with some children or family members to support them. However 152 constituting 49 per cent of the respondents did not have any dependents at the camps.

Further, a good number of the respondents 295 (95.2 per cent) had children as against only 12 (3.9 per cent) who did not have. Again the majority, 123 (39.7 per cent) had Six or more children, 43 (13.9 per cent) had four, 38 (12.3 per cent) had three and the rest had below three children.

It could be deduced from the above that no matter how well one is integrated in either the family or community, once you are accused of witchcraft you are dealt accordingly.

It was also noted from the statistics that a large number of these children 251 (81.2 per cent) were mainly farmers/fishermen, 59 (18.7 per cent) students, 24 (7.4 per cent) traders and business people, 9 teachers/lectures, 5 civil /public servants, 4 were artisans and 16 unemployed.

This picture seems to suggest that the occupational background of the children of the respondents did not provide them the status and position in the community to boldly assert their authority and defend and protected their parents who are accused of witchcraft and sent to camps.

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This is consonance with the views of Pritchard that people in positions of authority and wealth are not likely to be accused of witchcraft. Thus if the children of these alleged witches were in positions of authority the story might have been different.

As to whether some of the children were still living in the communities where the respondents were accused of witchcraft, over 70 per cent ( 218) still had some of their children in the communities. The rest 80 (25.8 per cent) did not have any children left back at home due the following reasons:

- They followed their parents to the camp.
- The children were not originally living with their parents in the same community.
- Their lives were threatened.
- They left due to stigmatization.

## **3.2 The Camps**

### **3.2.1 Procedures at the Camp on Arrival**

The camp, though not a formal institution, observes certain rules and regulations hence the alleged witches on arrival at the camp are taken through some procedures.- Certain rituals are performed to find out if one is actually a witch and then disarmed before they finally settle in the camp. It was therefore prudent to find out how the alleged witches were received and settled in the camp.

According to 187 (80.3 per cent) of the respondents representing the majority, on arrival at the camps they were received by the chiefs manning the camps, 75 (24.2 per cent) by the fetish priest, 25 (8.1 per cent) by their relatives and 44 (14.2 per cent) by the elders of the camp. This is an indication that some of the alleged witches had relatives already living in the camps who received them on arrival and sent them to the authorities in the camps.

When the alleged witches get to the camps, certain rituals are performed to verify whether they are actually witches as indicated above, then “disarm” before they are allowed to settle in the camp. These rituals involve scarifying of animals (such as fowls, goats and sheep), pouring of libation, shaving of hair and drinking of concoctions, the composition of which is not yet certain and in some cases sleep in the shrine overnight.

The statistics further revealed that more than half of the tagged witches and wizards 229 constituting 73.9 per cent were warmly received. However a sizeable proportion of 48 (15.5 per cent) were made to provide animals such as goats, sheep and fowl, drink and money for sacrifice to the gods. Other respondents 29 (9.4 per cent) said they were made to swear by the gods and slept in the shrine overnight. The district distribution showed that the alleged witches of Gushegu were warmly received and provided no items. However those from East Mamprusi, 3 and Yendi, 42 had respondents providing animals, and money for the sacrifice.

In relation to the actual procedure the alleged witches went through on their arrival at the camps, as many as 241 of the respondents representing 77.7 per cent said they were given some concoction to drink in order to verify if they are really witches and also “disarm” them. The next most significant number of respondents 62 (20 per cent) went through the ritual of sacrificing animals to the gods. A few of them 10 (3.2 per cent) slept in the shrine, 2 swore by the gods.

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A subtle revelation made by a few of the alleged witches 40 (12.9 per cent) was that they went through purification rites before taking the concoction, speaking to the fowl before it was killed, shaving of their hair and pouring of libation by the fetish priest before the concoction was administered.

It was deduced from the analysis that all the rituals were peculiar to all the three districts with the exception of sacrificing animals and providing other items which does not pertain to Gushegu. All the districts registered a significant number of respondents who drunk the concoction. Yendi recorded the highest of 199, Gushegu all 15 respondents, and East Mamprusi 11.

### **3.2.2 Activities Alleged Witches Engage In**

Once the alleged witches go through the necessary rituals and settle the camp becomes their home and they are expected to fend for themselves and lead a normal life. Thus respondents were asked if they were engaged in any economic activity.

In this regard, a large proportion of the respondents 198 constituting over half (63.9 per cent) were involved in some kind of work and 110 (35.5 per cent) did not work.

A total of 147 (47.4 per cent) of the inmates were farmers /fishermen, 45 (14.5 per cent) were involved in trading, 3 (1 per cent) public/civil servants, 2 (0.6 per cent) teaching and the same number 2 were schooling.

It was quite strange to find that 5 of the respondents who were gainfully employed as teachers and civil servants were in the camp. One would expect that with their background and status they could insist on their rights and refuse to leave their communities.

Inquiring further it was noted that most of the alleged witches 183 (59 per cent) worked for themselves, 12 (3.9 per cent) were engaged by the fetish priest, 4 (1.3 per cent) by the chief. An insignificant proportion of 11 (3.5 per cent) were not engaged in any specific job but were available for whoever needed their services.

The rewards for the activities engaged in by the interviewees ranged from farm produce to profit -money.

### **3.2.3 Assessment of Facilities at the Camps**

As mentioned above the camps are not formal institutions, but it is expected that they would have fairly good facilities which would make life a bit more comfortable for the inmates.

#### **Electricity**

Electricity seems to be the facility majority of the inmates had a problem with since to almost all the respondents 303 (97.7 per cent), this facility is nonexistent in all the camps. This should be expected since most of the communities in the districts do not have light.

#### **Water**

A substantial number of the alleged witches 127 (41 per cent) rated the water situation as poor, the next

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highest rating was very poor indicated by 76 (24.5 per cent). Another significant proportion of 54 (17.4 per cent) felt it was good and a slim minority of 21 (6.8 per cent) saw it to be very good. It was noted that Yendi was the district where water was a major issue as a good number of them 127 rated the facility to be poor, 75 said it was very poor and 19 thought it was good with only 2 people saying it was very good.

## **Housing**

Housing also appears to be a big challenge for the inmates. Of the 310 respondents a total of 163 (52.6 per cent) constituting more than half were of the opinion that the situation was poor and 43 (13.9 per cent) said it was very poor. On the other hand an insignificant proportion of 28 (8.4 per cent) were happy (good) about it, while 18 (5.8 per cent) were very happy with the accommodation situation.

Gushegu topped in the rating of housing for very good with 13 inmates and only two respondents rate it as good and very poor. Yendi had the highest response rate of 126 for poor and 38 for very poor. A significant number of 23 were sure it was good while 5 said it was very good. As many as 37 of the alleged witches in East Mamprusi note that the facility was in a poor state and 4 said it was very poor.

## **KVIP**

A total of 129, representing 41.6 per cent stated that the facility was in a bad condition, and 38 (12.3 per cent) felt it was very bad. However a substantial number of 34 (11 per cent) rated it as good and only 20 (6.5 per cent) said it was very good.

Out of the number that said it was poor Yendi had the highest proportion of 91 of its 250 respondents, followed by East Mamprusi with 38. There was no rating from Gushegu. Again, Yendi was the only district that had the utmost number of inmate 37 saying the facility was in a very poor shape.

With the exception of Gushegu which reported 13 of its inmate saying the condition of facility was very good the rest of the districts had below 2 respondents.

## **Sanitation**

The respondents seem to be pleased with the sanitation situation, since generally all the ratings were below 90 respondents. The highest rating was satisfactory which was noted by 85 (27.4 per cent). The next significant proportion of 69 (22.3 per cent) felt it was poor and 57 (18.4 per cent) said it was good. The rating of very good and excellent had the same response rate of 23 (7.4 per cent).

Majority of the inmates 76 in Yendi found the sanitation situation to be satisfactory while the rest of the district had below 10. Again Yendi was the only district which had high rating of 57 for good and excellent 22. For very good Gushegu topped with 12 respondents and Yendi 11.

## **Health Post**

It is intriguing to note that healthcare was not really a challenge as one would imagine. Over 100 of the interviewees 108 (34.8 per cent) were quick to say that it was good and 82 (26.5 per cent) rated it as very good while 5 (1.6 per cent) said it was excellent. However, a fairly significant number of 57 (18.4 per cent) were of the opinion that it was poor.

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Similarly, the district distributions showed the same trend, with exception of Yendi which recorded 76 of the inmates who felt it was good, 57 noted it was very good but the same number of 57 said it was poor. In the case of East Mamprusi more than half of the alleged witches 29 indicated it was good and 14 said it was very good. In the views of 11 respondents in Gushegu it was very good while 3 opined that it to be good.

### **Recreation**

Although most of the interviewees 59 (19 per cent) were of the opinion that it was poor the rest of the ratings were below 50 respondents. Similarly, Yendi was the only district of the 3 which had more than 50 inmates, 59 who observed it was poor, to 41 it was satisfactory, however 29 saw it to be good compared to 28 who rated it as very good. Almost all the inmates in 14 Gushegu felt it was very good with only one rating it to be good. In East Mamprusi, for 24 of the respondents there was nothing like entertainment in the camp, while 14 thought it was good.

### **Security**

In the views of 91 (29.4 per cent) respondents representing the majority, security was no problem to them, it was very good. The next high rating was good noted by 67 (21.6 per cent) of the alleged witches and to 19 (6.1 per cent) of them it was excellent. However, 21 (6.8 per cent) still felt it was poor. This is to be expected with the chiefs/fetish priests who are spiritually fortified around the inmates are bound to feel secured.

Almost a quarter of the respondents 70 of Yendi said security was very good and 53 thought it was good, while 34 noted it was satisfactory. Gushegu had all the 15 inmates saying the security was very good. In East Mamprusi however only 14 respondents felt it was not a problem and to 6 of them it was very good. It could be deduced from the above that Yendi was the most deprived camp which would require immediate attention and assistance, with Gushegu being the most endowed though it would also need some assistance.

#### **3.2.4 How the Camps Can be Improved**

The study further enquired from the respondents what they thought could be done to improve their conditions at the camp.

The alleged witches requested for a lot of things ranging from basic needs, social amenities to infrastructure which would help improve their conditions at the camp.

This is listed below:

#### ***Adequate Facilities / Infrastructure***

- Portable water
- Housing
- Health care
- Electricity
- KVIP
- School for their children/grandchildren
- Corn mill
- Good roads to transport their farm produce to the market.

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## Economic Empowerment

Credit facilities in the form of cash to boost their businesses.

- Boost farming activities
- Cater for their children
- For Farm inputs to enhance farming activities

## Basic Needs

- Food
- Clothing
- Mosquito Nets etc.
- Adequate security

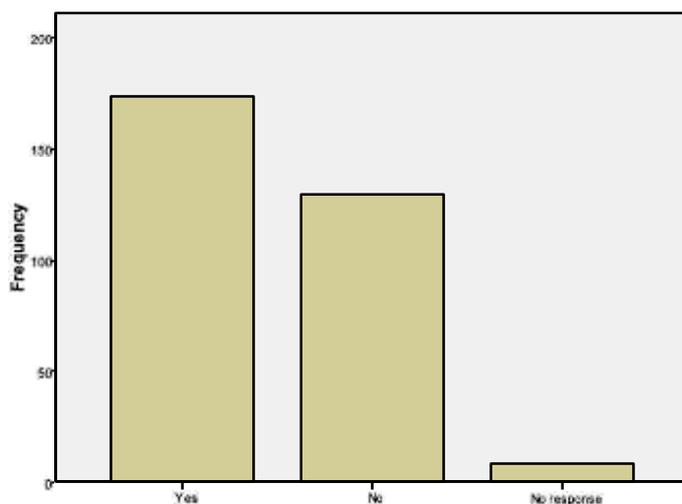
### 3.3 Human Rights Issues / Integration

The 1992 constitution guarantees freedom of movement, association among others, of every citizen, thus as they are in these camps it is expected that these rights will be upheld. It was therefore important to probe into this aspect of their lives at the camps.

#### 3.3.1 Feeling Lonely and Isolated

According to over 50 per cent of the respondents 173 representing 55.8 per cent they were feeling lonely and isolated compared to 129 (41.6 per cent) who were quite well integrated and happy. This should be anticipated since they come from different communities with different cultures and traditions it would not be that easy for them to be well integrated.

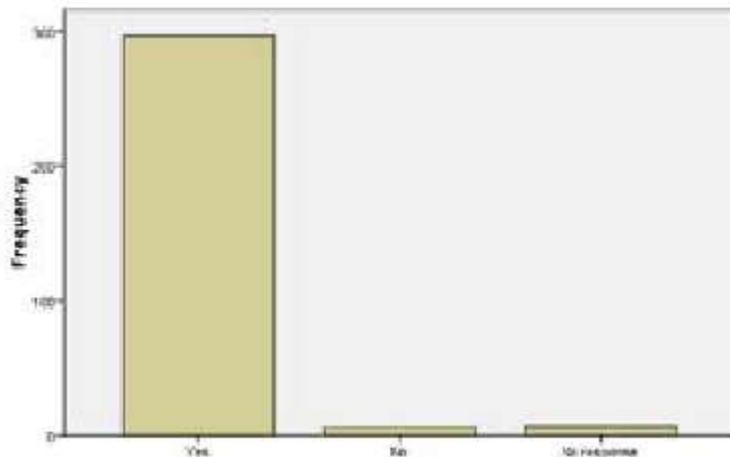
**Fig. 3.1: Whether Respondent Feels Lonely and Isolated**



### 3.3.2 Freedom of Worship

It was heartwarming to note that almost all the respondents 297 (95.8 per cent) attested to the fact that they were not restricted in any way from practicing their religion. Only a very insignificant number of 6 (1.9) felt there was some form of restriction and 7 (2.3 per cent) did not respond to the question.

**Fig.3.2: Whether There is Freedom of Worship**



### 3.3.3 Freedom of Movement

In relation to their movement a number of questions were put to respondents to find out if their movement was restricted in anyway whatsoever, as many as 296 constitution 95.5 per cent confirmed that their movement was not restricted as against 5 (1.6 per cent) who gave a counter view.

Again, 287 (92.6 per cent) asserted that indeed they were allowed to visit their relatives. Only 19 (6.1 per cent) said they were restricted.

A little below 50 per cent of the respondents 140 (45.2 per cent) stated that they did not visit so often. Almost a quarter 76 (24.5 per cent) had never visited their homes compared to 53 (17.1 per cent) who said they visited often and 21 (6.8) visited very often.

Furthermore, a significant proportion of 261 (84.2 per cent) of the alleged witches indicated that their relatives were also allowed to visit them. However, most of them 143 (46.1 per cent) were not visited so often, 64 (20.6 per cent) often, 48 (15.5 per cent) very often and 7 were never visited by their relatives.

### 3.3.4 Want to go Back Home

It is not a good experience for one to leave his/her community under such unpleasant circumstances and relocate elsewhere tagged witch camp. The study therefore enquired from the respondents if they would like to go back home to their communities.

Amazingly an over whelming majority of 213 (68.7 per cent) representing more than half did not want to go back home, as against 90 (29 per cent) who were willing to be reintegrated into their communities.

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This could be due to the treatment mitted out to them when they were accused and they appear to have found the camps a peaceful heaven.

### **3.4 Maintain or Abolish the Camp**

In the same vain when respondents were asked whether the camp should be maintained or abolished it was noted that a good number of 278 constituting 89.6 per cent wanted it maintained while a slim minority of 25 (0.9) felt it should be abolished.

Among the reasons given by respondents who did want it abolished were:

- To protect the lives of the alleged witches
- To protect people from being humiliated tortured and lynched
- To disarm and reform them
- To protect the community members
- For peace to prevail in the community
- For people accusing them to join them one day when they are also accused
- It is a tradition which should be maintained
- It has become our home

In the views of the others it should be abolish because:

- Living in the camp is generally not good
- Loneliness / isolation
- The old women are not strong enough to be on their own
- They want to join their families and be happy
- Some innocent people are suffering in the camp.
- The camps encourage people to brand others as witches and dump them in camps
- It is a violation of our rights.

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# CHAPTER 4

## Kalande

### 4.0 Introduction

Kalande is a community in the East Gonja District in the Northern Region. It is about twenty four kilometers from Salaga the district capital. They are said to have migrated from the Techiman area in the Brong Ahafo region. They speak a peculiar dialect known as Alande. At Kalande accusations and counter accusations of witchcraft is widespread throughout the entire community.

### 4.1 Definitions and Beliefs About Witchcraft

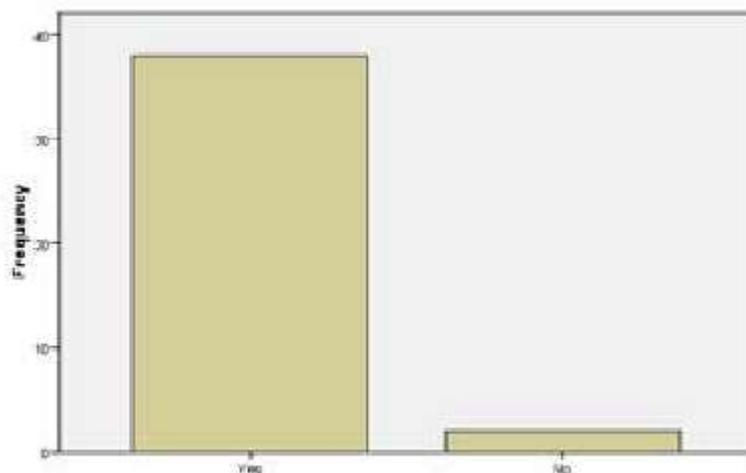
#### 4.1.1 Definitions

The forty respondents from Kalande were asked as to what in their view is the definition of witchcraft. Out of the forty respondents, 33 (82.5 per cent) defined it as the “the use of spiritual powers to harm or kill people”, in the view of 3 (7.5 per cent) of the respondent, witchcraft is the “exhibition of extreme anti-social behaviours”. One person (2.5 per cent) stated it as “the act of seeing into a person’s future and manipulating it negatively”, with another person defining it as “the use of magic”. Two persons (5.0 per cent) indicated that they do not know.

#### 4.1.2 Beliefs

The respondents were asked as to whether they believed in the existence of witchcraft. Almost all the respondents, 38 (95 per cent) stated that they believe witchcraft exist with 2 (5 per cent) stating otherwise. The chart below graphically depicts the belief of respondents as to whether witchcraft exists or not.

**Fig.4.1: Respondents Belief as to Whether Witchcraft Exist or Not**



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A look at the belief in the existence of witchcraft and the sex of respondents brought to fore that of the 38 respondents who stated that witchcraft exist, 21 (55.3 per cent) were males with 17 (44.7 per cent) females. It is worth noting that the two persons who stated that witchcraft does not exist were a male and a female.

More than a quarter (10, 26.3 per cent) of the 38 respondents who affirmed their belief in the existence of witchcraft were between the “50-59” year group with the “20-29” year group following with eight (21.1 per cent). The “40-49” year group also followed with 7 (18.4 per cent) with those above the age of Sixty and those in the “30-39” year group obtaining 6 (15.8 per cent) each. The respondent who stated that witchcraft does not exist was in the “19 and below” age group. The Two interviewees who stated that witchcraft does not exist were in the “20-29” and “40-49” age groups.

Majority (26, 68.4 per cent) of the respondents who believe witchcraft exist have had no form of formal education. Seven (18.4 per cent) have had education up to the basic level with three (7.9 per cent) with secondary education as their highest level of educational attainment. One person (2.6 per cent) who believes witchcraft exists has had no form of formal education but can read and/or write in English and /or vernacular. The other one has been educated up to the Tertiary level. The Two respondents who stated that witchcraft does not exist have had no form of formal education.

Almost two thirds (23, 60.5 per cent) of the respondents who believe in the existence of witchcraft were farmers with a distant 9 (23.7 per cent) involved in one form of trading or the other. Two (5.3 per cent) were teachers with One respondent (2.6 per cent) either being a Student, Public Servant, Artisan or Unemployed. The Two persons who do not believe in the existence of witchcraft were all traders.

Of the 38 respondents who believed in the existence of witchcraft, 25 (65.8 per cent) were married with seven (17.4 per cent) being Single. Four (10.5 per cent) persons were Divorced with Two (5.3 per cent) persons Widowed.

With witchcraft generally viewed as a spiritual phenomenon, it is therefore worthy to look at the opinion of respondents in terms of their belief in the existence of witchcraft in relation to their religious affiliations. It came to light that of the 29 (76.3 per cent) of the respondents who believed witchcraft exist were Christians with Four persons (10.5 per cent) being either Moslems or Traditionalist. One of them did not provide his religious affiliation. The Two persons who did not believe in the existence of witchcraft were all Moslems.

#### **4.1.3 Underlying Reasons for Respondents Belief in the Existence of Witchcraft**

When respondents were asked to give reasons as to why they believed witchcraft exist, 15 (39.5 per cent) of the respondents stated that they believe it exist due to the open displays or confessions by people who profess to possess witchcraft powers.

The second reason was cited by 11 (28.9 per cent) of the respondents to the effect that their believe stems from the fact that there unexplained mysterious circumstances and misfortunes and deaths that occur in the community.

The third reason cited was by 5 (13.2 per cent) of the respondents who believed witchcraft existed to the effect that they have had personal experiences with people with witchcraft powers mostly due to

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their exhibition of extreme antisocial behaviour or patterns. Six (15.8 per cent) persons who though stated they believed in the existence of witchcraft did not give any reasons. One person stated that he/she does not have any specific reason but just believes witchcraft exist.

## 4.2 Operations of Witches

When respondents explained how in their view witches operate, 25 (62.5 per cent) of them stated that persons possessed by the witchcraft powers turn into animals/strange creatures to devour their victims. Four (10 per cent) of respondents stated that witches operate by using magic and travelling long distances at night to feast on their victims with another four (10 per cent) stating that they operate by turning into a ball of fire/light and at times seen naked at night in the community especially at social gathering grounds. Two persons (5 per cent) also stated that witches meet on huge trees .Some other Two (5 per cent) persons also stated witches give diseases, misfortunes and death spiritually which manifest physically.

## 4.3 Means of Witchcraft Acquisition

The forty respondents were asked as to how in their view witchcraft is acquired, 27 (67.5 per cent) mentioned the family lineage either through inheriting it from a deceased relative or obtaining it from a relative who is living. It is worth noting that most of them mentioned grandparents giving it to their children and grandchildren thereby confirming their assertion as to why the very young and the very old are those accused. What followed next was the belief that witchcraft can be bought with 14 (35 per cent) of respondents stating so, they alleged that some people buy it from some spiritualist in a bid to protect themselves or harm others. 3 persons (7.5 per cent) also mentioned “gifts” as means through which witchcraft can be acquired knowingly or unknowingly as such gifts serve as the means of transmission of the witchcraft powers.

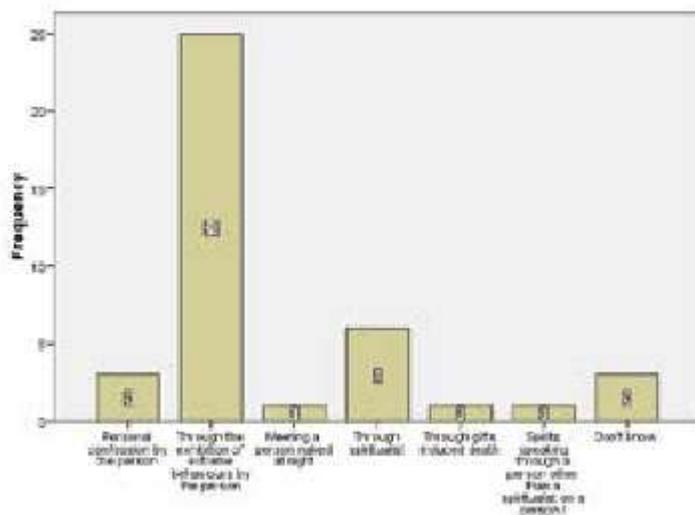
**Table 4.1: Means of Witchcraft Acquisition**

	Frequency	Per cent
Through family lineage	27	67.5
From friends	6	15.0
Through gifts obtained from others	3	7.5
By buying	14	35.0
Don't know	2	5.0

#### 4.4 Identifying a Witch

Exhibition of extreme anti social behaviours clearly is the foremost factor in determining whether a person is a witch or otherwise as indicated by 25 (62.5 per cent) of the respondents. Six persons (15 per cent) also stated that that they identify witches through consulting persons with supernatural powers such as a Priest, Mallam and other Spiritualist. Three (7.5 per cent) also mentioned confessions by persons who are possessed by the witchcraft powers themselves. A respondent (2.5 per cent) each mentioned meeting a person naked at night, death through gifts given by a person or spirits speaking through a person who is not a spiritualist. The chart below gives a graphical description.

**Fig 4.2: Identifying a Witch/Wizard in Your Community**



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#### 4.5 Age Groups of Persons Normally Branded as Witches

When the ages of persons were categorised and respondents chose among them the ages of persons usually accused as witches in the community, it came to fore that though no age group was immune from witchcraft accusations, the very young and the very old are those usually accused. Twenty-Seven (67.5 per cent) of the 40 respondents mentioned those above the age of Sixty with Sixteen (40 per cent) mentioning either the “50-59” year group or the youngest “19 and below” year group. On the other hand, eleven persons chose either the “20-29” year groups or the “40-49” year groups. Ten persons (25 per cent) made mention of the “30-39” year groups. The table below provides more details.

**Table 4.2: Age Groups of Persons Normally Branded as Witches**

	Frequency	Percentage
“19 and below”	16	40
“20-29”	11	27.5
“30-39”	10	25
“40-49”	11	27.5
“50-59”	16	40
“60+”	27	67.5

#### 4.6 Characteristics of Persons Usually Accused of Witchcraft

Respondents provided what usually are the characteristics of persons accused of witchcraft in the Kalande community. In their view, being aged is a major characteristics of persons usually accused of witchcraft, following are those extremely rich. The extremely poor are also not exempted as they are also accused as well as persons who look wretched. The table below provides the details.

**Table 4.3: Characteristics of Persons Usually Accused of Witchcraft**

	Frequency	Per cent
Excessive wealth	8	20
Extreme poverty	6	15
Wretchedness	4	36
Old age	25	62.5
Any other	5	12.5

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## 4.7 Accusations

Respondents were asked as to whether they have ever been accused of possessing witchcraft powers by anybody. To this, only 3 (7.5 per cent) of the 40 respondents stated that they have ever been accused of witchcraft with 36 (90 per cent) stating that they have never been accused. One person did not indicate whether she has ever been accused or not.

For the Three persons who stated that they have ever been accused, their first accuser was an immediate family member specifically mentioning the daughter with another mentioning the rival.

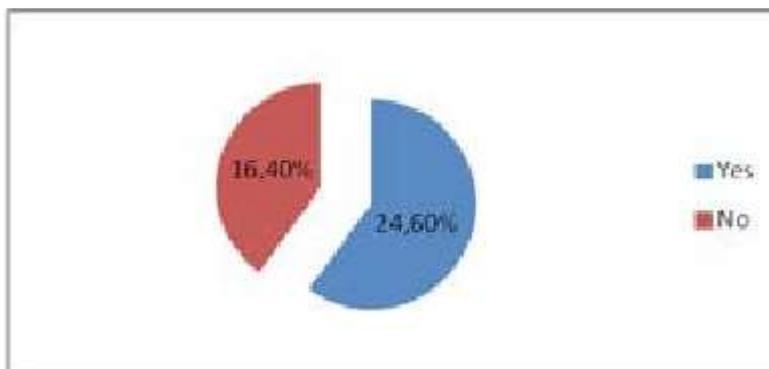
The two persons who opined that they were accused by an immediate relative (daughter or husband) mentioned that they were accused because they exhibited behaviours extremely anti social in their view mentioning being extremely quarrelsome and controversial.

Also, respondents were asked as to whether they have ever accused somebody of witchcraft. One respondent indicated that he had ever accused somebody and his reason was that the person exhibited extreme anti social behaviour.

### 4.7.1 Knowledge of Persons Ever Accused of Witchcraft

Respondents were also asked as to whether they were aware of any persons who have ever been accused of witchcraft. It came to light that of the forty respondents, 24 (60 per cent) of them stated that they were aware of persons who have ever been accused with 16 (40 per cent) stating that they had no knowledge of a person who has ever been accused of witchcraft.

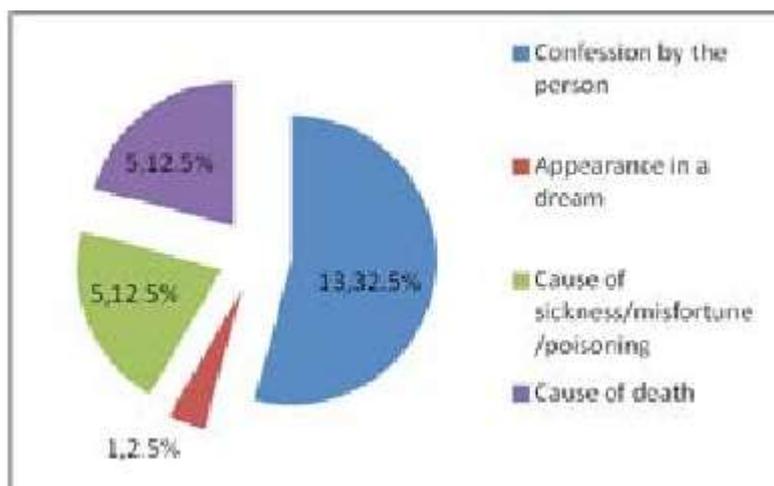
**Fig.4.3: Knowledge of Persons Ever Accused of Witchcraft**



### 4.7.2 Reasons Why the Person Was Accused

For the Twenty four persons who said they had knowledge of persons accused of witchcraft, 13 (32.5 per cent) alleged that the accused was the cause of sickness or misfortunes in the community as well as poisoning of persons through food. Five (12.5 per cent) of them also stated that the persons were accused because they confessed of being witches with another Five (12.5 per cent) also indicating that the persons accused were alleged to have killed some other persons. One person also alleged that the person was seeing by another in a dream.

**Fig.4.4: Reasons Why the Person Was Accused**



## 4.8 Dealing With Witchcraft Accusations

### 4.8.1 Community

At Kalande, the extent of witchcraft accusations usually calls for a total community action unlike other places where actions/inactions are left solely with immediate family members. When the respondents were asked as to what actually happens to the accused persons, 21 (52.5 per cent) postulated that persons accused of witchcraft are usually sent to the chiefs palace to meet the chiefs and elders where they are asked as to whether they really did what they are accused of. Some other nine persons also mentioned that they simply shy away from them with 4 (10 per cent) persons also mentioning that nothing is done to them due to the rule of law. Five persons indicated that they are brought before the community and humiliated. The details are presented in Table 4.5

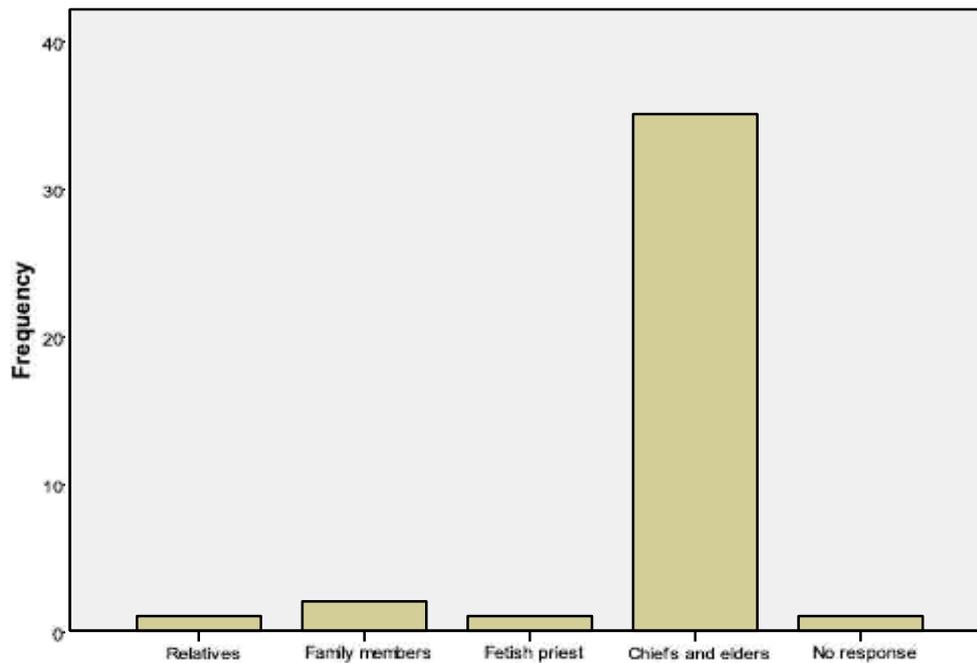
**Table 4.4: How the Community Deals with an Alleged Witch**

	Frequency	Per cent
Valid Sent to the chiefs palace	21	52.5
Humiliated in front of the whole community	5	12.5
Community members shy away from them	9	22.5
Due to the rule of law and democracy nothing is done to them	4	10.0
Any other	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

### 4.8.2 Persons With Authority

The respondents were asked as to who has the authority to take decisions in their community as to what happens to an alleged witch, in this light, 35 (87.5 per cent) of the 40 respondents mentioned the chiefs and elders as the persons with the authority. Two (5 per cent) also made mention of family members with a person each mentioning other distant relatives and the fetish priest. One person did not provide any response

**Fig. 4.5: Persons with Authority in Dealing with an Alleged Witch**



#### 4.9 Procedures Alleged Witches go Through

Respondents' views were sought as to what is done to persons accused of witchcraft. Most notable point mentioned was that the accused persons were sent before the chiefs, the fetish priest and elders where rituals are performed to exorcise them of the powers. Five (12.5 per cent) persons also noted that nothing is done to the accused persons as the community members just shun their company.

**Table 4.5: Procedures Alleged Witches go Through**

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Summoned before the chiefs, fetish priest and elders where rituals are performed to exorcise them of the powers	26	65.0
	Alleged witches are manhandled	2	5.0
	They are banished from the community	3	7.5
	Nothing is done to them as community members shun their company	5	12.5
	Spiritual assistance	4	10.0
	Total	40	100.0

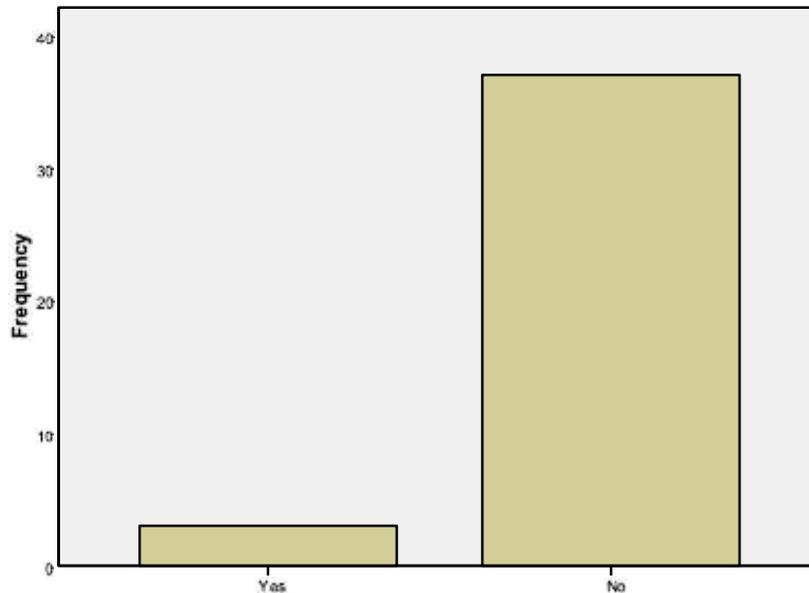
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#### 4.10 Opinion as to Whether Alleged Witches are Sent to Camps

The opinion of respondents was sought as to whether alleged should are sent to camps. Thirty Seven (92.5 per cent) of them indicated that respondents are not sent to camps whereas three (7.5 per cent) of them stated otherwise.

**Fig.4.6: Opinion as to Whether Alleged Witches are Sent to Camps**



#### Reasons

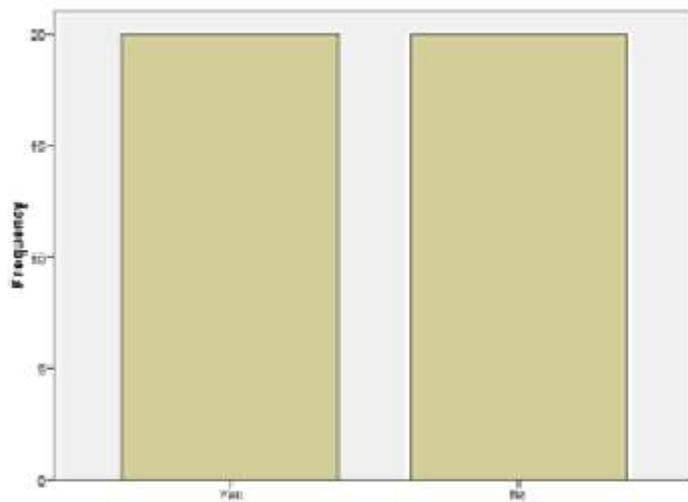
The reasons cited by the three respondents who indicated that alleged witches are sent to camps were to protect the alleged witches as stated by two persons. The other person who stated that the alleged witches are sent to camps stated that it is done to protect the community.

On the other hand, those who indicated that alleged witches are not sent to camps indicated that their tradition does not permit that persons accused of witchcraft are sent to camps attributing it to the reason why they do not have camps in the community. Others also attributed it to the principle of non discrimination and self determination with them indicating that the persons need not be discriminated against and that they have the right to determine where to stay.

#### 4.11 Whether Alleged Witches Should be Sent to Camps

It is worth noting that when the issue was put before respondents as to whether alleged witches should be sent to camps, exactly the same number (20, 50 per cent) of persons who stated that they should be sent to camps also stated otherwise.

**Fig.4.7: Whether Alleged Witches Should be Sent to Camps**



### **Reasons**

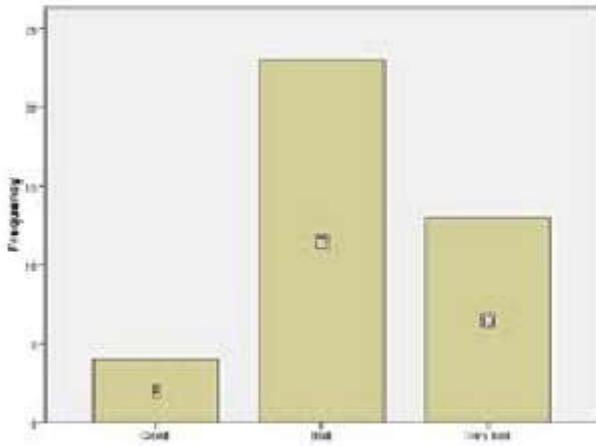
Respondents were further asked to give reasons in their opinion whether the alleged witches should or shouldn't be sent to camps. Reasons cited by 6 (30 per cent) respondents who think that alleged witches should be sent to camps were to protect the life of the alleged witches, 5 (25 per cent) persons also stated that the alleged witches should be sent to camps to protect the community members. Another 5 (25 per cent) also stated that it is done to ensure that peace prevails in the community. Four persons (20 per cent) also stated that they should be sent to camp so as to control reform and exorcise them of the powers.

On the contrary, out of the 20 who mentioned that the alleged witches shouldn't be sent to camps, 11 (55 per cent) indicated that they need not be discriminated against, 5 (25 per cent) indicated that they are better monitored in the community. Three persons (15 per cent) also stated that they are not sent to camps as there are no camps around.

### **4.12 Co-Existence Between Community Members and Alleged Witches**

It is worthy to note that when the respondents were asked as to how they co-exist with alleged witches, majority of the stated that it is not the best with 23 (57.5 per cent) rating it as bad and 13 (32.5 per cent) rating it as very bad. On the other hand, only four persons (10 per cent) rated it as good.

**Fig.4.8: Co-existence Between Community Members and Alleged Witches**



# CHAPTER 5

## Community

### 5.0 Introduction

For a better appreciation of the subject under study, the members within the communities were interviewed to ascertain their views.

The communities were classified into the push and the receiving/pull communities. Community where the camps were located were labeled as the receiving/pull communities whilst communities where the alleged witches moved from were the push communities.

**Table 5.1: Districts, Community and Type of Community**

District/Municipal Community	Type of Community	No. of Respondents	Response Rate (%)	
East Mamprusi	Gambaga	Receiving/Pull	25	100
	Nagbo	Push	25	100
Gushegu	Kpatinga	Receiving/Pull	25	100
	Nayugu	Push	25	100
Yendi	Ngani	Receiving/Pull	25	100
	Yendi	Push	25	100
TOTAL			150	100

From the above it can be noted that Gambaga, Kpatinga and Ngani from the East Mamprusi, Gushegu and Yendi districts/municipality respectively represent the Receiving/Pull communities with Nagbo, Nayugu and Yendi also respectively located in the East Mamprusi, Gushegu and Yendi districts/municipality representing the push communities.

### 5.1 Definition and Accusation

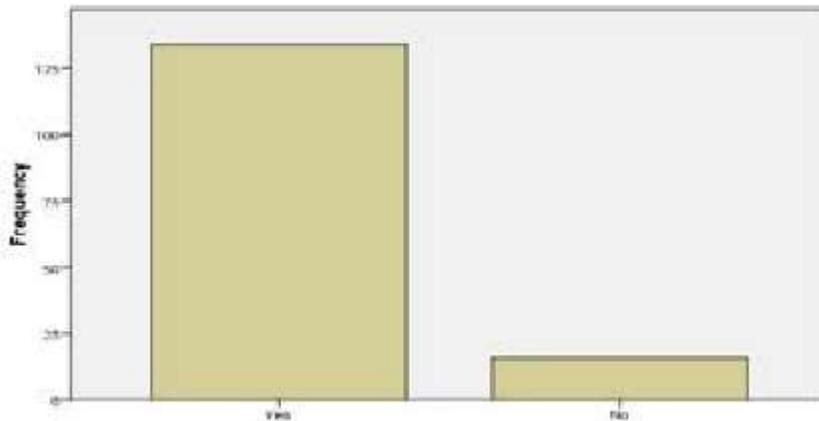
#### 5.1.1 Respondents' Definition of Witchcraft

The hundred and fifty respondents provided their views as to what witchcraft really meant. A hundred and twenty nine (89 per cent) defined it as the use of spiritual powers to harm or kill people. Distantly following was the definition that it is the act of seeing into a person's future and manipulating him/her negatively with Eight respondents (5.3 per cent) stating so. Closely following was the definition by seven respondents (4.7 per cent) to the effect that it is the act of using spiritual powers to be seeing in a person's dream. Four respondents (2.7 per cent) also defined witchcraft, as the exhibition of extreme anti social behaviours/patterns. One person did not know how to define it.

#### 5.1.2 Beliefs in the Existence of Witchcraft

Respondents were asked as to whether they believed in the existence of witchcraft, in this light, a hundred and thirty four (89.3 per cent) stated that they believed that witchcraft exist with Sixteen (10.7 per cent) stating otherwise. The details are graphically represented in the chart below.

**Fig.5.1: Beliefs in the Existence of Witchcraft**



Of the 134 respondents who stated that they believed in the existence of witchcraft, 48 (36 per cent) of them were from the Gushegu district with 44 (33 per cent) respondents coming from the East Mamprusi districts and 42 (31 per cent) from the Yendi municipality.

Of the 16 respondents who stated that witchcraft does not exist, eight (50 per cent) were from the Yendi municipal with six (37.5 per cent) from the East Mamprusi district with two (12.5 per cent) from the Gushegu district.

It must be noted that, of the sixteen respondents who indicated that they do not believe in the existence of witchcraft, 12 (75 per cent) were from the Push communities with 4 (25 per cent) from the receiving communities. The details are found in table 5.2 below.

**Table 5.2: Type of Community of Respondent by Belief in the Existence of Witchcraft**

		Belief in the Existence of Witchcraft		Total
		Yes	No	
Type of Community of Respondent	Push	63	12	75
	Receiving/Pull	71	4	75
Total		134	16	150

**Reasons for Respondents' Beliefs**

Reasons cited by respondents who believed in the existence of witchcraft were;

- Due to the open confession by people to the effect that they have witchcraft powers
- Due to the unexplained deaths and misfortunes in the community
- Manifestation of evil dreams
- Identification of witches by people with supernatural powers
- Through personal experiences by people with witchcraft powers
- Identification by the spirit either through ghost of the deceased or through a third party who is not a spiritualist

On the other hand, for the 16 respondents who do not believe that witchcraft exists, their reasons included;

- Have had no personal encounter with witches
- There is no scientific basis to prove that witchcraft exist
- God controls everything in this world as things happen according to his will; hence there are no witches.

## 5.2 Operations of Witches

To further ascertain views on the phenomenon, respondents' views were sought on the operations of the witches. It is worth noting that several activities were mentioned with the topmost point being that they turn into animals to devour their victims as stated by 53 (35.3 per cent), following were 32 (21.4 per cent) respondents who stated that witches operate by using magic and travelling long distances at night and turning their victims into animals.

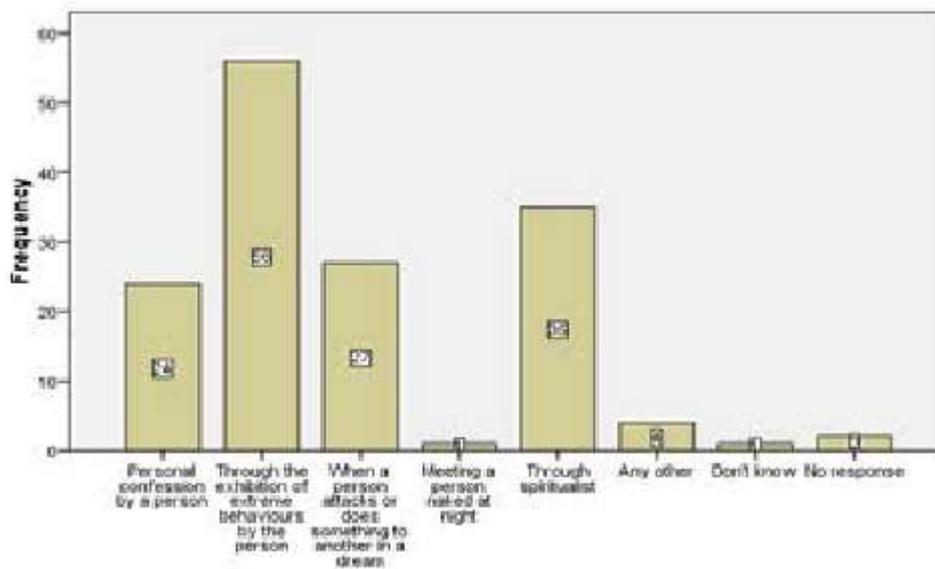
**Table 5.3: How Persons with Witchcraft Operate**

	Frequency	Per cent
They turn into animals to devour their victims.	53	35.3
They operate using magic and travelling long distances at night/ turning victims into animals	26	17.3
They operate like a ball of fire/light and at times seeing naked	32	21.4
They operate by deceptively appearing in people's dreams	6	4.0
They usually meet under huge trees and also at social gathering grounds	8	5.3
They operate by physically and spiritually feeding victims with poisonous food and drinks	18	12
Spiritually give diseases, misfortunes and death to people which manifest physically	21	14

## 5.3 Identifying a Witch/Wizard in the Community

Several factors contribute to the attribution of witchcraft possession to a person. Respondents interviewed from the various communities were therefore asked as to how persons with witchcraft powers are identified within the community. Fifty six of the respondents, representing 37.3 per cent indicated that persons are usually accused in the community as a result of their exhibition of extreme anti social behaviours. Following were thirty-five (23.3 per cent) respondents who stated that persons are identified due identification as witches by a spiritualist. Twenty-seven of the respondents stated that persons are accused when they are seeing attacking another in dream state. Twenty-four (16 per cent) respondents indicated that persons are accused because of personal confession by the persons themselves.

**Fig 5.2: Identifying a Witch/Wizard**



#### 5.4 Age Groups of Persons Normally Branded as Witches

Ages of persons were categorized and respondents were therefore asked to indicate where persons usually accused as witches fell into, these ages included those “19 and below”, “20-29”, “30-39”, “40-49”, “50-59”, “60+” More than half (52.7 per cent) of persons usually accused of witchcraft were those who were 60 years and above. Following were those who were fifty years and above with 72 respondents (48 per cent). Fifty four (36 per cent) of respondents were between the ages of “19 and below”.

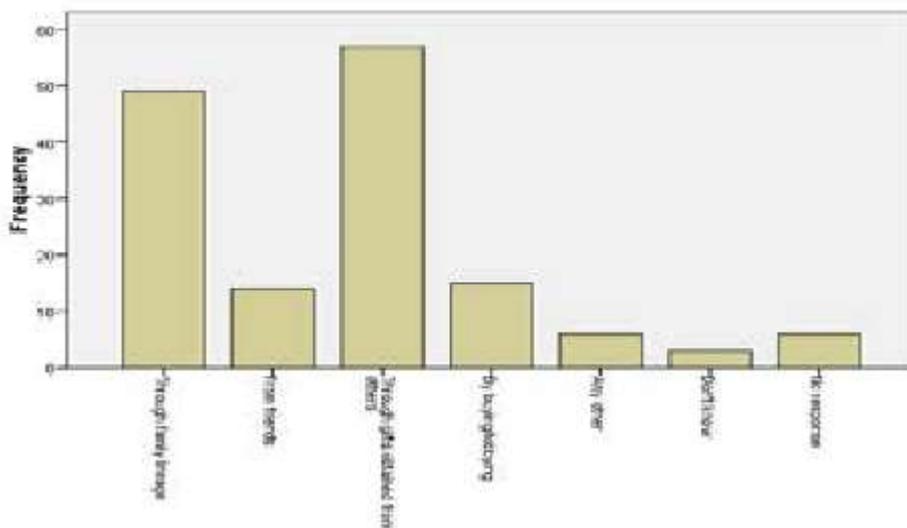
**Table 5.5: Age Groups of Persons Normally Branded as Witches**

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
19 and Below	54	36.0
20 – 29	33	22.0
30 – 39	49	32.7
40 – 49	60	40.0
50 – 59	72	48.0
60+	79	52.7

### 5.5 Acquisition of Witchcraft

The One hundred and fifty respondents stated in their view the means through which witchcraft is acquired. Fifty Seven (38 per cent) of them indicated that witchcraft is acquired through gifts obtained from persons who are already possessed. Forty nine (32.7 per cent) of the respondents stated that people acquired witchcraft through the family lineage either by inheriting it from a deceased relative or handed over to them by family member who is alive. Following were fifteen (10 per cent) of the respondents who stated that people usually lobby for or buy the powers from spiritualist or persons who are already possessed. Not only can witchcraft be obtained from family members but can be obtained from friends as indicated by fourteen (9.3 per cent) of the interviewees. The chart below provides the graphical description.

**Fig.5.3: Means of Witchcraft Acquisition**



At the community level, of the 57 respondents who indicated that witchcraft is acquired through gifts, 29 (50.9 per cent) of them were from the receiving/pull communities with 28 (49.1 per cent) from the push communities. On the part of the respondents who postulated that witchcraft is obtained through the family lineage, 26 (53.1 per cent) were from the push communities with the rest, 23 (46.9 per cent) coming from the receiving communities.

Also, for the fifteen respondents in whose view witchcraft is mainly acquired through buying/lobbying, 12 (80 per cent) of them were from the push communities with the remaining three (20 per cent) from the receiving/pull communities. Moreover, the Fourteen respondents who said witchcraft can be acquired from friends, 11 (78.6 per cent) were from the receiving communities with the three (21.4 per cent) coming from the push communities.

### 5.5.1 Characteristics of Persons Usually Accused of Witchcraft

Respondents stated what in their view are the characteristics of persons usually accused of witchcraft. Notable among the attributes mentioned were that persons accused of witchcraft are usually the aged as well as persons who usually isolated themselves as stated by 84 respondents (56 per cent), the second most prominent point mentioned was being excessively rich with 43 respondents (28.7 per cent) stating so. Below are the details.

**Table 5.6: Characteristics of Persons Usually Branded as Witches**

	Frequency	Percent
Excessive wealth	43	28.7
Extreme poverty	33	22.0
Wretchedness	15	10.0
Old age/isolation	84	56.0
Any other	26	17.3

### 5.5.2 Communities' Reaction

The interviewees were asked as to what the community does to persons accused of witchcraft. Ninety-one representing (60.7 per cent) indicated that accused persons are sent to the chiefs, fetish priest and elders for confirmation and to exorcise them of their powers. The second point stated was that the alleged witches are manhandled and humiliated in the community as stated by 13 (8.7 per cent) of the respondents.

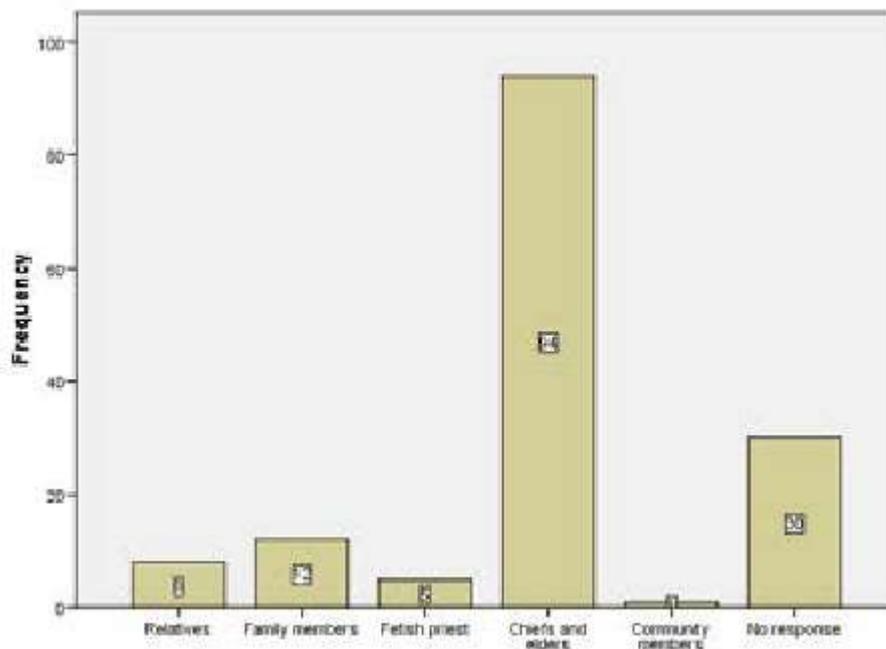
**Table 5.7: Happenings to Persons Accused in the Community**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid		
They are Stigmatised	7	4.7
They are Manhandled	13	8.7
They are sent to the Chiefs, Fetish Priest and Elders for Confirmation and Exorcise of their Powers	91	60.7
They are Banished from the Community	9	6.0
Any Other	1	.7
Don't Know	2	1.3
No Response	27	18.0
Total	150	100.0

### 5.5.3 Persons' With Authority

Interviewees stated who in their view has the authority as to what happens to a person accused of witchcraft. In this light, more than half of the respondents (62.7 per cent) indicated that the authority resides in the chiefs and elders with 12 (8 per cent) mentioning the family persons of the accused. Thirdly, eight persons (5.3 per cent) made mention of the relatives as the persons with the authority. In addition, Five persons (3.3 per cent) made mention of the fetish priest whereas One respondent mentioned the Community members. It must be noted that 30 respondents (20 per cent) did not indicate the person (s) with the authority.

**Fig.5.4: Person (s) with Authority as to What Happens to an Alleged Witch**



At the community level, out of the 94 respondents who indicated that the authority resides in the chiefs and elders, 48 were from the push communities with 46 from the pull communities. For the 12 persons who mentioned family members, 11 were from the push communities with only 1 person from the pull or receiving communities.

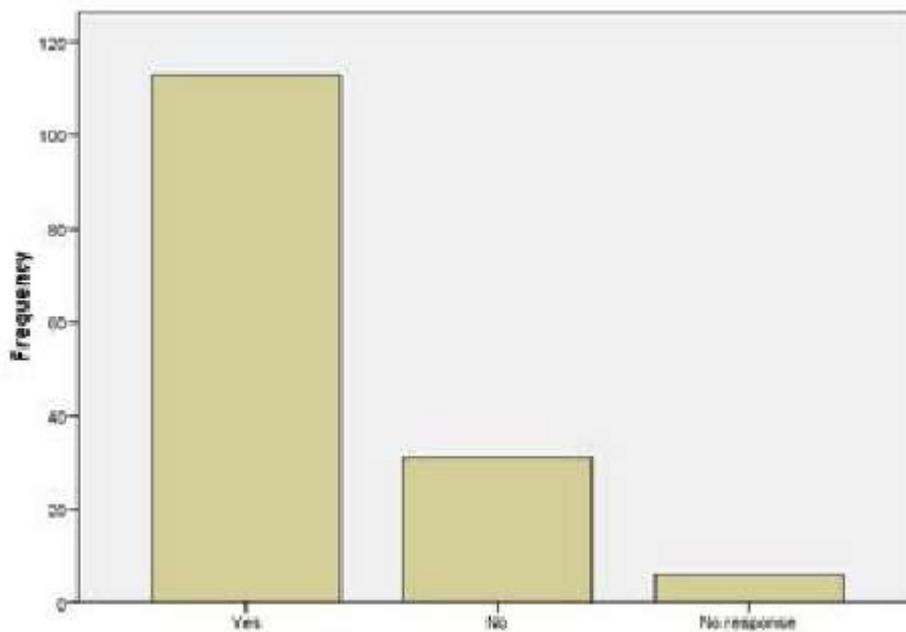
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### 5.5.4 Authority to Defend Themselves

The authority of an individual to defend herself is necessary in ascertaining the truth or otherwise in an allegation. The respondents were therefore asked as to whether in their opinion the alleged witches can defend themselves. In the view of the majority of the respondents, 113 (75.3 per cent) stated that persons alleged have the right to defend themselves. On the other hand, 31 (20.7 per cent) stated that alleged witches cannot defend themselves when an allegation is made against them. Six persons (4 per cent) did not state their opinion.

**Fig.5.5: Authority to Defend Themselves**



At the community level, of the 113 respondents who opined that alleged witches have the authority to defend themselves, 61 constituting the majority of such respondents coming from the pull communities with 52 from the pull communities.

On the other hand, for the 31 interviewees who stated that alleged witches do not have the right to defend themselves, the push community had 19 with the 12 respondents from the pull communities

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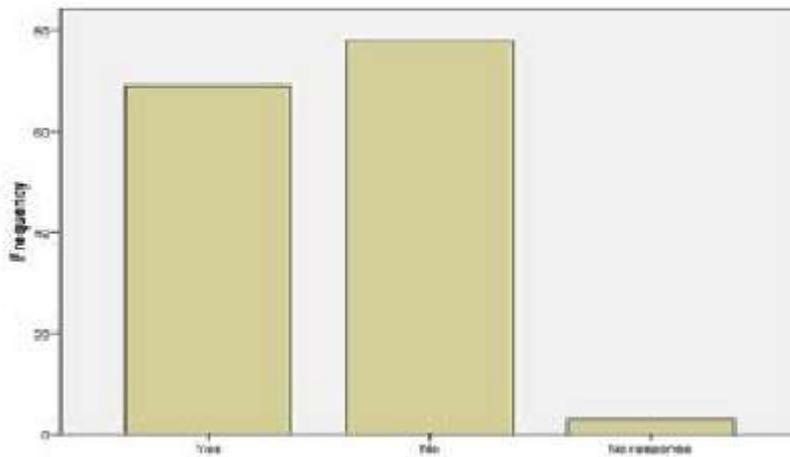
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## 5.6 Opinion on Alleged Witches and Camps

### 5.6.1 Whether Alleged Witches are Forced to Camps

On the issue as to whether alleged witches are forced to camps, 78 (52 per cent) indicated that the alleged witches are not forced to camps whereas 69 (46 per cent) indicated that alleged witches are forced to camps. Three persons (2 per cent) did not respond.

**Fig.5.6: Whether Alleged Witches are Forced to Camps**



Of the 78 respondents who stated that alleged witches are not forced to camps, 52 were from the pull communities with 26 respondents from the push communities. However on the other hand, of the 69 respondents who postulated that alleged witches are forced to camps, 46 were from the push communities with 23 from the pull communities.

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### 5.6.2 Persons Who Send Alleged Witches to Camps

Family members topped with 51 (34 per cent) of respondents stating it as those who send alleged witches to camps, following were the chiefs and elders of the community with 37 respondents (24.7 per cent). Twenty eight (18.7 per cent) of the respondents mentioned the relatives of the alleged witch as those who send the alleged to camp. Three persons (2.0 per cent) also mentioned community members as those who send the alleged witches to camps. Two persons (1.3 per cent) also mentioned the alleged witch and a person (0.7 per cent) mentioned the fetish priest.

#### Reasons

Several reasons were assigned by respondents as to why alleged witches were sent to camp, these included;

- To ascertain whether the person has the witchcraft powers or not
- To protect the person from maltreatment by community members
- To protect the community members from the powers of the alleged witch
- The alleged witches go to the camps to avoid discrimination
- Alleged are sent there as a form of punishment

**Table 5.8: Reasons why Alleged Witches are Sent to Camps**

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	To Protect the Person From Maltreatment by Community Members	59	39.4
	To Ascertain Whether the Person Has the Witchcraft Powers or Not	68	45.3
	To Protect the Community Members from the Powers of the Alleged Witch	53	35.3
	As a Form of Punishment	2	1.4
	The Alleged Witches go to the Camp Themselves to Avoid Stigmatization	5	3.4

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### 5.6.3 Procedures Alleged Witches go Through

The respondents were asked as to the procedures that the alleged witches go through in the community. The procedures included;

- The accused is sent to the chief, fetish priest and elders by family members
- They are made to provide animals and items to perform rituals to the gods
- They slaughter animals to determine whether the accused is a witch or not
- They are given concoction to “disarm”/exorcise them

One can die when he/she denies when indeed The most prominent among those mentioned by the respondents was that he alleged witches are given concoctions to drink so as to exorcise them of the powers. Following were those who postulated that animals are slaughtered to ascertain whether the accused is a witch or not. The full details are found Table 5.9.

**Table 5.9: Procedures Alleged Witches go Through in the Camps**

	Frequency	Per cent
The Accused is Sent to the Chief, Fetish Priest and Elders by Family Members	32	21.4
They are Made to Provide Animals and Items to Perform Rituals to the Gods	56	37.3
They Slaughter Animals to Determine Whether the Accused is a Witch or Not	57	38.0
They are Given Concoction to “Disarm”/ Exorcise Them	103	68.7
One Can Die When he/she Denies when Indeed Possessed	2	1.4

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#### 5.6.4 Challenges Alleged Witches Face

The alleged witches in the view of respondents are faced with multi faceted problems in the camp. They indicated that the most prominent challenge facing alleged witches in the camp are financial problems with a whopping 105 (70 per cent) of the respondents mentioning it as a problem. The issue of isolation was also mentioned by 78 (52 per cent) as the second most prominent challenge alleged witches face as they are isolated from the people they have basically known throughout most part of their lives. Physical torture also came up as a challenge alleged witches face with 30 (20 per cent) of the respondents mentioning it. Another issue made mention of was the mental trauma alleged witches go through, as the allegation changes their status quo. Challenges captured under the any other included health challenges, feeding and other basic necessities of life. The full details can be found below.

**Table 5.10: Challenges Faced by Alleged Witches**

	Frequency	%
Financial	105	70.0
Physical Torture	30	20
Mental	5	3.3
Isolation	78	52.0
Any Other	20	13.3

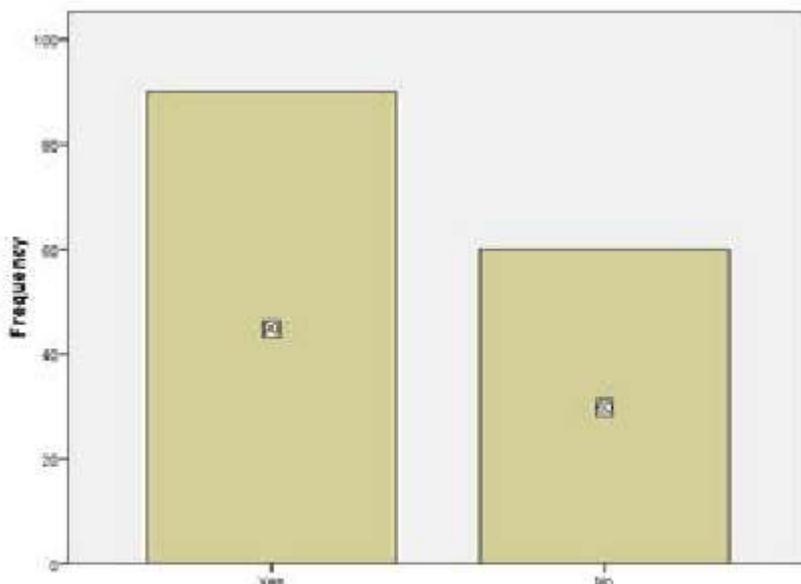
#### 5.6.5 Activities Alleged Witches Engage in at the Camp

With the respondents coming from both the push and pull communities of respondents, their views were sought as to the economic activities engaged in by the alleged witches. A hundred and thirty-five (90 per cent) of respondents stated that the alleged witches were involved in farming with 11 (7.3 per cent) of them involved in petty trading. Two persons mentioned other activities with some other two respondents not responding.

### 5.6.6 Whether Respondents Have Been to the Camp

When the hundred and fifty respondents were asked as to whether they have been to the “witch camps” before. Ninety interviewees (60 per cent) stated that they have been to the camp before with the remaining Sixty respondents (40 per cent) stating otherwise.

**Fig. 5.7: Whether Respondents Have Been to the Camp**



It is not surprising that majority of the respondents who have been to the camps come from the pull or receiving communities. Of the 90 respondents who have been to the camps, 63 were from the pull communities with 27 from the push communities.

### 5.7 Rating of Facilities in the Camp

In general, respondents were asked to best rate the conditions in the camps in terms of Electricity, Water, Housing, KVIP, Sanitation, Health Post, Recreation, and security system. The table below shows how respondents in general best rated the facilities at the camp.

**Table 5.11: General Rating of Facilities by Respondents**

	Electricity	Water	Housing	KVIP	Sanitation	Health Post	Recreation	Security	Total
<b>Excellent</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Very Good</b>	2	15	17	9	8	19	2	8	<b>78</b>
<b>Good</b>	0	21	18	14	28	53	3	28	<b>165</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b>	0	10	14	17	13	15	12	9	<b>90</b>
<b>Poor</b>	0	32	16	11	15	4	7	4	<b>91</b>
<b>Very Poor</b>	4	11	27	17	25	1	13	11	<b>109</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>532</b>

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With the electricity system at the camp, out of the 6 persons who answered, two (2), rated it as very good while four (4) rated it as very poor.

Rating of water by the respondents also showed that 15 persons rated it as very good, 10 rated it as satisfactory. On the other hand, 32 and 11 persons rated it as poor and very poor respectively. With the housing system, out of the 92 respondents who answered, 17 rated it as very good, 18 rated it as good while 32 persons rated it as poor and 11 rated it as very poor. In the case of the KVIP, 9 persons of the total respondents rated it as very good, 14 rated it as good, and 17 rated it as satisfactory. However, 17 persons rated it as very poor and 11 also rated it as poor. Also with the sanitation condition, out of the total of 89 who answered majority, 28 rated it as good, next was 25 persons who rated it as very poor, with 15 persons rating it as poor.

With the case of the Health Post, it is interesting to note that, 53 rated it as good, 19 rated it as satisfactory, 15 rated it as satisfactory while 15 and 25 rated it as poor and very poor respectively.

In terms of the recreations at the camp, 15 persons rated it as just satisfactory; a low number of 3 rated it as good. While 13 rated it as very poor and 7 rated it as poor. Rating of the security condition at the camp reveals that a large number, 28 rated the security condition as good. Next were those who rated it as very poor, 9 persons however were just satisfied. Surprisingly 1 person rated the security condition at the camp as excellent. The table below shows how respondents in the push communities' best rated the various facilities at the camp.

### **5.7.1 Rating of Facilities by the Push Communities**

In the push communities, only 2 persons rated the electricity system in the camps as very good. With the water system in the camp, 8 persons being the highest respondents rated it as good with the same number rating it as poor and poor with, following were 6 persons who rated it as very poor. However, 5 persons rated it as very good.

With the housing system, out of the 30 respondents who answered, 11 persons were just satisfied, 7 persons rated it as very good while 6 rated it as very poor.

Rating of the KVIP by respondents shows that majority that is 12 persons were satisfied, next were those who rated it as very good with 7 persons. However, 8 persons rated it as poor with 8 persons rating it as very poor.

Also with the sanitation system, out of the total of 28 who answered, 13 persons rated it as good, 8 rated it as satisfactory while 3 rated it as very poor. In case of the health post at the camp, respondents rated it as very good and good with 12 persons each. 1 person rated it as very poor.

In terms of the recreation centers at the camp, the highest respondents, nine (9), rated it as satisfactory; others rated it as very good and poor with 2 persons each.

Rating of the security by the respondents in the push communities shows that 8 persons rated it as very good, 7 rated it as good. Meanwhile only 1 person rated it as very poor.

Table 5.12 also shows how respondents in the push communities' best rated the various facilities in the camp.

**Table 5.12: Rating of Facilities by the Push Communities**

Push	Electricity	Water	Housing	KVIP	Sanitation	Health Post	Recreation	Security	Total
<b>Excellent</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Very Good</b>	2	5	7	2	1	12	2	7	<b>38</b>
<b>Good</b>	0	8	5	1	13	12	2	8	<b>49</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b>	0	1	11	12	8	5	9	4	<b>50</b>
<b>Poor</b>	0	8	6	8	3	0	2	1	<b>28</b>
<b>Very Poor</b>	0	6	1	4	3	1	1	1	<b>17</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>183</b>

### 5.7.2 Rating of Facilities by the Pull Communities

Rating of electricity system in the camps by the pull communities shows that out of the total 4 respondents who answered this all 4 persons rated it as very poor. With the rating of water system in the camp, majority of the respondents that is 24 rated it as poor, 13 rated it as good, 10 rated it as very good while 5 rated it as very bad.

Also with housing system in the camp a surprising number of 26 persons rated it as very poor, 13 rated it as good. 10 persons also rated it as very good. With the KVIP, out of the 41 respondents who answered this, most of the respondents rated it as good and very bad with 13 persons coming from each. Seven (7) persons rated it as very good. However, only 3 rated it as poor.

Rating of the sanitation system in the camps also shows that 22 persons rated it as very poor, 15 rated it as good while 3 rated it as poor. With the health post at the camp, 41 persons out of the total 62 rated it as good, 10 rated it as satisfactory and 4 persons rated it as poor.

In terms of the recreation centers, majority, 12 persons rated it as very poor, 5 rated it as poor while only 1 rated it as good.

With the security system at the camp, 20 persons out of the 38 respondents rated it as good, 5 rated it as satisfactory while 11 persons rated it as very poor.

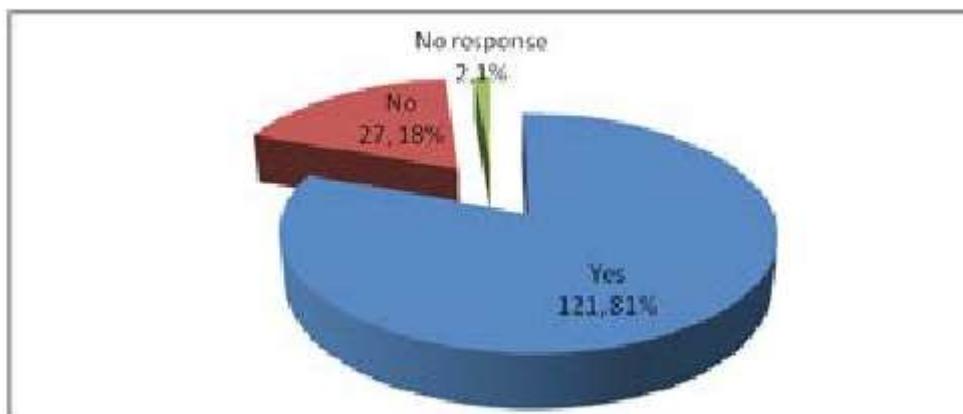
**Table 5.13: Rating of Facilities by the Pull Communities**

Pull	Electricity	Water	Housing	KVIP	Sanitation	Health Post	Recreation	Security	Total
<b>Excellent</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Very Good</b>	0	10	10	7	7	7	0	1	<b>42</b>
<b>Good</b>	0	13	13	13	15	41	1	20	<b>116</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b>	0	9	3	5	5	10	3	5	<b>40</b>
<b>Poor</b>	0	24	10	3	12	4	5	1	<b>59</b>
<b>Very Poor</b>	4	5	26	13	22		12	11	<b>93</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>350</b>

## 5.8 Opinion on the Participation of Alleged Witches in Community Social Events

It is the right of every human to participate in every lawful social event of his/her choice. The alleged witches irrespective of their conditions have an unconditional right to participate in any lawful activity of their choice. The views of the respondents were therefore sought as to whether in their point of view, the alleged witches in the camps are allowed to participate freely in community social events such as funerals, durbars among others. A hundred and twenty one of them representing eighty one percent indicated they are allowed to participate in community social events with twenty seven representing eighteen percent stating otherwise. Two persons did not state their opinion. The details are shown in the table below.

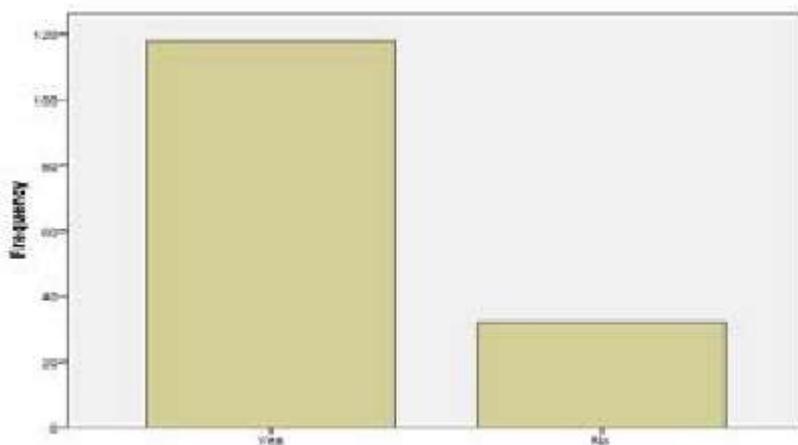
**Fig 5.8: Participation in Community Social Events**



## 5.9 Movement of Alleged Witches

When respondents were asked of their knowledge on the movement of the alleged witches, 118 (78.7 per cent) stated that alleged witches are able to move freely and unimpeded whereas 32 (21.3 per cent) stated otherwise.

**Fig. 5.9: Opinion as to Whether Alleged Witches are Allowed to Move Freely**



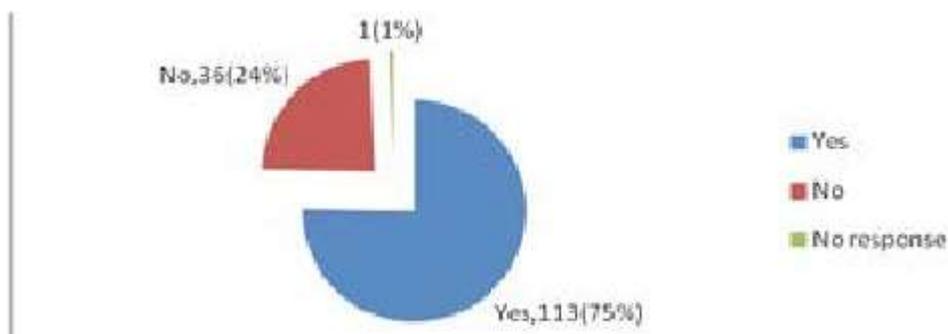
Of the 118 respondents who stated that alleged witches are allowed to move freely, 63 were from the push communities with 55 from the pull communities.

On the other hand, respondents from the pull communities constituted majority of the 32 respondents who said alleged witches are not allowed to move freely with 20 respondents whereas the push communities had 12 respondents.

### 5.10 Visits to Relatives By Alleged Witches

The respondents' views were sought as to whether in their view, the alleged witches are allowed to visit their relatives, 113 (75 per cent) of the 150 respondents interviewed stated that they are allowed to visit their relatives whilst 36 (24 per cent) stated otherwise.

**Fig 5.10: Visits to Relatives by Alleged Witches**

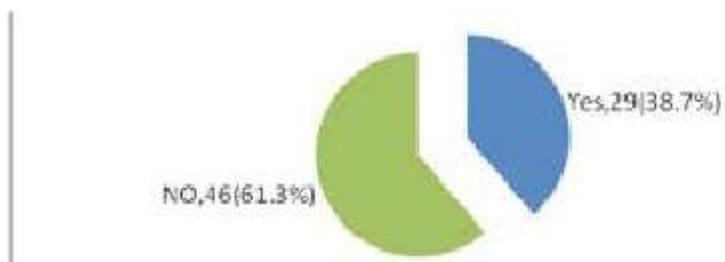


Of the 113 respondents who stated that alleged witches are allowed to visit their relatives, the push community had 61 respondents with 52 respondents from the pull communities. On the other hand, of the 36 respondents who stated that allowed witches are not allowed to visit their relatives freely, 22 were from the pull communities with 14 from the push communities.

### 5.11 Whether the Community Will Accept Alleged Witches Back

The respondents from the push communities were asked as to whether in their view; their various communities would accept the alleged witches back. Of the 75 respondents, 46 (61.3 per cent) indicated that they would not accept the alleged witches back into the community with 29 (38.7 per cent) stating otherwise.

**Fig. 5.11: Whether the Community Will Accept Alleged Witches Back**



It is worth noting of the 29 respondents who stated that in their view, their community would not accept the alleged witches back, 22 (75.9 per cent) were from Nagbo with 6 (20.7 per cent) coming from Yendi and the only person (3.4 per cent) left was from Nayugu. On the other hand, of the 46 respondents who said their communities would not accept the alleged witches back, 24 (52.2 per cent) were from Nayugu whereas 19 (41.3 per cent) were from Yendi with 3 persons (6.5 per cent) coming from Nagbo.

## 5.12 Improving Conditions of Alleged Witches

With the multi faceted problems indicated by the community members, the interviewees were therefore asked as to what in their view could be done to ameliorate the plight of the alleged witches. Topmost among the suggestions made was the point by the 125 (83 per cent) respondents to the effect that the alleged witches need to be provided with basic needs. The basic needs mentioned included shelter, food, clothing and among others. The second most prominent suggestion was to the effect that the alleged witches need to be economically empowered. Also, 36 (24 per cent) respondents stated the provision of adequate facilities in the camp.

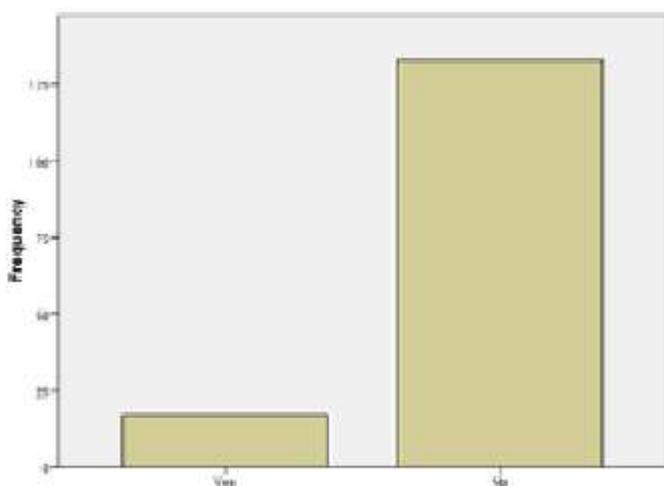
**Table 5.14 Improving Conditions of Alleged Witches at the Camp**

	Frequency	Percent
Provision of Adequate Facilities	36	24
Provision of Healthcare	12	8
Provision of Basic Needs	125	83
Economically Empowering Them	42	28
Advocacy to Promote their Rights as well as Counseling Services	1	1
Provision of Adequate Facilities	5	3

## 5.13 Abolishing Camps

With respondents stating their views about the camps irrespective of whether they have been there or not, they were therefore asked as to whether the camps should be abolished or not. A hundred and thirty three respondents (88.7 per cent) indicated that the camps need not be abolished whereas seventeen respondents (11.3 per cent) stated otherwise. The graphical representation is shown below.

**Fig 5.12: Whether Camps Should be Abolished**



It must further be noted that of the seventeen respondents who stated that the camps should be abolished, twelve (70.6 per cent) of them were from the push communities whereas the remaining five (29.4

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per cent) were from the receiving communities. For the hundred and thirty respondents who oppose abolishing the camps, sixty-three (47.4 per cent) were from the push communities whereas seventy (52.6 per cent) were from the remaining communities.

At the district level, of the seventeen respondents who support the fact that the camps should be abolished, Nine (52.9 per cent) were from the Gushegu district with four (23.5 per cent) each coming from the Yendi municipality and the East Mamprusi district. For those who said the camps should not be abolished, forty-six (34.6 per cent) each came from the East Mamprusi district and the Yendi municipality with forty-one (30.8 per cent) from the Gushegu district.

### **Reasons Why the Camps Should be Abolished**

The reasons cited by respondents who stated that the camps should be abolished were that;

- Most of the accused persons are innocent.
- The “camping system results in stigmatisation and would therefore make resettlement difficult.
- Inadequate facilities at the camp.
- Inadequate/inaccessible healthcare at the camp.
- Lack of basic needs.

### **Reasons Why the Camps Should Not be Abolished**

For those who stated that the camps should not be abolished, their reasons were that:

- To protect the life’s of the alleged witches and safeguard their rights as individuals as they might be attacked in the communities.
- To exorcise them of the powers and reform them.
- To ascertain whether they are actually witches.
- For peace to prevail in their communities.
- It is a tradition which must be preserved.

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## **CHAPTER 6**

### **Opinion Leaders**

#### **6.0 Introduction**

The Constitution of Ghana clearly stipulate that every person in Ghana irrespective of the race, colour, place of origin, political opinion, religion, creed or gender shall be entitled to the fundamental human rights and freedom but the rights of such individual is subject to respect for the rights and freedom of others and for public interest.

In view of this, ten (10) Opinion leaders in each of the four communities (Gambaga, Ngani, Kpatinga and Kalande) were interviewed to find out if the rights of the alleged witches were adhered to by others. In all forty (40) Opinion leaders were in-depth interviewed. The Opinion leaders comprised of chiefs, their attendants, religious leaders, and heads of institutions, assembly members, youth group leaders and other important people in the community.

This section of the report deals with the Opinion leaders' perception about witchcraft and its existence, history of the witch villages, procedures the alleged witches go through in both the community and camp, activities the alleged witches are involved in and the challenges facing them at the witch village.

#### **6.1 Witchcraft and It's Existence**

Witchcraft as perceived by majority of respondents 35 (87.5 per cent), is the use of spiritual powers by a person to harm or kill people. This spiritual power according to them is evil spirits which possess people. These powers can be used to cause deformity, destroy ones' property and misfortunes in the lives of their victims. A respondent gave a scenario where a rope is tied around an object while calling the name of the persons and incantations which can result in the persons' death.

Three (7.5 per cent) respondents however, defined witchcraft to be an act of seeing into a persons' future and manipulating the person negatively. For them, a witch cannot change a persons' future or destiny but can only influence the person and by so doing the person not reaching his/her goal in life. Manipulation can be in the form of drunkenness, theft, and other immoral vices in the society.

A few respondents 2 (5 per cent) saw witchcraft to be an exhibition of extreme antisocial behaviour patterns. A person is therefore said to have witchcraft powers if the person is a liar, inquisitive, talkative, has hatred towards another and always causing trouble. If one is also wicked towards the neighbour, then the person is perceived to be a witch or wizard. Pritchard in his book "witchcraft among the Azande", clearly stipulates how men bewitched other men when they hate them.

Even though, all forty respondents defined what witchcraft is, it was necessary to find out from them if they believed in the existence of witchcraft. Surprisingly, three (7.5 per cent) of the respondents did not believe in the existence of witchcraft and their reason was that:

- There is no scientific proof to the existence of witchcraft
- God controls everything and created everything; and witchcraft was not part of Gods' plans.

Of the 35 (92.5 per cent) respondents who said witchcraft exists, 18 (45 per cent) of them said they believe in the existence of witchcraft because of the open confession made by people that they have witchcraft powers.

Other reasons respondents gave on the existence of witchcraft includes; the unexplained misfortunes and mysterious deaths of people occurring in the community. This was stated by 7 (17.5 per cent) respondents. Six (15 per cent) respondents mentioned the identification of witches by people with spiritual powers like soothsayers as the reason for the existence of witchcraft. Three (7.5 per cent) respondents also mentioned the identification of people with witchcraft powers by spirits either through ghost of the deceased victim or through a third party who is not a spiritualist. This is where a person bewitched or killed reveals the person responsible for his/her predicament or death.

Two (5 per cent) respondents claim they believe witchcraft exists because of their own personal experience with people having the witchcraft powers. One (2.5 per cent) respondent believe that people seeing themselves being bewitched in dreams and it coming to pass is a clear indication that witchcraft exists.

A cross analysis with the district of the respondents shows that 100 per cent (10) of respondents in East Mamprusi (Gambaga) and Gushegu believed that witchcraft exist whereas 80 per cent (8) in East Gonja and 90 per cent (9) in Yendi believe in the existence of witchcraft

### 6.1.1 Community Beliefs About Witchcraft

In order to understand why people are sometimes accused of witchcraft, it was important to find out from the respondents what the community beliefs about witchcraft were. Table 6.1 shows the various responses respondents gave.

**Table 6.1: Community Beliefs About Witchcraft**

	Frequency	Per cent
It is the use of Spiritual Powers to Harm/Kill and Cause Misfortune to People	23	57.5
The Use of Magic to Operate at Night	4	10
The Use of Spiritual Powers to Appear in a Person's Dream	3	7.5
Exhibition of Extreme Behaviour Patterns	2	5
Witchcraft is Used to Acquire Excessive Wealth and Power	1	2.5
Any Other	4	10

From table 6.1, majority (23) of the respondents said their community belief about witchcraft is the use of spiritual powers to harm/kill and cause misfortune to people. Every misfortune in society is often attributed to witchcraft. Examples are poor farm yield, breakdown in marriages and being jobless.

Another 10 per cent stated the use of magic to operate at night as the belief of witchcraft in the community. This is often seen as a glowing light at night climbing trees up and down. This assertion was captured by Pritchard that witches move through the air emitting bright light; it shines a little then goes out.

Closely followed were respondents who claim their community belief of witchcraft is the use of spiritual powers to appear in a persons’ dream where 7.5 per cent of the respondents stated so. According to Pritchard, a dream is not a symbol of witchcraft but an actual experience of it. Therefore dreaming being chased by a human-headed beast is an actual experience of witchcraft.

Two (5 per cent) respondents were of the view that the exhibition of extreme behaviour patterns is the belief his/her community holds about witchcraft. in this regard therefore, a person who is not a witch but exhibiting queer habits, quarrelsome disposition according to Nukunya can be branded as a witch. Lastly, only 2.5 per cent of the respondents said, witchcraft is used to acquire excessive wealth and power and for Nukunya, the belief is that only witchcraft would make one have such wealth and power. Other reasons mentioned by four of the respondents were that:

- Old women have the tendency of being accused of witchcraft
- People with witchcraft power can be exorcised or ‘disarmed’
- People with witchcraft power can only be identified by spiritualist
- People with witchcraft power are enemies to the community

### 6.1.2 Ways by Which Witches Operate

This section seeks to find out from the respondents their views and ideas on how witches operate. The opinion leaders gave out various responses and this can be seen on table 6.2 below.

**Table 6.2: How Persons With Witchcraft Operate**

	Frequency	Per cent
They Operate Like a Ball of Fire/Light and at Times Seen Naked	21	52.5
They Usually Meet on Huge Trees and Also at Community Meeting Places	18	45
They operate using magic/travelling long distances at night	16	40
They Turn Into Animals	13	32.5
Spiritually Give Diseases, Misfortunes and Death to People Which Manifest Spiritually	11	27.5
They Operate Deceptively, Appearing in People’s Dreams	8	20
They Operate by Physically and Spiritually Feeding Victims With Poisonous Food and Drinks	7	17.5
Any Other	1	2.5

Majority (52.5 per cent) of the respondents agree that witches operate like a ball of fire/light and at times seen naked at night. Another 45 per cent stated that they usually meet on huge trees and also at community meeting places. Next were respondents who said they operate using magic to travel long distances at night. They represent 40 per cent of the total respondents figure.

Also, of the total number of 40 respondents, 32.5 per cent of them said witches operate by turning into animals such as birds, insects at night. A few also were of the view that, not only do they themselves turn into animals, but they also turn their victims into animals such as donkeys to ride on them at night. For some of the respondents (27.5 per cent), they operate by spiritually giving diseases, misfortunes and death to people which manifest physically. Closely followed, were 20 per cent of respondents who mentioned that witches operate deceptively appearing in people’s dreams.

Only seven respondents said they operate by physically and spiritually feeding victims with poisonous food and drinks.

From the various responses given by the respondents, it was observed that witches operate with one aim in mind and that is to meet and plan on how to cause misfortune, harm, destroy or even kill their victims.

### 6.1.3 Acquisition of Witchcraft

On how witchcraft is acquired, the respondents gave various means by which it can be acquired and the results are shown on the table below.

**Table 6.3: How Witchcraft is Acquired**

	Frequency	Per cent
Through Family Lineage	36	90
By Buying	19	47.5
Through Gifts Obtained From Others	12	30
From Friends	10	25
Invoking of Spirits	2	5
Any Other	1	2.5

According to Nukunya, witchcraft can only be inherited or acquired and it was quite revealing to note that 90 per cent of the respondents agree that witchcraft is inherited through family lineage. This can be in the form of an inheritance left by a parent/grandparent to the child/grandchild.

Respondents also agreed that witchcraft is acquired, but on how it is acquired, 47.5 per cent of the respondents said it is acquired by buying it. This is where a person goes to buy the witchcraft power with money for his/her personal gain.

Others also acquire it through gifts obtained from others were 30 per cent of the respondents mentioned it. Gifts mentioned by the respondents were food and chewing stick. Friends with witchcraft power can easily give such supernatural powers to their friends and 10 (25 per cent) respondents stated so.

Five per cent of the respondents however said, witchcraft can be acquired through invoking of spirits. For them, calling on spirits can make one gain supernatural powers for witchcraft activities. Only one respondent gave other reason for the acquisition of witchcraft power through evil trees in the forest.

### 6.1.4 Identifying a Witch in the Community

To identify one to be a witch is to be able to recognize them among other individuals. However, since it is a supernatural force, physical behavior patterns cannot entirely tell that one is a witch. In spite of this, most of the respondents 18 (45 per cent) said, a witch is identified in the community through the exhibition of extreme behavior patterns by the person.

Also, 15 (37.5 per cent) respondents said when a person attack or does something to another in a dream then that person is identified as a witch. Thirteen (32.5 per cent) respondents also believe a witch is identified by spiritualist when they are sent to the fetish priest for confirmation. With spiritualists,

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respondents also said soothsayers have the power to identify witches. Only 8 (20 per cent) respondents said they identify witches through personal confession by the person.

One (2.5 per cent) respondent however said, meeting a person naked at night means the person is a witch. Also a respondent said when there are misfortunes surrounding a person, then that person is the cause of the misfortune and therefore a witch.

On the role respondents play when witches are identified, majority of them 22 (55 per cent) said they send the person to the chiefs' palace. Some of the opinion leaders said they protect the rights of the person from maltreatment and they were 5 (12.5 per cent). Four (10 per cent) of the respondents perform rituals to determine if the person is a witch or not /exorcise them. Among this category of people are the pastors who exorcise them and the chief / fetish priest who perform rituals to determine if the person is a witch or not. Seven (17.5 per cent) respondents however do not play any role when a witch is identified.

### **6.1.5 Reasons Why Accused Witches are Sent to Camps**

To find out the reason why the alleged witches are confined or sent to camps, it was important to find out from the respondents, the person who sees to it that alleged witches are sent to camps. It was surprising to note that 31 (77.5 per cent) respondents mentioned chiefs and elders as persons responsible for sending the alleged witches to camps.

Followed were six (15 per cent) respondents who asserted that family members of the accused see to it that he/she is sent to the camp. Relatives were mentioned by four (10 per cent) respondents as those who send their relation to the camp.

For two (5 per cent) respondents, it is the fetish priest who orders for the person to be sent to the camp. Only one (2.5 per cent) respondent said community members are those who see to it that the accused person is sent to the camp.

The reasons respondents gave for sending accused witches to camps were:

- To ascertain whether the person has the witchcraft power or not and 'disarm' them. 22 (55 per cent) people stated this.
- To protect the person from maltreatment by community members. This assertion was made by 21 (52.5 per cent) respondents.
- To protect the community members from the powers of the alleged witch, 8 (20 per cent)
- As a form of punishment to the accused person. Only 1 (2.5 per cent) person mentioned this.

The camp as seen by some of the respondents is a place, where the alleged witch is protected from maltreatment by the community members. It was therefore evident that an alleged witch is made to go through some form of ordeal when accused of witchcraft irrespective of the Constitutional laws of Ghana where Article 15, Clause 2, Paragraph a states that, 'No person shall, whether or not he is arrested, restricted or detained, be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.

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## 6.2 History of the Camp

Since every place has its own past event and of the four communities visited, three of them had a witch camp in the community and it was prudent to find out the history of the camp.

### 6.2.1 History About Gambaga Witch Camp According to Respondents

Gambaga being one of the oldest witch camps in the Northern Ghana according to 4 (40 per cent) respondents in the East Mamprusi District where the camp is located said the camp was founded in the 1800s and 6 (60 per cent) of them said it was founded a very long time ago. Even though 4 respondents said the camp was founded in the 1800s, it was actually founded in 1910.

On why the camp was founded, it was interesting to note that 8 (80 per cent) respondents stated that it was founded for protection and a home for alleged witches and rejected people. Only two (20 per cent) respondents said the camp was founded to ascertain whether the person is a witch or not and disarm them. Eight (80 per cent) respondents were right to mention that the camp was founded by one Imam Baba. It is believed that this Imam was a Moslem leader and rescued a woman accused of witchcraft on her way to be executed. He took her to his house and since then anyone accused of witchcraft was sent to the Imams' house. It was when there was no place for them in the Imams' house that they were sent to the Gambarana of the Mamprusi kingdom in 1910 who cited them at their present location called the Gambaga witch camp.

For 90 per cent (9) of the respondents, the population at the camp ranges from 100-200 since some are sent back home, some die due to old age and others are brought in. Their numbers therefore keep fluctuating. One respondent however did not respond to the question. All the respondents attested to the fact that the Gambarana is in charge of the camp.

### 6.2.2 History About the Tindang Camp According to Respondents

The Tindang camp, located in the Yendi District, according to 3 (30 per cent) respondents was founded long ago. Seven (70 per cent) respondents did not respond to the question, when the camp was founded. Fifty per cent (5) of the Opinion leaders in the Yendi district said it was founded for the protection and a home for alleged witches and rejected people. Another forty per cent (4) said it was founded to ascertain whether the person is a witch or not and disarm them. One respondent however did not respond to the question.

Of the 10 respondents interviewed, 30 per cent (3) of them said the camp was founded by Jabarli the hunter whereas one respondent mentioned the fetish priest as the one who founded the camp. Six (60 per cent) respondents did not respond to this question.

There are two schools of thought on who founded the Tindang camp. One group believes that the camp was founded when the original owner of the shrine had problems with a family member whom he believed was a witch. So he went for some medicine which killed her. The news spread all over the community and its environs that when a person is accused of witchcraft, the person is brought to him to ascertain the truth.

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Another group of thought is of the opinion that the camp was founded by a great man called Jabarli who was a hunter. He founded a shrine and decided to enquire of what the gods was capable of doing for him. And that his discovering from the soothsayers was that the shrine (the gods) was capable of proving witchcraft and disarming them as well. The same told him how witchcraft could be proven and disarmed.

The camp has the largest population of alleged witches and wizard of over 500. Three respondents agreed to this and said the camp has about 500-600 people. All the respondents said the camp was in charge of the Tindana.

### **6.2.3 History About the Tindanzie Camp According to Respondents**

The Tindanzie camp located at Kpatinga in the Gushegu district has been in existence for a very long time and the elders in the community grew up to meet it. This was asserted by all the respondents interviewed. For the respondents, the camp was founded to protect and provide a home to the alleged witches and rejected people. 6 (60 per cent) respondents mentioned so. For 2 (20 per cent) respondents, the camp was founded to protect the community members from the alleged witch. Furthermore, on why the camp was founded, a respondent said it was founded to ascertain whether the person is a witch or not and disarm them.

Even though, it was evident that the one who founded the camp is not known, two (20 per cent) respondents said the fetish priest founded the camp, another said Jabarli the hunter and yet still a respondent mentioned Tindazair Deapori as the one who founded the camp.

Seven (70 per cent) respondents said the population of the camp is within 30-40. This camp is the least populated among the three witch camps selected. All the respondents said the Tindana is in charge of the camp.

### **6.3 Procedures Alleged Witches Go Through Before Settling in the Camp**

The alleged witches are made to go through some procedures before they are made to finally settle in the camp. The various procedures respondents mentioned are:

- The accused is sent to the chief/fetish priest by family members
- They are made to provide animals and items to perform rituals to the gods
- They slaughter animals to determine whether the accuse is a witch or not
- They are given concoction to disarm them.

Majority of the respondents 23 (57.5 per cent) said the accused witch is given concoction to disarm him/her. Followed were respondents who said they are made to provide animals and items to perform rituals to the gods, 17 (42.5 per cent). Next, these animals are slaughtered to determine whether the accused is a witch or not. Thirteen (32.5 per cent) respondents mentioned so. The least was a respondent who said the accused is sent to the chief/fetish priest by family members.

From the survey conducted, an alleged witch has to be sent to the chief/fetish priest accompanied by a family member. The accused would only be attended to when there is a family member present.

In the Gambaga witch camp, the accused and the complainant are made to provide fowls to determine the guilty party. The chief slaughters the fowl of the accused and accuser. If any of the fowl dies lying on its back, facing up, then, the persons' whose fowl died lying on its back is guilty but on any other position the fowl dies lying means the person is guilty. That means either the accused is guilty of the offence or the accuser has lied about the accused.

In the Tindang camp, however, the accused is asked to confess. If the person accepts that he/she is a witch, then the person is disarmed of the witchcraft powers. However, if the person denies, he/she is made to drink some concoction and when the person is really a witch he/she dies instantly. There are instances where an alleged witch is made to release the person he/she has bewitched.

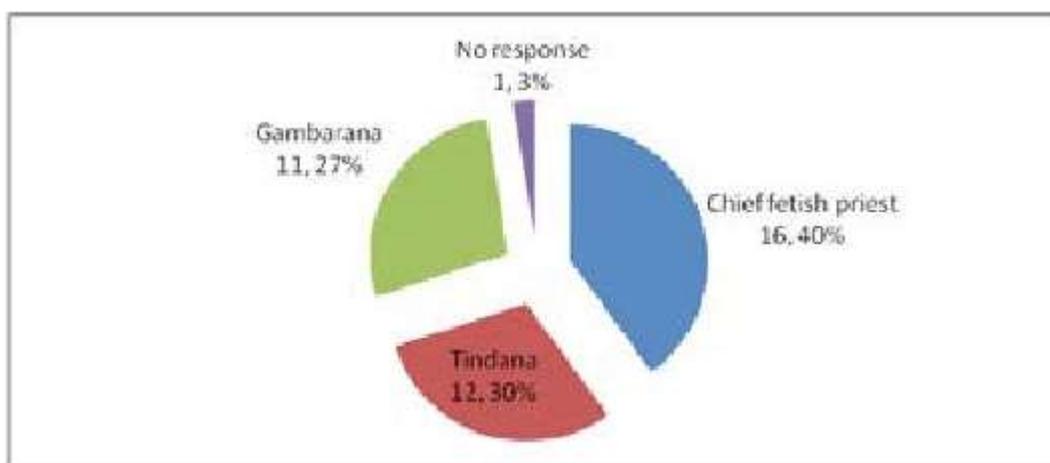
### 6.3.1 How Alleged Witches are 'Disarmed'

A witch being disarmed means the witchcraft power has been taken away from the person. Whether these alleged witches are really 'disarmed' of their power, 97.5 per cent (39) of the respondents said yes, they are 'disarmed' whereas 2.5 per cent (1) thought otherwise.

Moreover, it was important to find out from the respondent who attested to the fact that the alleged witches are 'disarmed', how they are 'disarmed'. To this, 70 per cent (28) said they are 'disarmed' by giving them concoction/potion/spiritual water to drink and/or bath with. The rest (11 (27.5 per cent)) thought they are 'disarmed' by the fetish priest/chief through the gods by use of spiritual powers.

In answering the question on 'who determines that the concoction/potion/others used in 'disarming' them are the right substance'. 16 (40 per cent) respondents said the Tindana, 12 (30 per cent) said the fetish priest and another 10 (25 per cent) said the Gambaga-Rana. Chart 6.1 shows the person responsible for 'disarming' the alleged witches.

**Fig 6.1: Person who "Disarms" Alleged Witches**



For 40 per cent of the respondents, it is the chief fetish priest who does the 'disarming'. 30 per cent said it was the Tindana and only 27.5 per cent said it was the Gambaga-Rana.

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## **6.4 Freedom of Association and Movement**

The general fundamental freedoms as enshrined in 21 (1) (e) and 21 (1) (g) of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana clearly states that all persons have the right to freedom of association and movement. This therefore gives every individual the right to move freely in Ghana.

According to all the respondents interviewed, the alleged witches have their total liberty and freedom to practice his/her own religion.

The in-depth interview with opinion leaders also revealed that even though they all agree that relatives of the alleged witches do visit them in the camp, only, 31 (77.5 per cent) were of the opinion that the alleged witches are allowed to visit their relatives. Nine (22.5 per cent) of them do not however share this same view and have the opinion that the movement of the alleged witches are restricted since the alleged witches are not allowed to visit their relatives.

Furthermore, when the 31 respondents who said the alleged witches were allowed to visit their relatives were asked how often the visitation was, 4 (10 per cent) said their visitation to relatives was very often, 13 (32.5 per cent) said often and 14 (35 per cent) said not so often.

Surprisingly, when respondents were asked the frequency of visits by the relatives of the alleged witches, majority [20 (50 per cent)] of them said their relatives visit was not so often. Fifteen (37.5 per cent) said it was often and only 5 (12.5 per cent) respondents said relatives visit them very often.

It can be deduced that majority of the alleged witches are abandoned at the camp and their relatives don not visit them frequently.

## **6.5 Conditions and Challenges Faced in the Camp**

In every society, there are some basic needs and facilities which are required to enable members of the community live comfortable. In order to know the conditions of the facilities at the camp, the respondents were made to rate the living conditions of facilities such as electricity, water, housing, KVIP, sanitation, health post, recreation and security.

### **6.5.1 Facilities Rated ‘Excellent’ by Respondents**

Security and health post were rated excellent by 4 (10 per cent) and 1 (2.5 per cent) respondents respectively. Health post was rated excellent by a respondent in Yendi whereas security was rated excellent by 3 (30 per cent) respondents in Yendi and 1 (10 per cent) respondent in East Mamprusi.

### **6.5.2 Facilities Rated ‘Very Good’ by Respondents**

Facilities rated ‘very good’ by respondents were water 3 (7.5 per cent), KVIP 1 (2.5 per cent) and security 4 (10 per cent). Respondents who rated water and KVIP as very good were all from the East Mamprusi district where the Gambaga witch camp is located. For those who rated security as very good, 1 (10 per cent) was from the East Mamprusi district and the rest, from the Yendi Municipal.

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### **6.5.3 Facilities Rated Good by Respondents**

For facilities rated ‘good’, 8 (20 per cent) respondents rated health post as good, 6 (15 per cent) respondents said sanitation in the witch camp was good, 4 (10 per cent) respondents each rated security, water, recreation and KVIP as good. Three (7.5 per cent) respondents said the housing facility in the camp was good and a respondent (2.5 per cent) rated electricity as good.

### **6.5.4 Facilities Rated Satisfactory by Respondents**

On the facilities rated satisfactory by respondents, sixteen (40 per cent) respondents rated sanitation as satisfactory in the witch camp. KVIP, health post and recreation followed with 14 (35 per cent) respondents’ rating. Thirteen (32.5 per cent) respondents said water, 12 (30 per cent) said housing and security, and the least was 2 (5 per cent) respondents’ rating of electricity as satisfactory.

### **6.5.5 Facilities Rated Poor by Respondents**

About a quarter of respondents 9 (22.5 per cent), rated recreation in the witch village as poor. KVIP had 7 (17.5 per cent) respondents rating it as poor, next was electricity mentioned by 6 (15 per cent) respondents. Five (12.5 per cent) respondents rated water, housing, sanitation and health post as poor. Lastly were 3 (7.5 per cent) respondents who rated security as poor.

### **6.5.6 Facilities Rated Very Poor by Respondents**

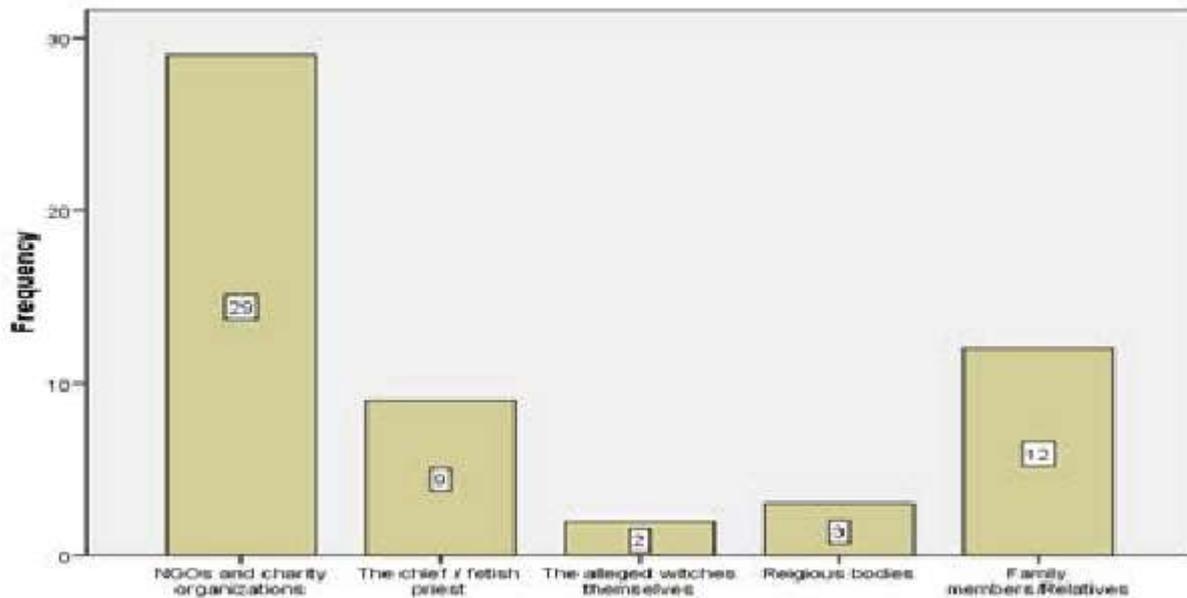
Housing was rated very poor by 10 (25 per cent) respondents, and this was followed by 9 (22.5 per cent) respondents rating of electricity as very poor. Five (12.5 per cent) respondents however rated water as very poor, 4 (10 per cent) said KVIP, 3 (7.5 per cent) went for sanitation, 2 (5 per cent) for health post and 1 (2.5 per cent) for recreation.

A cross analysis of the facilities in the camp with the districts where the camps were located revealed that 70 per cent (7) of the respondents in the East Mamprusi district said health post for the Gambaga witch village was good and another 50 per cent (5) rated housing as very poor. In Gushegu, 100 per cent (10) of the respondents rated water, KVIP and recreation as satisfactory, 90 per cent (9) of them rated health post, housing and security as satisfactory, and 80 per cent (8) rated sanitation as satisfactory. Respondents in the Yendi Municipal did not rate electricity since the Nnani witch camp had no electricity. Fifty per cent (5) of them rated water and housing as very poor.

### **6.5.7 Maintenance of Facilities at the Witch Camp**

On how the facilities at the camp are maintained, majority of them 29 (72.5 per cent) said the facilities are maintained by the NGOs and charity organizations. Twelve (30 per cent) respondents said the facilities are maintained by the family members/relatives of the alleged witches. Followed were respondents who mentioned chief/fetish priest 9 (22.5 per cent), 3 (7.5 per cent) said religious bodies and another 2 (5 per cent) said the alleged witches themselves maintain the facilities. The chart below shows how facilities are maintained at the camp.

**Fig. 6.2: How Facilities are Maintained in the Camp**



### 6.5.8 Challenges at the Camp

When respondents were asked to mention challenges faced by the alleged witches at the camp, majority 27 (67.5 per cent) of them said the alleged witches lack basic needs like food, clothing and shelter which is needed for human survival.

Eleven (27.5 per cent) of the respondents mentioned inadequate facilities such as electricity, water, KVIP and roads as a challenged faced by the alleged witches, another 11 (27.5 per cent) said the camp lacked the provision of proper health care to the alleged witches. Next were 7 (17.5 per cent) respondents who were of the view that the alleged witches are isolated from their family members and there must be counseling for them. Only 3 (7.5 per cent) respondents said there is lack of security in the camp.

Various ways were however mentioned by respondents on how to improve the conditions of the alleged witches at the camp. Among them were:

The provision of their basic needs was mentioned by 26 (65 per cent) respondents. Basic needs mentioned by the respondents were the supply of food, clothing and the provision of better housing facility. Followed were 11 (27.5 per cent) respondents who said there should be the provision of adequate facilities such as good drinking water, electricity and good roads. Closely followed were 10 (25 per cent) respondents mentioning provision of health care to the alleged witches.

For 6 (15 per cent) of the opinion leaders, the alleged witches need economic empowerment such as capital to start a business, supply of farm inputs for their farming activities and vocational training for the alleged witches. This they believe will enable them lead normal life and achieve livelihood. Two (5 per cent) respondents said there is the need for adequate security at the camp.

Despite all the challenges facing the alleged witches that respondents mentioned, 38 (95 per cent) said

the witch village should be maintained and only 2 (5 per cent) said it should be abolished.

## 6.6 Activities Alleged Witches Engage in at the Camp

In finding out the activities the alleged witches engage in at the camp, it was important to find out from our respondents how the alleged witches are catered for at the camp and the table below shows the results.

**Table 6.4: How Alleged Witches are Catered for at the Camp**

	Frequency	%
Family Members / Relatives	30	75
NGOs and Charity Organizations	16	40
The Chief / Fetish Priest	16	40
By Themselves / Colleagues in the Camp	9	22.5
Religious Bodies	2	5

From the table above, it can be deduced that only 9 respondents said the alleged witches cater for themselves whereas 30 of our respondents said family member / relatives of the alleged witches cater for them at the camp. Sixteen of the respondents each mentioned the chief/fetish priest and NGOs and charity organizations as the ones who cater for the alleged witches. Only 2 respondents said they are catered for by religious bodies.

So for the activities the alleged witches engage in at the camp, 37 (92.5 per cent) respondents said they are farmers, 19 (47.5 per cent) respondents mentioned traders and 5 (12.5 per cent) said artisans.

With the farmers, most of the respondents said the alleged witches assist farmers on farms, some farm on their own while others engage in poultry farming. For trading, the alleged witches mostly sell firewood, ‘dawadawa’, local soap and brooms. Respondents mentioned artisans such as weaving and tailoring.

Since most of the alleged witches are aged and weak and cannot fend for themselves, 36 (90 per cent) respondents mentioned that the family members / relatives are those who cater for these weak ones. Another 14 (35 per cent) mentioned the chief/fetish priest, 7 (17.5 per cent) mentioned their colleagues at the camp as those who cater for the weak ones and only 3 (7.5 per cent) respondents mentioned the NGOs and charity organizations.

## 6.7 Reintegration of Alleged Witches into Society

Reintegration of alleged witches into society is a situation where they come back to join their families and relatives in the society. For 31 (77.5 per cent) respondents, there has been an instance where an alleged witch has been reintegrated into the community. But for 9 (22.5 per cent) respondents, there has not been an instance where an alleged witch has been reintegrated into the community.

Reasons given for instance where the alleged witch is reintegrated into his/her communities were:

- The relatives of the alleged witch come for them as stated by 21 (52.5 per cent) respondents
- The belief that the person is disarmed, which was mentioned by 7 (17.5 per cent) respondents
- The belief that the person is innocent as mentioned by two (5 per cent) of the respondents.

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## CHAPTER 7

### Focus Group Discussion Held With The Alleged Witches

#### 7.0 Introduction

Witchcraft is the alleged use of supernatural or magical powers, usually to harm or damage members of a community or their property (Wikipedia the free encyclopedia).

According to encyclopedia Britannica, it is the exercise or invocation of alleged supernatural powers to control people or events, practices typically involves sorcery or magic.

The chapter present the findings of various focus group discussions held. It also attempts to analyze the findings and suggest solutions to issues discussed. The focus group discussions provided in depth information concerning the experiences of the alleged witches/wizards.

In all eight focus group discussions were held. Each group consisted of twelve participants. The first was held at Gambaga at the East Mamprusi district on July 21, 2010. It comprised of three different groups. The first group comprised of Mamprusi's and Dagamba's. The second group was only Konkomba's; the third was with the Bimobas in the camp.

The next was held on July 26, 2010 at Tinda – Zeeyili witches camp at Kpatinga in the Gushegu district only one focus discussion group was held.

The last groups were held at the Tindang camp at Yendi District on the July 27, 2010. The first group consisted of males both Dagomba's and Kokombas.

The second group comprised of females who were Dagomba's and Kokombas. The third group was made up of six males and six females all Kokombas. The fourth group also consists of six males and six females all Dagomba's.

#### 7.1 Socio-Demographic Data

At Gambaga camp the ages of the women was between 45 – 72 years. The majority of the women 29 out of the 36 who participated were above 60 years.

The Tindanzie camp women ages ranged between 46 -71 years. At least seven (7) of the twelve (12) women were between, 50 – 57. The Tindang camp had participants whose ages are between 30 -95 years. However out of forty-eight participants in the groups twenty-nine (29) were above 60.

This shows that most of those who participated were between the age group of thirty and sixty years and above. A closer look points out that most respondents were sixty and above. It is possible that depending on the years spent at the camp the people who are accused of witchcraft are mainly middle aged or old people.

##### 7.1.1 Educational Background of Participants

Of all the participants alleged witches / wizard involved in the eight (8) focus group discussions from

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three different districts all ninety-six (96) of them had no formal education. The lack of formal education could be a factor for making them easily accused of witchcraft.

### **7.1.2 Occupational Background of Participants**

Majority of these alleged witches / wizards are farmers. A few however engage in trades such as soap and beads making and pito brewing and some were unemployed.

### **7.1.3 Marital Status of Respondents**

The alleged witches involved in the focus group discussions at the Gambaga camp were mostly widows. There were twenty nine widows (29) and seven (7) married women. At Tindanzie camp those who participated were mostly widows. There were ten (10) widows and one person separated and another divorced. The participants at the Tindang camp had more married people. That is twenty seven (27) married, nineteen (19) widows and two (2) separated.

In the mostly female camps of Gambaga and Kpatinga the women involved in the focus group discussion were mostly widows, only a few were married.

In the mixed camp at Yendi where there are both males and females most of the participants were married. There were quite a number of widows and only a few were separated.

### **7.1.4 Religious Affiliation of Participants**

At Gambaga and Gushegu the women involved in the focus group discussion were mostly Christians with a few Moslems. The Tindang camp had most participants being traditionalists with some Christians and Moslems.

## **7.2 Witchcraft Beliefs and Accusations**

The study aimed at finding out whether the participants involved in the discussions were really witches. At Gambaga and Kpatinga the women denied the fact that they were witches. They said they had been falsely accused. However, at the Tindang camp though the majority refuted the allegation. A few openly admitted that they were witches / wizards.

The alleged witches / wizards said that they were ordered to the camp by their relatives. In a few cases the chiefs and elders. They were ordered there because they were accused of witchcraft.

### **7.2.1 The Categories of People Prone to Witchcraft**

Accusation includes people who are prospering in their family life or trade, People who are intelligent. Accusations are made when people quarrel and make threats against others and they happen. People who are hated or are believed to have juju in their community are also accused of witchcraft. They said both young and old people can be accused. They also said people between 40 and sixty and above were accused more often.

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### **7.2.2 Things Done by People who are Accused**

You can be accused when a person who is threatened suffers a misfortune. Accusations also are made when the accused is seen in a dream and subsequently bad things occur.

### **7.3 Procedures Alleged Witches go Through Before Setting in the Camp**

The purpose of going to the camp is to ascertain whether the witchcraft accusation is true or not. At the camp the accused are sent to the fetish priest called 'Gambaga-Rana' at Gambaga. At Kpatinga and Tindang they call them Tindana.

The accused is made to sacrifice to prove the certainty of their witchcraft. A fowl is sacrificed and thrown to the ground. When the fowl falls on its back it is believed the accusation is false. If it falls otherwise it's true.

A concoction is then given to you. You are warned that if you do not admit guilt and you take the concoction you can die.

The purpose of the concoction is to "disarm" the person from the witchcraft powers. At the Tindang camp you are made to sacrifice a goat or sheep. You also pay money and cola to the Tindana. At Gambaga after these rituals are performed and you are disarmed you are introduced to the chief and camp leaders (magajia) who allocate you a place to stay.

The procedures they go through to be kept at the camp seem complex. It is difficult to assess the situation without personally witnessing the rites being performed. There may be some human rights abuses however it is difficult to prove it.

In the case where accused people have drunk the concoction and died it deprives the person of his right to life.

### **7.4. Activities Alleged Witches Engage in at the Camp**

This discussion looks at the issue of work, provision of basic necessities and children at the camp. It was interesting to find out what work the alleged witches / wizards did at the camp, and whether they were forced to work?

Participants involved in all three camps mostly did work. The majority of them were farmers. A few engaged in soap and bead making and pito brewing. A few were also unemployed.

In all the communities they normally offered service to the fetish priest by helping in the farm. This they said they did voluntarily. They also assisted people on their farms for payment or in exchange for foodstuffs.

The perception of them practicing prostitution to make ends meet was debunked by all the participants from the three camps. The women actually said they were too old to live such a life. Also that such behaviour will not be allowed in their camps.

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#### **7.4.1 How do You Live in the Camp in Terms of Food, Shelter and Clothing?**

Shelter is provided by the fetish priest and NGO's at the Gambaga Tindanzie camp. At Tindang camp they provide their own shelter.

The Gambaga-Rana and Tindana provide some food for the women in their camps. They also work for him at the farm.

The alleged witches/ wizards also offer their labour to community members and their paid by day, or they are offered foodstuffs at harvest time. Monies from these jobs are used for their personal upkeep. Apart from these NGO's periodically provide food and second hand clothing at all the camps. NGO at Gambaga e.g. is Go Home Project; Kpatinga is World Vision, Ngani e.g. UNICEF, World Vision etc. They however complain that it is not sufficient.

The people at the camps are free to work. They are not forced to work anywhere. However they still face limitations because they may not necessarily be engaged in the work of their choice. They are limited to the few jobs available to them.

They may have enough to feed on but they obviously still have to depend on NGO support because they may not make much income because of the environment which they find themselves.

#### **7.4.2 Children at the Camp**

There were children and grandchildren of alleged witches living at the camps. At the Gambaga and Kpatinga all the children there were attending school. However, at Ngani camp some were at school and others were not.

The chores the children perform at the camp include fetching water, cooking, washing dishes, fetching firewood. The older ones help on the farm. They also keep their parent or grandparents company.

#### **7.5 The Right to Association and Movement**

The participants said they are allowed to interact with community members. They also attend social gathering. They could buy and sell at the market. Work in peoples farms; attend weddings, out-doorings, church, mosque together with the community members.

##### **7.5.1 Allowed to Vote and Participate in National Activities.**

The alleged witches/wizards are allowed to vote provided they were registered voters and they transfer their vote to the camp. They also engage in other national activities.

##### **7.5.2 Relationship With Each Other in the Camp**

All the participants said their relationship with each other was cordial. They identified with one another since they had all been branded as witches/ wizards. They chat, work together and support when one is sick.

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### **7.5.3 How Treated When Sick**

At Gambaga the women said before the National Health Insurance (NHIS) was introduced the Go Home Project and the chief sent those sick to the hospital. Currently they use their NHIS card to attend hospital. They complained that a few of them had expired cards.

At Kpatinga, the women said they had a problem when they are sick because most of their NHIS cards have expired. Presently if a person is sick the Tindana is informed to get the relatives to come and treat the person.

The Tindang camp participants explained that when a member is sick they are sent to the hospital. However depending on the condition the ailment can be treated locally with herbs

These alleged witches or wizards have rights. In many cases though they have liberty to move around they still face limitations since their stay at the camp deprives them of the day to day contact with their family. Marriages may even fall apart if spouse is staying at a camp away from husband and children. Notwithstanding this issue it is good that they have the liberty to live freely in the communities where their camps are found and that they do not lose their right to vote and participate in community activities.

### **7.6 Conditions and Challenges at the Camp**

The facilities at the Gambaga camp include a KVIP toilet which they described as inadequate for their numbers. They also have pipe borne water that flows. There is also a small solar Panel that is not working. They have houses made with thatched roofs.

The facilities at the Tindanzie camp were described by the women as quite good. They have good shelter, drinking water and toilet facilities. At the Tindang Camp the facilities are a KVIP which is described as inadequate and a borehole that is not in use. Housing facilities at the camp they said is not too good.

#### **7.6.1 Problems at the Camp**

The alleged witches at the Gambaga camp want their buildings to be made modern, and be given zinc roofing. The rooms also should be better ventilated.

They need mattresses, more toilet facilities, food and clothing in for their children. They also need electricity. They said the district assembly had presented them with a corn mill which was not in use because they lacked electric power at their camp.

The Tindanzie group also said they need electricity to help run their grinding mill. They complained of loneliness, rejection and being separated from their families. The problems at the Tindang camp were numerous. They said they needed accommodation, electricity, water, a school and KVIP toilet. They need help with feeding and clothing. They also requested for free health insurance coverage for the members of the camp. Finally they needed more farmlands for their work.

### **7.7 Reintegration of Alleged Witches**

At Gambaga the alleged witches were asked whether they want to be re-integrated into their communities.

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The women did not want to return. They said they had been branded as witches and chased out of the village. They did not want to be tortured or killed.

On the other hand they will return if their relatives come to request their release from the Gambaga-Rana and the Go Home project. They give an example of a colleague who went home only to be chased back to the camp one month later.

At Tindanzie camp the alleged witches are willing to be reintegrated in their communities of origin provided their people are willing to accept them. If they would also ensure they will be safe in the community.

At Tindang Camp the majority of participants said they did not want to be reintegrated into their former community for fear of further accusations and stigmatization.

A few said they were lonely at the camp and would like to join their people at home. The findings indicate that these alleged witches and wizards are not willing to reintegrate for fear of stigmatization and rejection at their home communities.

There is a need for a long public education programme to educate the communities who feed the camp with these people. When education is successful and there is attitudinal change to issues of witchcraft; then these (alleged witches/wizards) will feel safe to return to their communities.

### **7.7.1 Whether the Camp Should be Maintained**

The alleged witches / wizards from Gambaga and Tindang said (Yes) the camp should be maintained. Their reason was to prevent the accused from being harmed. It saves their lives. It gives them the opportunity to live again.

It also serves as a place where the witches are disarmed. The women at the Tindanzie camp said the camp should be abolished so that they could all return home. A few participants from the other two camps also said the camps should not be maintained. They said if the camps are abolished they could go home or move to other areas to restart their lives.

In conclusion, there is a need for in-depth education to be given both Push and Pull communities to ensure an attitudinal change towards the issue of witchcraft and how it is handled.

Education must be targeted at practitioners at the camps, chiefs, elders and opinion leaders of communities of origin. Finally education should be given to all the people there as well the accused people at the camp. It is interesting to consider the human rights issues of these women. Actually the moment you are accused the human right abuses begin. They suffer verbal abuse, torture, banishment and stigmatization within the community.

The procedures they go through at the camp to determine the truth of the accusation also seems degrading. The pressure you undergo may cause you to admit offence when you are actually innocent just to save yourself from further embarrassment.

Once you leave your community if you are married it may break up. If you have your children they will all suffer stigmatization. It may affect their education and emotional life.

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Children have a right to education, it is necessary to ensure that every child living at these camps are sent to school. This would offer them an opportunity for a better life in the future.

The alleged witches / wizards are allowed to work. They may not be engaged in the occupation of their choice and may not make enough income to sustain them. I recommend that strong people should be given skills training, so that they work on their own and make more profits to cater for their needs. The 1992 Constitution states that citizens must have freedom of movement, freedom of association. It is good that these alleged witches / wizards are allowed to participate freely in the activities of the camps and the community. However, can the same be said of their community of origin?

With regards to health the 'NHIS' is timely to solve these problems. However free NHIS cards need to be provided. It must be renewed when they expire.

Conditions of the camps need to be improved. They need good shelter, toilet facilities, electricity and water. In addition food and clothing must be provided.

The reintegration of the alleged witches / wizards into their communities is necessary. Extensive education must be given at the community level to change attitudes concerning how people accused of witchcraft should be treated.

On the long term the camps must be abolished. On the short term a pilot scheme for reintegrating these accused people into their communities must be started. When successful it must be replicated in other camps until the whole camp system is abolished.

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## **CHAPTER 8**

### **Field Experience of Research Assistants**

#### **8.0 Introduction**

The Research Assistants (RAs) that were selected for the exercise were given training so that a good, job could be done. Research Assistants selected the respondents as instructed. The Research Assistants were implored to write brief reports after the exercise.

These reports will provide information on the receptiveness of, the respondents and capture the procedure adopted in the case study and response of interviewees, important or noteworthy information that caught their attention during the administration of questionnaire and suggestions or comments on the future exercises.

#### **8.1 Procedure Adopted in Selecting the Respondents**

In selecting the various households for the exercise, Research Assistants used Random walk method with a sampling gap of three in the rural areas. In cases where the members of the household to be interviewed were absent, the Research Assistants moved on to the next household taking cognizance of the fact that majority of the people cannot read or write, the Research Assistants used more field interviewing methods, thus participant observation, focus group discussion and questionnaires.

Most of the primary sampling points used by the Research Assistants were chief's palace, (opinion leaders), some communities and the witch camp. On the average Research Assistants administered not more than eight (8) questionnaires a day.

#### **8.2 Constraints Faced in Adopting Procedure Selected**

Generally, the exercise was successful; however some respondents did not believe in witchcrafts nor wanted to comment on the issue hence making it to administer the questionnaires.

##### **8.2.1 Response to the Questionnaire**

Respondents were receptive to the exercise. Most of the respondents express delight and felt privileged to be part of the case study and the opportunity to air their challenges. They commend the NCCE for this privilege.

It was noted during the administration that some respondents in certain remote areas took long time to respond to some of the issues.

A few of the respondents however, declined the interview. They either claimed that the outcome would yield nothing or the aim of the study will only give fruitless results since it's a spiritual issue and it cannot be proven in any law court.

#### **8.3 Noteworthy Issues**

The respondents complained about the poor state of the camp. Cost of living becoming more and more

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difficult and low income since their age and health cannot catch-up with the hard work.

Lack of infrastructure in the camp and communities was another issue of complaint noted by the Research Assistants. This situation was prevalent in the camps, no good roads to the communities, not potable drinking water, and electricity among others.

#### **8.4 Suggestions**

The following suggestions and recommendations from the respondents:

- NCCE should help in informing the appropriate authorities to help build good health facilities, electricity and potable drinking water.
- Most of the respondents especially those in the camp wish to be supported with the basic needs.
- Almost all the respondents believe the camps should not be abolished.
- It was the view of most respondents that the camp should not be abolished since it serves as a safe haven for the stigmatized, maltreated and even those whose lives are threatened.

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## CHAPTER 9

### Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

#### 9.0 Summary of Major Findings

Witchcraft is a universal phenomenon and the reality of this phenomenon in Ghana is not in doubt. The belief is widespread and has been institutionalized in some areas of the Northern region of the country. People accused of witchcraft are manhandled threatened with death and banished from their communities. These people, mainly women with no choice end up in villages tagged ‘witch camps’. It has been established that the alleged witches live outside their normal communities and this could impact negatively on their lives.

In all a total of 310 alleged witches were interviewed. Other categories of people interviewed were opinion leaders 40, push communities where the alleged witches come from 75 and the pull communities where the witch camps are located 75. Another community though not a camp, neither do they send people to witch camps had (40) people sample due to the widespread witchcraft accusation and counter accusation in the community. Thus separate set of questionnaires were designed for each category of respondents. Eight (8) focus group discussions were also organized for the inmates of the camps.

The investigation established that most of the alleged witches 114 (56.8 per cent) had been in these camps between 5-10 years, 41 (13.2 per cent) 10-20years, and 23 (7.4 per cent) had been there for over 20 years. Almost all the responders 303 (97.7 per cent) confirmed that they were in the camps because they had been accused of witchcraft and 4 (1.34 per cent) said they were there because they had lost their husbands.

The study also revealed that more than half of the respondents 159 (51.3 per cent) did not believe in the existence of witchcraft compared to 147 (47.4 per cent) who were sure it exist. Surprisingly, 22 (7.1 per cent) of the alleged witches personally confessed they were witches. Out of this number 5 were wizards and 16 witches. As to how they acquired it, 10 of them inherited it from the family lineage, 9 requested for it from friends, I bought the power and 2 did not know how they came by it.

It was apparent that most of the respondents 214 were first accused by their own kinsmen – nuclear/ extended family members, and in-laws. The other 62 were accused by community members, friends, chiefs and spiritualist, while 28 were accused by their rivals.

According to 151 respondents, the basis of the accusation was due to the death of relatives or community members. For 60, it was as a result of sickness and misfortune of victims. Dream state accounted for 45. The exhibition of extreme anti social behaviour and certain physical characteristics was stated by 16 respondents.

It was further noted that close to half of the respondents 139 (44.8 per cent) were not harmed in any way when they were accused. Sadly 74 were manhandled and almost lynched and 38 were banished from their communities.

As many as 182 (58.7 per cent) indicated that they were actually forced to go to the camps because according to 45 of this number, they were virtually chased out of their communities to go to the camp. The same number of respondents 45 indicated that their lives were threatened, 39 were dragged there

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for verification purposes, 34 were chased to the camps by their own relatives and due to stigmatization, neglect, loneness and isolation the rest 29 were forced to go to the camps.

On the contrary, the other 127 who went on their own free will said they did so due to stigmatization, fear for their lives, banishment from their communities, fear of further accusations and to have peace of mind.

It was also evident that the alleged witches were quite well integrated in the families and communities, as 204 were living with their immediate relatives and 91 with the extended family members with the exception of only 3 who were living alone. Further, a significant number of the respondents 295 (95.2 per cent) had children while 12 did not have children. As many as 251 of these children were engaged in farming and fishing, 59 schooling, 24 trading, 9 teaching and 5 civil/public servants with 16 unemployed. A sizeable number of 155 had dependents living with them in the camps and 152 were alone.

From the study, it was discovered that a substantial proportion of the alleged witches 218 had some of their children still living in their communities back at home, while 80 (25.8 per cent) stated that their children left the communities because of stigmatization and threat upon their lives, while some of the children were not originally living in the same community with their parents.

The investigation also exposed the procedures the alleged witches went through on arriving at the camps before settling down, which could best be described as rituals. It was observed that 225 (72.6 per cent) of the respondents were given some concoction to drink to disarm them. However, the composition of this concoction was not established. A small number of 20 sacrificed animals for verification purposes, 9 slept in the shrine overnight. Forty others were taken through purification rites before taking the concoction such as speaking to the animal before it was killed, showing of hair and pouring of libation by the fetish priest. It was however noted that the provision of the items pertained to Yendi and Gambaga camps.

The inmates were engaged in various economic activities. The study showed that 147 were farmers/fishermen and 45 traders. Interestingly 3 were public/ civil servants and the same number 2 were teachers and students. However, 110 were not engaged in any economic activity. A few of the respondents 16 who claimed they worked for the chiefs and fetish priests, said farm produces were the reward for their services.

In relation to the facilities at the camp, it was discovered that all the three camps did not have electricity. The other facilities which were a major problem to the inmates and were therefore poorly rated were; housing 163 (52.6 per cent), KVIP 129 and water 127. Surprisingly 108 rated healthcare as good and 82 said it was very good. For sanitation the highest rating was satisfactory 85 and 69 felt it was poor. All the ratings for recreation were below 60 responses, but 85 intimated that there was nothing like recreation in the camp.

Similarly, all the ratings for security were below 100 respondents with 91 saying it was very good as against 67 who thought it was good. Indeed, it was noted that a lot really needs to be done to improve the conditions of the inmates in the camps. The assistance requested by the respondents ranged from finances, basic needs, infrastructure to social amenities.

The study also disclosed that a considerable number of the respondents 173 (55.8 per cent) were feeling lonely and isolated, compares to 129 (41.6 per cent) who felt otherwise.

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It was also recognized that the rights of the respondents in relation to freedom of movement, worship and association were not abused. Over 90 per cent of the respondents 297 confirmed that they were not restricted from practicing their religion. A similar number 296 also asserted that their movement was not restricted and they could visit their relatives and vice versa. However most of them 140 did not visit home often and 143 were also not visited often. Only 21 visited their communities very often as against 48 who were visited very often while 76 had never visited home.

Amazingly, the analysis revealed that an overwhelming majority of the respondents 213 were not willing to go back home, while 90 wanted to be reintegrate with their families. Again, over 80 per cent, 278 wanted the camps to be maintained compared to 25 who were of the view that it should be abolish.

Contrary to the views of the alleged witches, almost all the respondents, 38 out of the 40 interviewed at Kalande, believed witchcraft exist. On the mode of acquisition, 27 mentioned the family lineage, another 14 also said it could be bought and 3 stated that it could be acquired through gifts.

As to how witches could be identified, exhibition of extreme anti social behavior was indicated by 25 respondents, 6 were of the view that they could be identified by spiritualist and 3 mentioned self confession.

Out of the 40 respondents only 3 admitted that they have ever been accused of witchcraft and these people like the alleged witches were also accused by their immediate relatives. Interestingly, 24 indicated that they were aware of people who had ever been accused with 16 having no such knowledge of any person. The basis of accusation noted by the respondents was not different from that of the alleged witches, 13 identified sickness and misfortune as some of the basis, while 10 mentioned self confession and death of other people.

It was revealed from the study that in Kalande when one is accused of witchcraft, the person is not manhandled in any way but sent to the chief's palace for confession or verification. This was stated by 21 of the respondents, who further indicated that nothing was done to person due to the rule of law but they are humiliated by community.

With regard to the procedure the alleged witches go through, 35 of the interviewee said the person is sent to the chief, fetish priest and elders where rituals are performed to exorcise them of the powers, while 5 stated that nothing is done to the person but people shun his/her company.

As to whether accused persons are sent to camps, an overwhelming majority of 37 (92.5 per cent) did not confirm this as against 3 who did. The main reason why alleged witches are not sent to camps in this community, as noted by majority of the respondents 37 was that it is not part of their culture.

On the issue of the introduction of the culture of sending alleged witches to camps, exactly half 20 (50 per cent) were in favour as against the other half who disagreed.

Most of the respondents 23 also affirmed that the relationship between community members and the alleged was bad and 13 rated it as very bad. Only 4 persons rated it as good.

Like Kalande, majority of the respondents 134 of 150 of the push and pull communities had a strongly believed in the existence of witchcraft as while 17 did not share this believe.

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Similarly, most of these respondents 56 (37.3 per cent) also identified exhibition extreme anti social behaviour as one the indices of witchcraft, 35 mentioned spiritualist as people who can easily identified a witch, with dreams state intimated by 27 respondents and 24 indicated personal confession. The same views were shared by the respondents as to how witchcraft is acquired. Just like the alleged witchcraft and the respondents of Kalande it is mainly inherited through the family lineage, gifts, buying and acquiring it from friends.

For the respondents of the push and pull communities the characteristics of a witch are people who are old and loners which were the observation of 84 respondents and 43 mentioned excessive wealth. Other characteristics were extreme poverty, wretchedness among others which is not different from the views of the Kalande people.

The views of the push and pull communities was not too different from that of the Kalande people on how accused witches are treated by the community. Majority of the respondents 91 stated that they are sent to the chief, fetish priest and elders for confirmation and exorcised of the power. However, 13 people indicated that they were manhandled and humiliated.

In relation to the issues of being forced to the camps 69 (46 per cent) of the respondents confirmed that the alleged witches were indeed forced to the camps, while 78 did not share this view. It was also clear from the statistics that it was mainly the family members who sent the accused witches to the camps, which was the assertion of 79 respondents.

Again, it was confirmed by 103 (68.7 per cent) of the respondents that the alleged witches on reaching the camp were given concoction to drink to “disarm” or exorcise them of the power. The others also mentioned that animals were slaughtered to determine whether one is a witch, and they also provide items for rituals. One could die if indeed the person is a witch but denies and goes through the rituals. The activities engaged in by the inmates as noted by the respondents were not different from what the alleged witches themselves stated- farming and petty trading among others.

With regards to the facilities at the camp, the only facility that was rated above 50 by 53 respondents as good was healthcare; none of the facilities was rated above 40. According to the community members the major challenges facing the alleged witches at the camps included financial 105, isolation 78, Physical torture 30 and mental trauma 5 (3.3 per cent).

It was again realized that the movement of the alleged witches was not restricted and they participated freely in social activities of the community. These were the assertions of 113 and 121 interviews of the community respectively.

It was further established that members of the push community 46 (61.3 per cent) out of 75 had a strong belief that the alleged would not be accepted back into their communities, but 29 were positive about their reintegration into the communities should they return.

The most common suggestions given by respondents to improve the camps were provision of basic needs 125, financial assistance 42 and provision of adequate facilities 36.

It was found that over 80 per cent of the respondents (88.7 per cent) were strongly opposed to the abolishing of the camps with only 11.3 per cent advocating for its abolition.

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In the views of the opinion leaders interviewed the existence of witchcraft was not in dispute as 35 out of 40 confirmed its existence.

The opinion leaders also shared the same opinion with the other community members on the mode of acquiring witchcraft – through the family lineage, buying 19, gifts 12 and friends 10.

Like the Kalande, members of the push and pull communities, the respondents also identified, the exhibition of extreme anti social behavioral characteristics, dream state and by spiritualist as some of the means of identifying a witch.

The opinion leaders also stated the same procedure the accused witches are taken through at the camps as mentioned by the other respondents above, taking of concoction 23, providing animals for rituals 17 among others.

Most of the respondents 31 interviewed emphatically stated that the accused witches in the camps had their total freedom and liberty, since their movement was not restricted.

The ratings of the facilities at the camps by the opinion leaders was not different from the other respondents as almost all the faculties had high rating of poor, very poor and satisfactory. Again, the respondents also identified the same challenges just like the other respondents of the other communities. They were basic needs, inadequate facilities and isolation.

The opinion leaders shared a counter view on the issue of reintegrating the alleged witches into their communities. Here the bulk of the respondents 31 (77.5 per cent) noted that once there had been an instance, where an alleged witch had been reintegrate successfully into her community it was possible they could be reunited with their families.

From the focus group discussion, it came to light that a few of the participants at the Ngani camp openly admitted they were witches and wizard, however those of Gambaga and Kpatinga came utterly denied and said they were falsely accused.

Contrary to the views of the other respondents, the participants indicated that persons accused of witchcraft are people who are prospering in life and are intelligent. They also mentioned people who are quarrelsome and threatens others, share hatred; dream state as the basis of the accusation.

The alleged witches confirmed the assertion of the other respondents on the procedure at the camps. According to them sacrifice is made to verify the accusation. A fowl is sacrificed and thrown to the ground and if it falls on it back then the accusation is true. They also mentioned taking the concoction but before they do, they are sternly warned that if they deny and take the concoction they will die should it turn out that they are actually witches. It was discovered that the presentation of items such as goats, sheep and money and cola was peculiar to Ngani.

In line with the views of the other respondents, the participants also purported that they were mostly engaged in farming and trading activities. However in all the communities they categorically acknowledged that they normally helped the chiefs, fetish priests and other community members on their farm in exchange for food staffs. This, they did voluntary.

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On the question of whether their rights were being abused, they vehemently denied any such abuse, since they were free to go anywhere they wanted and the relationships within the camp were cordial.

Again, the participants confirmed that the facilities at the Kpatinga camp were quite good with the most deprived camp being the Ngani camp.

The participants reaffirmed the same assistance requested by the alleged witches and recommendations made by the community members and opinion leaders.

At the discussion, the participants also made it clear that they did not want to be reintegrated into their communities, only on grounds that they would be accepted and protected.

The common view of the participants of the Ngani and Gambaga camps was that the camp should be maintained to protect them, while the inmates of the Kpatinga camp were yearning to go back to their families.

## **9.1 Conclusion**

The study firmly established that the belief in witchcraft is not in doubt particularly among the people in Northern Ghana. Certain characteristics were also identified as associated with witchcraft such as exhibition of extreme anti social behavior, old age, poverty, excessive wealth, wretchedness among others. Most people are accused of witchcraft on the basis of the death of either relatives or community members, misfortunes, and dream state.

It was also revealed that the alleged witches upon accusation are sometimes manhandled, threatened with death, stigmatized, humiliated or banished from their communities. However in most cases nothing is done to them physically. The alleged witches were mostly identified by the community/family members or by the above indices and by chiefs, fetish priest/spiritualist.

Witches are feared and issues of witchcraft is not taken kindly, to the extent that one's own family is willing to easily give accused persons out and shun their company once accused of witchcraft. Some of the alleged witches themselves actually confessed that they were indeed witches and wizards.

It was discovered that the conditions at the camps were not the best. With the exception of Kpatinga the buildings in the other camps are in a deplorable state and they lack basic social amenities and infrastructure. The inmates also need financial assistance.

With regards to their movement it was noted that their rights were not being abused in any way, since their movement was not restricted and they are able to participate in social events, and exercise their civic rights and responsibilities.

However, the procedure they go through to ascertain whether they are actually witches and the concoction they also take to disarm them could constitute human right abuse since one can die in the process.

It is strongly recommended that the camps should be abolished due to the following reasons;

- With reference to the rights of the respondents, through the study did not reveal violation of their rights in terms of movement and association, these people should not be kept in camps. The constitution guarantees the individual living with the families. No doubt some of them feel desolated and lonely.
- As already noted, witchcraft is a universal phenomenon and there are witches all over Ghana. If the witches in the other regions are kept in camp then the witches in the Northern region should not be in camps either.
- In situations where alleged witches are manhandled, threatened with death and banished from their communities constitute violation of their rights and the perpetrators' should be brought to book.
- Education should be intensified on the rights and responsibilities of the citizen in affected communities.
- The rituals performed for the alleged witches at the camps before they are allowed to settle, needs to be investigated into more detail particularly, the composition of the concoction they are made to take. Once the authorities who administer the concoction hinted that it could result in death, this also constitutes human right abuse. Thus the human right advocates should intervene and deal with the situation.
- Though most of the alleged witches do not want the camps abolish, mainly because they fear they would not be accepted by their people and their lives would be in danger, thus before the camps are abolished intensive education should be given to the push communities on the need to maintain alleged witches in the communities just like the other communities.
- The push communities should be properly monitored and prepared to receive the alleged witches in order to protect their lives. After, they are reintegrated the communities should be monitored to ensure their well being.
- However, if for any reason the camps should be maintained then the problems at the camps should be addressed specifically; new buildings should be constructed for the inmates of the Ngani and Gambaga camps.
- They should also be provided with basic social amenities such as water, electricity, KVIP, health care facilities and corn mill etc.
- They should also be given financial assistance.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### SAMPLED COMMUNITIES IN THE NORTHERN REGION

#### **Witches Villages**

1. Tindanzie Camp (Kpatinga)- Gushegu District
2. Gambaga Camp (Gambanga)- East Mamprusi District
3. Tindang Camp (Ngani) -Yendi Municipal
4. \*Kalande - (Salaga) East Gonja District

#### **Push Communities**

1. Nagbo (East Mamprusi District)
2. Nayugu (Gushegu District)
3. Yendi Municipality

#### **Receiving/Pull Communities**

1. Gambaga (East Mamprusi District)
2. Kpatinga (Gushegu District)
3. Ngani (Yendi Municipality)

\* - Not a witch village

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**APPENDIX B1**

**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CIVIC EDUCATION**

**Q UESTIONNAIRE**

**(THE COMMUNITY)**

**TITLE: RESEARCH ON WITCHCRAFT AND HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN  
GHANA: CASE STUDY OF WITCHES' VILLAGES IN NORTHERN GHANA**

**(PLEASE BE ASSURED THAT YOUR RESPONSES WILL BE TREATED WITH UTMOST  
CONFIDENTIALITY. CONSEQUENTLY YOU NEED NOT PROVIDE YOUR NAME)**

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**NAME OF INTERVIEWER.....**

**PLACE OF INTERVIEW.....**

**DISTRICT.....**

**REGION.....**

**DATE OF INTERVIEW.....**

**TYPE OF RESPONDENT:   PUSH COMMUNITY RECEIVING/PULL  
COMMUNITY**

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**14.** What happens to a person accused of witchcraft within the community?

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**15.** Who gives authority for what happens to persons accused of witchcraft?

- i. Relatives
- ii. Family members
- iii. Fetish Priest
- iv. Chiefs and elders
- iv. Community members
- v. Any other.....

**16.** Do persons accused of witchcraft have the opportunity to defend themselves as to whether they are actually witches or not.

.....  
.....

**17.** Are the alleged witches forced to camps?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

**18.** Who sends the witches to the camp?

- i. Relatives
- ii. Family members
- iii. Fetish Priest
- iv. Chiefs and elders
- v. Community members
- vi. The witch herself
- vii. Any other.....

**19.** Why are witches sent / brought to the camps?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**20.** Describe any procedure an alleged witch goes through when sent to the camp that you are aware of?

.....  
.....  
.....

**21.** What challenges do the alleged witches face?

- i. Financial problems
- ii. Physical torture
- iii. Mental problems
- iv. Isolation
- v. Any other.....

**22.** What activities are the alleged witches engage in?

- i. Farming
- ii. Trading
- iii. Any other.....

23. Have you ever visited anyone at the witch camp before?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

• If yes to Q.23, continue from Q.24, if no, go to Q.25

24. How would you best rate the living conditions in the camp?

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	Not applicable
Electricity							
Water							
Housing							
KVIP							
Sanitation							
Health Post							
Recreation							
Security							

25. Are the women in the camps allowed to participate in community social events?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

26. Are the inhabitants of the camps free to go to the surrounding villages or are their movement restricted?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

27. Are the alleged witches allowed to visit their relatives?

- i) Yes
- ii) No

28. Will you accept them back in the community?

- i. Yes
- ii. No
- iii. Not applicable

29. In your opinion, what can be done to improve the conditions of witches at the camps?

.....  
.....  
.....

30. In your opinion do you think the camps should be abolished?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

31. Give reasons for your answer

- i. ....
- ii. ....

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**APPENDIX B2**

**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CIVIC EDUCATION**

**Q UESTIONNAIRE  
(THE ALLEGED WITCHES)**

**TITLE: RESEARCH ON WITCHCRAFT AND HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN GHANA:  
CASE STUDY OF WITCHES' VILLAGES IN NORTHERN GHANA.**

**(PLEASE BE ASSURED THAT YOUR RESPONSES WILL BE TREATED WITH UTMOST  
CONFIDENTIALITY. CONSEQUENTLY YOU NEED NOT PROVIDE YOUR NAME)**

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**NAME OF INTERVIEWER.....**

**PLACE OF INTERVIEW.....**

**DISTRICT.....**

**REGION.....**

**DATE OF INTERVIEW.....**

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**SECTION B**

7. For how long have you been in the camp?
- i. Less than a year
  - ii. 1 - 3 years
  - iii. 3 - 5 years
  - iv. 5 - 10 years
  - v. 10 - 20 years
  - vi. Over 20 years

8. Why are you here?

.....

.....

9. Have you ever been accused of witchcraft?

- i) Yes
- ii) No

10. Who first accused you of witchcraft?

.....

11. Why were you accused of witchcraft?

.....

.....

.....

12. How did you feel when you were accused of witchcraft?

.....

.....

13. What happened to you during the period of accusation in the community?

.....

.....

14. a) Were you forced to go to the camp?

- i) Yes
- ii) No

b) Give reasons for your answer.

.....

.....

.....

---

---

15. Who sent you to the witch camp?

- i) Relatives
- ii) Family members
- iii) Friends
- iv) Community Members
- v) Any other (specify) .....

16. Who were you living with before coming to the camp?

.....

.....

17. Do you have any dependants in the camp?

- i) Yes
- ii) No

18. a) Do you have any children?

- i) Yes
- ii) No

If **yes**, answer **b** and **c**, if **No** go to **Q19**

b) Number of children? .....

- i) Males.....
- ii) Females.....

c) Do you have any of them still in the community where you were?

- i) Yes
- ii) No

d) If No, give reasons

.....

.....

e) What is the occupation of your children?

.....

.....

19. On your arrival at the camp, can you describe in detail the procedures you went through at the camp?

a) Who received you to the camp?

.....

.....

b) How did they receive you?

.....

.....



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**29. a) Do your relatives visit you?**

i) Yes

ii) No

**b) If yes, how often do they visit you?**

i. Very often

ii. Often

iii. Not so often

iv. Never

**30. Would you like to go back home to your community?**

i) Yes

ii) No

**31. In your opinion, what can be done to improve your conditions at the camp?**

.....  
.....  
.....

**32. Do you think the camps should be maintained or should be abolished?**

.....  
.....  
.....

**33. Are you really a witch?**

i. Yes

ii. No

**34. If yes, how did you acquire it?**

.....  
.....

**35. Does witchcraft exist?**

i. Yes

ii. No

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**APPENDIX B3**

**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CIVIC EDUCATION**

**Q UESTIONNAIRE  
(THE KALANDE COMMUNITY)**

**TITLE: RESEARCH ON WITCHCRAFT AND HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN GHANA:  
CASE STUDY OF WITCHES' VILLAGES IN NORTHERN GHANA**

**(PLEASE BE ASSURED THAT YOUR RESPONSES WILL BE TREATED WITH UTMOST  
CONFIDENTIALITY. CONSEQUENTLY YOU NEED NOT PROVIDE YOUR NAME)**

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**NAME OF INTERVIEWER.....**

**PLACE OF INTERVIEW.....**

**DISTRICT.....**

**REGION.....**

**DATE OF INTERVIEW.....**

**TYPE OF RESPONDENT: KALANDE COMMUNITY**

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**SECTION A**  
**SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

**1. Sex:**

- i. Male ..... ii. Female.....

**2. Age:**

- i. 19 and below..... ii. 20 – 29.....  
iii. 30– 39..... iv. 40 – 49.....  
v. 50 – 59..... vi. 60+ .....

**3. Educational Background (Highest Attainment):**

- xiii. No Formal Education .....  
xiv. No Formal Education (but can speak/write in  
English and/or vernacular).....  
xv. Basic (Primary, Middle, JHS etc.) .....  
xvi. Secondary (SHS, Trg. Col., Voc. etc.).....  
xvii. Tertiary Institution (Poly, Univ. etc.).....  
xviii. Any Other (please specify).....

**4. Occupation:**

- i. Student ii. Farmer/ Fisherman  
iii. Teacher/Lecturer iv. Civil/ Public Servant  
v. Professional vi. Trader/ Businessman  
vii. Unemployed  
viii. Artisan (specify) .....  
ix Any Other (specify).....

**5. Marital Status:**

- i. Single ii. Separated  
iii. Married iv. Divorced  
v. Other.....

**6. Religion:**

- i. Christian ii. Traditionalist  
iii. Moslem iv. Any Other (specify).....



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**13.** Have you ever been accused of witchcraft?

- i. Yes                      ii. No

- If yes to Q.14, continue from Q.15, if no, go to Q.17

**14.** Who first accused you of witchcraft?

.....

**15.** Why were you accused of witchcraft?

.....

**16.** Do you know of anyone who have ever been accused of witchcraft

- i. Yes                      ii. No

**17.** If yes, why was the person accused of witchcraft

.....

**18.** Have you ever accused anyone of witchcraft?

- i. Yes                      ii. No

**19.** If yes, why did you accuse the person of witchcraft?

.....

.....

**20.** Who gives authority for what happens to persons accused of witchcraft?

- i. Relatives                      ii. Family members  
iii. Fetish Priest                      iv. Chiefs and elders  
iv. Community members                      v. Any other.....

**21.** How does your community deal with an alleged witch?

.....

.....

**22.** What procedures do the alleged witches go through in your community?

.....

.....

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**23.** Are the alleged witches sent to camps?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

**24.** Give reasons for your answer?

i. ....

ii. ....

**25.** Should alleged witches be sent to camps?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

**26.** Give reasons for your answer?

i. ....

ii. ....

**27.** How do community members co-exist with alleged witches within the community?

i. Excellent.....

ii. Very good.....

iii. Good.....

iv. Bad.....

v. Very bad.....

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**APPENDIX B4**

**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CIVIC EDUCATION**

**Q UESTIONNAIRE  
(THE OPINION LEADERS – IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW)**

**TITLE: RESEARCH ON WITCHCRAFT AND HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN GHANA:  
CASE STUDY OF WITCHES' VILLAGES IN NORTHERN GHANA**

**(PLEASE BE ASSURED THAT YOUR RESPONSES WILL BE TREATED WITH UTMOST  
CONFIDENTIALITY. CONSEQUENTLY YOU NEED NOT PROVIDE YOUR NAME)**

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**NAME OF INTERVIEWER.....**

**PLACE OF INTERVIEW.....**

**DISTRICT.....**

**REGION.....**

**DATE OF INTERVIEW.....**

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**SECTION A**  
**SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

**1. Sex:**

- i. Male ..... ii. Female.....

**2. Age:**

- i. 19 and below..... ii. 20 – 29.....  
iii. 30– 39..... iv. 40 – 49.....  
v. 50 – 59..... vi. 60+ .....

**3. Educational Background (Highest Attainment):**

- xix. No Formal Education .....  
xx. No Formal Education (but can speak/write in English and/or  
vernacular).....  
xxi. Basic (Primary, Middle, JHS, etc.) .....  
xxii. Secondary (SHS, Trg. Col., Voc. etc.).....  
xxiii. Tertiary Institution (Poly, Univ. etc.).....  
xxiv. Any Other (please specify).....

**4. Occupation:**

- i. Student ii. Farmer/ Fisherman  
iii. Teacher/Lecturer iv. Civil/ Public Servant  
v. Professional vi. Trader/ Businessman  
vii. Unemployed  
viii. Artisan (specify) .....  
ix Any other (specify).....

**5. Marital Status**

- i. Single ii. Separated  
iii. Married iv. Divorced  
v. Other.....

**6. Religion:**

- i. Christian ii. Traditionalist  
iii. Muslim iv. Any Other (specify).....

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**SECTION B**

**7.** What is witchcraft?

.....

.....

.....

**8. a)** Do you believe in the existence of witchcraft?

- i. Yes                      ii. No

b) Give reasons for your answer.

.....

.....

.....

.....

**9.** In your community, what are your beliefs about witchcraft?

.....

.....

.....

**10.** How do witches operate?

.....

.....

.....

.....

**11.** In your opinion how is witchcraft acquired?

.....

.....

.....

**12.** How do you identify a witch in your community?

.....

.....

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**13. What role do you play when witches are identified?**

.....  
.....  
.....

**14. Who sees to it that alleged witches are sent to the camps?**

- i. Relatives
- ii. Family members
- iii. Fetish Priest
- iv. Chiefs and elders
- v. Community members
- vi. Any Other.....

**15. Give a brief history about the camp (when was it founded, why was it founded and who founded it, what is the population at the camp)?**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**16. Why are accused witches sent to camps?**

.....  
.....

**17. In the period of accusation, what happens to the alleged witches (example beaten, man-handled)?**

.....  
.....

**18. Who is in charge of the camp?**

.....  
.....

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19. a) What procedures do the alleged witches go through before settling in the camp?

.....  
.....

b) Are they disarmed?

- i. Yes                      ii. No

c) If yes, how are they disarmed?

.....  
.....

d) Who determines that the concoction/potion/others used in disarming them are the right substance?

.....

e) Who does the disarming?

.....

f) Can one tell if an alleged witch is really disarmed?

- i. Yes                      ii. No

20. How are the alleged witches catered for at the camp?

.....  
.....

21. Do alleged witches have the freedom to practice their religion?

- i. Yes                      ii. No

22. How will you best rate the living conditions at the camp?

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	Not applicable
Electricity							
Water							
Housing							
KVIP							
Sanitation							
Health Post							
Recreation							
Security							

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**23.** How are the facilities maintained?

.....  
.....

**24.** What are the age groups of those normally accused of witchcraft?

- i. 19 and below.....
- ii. 20 – 29.....
- iii. 30– 39.....
- iv. 40 – 49.....
- v. 50 – 59.....
- vi. 60+ .....

**25. a)** Are the alleged witches allowed to visit their relatives?

- i) Yes
- ii) No

b) If yes, how often do they visit them?

- i. Very often
- ii. Often
- iii. Not so often
- iv. Never

**26. a)** Do their relatives visit them?

- i) Yes
- ii) No

b) If yes, how often do they visit them?

- i. Very often
- ii. Often
- iii. Not so often
- iv. Never

**27.** What work do the witches do at the camp?

.....  
.....

**28.** Who caters for the aged and weak ones among the alleged witches?

.....

**29. a)** Has there been any instance where any of the alleged witches has been reintegrated into his/her community?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

b) Give reasons for your answer

.....  
.....

**30.** What are the challenges at the camp?

.....  
.....

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**31.** In your opinion, what can be done to improve conditions of the alleged witches at the camp?

.....  
.....

**32.** Do you think the witch village should be maintained?

- i. Yes
- ii. No

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**APPENDIX B5**  
**FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**  
**SECTION A**

**SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF PARTICIPANTS**

- Name
- Age
- Educational background: (highest attainment)
- Occupation
- Marital Status
- Religion
- Community of origin

**SECTION B**

1. Who ordered your coming here and for what reason?
2. What categories or type of people are more prone to be accused of witchcraft?
3. What do they do for people to accuse them of witchcraft?
4. What procedures were you made to go through when you first came here?
5. What work do you do in the camp?
6. Are you forced to work against your will?
7. There is a perception out there that some of you engage in prostitution to survive, how true is that assertion.
8. How do you live at the camp in terms of food, shelter, clothing etc?
9. Do you have children living with you at the camp?
10. Are the children attending school?
11. What chores do the children do at the camp?
12. Do you interact with the community members, attend social gatherings?
13. Are you allowed to vote or participate in other national activities?
14. How is your relationship with each other at the camp?
15. If you are sick/ill how are you treated?
16. What facilities do you have at the camp and in what conditions are they in?
17. What problems do you face at the camp?
18. Do you want to be re-integrated into your community, give reasons for you answer?
19. Do you think the camp should be maintained, give reasons?
20. Are you really witches?

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**REPORT ON A VALIDATION WORKSHOP ON *WITCHCRAFT AND HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN GHANA*; CASE STUDY OF *WITCHES' VILLAGES IN NORTHERN GHANA* AT ALISA HOTEL, ACCRA ON NOVEMBER 24, 2010**

**Introduction**

The validation workshop on *Witchcraft and Human Rights of Women in Ghana* was carried out by the Research Department of the National Commission for Civic Education in November, 2010.

The workshop took place at the Alisa Hotel in Accra on November 26, 2010. The programme began at 9:00 am with the arrival of guests and participants. The opening prayer was given by Rev. Narh and the MC for the workshop was Ms. Flora Mudey from the Research Department (NCCE).

Ms. Mercy Essein (Deputy Director Personnel NCCE) introduced the Chairman for the workshop in the person of Mr. Larry Bimi (Chairman, NCCE). Other dignitaries present were Mr. Kojo Tito Voegborlo (Commission Secretary, NCCE), Mrs. Gertrude Zakariah-Ali (Director for Research, NCCE), Mrs. Fanny Kumah (Director, Literature and Materials, NCCE) Mrs. Joyce Afutu (Greater Accra Regional Director, NCCE). In all, sixty-two (62) participants were invited from the Christian Councils, Organisations, NGO's and the Media.

In the Chairman's acceptance remarks, Mr. Larry Bimi stated that the existence of witch camps in the country offends chapter five of the 1992 Constitution. He considered the practice as discriminatory against women and inhuman. In his view, it prevented the victims from enjoying their rights as humans as enshrined in the Constitution.

He wondered why there were wizards too but only women were made to endure the ordeal at the witches' camps, where they are kept against their will.

In a short welcome address by the Director of Research, Mrs. Gertrude Zakariah-Ali, stated the need for participants to bring on board their contribution and views in order to come up with a concrete view on subject, witchcraft and human rights of women in Ghana. She particularly urged the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs to help bring better solution to the problem.

**First Presentation: Objectives, Methodology and Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents - By Mrs. Janet Sarney-Kumah**

**Introduction**

Witchcraft is a universal and historical phenomenon which continues to attract a lot of interest. The topic witchcraft when discussed brings about a lot of emotions of fear, hatred and anger to mention a few. Witches are regarded as evil and harmful; a suspected witch is killed, maltreated or banished from the community.

The NCCE decided to undertake this study because these conditions seems to prevail in the Northern region of Ghana where women accused of witchcraft had gone through dehumanizing situations and were confined to villages called witch camps. The study sought to ascertain exactly what goes on at the witch camps.

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## **Problem Statement**

In the Northern region of Ghana, camps have been created, where individuals accused of witchcraft have been forced to abide there as a safe haven. The 1992 Constitution established that citizens are entitled to certain right and freedom.

These include the right to:

- Equality before the law
- Freedom from torture cruelty and inhuman treatment
- Human dignity
- Education, health and to share the cultural life of the community

Women at the witch villages are tagged as witches with no legal justification. They are illegally banned from their villages; they live without their families and cannot participate in the community life of their own villages.

They are also threatened with lynching, and they go on self imposed exile. Is their human dignity not being abused? What are the conditions at the camp? What are the facilities at the camp? And how are the human rights of these women upheld?

## **Objective of the Study**

The key purpose of the study was

- To determine whether the rights of the alleged witches are being uphold.
- Observe life at the witches villages and their surrounding communities

## **The Specific Objectives**

- Find out how witchcraft is perceived and understood in Ghana?
- Who identifies a witch and what happens to those identified to be witches?
- Under what conditions are they living in the witch villages?

## **Methodology**

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed for this study. This is because the study of the phenomenon of witchcraft involves gathering in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior.

## **Study Population**

Three witch villages in the Northern Region were chosen namely

- Gambaga camp (East Mamprusi District)
- Tindanzie camp (Gushegu District)
- Tindanzie camp (Yendi Municipal)
- Kalande (Salaga District) not a typical witch village but has widespread witchcraft belief and accusation.

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The population included the alleged witches, the three communities where the camps are located. The three push communities where the witches come from and Opinion leaders. A total of 310 alleged witches were interviewed. 45 from Gambaga camp, 15 Tindanzie camp, 25 Tindang camp.

Communities Push/pull 150

Kalande 40

Opinion leaders 40

In addition 8 focus group discussions were held for the three witch camps based on gender and ethnic group. Four (4) were held in Tindang for the men, women Kokombas and Dagombas because it is the largest in terms of population, Three (3) discussion groups were held at Gambaga for Dagombas, Frafras, Mamprusi and One (1) held at Tindanzie at Kpatinga because it is the least populated.

### **Sample Selection**

The random walk technique was adopted using the day's code. Observing gap of three (3). The three witch villages were mapped out and simple random sampling technique was used to select the alleged witches and community members. Opinion leaders were purposively selected in order to obtain rich information.

### **Study Instrument**

The main instruments used for data collection were the questionnaire and focus group discussion.

### **Training of Field Officers**

A one day training workshop was organized for the twenty-two (22) research assistants who were engaged for the study. The training took place on July 20, 2010 at the Catholic Guest House, Tamale.

### **Socio-Democratic Background of Respondents**

This is brief overview of the age, sex, and educational background of respondents.

### **The Alleged Witches**

The three highest age ranking of the alleged witches were as follows;

- ❖ The first ranking were 19 (38.4 per cent) respondents who were sixty and above.
- ❖ The second ranked were 89 (28.7 per cent) respondents who were between 50-59 years.

Also 60 (19.4 per cent) of respondents who were aged between 40-49 years had the third highest ranking. The findings indicate that most of the alleged witches interviewed were older people. Old age is clear factor influencing an individual's likelihood of witchcraft accusation.

Majority of the 239 (77.1 per cent) were females, 68 (21.6 per cent) were males. It is obvious that women seemed to be more accused of witchcraft more often.

Majority of the alleged witches 293 (94.5 per cent) had no formal education, 7 (2.3 per cent) had no formal education but can read and write in English or vernacular. The findings indicate that one's educational attainment may be a factor in making one venerable to witchcraft accusation.

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## **Kalande**

The three highest ranking of their ages are as follows: 10 (25 per cent) of the respondents interviewed at Kalande were aged between 50-59 years, 9 (22.5 per cent) were aged between 20-29 and 8 (20 per cent) who were third highest ranking were aged between 40-49 years.

Twenty two (55 per cent) of the respondents interviewed from Kalande were males, Eighteen (45 per cent) of them were females.

Majority 29 (72.5 per cent) of those interviewed had no formal education. 7 (17.5 per cent) had secondary education while 1 (2.5 per cent) had no formal education but could read and write English and or vernacular. Educational level depicts a low level of education of those interviewed. This may indicate that the educational level with the community is quite low.

## **Community Pull/Push**

The three highest age group were; 43 (28.7 per cent) attained by the 20-29 age group followed by 33 (22 per cent) was attained by the 40-49 age group and 24 (16 per cent) was attained by the 50-59 age group. Findings indicate that individuals within different age group had a fair chance of being interviewed. Out of the 150 interviewed 88 (58.7 per cent) were males and 61 (40.7 per cent) were females.

95 (63.3 per cent) had no formal education, 28 (18.7 per cent) had completed basic education, 18 (12 per cent) had completed secondary education, 3 (2.0 per cent) had completed tertiary education. If 63 per cent had no formal education it indicate that educational level of the people within the communities is quite low.

## **Opinion Leaders**

The age groups with the three highest ranking were; Age group 60 and above with 18 (45 per cent), Age group 40-49 was next with 8 (20 per cent) while Age group 50-59 was third with 7 (17.5 per cent). There were 83 ( per cent) males and 6 (15 per cent) females. The sex of one individual was not indicated. More than half of the total respondents 27 (67.5 per cent) had no formal education, 6 ( per cent) had completed tertiary education. And 5 (1205 per cent) had basic education.

## **The Respondents Definition of Witchcraft**

The study sought to find out how respondents would define witchcraft. The question was put to the 40 respondents of Kalande community, 150 respondents from the Push and Pull communities and 40 opinion leaders.

Majority of the respondents defined it as the use of spiritual powers to harm or kill people. This was stated by 33 (82.5 per cent) of the respondents at Kalande. 129 (89 per cent) of the community members and 35 (87.6 per cent) of opinion leaders also stated the same definition.

Witchcraft was seen as the act of seeing into a person future and manipulating it negatively.

This response was given by 8 (5.3 per cent) of community members; 3 (7.5 per cent) of opinion leaders and 1 (2.5 per cent) of respondent from Kalande.

Witchcraft was also defined as the exhibition of extreme antisocial behaviours. A few community

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members 4 (2.7 per cent), 3 (7.5 per cent) of respondents from Kalande, and 2 (5 per cent) of opinion leaders gave this response.

Witchcraft was also defined as individual who is seen spiritually attacking people in their dream. This was mentioned by 7 (4.7 per cent) of community members.

### **Whether Witchcraft Really Exists**

The findings indicate that majority of respondents interviewed believed that witchcraft does exist. As many as 134 (89.3 per cent) of community members, 38 (92.5 per cent) of respondent from Kalande, and 35 (92.5 per cent) of Opinion Leaders, 147 (47.4 per cent) of alleged witches all agreed that witchcraft exists.

There were respondents also who vehemently denied the existence of witchcraft. These included 159 (51.3 per cent) of the alleged witches. 2 (5 per cent) from Kalande, 16 (10.7 per cent) of community members and 18 (45 per cent) of the opinion leaders.

It is quite surprising that the alleged witches said they did not believe in the existence of witchcraft. The alleged witches may be denying the existence of witchcraft due to fear of stigmatization and humiliation amongst others.

### **Admittance of Witchcraft Possession**

It was astonishing to find out that 22 (7.1 per cent) of the alleged witches openly admitted possessing witchcraft. The majority of 287 (92.6 per cent) alleged witches denied being witches.

The findings from the focus group discussion saw majority of the alleged witches denying witchcraft possession. A few also openly admitted that they were witches.

### **Reasons Given for the Believe in the Existence of Witchcraft**

The notable reasons given for the belief in witchcraft include:

1. Open confession of people who possess these witchcraft powers  
This was stated by 13 (39.5 per cent) of respondents from Kalande, 18 (45 per cent) of the opinion leaders and some community members.
2. Another reason given for existence of witchcraft are the misfortunes and mysterious deaths of people occurring in the community.  
This was mentioned by 211 (68.1 per cent) of alleged witches. 11 (28.9 per cent) of Kalande respondents and 7 (17.5 per cent) of the opinion leaders.
3. A third reason was people who exhibit extreme anti-social behavior patterns.  
This was stated by 10 (3.2 per cent) of the alleged witches and 5 (13.2 per cent) of respondents at Kalande.
4. The fourth reason was the identification of witches by people with supernatural powers.

This was said by 6 (15 per cent) of the opinion leaders and community members.

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## **Witchcraft Accusation**

This is a very important issue since majority of the women found in the camps are there because they have been accused of witchcraft. As many as 275 (88.7 per cent) of the alleged witches interviewed had been accused of witchcraft. 3 (7.5 per cent) of respondents from Kalande had also been accused. Majority of the alleged witches involved in Focus group discussion had also been accused of witchcraft.

The study attempted to find from the alleged witches who first accused them. 113 (36.5 per cent) were first accused by their immediate family members (children, husband etc). 72 (23.2 per cent) were first accused by extended family members. 11 (4.8 per cent) were first accused by community members. 29 (9.4 per cent) were first accused by in-laws, 28 (9 per cent) were first accused by rivals while 10 (3.2 per cent) were first accused by spiritualists.

It is sad to note that family members are responsible for most of the witchcraft accusation. Indeed 241 (69.1 per cent) of all accusations are from the family members immediate or extended and this indicates that in providing solutions a lot of education must be provided for families.

## **Community Dealings With Witchcraft Accusation**

The study sought to find out how the accused persons were dealt with within the community, a few notable responses emerged

1. They were sent to the chiefs, fetish priest and elders for confirmation and to exorcise them of their powers. This was stated by 91 (60.7 per cent) of community members. 21 (52.5 per cent) of respondents at Kalande and 30 (9.7 per cent) of alleged witches.
2. A second response was that in some cases the alleged witches were manhandled. 74 (23 per cent) of the alleged witches said this, as well as 13 (6.79 per cent) of community member.
3. Alleged witches were banished from communities.  
This was stated by 38 (12.3 per cent) of the alleged witches and 9 (6%) of community members.
4. The alleged witches are stigmatized in their communities.  
This was stated by 20 (6.5 per cent) of alleged witches, 5 (12.5 per cent) of Kalande respondents and 7 (4.7 per cent) of community members.

It is encouraging that 139 (44.8 per cent) of alleged witches said nothing happened to them. This indicates that with education and awareness creation there is likely to be attitudinal change within the community.

## **Were the Alleged Witches Forced to go to the Camps?**

The finding indicate that more than half of the respondents 182 (58.7 per cent) were forced to the camps. 127 (41 per cent) went to the camp on their own free will. According to the respondents who claimed they were forced to the camp, 45 (14.5 per cent) reasoned that they were actually chased out of their communities to go to the camp.

Another proportions of respondents 45 (14.5 per cent) said their lives were threatened so they had no choice but to go to the camp. On the other hand, those who said they were not forced to the camps, 48 representing 15.5 per cent said they willingly went to the camp due to stigmatization/fear of stigmatization.

15 (4.8 per cent) felt their lives were under threat so they decided to leave the community, while 10 (3.2 per cent) were chased out of the community.

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## **Second Presentation: Witchcraft Acquisition and Conditions at the Camps**

### **By Mr. Derek Gyamfi Yeboah**

#### **Means of Witchcraft Acquisition**

It was generally established that witchcraft is acquired through;

- Family lineage
- Gifts
- Buying
- Friends

#### **Community**

Fifty Seven (38 per cent) of them indicated that witchcraft is acquired through gifts obtained from persons who are already possessed. Forty nine (32.7 per cent) of the respondents stated that people acquired witchcraft through the family lineage either by inheriting it from a deceased relative or handed over to them by family member who is alive.

The Following were 15 (10 per cent) of the respondents who stated that people usually lobby for or buy the powers from spiritualist or persons who are already possessed. It was also established that not only can witchcraft be obtained from family members but can be transferred from friends or persons not in any way a blood relation as indicated by fourteen (9.3 per cent) of the respondents.

#### **Kalande**

27 (67.5 per cent) mentioned the family lineage either through inheriting it from a deceased relative or obtaining it from a relative who is living. It is worth noting that most of them mentioned grandparents giving it to their children and grandchildren thereby confirming their assertion as to why the very young and the very old are those accused. Six (15.0 per cent) stated that one does not need to be related to a person by blood before witchcraft can be transferred and that witchcraft can be acquired from friends. What followed next was the belief that witchcraft can be bought with 14 (35 per cent) of respondents stating so, they alleged that some people buy it from some spiritualist in a bid to protect themselves or harm others.

3 persons (7.5 per cent) also mentioned “gifts” as means through which witchcraft can be acquired knowingly or unknowingly as such gifts serve as the means of transmission of the witchcraft powers. It was also established that not only can witchcraft be obtained from family members or blood relations but can be transferred from friends as indicated by fourteen (9.3 per cent) of the interviewees.

#### **Alleged Witches and their Relations**

According to Durkheim social integration ensures the happiness of the individual and individuals find their happiness in groups thus if one is not integrated he/she would feel isolated and unhappy and in extreme cases commit suicide. It was necessary to assess how integrated the respondents were in their families and communities as a whole.

Evidently, over half of the respondents 204 (65.8 per cent) were living with their immediate relatives before coming to the camp. Over a quarter 91 (29.4 per cent) lived with extended family members while Only 3 (2.6 per cent) were living alone.

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Exactly 50 per cent disclosed that they had dependents living with them at the camps because some of their children were too young to be left behind. Others too moved to the camps with their entire family due to stigmatization and humiliation, while some came to the camp with some children or family members to support them.

However, 152 constituting 49 per cent of the respondents did not have any dependents at the camps. Further, a good number of the respondents 295 (95.2 per cent) had children as against only 12 (3.9 per cent) who did not have, Again, 123 representing 39.7 per cent had Six or more children, Forty three (13.9 per cent) had four and Thirty eight (12.3 per cent) had three and the rest had below three children. It could be deduced from the above that no matter how well one is integrated in either the family or community, once you are accused of witchcraft you are dealt with accordingly.

It was also noted from the statistics that a large number of these children 251 (81.2 per cent) were mainly farmers/fishermen, 59 (18.7 per cent) students, 24 (7.4 per cent) traders and business people, 9 teachers, 5 public servants, 4 were artisans and 16 unemployed

As to whether their children were still living in the communities where the respondents were accused of witchcraft, Over 70 per cent ( 218) still had some of their children in the communities.

The rest 25.8 per cent (80) did not have any children left back at home due the following reasons:

- They followed their parents to the camp.
- The children were not originally living with their parents in the same community.
- Their lives were threatened.
- They left due to stigmatization.

It was clear that irrespective of the occupational background of the accused, the spouse or the Children, not much can be done by them to avert the embarrassment and stigmatization inherent in a witchcraft accusation. As in most cases, the accused is seen to have brought shame to the family and hence shun their company.

### **Length of Time Alleged Witches Have Been in the Camps**

The investigation established that most of the alleged witches 114 (56.8 per cent) had been in these camps between 5-10 years, forty one (13.2 per cent) had been there between 10-20 years' whiles twenty-three (7.4 per cent) had been there for over 20 years.

Almost all the respondents 303 (97.7 per cent) confirmed that they were in the camps because they had been accused of witchcraft and 4 (1.34 per cent) said they were there because they had lost their husbands.

### **Procedures Alleged Witches go Through at the Camps**

The investigation also exposed the procedures the alleged witches went through on arriving at the camps before settling down, which could best be described as rituals.

### **Alleged Witches**

It was observed that 225 (72.6 per cent) of the respondents were given some concoction to drink to disarm them. However, the ingredients making up the concoction was not established.

Twenty of them also provided animals to be sacrificed for verification purposes. Nine alleged witches opined that they slept in the shrine overnight, while forty others stated that were taken through some other purification rites before taking the concoction. These included speaking to the animal before it was killed, shaving of hair and pouring of libation by the fetish priest.

It was however noted that the provision of the items pertained to Ngani and Gambaga camps.

### **Community Members**

The accused is sent to the chief, fetish priest and elders by family members, they are then made to provide animals and items to perform rituals to the gods. They slaughter animals to determine whether the accused is a witch or not.

They are also given concoction to “disarm”/exorcise them however, one can die when he/she denies when indeed he/she is a witch. The most prominent among those mentioned by the respondents was that the alleged witches are given concoctions to drink so as to exorcise them of the powers.

### **Procedures Alleged Witches go Through at Kalande**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Summoned Before the Chief, Fetish Priest and Elders Where Rituals are Performed to Exorcise them of the Powers	26	65.0
Nothing is Done to them as Community Members Shun their Company	5	12.5
Spiritual Assistance	4	10.0
They are Banished from the Community	3	7.5
Alleged Witches are Manhandled	2	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### **Activities Alleged Witches Engage in at the Camps**

With this it was noted that most of the alleged witches 183 (59 per cent) worked for themselves. 12 (3.9 per cent) were engaged by the fetish priest, 4 (1.3 per cent) by the chief. while eleven (3.5 per cent) were not engaged in any specific job but were available for whoever needed their services. However, the rewards for the activities engaged in by the interviewees ranged from farm produce to profit -money.

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## Some of the Products Alleged Witches Sell

Local soap manufactured by some alleged witches at the Gambaga witch camp.



Dawadawa produced by some alleged witches at the Gambaga witch camp



Firewood gathered to be sold by alleged witches at the Tindanzie witch camp at Kpatinga in the Gushegu



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## **Alleged Witches Views on the Facilities at the Camps**

### **» Electricity**

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Electricity seems to be the facility majority of the inmates had a problem with since to almost all the respondents, 303 (97.7 per cent) of the alleged witches, this facility is non-existent. This should be expected since most of the communities in the districts do not have light.

At the focus group discussion, the participants from the Gambaga witch camp made mention of a small solar panel that is not working. They also complained about the reason why there are electric poles in the camps but still not connected.

### **Electricity at Gambaga**

#### **Solar Panel**



#### **Electric Pole**



### **Water**

With regard to water, a substantial number of the alleged witches 127 (41 per cent) rated their access to water to be poor. 54 (17.4 per cent) felt it was good and 21 (6.8 per cent) saw it to be very good. It was noted that Yendi was the district where water was a major issue as a good number of them, 127, rated the facility to be poor, 19 thought it was good with only 2 people saying it was very good.

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## Source of Drinking Water at the Witch Camps

### Gambaga



### Tindanzie



### Housing

Housing also appears to be a big challenge for the inmates. Of the 310 respondents a total of 163 (52.6 per cent) constituting more than half were of the opinion that the situation was poor. On the other hand 28 (8.4 per cent) indicated that it was good, while 18 (5.8 per cent) stated that the accommodation situation was very good.

For the 18 respondents who indicated that the housing situation was very good, 13 were from the Tindanzie camp in Gushegu. Also of the 163 respondents who stated that the state of accommodation was poor, 126 were from the Ngani witch camp in the Yendi municipality.

As many as 37 of the alleged witches in Gambaga also noted that their housing facility was in a poor state.

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## Housing Facilities at the Gambaga Camp



## Tindanzie Camp



## KVIP

A total of 129, representing 41.6 per cent stated that the facility was in a bad condition. However, a substantial number of 34 (11 per cent) rated it as good and only 20 (6.5 per cent) said it was very good. Out of the number that said it was poor Ngani camp had the highest proportion of 91 respondents, followed by Gambaga with 38. Thirteen respondents from the Tindanzie camp indicated that the facility was very good.

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## **KVIP Facilities at the Witch Camps**

### **Gambaga Public Toilet**



### **Tindanzie Camp**



## **Sanitation**

The respondents seem to be pleased with the sanitation situation. Eighty five (27.4 per cent) of the respondents noted that the sanitary situation in the camp was satisfactory. Sixty nine (22.3 per cent) felt it was poor and 57 (18.4 per cent) said it was good whiles Twenty three (7.4 per cent) either noted the situation to be very good or excellent.

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## Health Post

It is intriguing to note that healthcare was not really a challenge as one would imagine. Over 100 of the interviewees 108 (34.8 per cent) were quick to say that it was good and 82 (26.5 per cent) rated it as very good while 5 (1.6 per cent) said it was excellent. However, a fairly significant number of 57 (18.4 per cent) were of the opinion that it was poor.

Similarly, the district distributions showed the same trend, with exception of Ngani witch camp which recorded 76 of the inmates who felt it was good, 57 noted it was very good but the same number of 57 said it was poor.

In the case of the Gambaga witch camp, more than half of the alleged witches (29) indicated it was good and 14 said it was very good. In the views of 11 respondents in Gushegu it was very good while 3 noted it to be good

## Recreation

Although most of the interviewees 59 (19 per cent) were of the opinion that it was poor the rest of the ratings were below 50 respondents. But in Gambaga, for 24 of the respondents there was nothing like entertainment in the camp, while 14 thought it was good.

## Security

In the views of 91 (29.4 per cent) respondents representing the majority, security was no problem to them, it was very good.

The next high rating was good noted by 67 (21.6 per cent) of the alleged witches and to 19 (6.1 per cent) of them it was excellent. However, 21 (6.8 per cent) still felt it was poor. This is to be expected with the chiefs/fetish priests who are spiritually fortified around them, they are bound to feel secured.

Almost a quarter of the respondents (70) of the respondents from the Ngani camp said security was very good and 53 thought it was good, while 34 noted it was satisfactory. Tindanzie camp had 15 inmates saying the security was very good.

At Gambaga however, only 14 respondents felt it was not a problem and to 6 of them noted it was very good.

## Opinion Leaders Views on How Alleged Witches are ‘Disarmed’

A witch being disarmed means the witchcraft power has been taken away from the person, whether these alleged witches are really ‘disarmed’ of their power, 97.5 per cent (39) of the respondents said yes, they are ‘disarmed’ whereas 2.5 per cent (1) thought otherwise.

Moreover, it was important to find out from the respondent who attested to the fact that the alleged witches are ‘disarmed’, how they are ‘disarmed’.

To this, 70 per cent (28) said they are ‘disarmed’ by giving them concoction/potion/spiritual water to drink and/or bath with. The rest (11 (27.5 per cent)) thought they are ‘disarmed’ by the fetish priest/ chief through the gods by use of spiritual powers.

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In answering the question on ‘who determines that the concoction/potion/others used in ‘disarming’ them are the right substance’, 16 (40 per cent) respondents said the Tindana, 12 (30 per cent) said the fetish priest and another 10 (25 per cent) said the Gambarana. For 40 per cent of the respondents, it is the chief priest who does the ‘disarming’, 30 per cent said it was the Tindana and only 27.5 per cent said it was the Gambarana.

### **Opinion Leader’s Views on How Facilities are Maintained in the Camps**

On how the facilities at the camp are maintained, majority of them 29 (72.5 per cent) said the facilities are maintained by the NGOs and charity organizations. Twelve (30 per cent) respondents said the facilities are maintained by the family members/relatives of the alleged witches.

Followed were respondents who mentioned chief/fetish priest 9 (22.5 per cent), Three (7.5 per cent) said religious bodies and Two (5 per cent) said the alleged witches themselves maintain the facilities.

### **Challenges Alleged Witches Face in the Camps Opinion Leaders**

Twenty seven (67.5 per cent) of them said the alleged witches lack basic needs like food, clothing and shelter which is needed for human survival. Eleven (27.5 per cent) of the respondents mentioned inadequate facilities such as electricity, water, KVIP and roads as a challenge faced by the alleged witches, another (27.5 per cent) said the camp lacked the provision of proper health care to the alleged witches.

### **Community Members**

Most prominent challenge facing alleged witches in the camp are financial problems with a whopping 105 (70 per cent) of the respondents. The issue of isolation was also mentioned by 78 (52 per cent) as the second most prominent challenge alleged witches face as they are isolated from the people they have basically known throughout most part of their lives.

7 (17.5 per cent) respondents were of the view that the alleged witches are isolated from their family members. Only 3 (7.5 per cent) respondents said there is lack of security in the camp. Physical torture also came up as a challenge alleged witches face with Thirty (20 per cent) of the respondents noted that the alleged witches are manhandled, Five (3.3 per cent) made mention of the mental trauma alleged witches go through, as the allegation changes their social standing.

Twenty (13.3 per cent) mentioned health challenges, feeding and other basic necessities of life

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## **Third Presentation: Freedom of Movement, Association and Integration**

### **By Mrs. Praise Mensah**

The 1992 Constitution guarantees the freedom of movement and association, among others, of every citizen. Thus the alleged witches irrespective of their conditions have the right to participate in every lawful social activity of their choice in the community.

296, constituting 95.5 per cent, said their movement was not restricted and they participated in social events and activities of the communities. 287 (92.6 per cent) indicated that they were free to visit their relatives and their relatives also visited them. However 76 (24.5 per cent) had never visited home and 7 were also never visited.

The assertion of the alleged witches seems to suggest that they are well integrated in the camps; they intimated that they have good relations with one another, corporate and support each other. However over fifty percent 173 (58.8 per cent) of the 310 respondents said they were feeling lonely.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to unearth the conditions under which these alleged witches live in the camps and to find out the extent to which the rights of these people are being upheld.

In all a total of 540 respondents were sampled. This comprised of alleged witches 310 Communities 150 (Push communities 75 and the pull/receiving communities 75), Opinion leaders 40 and Kalande 40. The investigation established that most of the alleged witches 114 (56.8 per cent) had been in these camps for more than 5 years, while 196 had lived there 10 to over 20 years. This implies that they have found these camps a safe haven and therefore abolition the camps will not be easy there is therefore the need for intensive education to make them see the need for its abolition.

The study firmly established that the belief in witchcraft is not in doubt particularly among the people in Northern Ghana. Out of the 540 respondents, 356 strongly believed in the existence of witchcraft as against 180 who did not believe in its existence.

More than half of the alleged witches themselves 159 (51.3 per cent) did not believe in the existence of the phenomenon. Twenty-two (7.1 per cent) of the alleged witches personally confessed they were actually witches.

Out of this number 5 were wizards and 16 witches. The district distribution showed that 10 were from East Mamprusi, Gushegu 1 and Yendi 11.

Witchcraft accusation is normally based on unexpected mishaps or misfortunes which are not considered natural. This was confirmed by almost all the respondents.

According to them the basis of the accusation was mainly due to:

- Death of relatives or community members.
- Sickness and misfortune of victims.
- Dream state.
- The exhibition of extreme anti social behaviour and certain physical characteristics.

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However, the respondents of the push and pull communities identified the following as some of the characteristics of a witch:

- Very old and lonely.
- Excessive wealth.
- Extreme poverty and
- Wretchedness.

Contrary to the views of the other respondents, the alleged witches at the focus group discussion indicated that persons accused of witchcraft are people who are:

- Intelligent.
- Prospering in life,
- Quarrelsome and threatens others.
- Sheer hatred.
- Dream state.

It was further noted that most of the respondents were not harmed in any way when they were accused but some of them were manhandled and almost lynched, while others were banished from their communities. Most of the respondents were actually forced to go to the camps. This constitutes violation of their rights.

The investigation also exposed the procedures the alleged witches go through on arriving at the camps to ascertain whether they are actually witches which can best be described as rituals. The potion they are made to drink to ‘disarm’ them could constitute human right abuse since one can die in the process. The chemistry of this potion was not established. There is therefore the need for further investigation to establish whether it does not contain any poisonous substance that can adversely affect their health. The inmates were engaged in various economic activities and some claimed they worked for the chiefs and fetish priests in return for farm produces but this according to them was on voluntary basis.

In relation to the facilities at the camp, it was discovered that all the three camps did not have electricity. The most deprived is the Tindang and Tindanzie, the most endowed.

Almost all the respondents confirmed that the rights of the respondents in terms of freedom of movement, worship and association were not violated. But this should not justify their staying in the camps. It was also noted that 50 per cent of the alleged witches (155) had dependants living with them at the camps. These dependents are mainly children and most of them are not schooling.

The analysis revealed that majority of the alleged witches were not willing be reintegrate with their families. The question then is why will they not want to be reintegrated if as many as 173 (55.8 per cent) said they were feeling lonely?

This was also confirmed by the respondents of the push communities as more than half, 46 indicated that they will indeed not be accepted into the communities.

According to the respondents the major challenges facing the alleged witches at the camps included:

- Financial.
- Isolation.
- Mental trauma.
- Inadequate facilities and infrastructure and
- Other basic needs.

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## Recommendation

It is strongly recommended that the camps should be abolished due to the following reasons; Though the study did not reveal violation of their rights in terms of movement and association, these people should not be kept in camps. The constitution guarantees the freedom of association of the individual thus, they have the right to live with their families and participate in the social life of the community. No doubt some of them feel desolate and lonely.

As already noted, witchcraft is a universal phenomenon and there are witches all over the world and for that matter Ghana. If witches in the other regions are not kept in camps then the witches in the Northern region should not be kept in camps either.

In situations where alleged witches are manhandled, threatened with death and banished from their communities constitute violation of their rights and the perpetrators should be brought to book. Education should be intensified on the rights and responsibilities of the citizen in affected communities.

The rituals performed for the alleged witches at the camps needs to be investigated into more details with particular reference to the chemistry of the potion they are made to take. Once the authorities who administer the concoction hinted that it could result in death, this also constitutes human right abuse. Thus the human right advocates should intervene and deal with the situation swiftly.

Most of the alleged witches do not want the camps abolish, mainly due to fear of rejection and threat on their lives, Thus, before the camps are abolished intensive education should be given to the push communities on the need to maintain alleged witches in the communities just like the other communities in the other regions.

The push communities should be properly monitored and prepared to receive the alleged witches in order to protect their lives and after they are reintegrated the communities should be monitored to ensure their well being. However, if for any reason the camps should be maintained then the problems at the camps should be addressed. Specifically, new buildings should be constructed for the inmates of the Ngani and Gambaga camps. They should also be provided with basic social amenities such as water, electricity, KVIP, healthcare facilities and corn mill etc. they should also be given financial assistance.

Every effort should also be made to remove the children from the camps since it is not good for their future developments.

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Right: Picture of field auditors and moderators after a focus group discussion with alleged witches at the Gambaga witch camp

Left: Picture of focus group discussion moderators and alleged witches at Ngani



*Group Pictures with Some Alleged Witches*

## **Open Forum**

The open forum took place right after the third presentation. And during the forum there were questions, suggestions, and comments that were made by participants. The following were some of the questions that were asked?

- Questions were asked about what actually goes into the preparation of the concoction that is given to the alleged witches which was believed to disarm them.
- Who determines how the concoction should be prepared?
- Is the concoction medically safe?
- Do the chiefs have evidence or records of persons who have died as a result of drinking the concoction?

Suggestions raised to the questions were that:

- The determination of how the concoction is prepared or what actually goes into the preparation of the concoction shouldn't be left only to certain personality like the priest of the community but it should be known to other leaders of the community and again the concoction should be medically approved by the Ghana Standards Board to be safe.

Also, on the abolishing of the camps, participants suggested that:

- Abolishing these camps will be very difficult but education should be intensified on the bad and negative effect of this problem, abolishing of the camps should be a gradual process.
- And in trying to abolish these camps, spiritualists, priests, pastors, chiefs, media etc should all come on board to help educate people on the negative effects of the witches' camps.

'The need for abolishing the camps does not mean we want the camps to be abolished today or any other particulate date, but what is relevant here is to try to assign programmes to reverse the situation or assign programmes to try to abolish these camps'. This was an intervention by the Research Director, Mrs. Gertrude Zakariah-Ali, concerning the issue of abolishing of these camps.

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## Group Work

This is where participants were grouped into 3 and one question was given to each group to discuss and bring suggestions to them. Each group was to select a leader and a secretary to present their work. The following were each group's question and the suggestions given;

### Group 1

Question: Do the witches' villages provide grounds for violating and abusing the Human Rights of the alleged witches? Explain.

Group one after discussing the question into details came out with their findings.

Answer to this question was neither 'yes' nor 'no', because;

The Camps are not necessarily the causes of the human Right Violation and abuses but they are rather the consequences or results of the false accusation and subsequent violation of human Rights.

### **Explanation:**

The violation and abuses are based on mere suspicion and false accusation.

There is no legal mechanism put in place to verify whether an accused person is truly a witch or not.

And even if the person admits for fear of being lynched there is no legal grounds for placing the person in the witches' camp.

### **Group 2**

Question: Are the witches' villages cultural? Do they play any important role in society? Explain. Should the alleged witches be re-integrated into their communities? Why?

Answer: It is cultural, since it has been established for a long time now; some believe it has come to be part of our culture.

- It is rather a tradition not culture  
The first witch camp was established before 1800's. Therefore we can say it is an inherited part of culture but even for the past 100 years it has come to be social practice of our people in the northern region have come

Yes the witches' villages do play an important role in society because they serve as a safe haven for the alleged witches from mob attack and other violation.

- It is not a physical abuse and abuse of basic rights are at least preserving if they seek refuge at these camps.

Being separated from their family and children deprives them of education and normal growth.

There should be re-integration into the society because it's their basic constitutional right.  
(Unless these attitudes are changed it will be difficult to re-integrate them)

- If prisoners can be pardoned and reinstated into the society, then such alleged witches should be re-integrated into the society.
- The push community should be educated to accept them home.
- The women should be guaranteed of their security before going back.
- The security agencies should deal with those who take the law into their own hands.

### **Group 3**

Question: Should witches villages be abolished? If yes, suggest an implementation plan, specifying the role of various actors. If no, give reasons why.

Answer: Yes, witches' villages should be abolished.

We would like to suggest 'phase out', we hope that with education and awareness creation, over time no more women/men would be banished to these camps and eventually they will cease to exist.

### **Implementation Plan**

- i. Formal education for children in the camps and the communities surrounding the camps.
  - Provision of educational facilities at these camps so that children will become educated and eventually becomes adults who do not accuse women of witchcraft.
- ii. Advocacy, awareness, education targeting all levels / categories of persons within the communities' i.e. traditional authorities, women and young groups, young children.  
Actors: NCCE, DSW, CHRAJ, GHS, Chiefs, Imams, priests, assemblymen/women/ teachers, CSOs, CBOs, NGOs,
  - Training community members to do consistent and sustained education, awareness creation within their communities.
  - Religious bodies as preachers who give normal guidance to their people.
- iii. Legislation: Parliamentarians need education and awareness about the need to enact legislation to help abolish these camps.
  - Women advocacy groups,
  - NCCE can lobby through the MOWAC to help push for legislation.

### **Recommendation**

1. Parliament awareness should be invited to such programmed to help sensitize them about these issues
2. Representatives from these communities can also be invited.

### **Closing Remarks**

Mrs. Zakariah-Ali in giving her closing remarks commended the research personnel for a good work done, and said with the findings, the Commission was better equipped to embark on an effective civic education which the Constitution mandates it to do. She also thanked the participants and urged them that their suggestions, views and advices would be seriously considered.

The closing prayer was given by Mr. Prince Odoom.

